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Introduction

Just like any other language, Polish is constantly evolving. Some terms which have been considered culturally appropriate and in line with language norms for a very long time at some point may become hurtful to the people they refer to. University is a unique setting that should serve as an example for others to follow and a place embodying the idea of openness and acceptance towards every person. Words that can make someone feel that their value is being diminished hurt. This Guide provides selected information on how to talk and write to and about a person to show respect towards them. We focus on terms that are currently accepted and recommended. Still, for the sake of education, we list some terms that should not be promoted due to their pejorative overtones, whereas those that are particularly hurtful and unacceptable are omitted altogether.

Part I: Etiquette

Communication is an activity that concerns aspects such as: politeness, psychology, cultural differences, age differences, gender differences, etc. Ways to show respect towards participants of communication are encoded in etiquette, i.e. a set of linguistic patterns, customs and polite behaviours adopted in a given community. Types of etiquette vary depending on a group and context (social vs. professional). Just like the entire linguistic system, the rules of politeness expressed in language are changing. That is why we may have doubts about using some of them. Still, if we want to demonstrate proper language manners and we do not want to hurt others with our words, we are obliged to comply with universally accepted norms. As one of the main foundations of culture and identity, language certainly deserves special attention.

1. Politeness in face-to-face conversations

In personal interactions, it is important to have a positive attitude towards others and a good approach to those dependent on us. This serves as the basis for good manners and is indicative of being cultured.

Addressing others as Pan/Pani (Sir/Madam)

Addressing someone with Pan/Pani allows communication participants to remain in their private space, which is not invaded during conversation. When one person uses it in a conversation, it is understood that this form of address is mutual.

Best practice!



The most universal form, which will not offend the addressee in Mr./Mrs. relations, is the phrase:

Proszę Pana Proszę Pani Proszę Państwa However, in the professional context in which the use of forms related to profession and function is respected, we can use the following:

name of the position held: Panie Ambasadorze – Mister Ambassador, Panie Prokuratorze – Mister Prosecutor;

academic degree: Panie Profesorze, Pani Profesor /
Profesorko – Professor

function: Panie Rektorze – Rector + last name; Pani Kierownik / Kierowniczko, Manager/Director + last name

In formal, ceremonial contexts, we use "symbolic titulature", e.g. **Wasza Magnificencjo – Your Magnificence** (to the rector of a university), **Wasza Ekscelencjo – Your Excellency** (to Prime Minister, President, Ambassador, Archbishop, Bishop, Chief Rabbi).

Avoid!



In Polish, combining Pan/Pani with a surname is not really elegant. We should say **Panie Kowalski** or **Pani Nowak only** to avoid confusion by addressing the right person in a group. Addressing an unknown person (especially a person older than we are) using the polite form but with their first name **Pani Anno**, **Panie Ryszardzie is** impolite – it is an invasion of their privacy. It is also impolite to address someone in a similar situation with a diminutive form of their name: **Pani Aniu**, **Panie Rysiu**.

Informal forms of address

In social and informal situations, we usually quickly switch to being on first-name terms with others. When someone introduces themselves by their first name only, it means we have moved on to using the first name. If the interlocutor introduces themselves by their full name or just their last name, it is a signal that they should be addressed as Pan/Pani. When adults who do not know each other are introduced to each other by acquaintances who are on first-name terms with them, they should stick to such forms, following the rule that "friends of our friends are our friends."



REMEMBER!

The offer to switch to first-name terms is made by a person of higher rank or position in some hierarchy, and a person who is older.



2.

Greetings and farewells

As Małgorzata Marcjanik, a Polish linguist specialising in polite communication, states, "the speaker's choice of the form of farewell and greeting [...] remains closely related to the relationship in which the sender and receiver are", for "behind every relationship [...] there is always an individual story of acquaintance between the partners engaged in communication."

Best practice!



Dzień dobry Pani Profesor Good morning, Madam Professor

Dzień dobry Panie Dziekanie Good morning, Sir/Dean + last name

Avoid!



The tendency to shorten the distance between conversation participants is reflected in the use of the following forms to say hello:

Witam Pana Witam Pania Profesor Witam Pana Dziekana



The word witam implies a higher rank of the person sending the message. For example, a lecturer may address students in this way, or a superior may address a subordinate, but not the other way round.

3.

3. Electronic correspondence

An e-mail should be carefully reviewed in terms of language (with attention paid to the style and punctuation rules, avoiding misspellings). This attests to the respect we have for the addressee of our e-mail

Best practice!



The proper and most common ways to address a correspondence participant with whom we are not closely acquainted include the forms:

Szanowny Panie Dear Sir
Szanowna Pani Dear Madam
Szanowna Pani Doktor Dear Doctor + last name
Szanowny Panie Dear Professor + last
Profesorze name

We end official emails with the following phrase:

Z wyrazami szacunku; Yours sincerely Łączę wyrazy szacunku Z poważaniem Kind regards Writing to people with whom we have a close relationship, we can use a more casual way of saying goodbye, e.g. Serdecznie pozdrawiam – Warmest regards.

You can also use this!

A neutral form of greeting is becoming increasingly common in electronic correspondence: **Dzień dobry**- **Good morning**, is reaching the status of a standard form due to its frequency and convenience of use.

Avoid!



In asymmetrical interactions, it is considered inappropriate to use forms that combine the first-name terms with those typical of a formal relationship:

Witam Panią Profesor Drogi Panie Profesorze Witam Pana



You can find more information in:

Głodowski, W. (2001) *Komunikowanie interpersonalne*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Hansa Communication.

Kamińska-Radomska, I. (2020) *Kultura biznesu. Normy i form*y. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Marcjanik, M. (2013) *Grzeczność w komunikacji językowe*j. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Markowski, A. (2005) Kultura języka polskiego. Teoria. Zagadnienia leksykalne. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Szteliga, A. (201*8*) *Etykieta zawodowa i protokół dyplomatyc*zny. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.

Part II: Forms to use

1. Feminine forms

Although it is a fairly popular belief that **feminine** forms (in Polish often called feminatywy) are a 21st-century invention, they have been functioning in Polish with varying frequency for several hundred years. The appearance of new feminine forms is usually associated with social changes. That was the case in the first half of the 20th century, when women gained greater access to education and voting rights, and when they began to pursue professions previously unavailable to them. At that time terms such as posłanka, doktorka, profesorka, kowalka or stolarka were already in use (all of them created in a typical Polish way, adding a feminine ending -ka to a masculine form). These and other feminine forms became widespread in the interwar period not only, or even not primarily, in the feminist press but also in daily newspapers and everyday communication. In the postwar era, when the new 1952 constitution was introduced in the Polish People's Republic, the equality of women (theoretically guaranteed in the constitution) visible in feminine forms started to be eradicated from the Polish language in favour of masculine forms used to refer to both genders.

In the 21st century, the list of female names for occupations, positions and functions has been expanding. Even if some of them are not yet in dictionaries, they function in everyday Polish and facilitate effective communication. It is the speakers of the language who decide whether a particular form will 'catch on' in their language. This invalidates the so-called phonetic argument, quoted by some opponents of feminine forms. If we are able to pronounce a given word, even if it contains several consonants in succession, this form may become common (in Polish: architektka, i.e. a female architect, vs. odstrzał, blichtr, wewnątrzwspólnotowy).

It is important to note that, given the various ways to talk about and address women, it is worth asking how to properly address and speak about a person when possible.

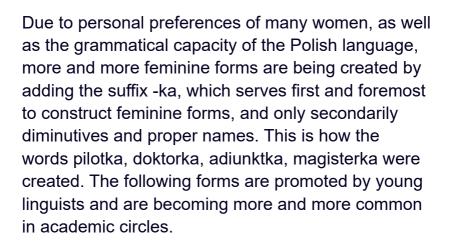
Because of its universality and ideological neutrality, the form with the word pani still seems the safest choice.



Best practice! <



pani profesor
pani doktor
pani dziekan
pani kwestor
pani inżynier
pani redaktor
pani rektor
pani magister
pani licencjat
pani kierownik katedry



You can also use this!

doktorka
profesorka
dziekanka
kwestorka
inżynierka
psycholożka
redaktorka
rektorka
licencja(n)tka
magisterka / magistrantka
kierowniczka katedry

Given the relatively short existence of some words, e.g. because a given position has not previously been held by a woman, there are sometimes alternative forms: pani rektor / rektora / rektorka. Some universities include a provision in their statutes stating that both feminine and masculine forms of the names of positions and functions may be used in official university documents (this is the case, for example, at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań). It should be noted that the Head of the Council for the Polish Language, Professor Katarzyna Kłosińska, advises that the ending -ka, rather than -a, should be used, as the latter is not currently applied to create correct feminine forms, so rektorka, rather than rektora; ministerka, rather than ministra; magisterka, rather than magistra; prezydentka, rather than prezydenta.

We should avoid using masculine forms when referring to women unless in strictly official situations or in written language in a formal context, since many feminine forms have yet to be codified.

Avoid!



Anna Kowalska, dziekan wydziału... powiedział... Student Karolina Wysocka otrzymał nagrodę...

You can find more information in:

Karwatowska, M., J. Szpyra-Kozłowska (ed.) (2012) Oblicza płci. Język-Kultura-Edukacja. Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS.

Szpyra-Kozłowska, J. (2021) Nianiek, ministra i japonki. Eseje o języku i płci. Kraków: Universitas.

Zachorska, M.F. (2023) Żeńska końcówka języka. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie.

2. How to refer to people with regard to their sexual orientation and gender identity?

Inclusive language in relation to LGBTQ+ people (see glossary) respects the identity, experiences and dignity of all people regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. It involves the use of descriptive, neutral and respectful terminology while avoiding words and expressions that may be hurtful or pejorative.

It is crucial to avoid stereotypical or oversimplified descriptions and to refrain from making assumptions that heterosexuality and binary gender identities are the norms to which everybody should conform. Instead, the inclusive language of equality seeks to embrace the diversity of human experiences and identities, promoting acceptance and inclusion of all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

It is essential to use language that respects the identity and dignity of LGBTQ+ community and to avoid expressions that may offend or discriminate against them.

The following are examples of appropriate ways to speak and address LGBTQ+ people.

You can use these!

Pol:
osoba niebinarna
osoba transpłciowa
trans kobieta
trans mężczyzna
osoba homoseksualna
gej
lesbijka
osoba interpłciowa
osoba biseksualna
osoba queer
osoba panseksualna
osoba aseksualna
(see glossary)

Eng:
non-binary person
transgender person
trans woman
trans man
homosexual person
gay
lesbian
intersex person
bisexual person
queer person
pansexual person

All these terms should be used respectfully and in a way that honours a person's gender identity and takes into account their experiences and individuality. As such, they are intended to be neutral, not offensive or pejorative.

Rather than using stereotypical or simplified terms, we need to use **descriptive terms** that reflect more accurately (but with dignity) a person's identity and experiences, e.g. transgender person, homosexual person, gay, lesbian, intersex person (see glossary), and others.

BE CAREFUL WITH PRONOUNS!

It is important to use appropriate personal pronouns and adjectives, e.g. She is nice; He has never been to Paris; They went to the cinema with their friend (singular they); This person is transgender

The use of proper pronouns is a key element of inclusive language when used for LGBTQ+ people. When it comes to transgender people, it is important to use pronouns that correspond to their gender identity. The person's preference for the grammatical forms and respect for their identity should also be taken into account.

Everyone may have their preference for given pronouns to be used, so it is best to start a conversation with the question 'How do I address you?' or ask the person about their preference for personal pronouns, e.g. 'Which personal pronouns do you prefer?' and follow these suggestions.

It is now more and more stressed that the set of pronouns a person may wish to be identified by is much broader than masculine pronouns (he/him) or feminine pronouns (she/her). A trans woman will often choose feminine pronouns, and a trans man will often choose masculine pronouns, but for many non-binary people, gender identity may not fit into the traditional gender distinctions. Non-binary people can linguistically identify outside the binary gender divide.

The pronouns a person may opt for include neutral forms, e.g. it/its (ono/jego) (neutral), it/her (ono/jej) (neutral with feminine forms), it/her/his (ono/jejgo), (neutral with combined forms), ono/jeno or ono/jenu (neutral with post-gender forms). There are also those who choose plural forms (in Polish much less frequent than in English, where they are standard), e.g. they/their (one/ich, oni/ich, oni/e/ich, ony/ich or onie/ich).

It is also worth noting that there are neopronouns (used in writing) by which a person may wish to be identified, e.g. xhe, hx, s/he, in Polish onx, jex, on/a, jego/jej, on_, je_, on*, je*.

We can also show respect towards a person by using names and terms that the person has chosen themselves, not a name they were given at birth, e.g. 'Hi Alex!' – not a female name Aleksandra or a male name Aleksander. It is good practice for the year supervisor to inform students at the first meeting that they can download a form and apply to the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson for support in changing their personal details in the IT systems of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn to data consistent with their gender identity. They can also request to be addressed with a specific pronoun and/or first name (other than in the USOS system). It is recommended that teachers ask their students what forms / names / pronouns they prefer.

The preferences of LGBTQ+ persons regarding how they define their gender identity and sexual orientation should be taken into account, and their choices in this regard should be respected, even if they are subject to change in time, e.g. during their years at our university.

Ultimately, inclusive language seeks to create a world where all people are treated with respect, acceptance and equality.

Avoid!



osoba transseksualna transseksualista

In Polish, the term osoba transeksualna was used in the past but is now considered dated and inappropriate, replaced by osoba transpłciowa. For many transgender people, the term may mean that other people think that they "change their sex," which is an oversimplification or misunderstanding of their identity. It is therefore recommended that this term be avoided.

Never use! homo, pederasta

These terms carry negative connotations. It is crucial to avoid mixing terms with negative and neutral connotations together, e.g. 'pederast' and 'gay,' because 'gay' describes a sexual orientation, whereas 'pederast' refers to a sexual offence and is a term that is hurtful to homosexual people.

You can find more information in:

Skrzydłowska-Kalukin, K., J. Sokolińska (2022) Mów o mnie ono. Dlaczego współczesne dzieci szukają swojej płci? Warszawa: WAB.

Karwatowska, M., J. Szpyra-Kozłowska (ed.) (2012) Oblicza płci. Język-Kultura-Edukacja. Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS.

3. How to refer to people with disabilities?

When speaking to or about a person with a disability, it is best not to mention the disability at all; when necessary, we ought to use terms that refer more to the person as an individual rather than to their disability. Disability can affect many different areas of human functioning. In general, a person with a disability is defined as a person who has a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment that may, when facing various barriers, hinder their ability to participate fully and effectively in society as an equal citizen.

You can use these!

osoby z niepełnosprawnościami;

osoby z niepełnosprawnością intelektualna/ruchowa osoby z niepełnosprawnością w uczeniu się

głusi osoby neuroróżnorodne osoby w spektrum autyzmu osoby z doświadczeniem kryzysu psychicznego osoby z indywidualnymi/ze

zróżnicowanymi potrzebami (w...)

persons with disabilities, disabled

person (preffered by some younger

people)

persons with intellectual/motor

disabilities

persons with learning disabilities

the deaf

neurodivergent persons

persons on the autism spectrum

persons experiencing a mental

health crisis

persons with individual/differentiated

needs (in...)

Terms such as: persons with...,
e.g. disabilities, intellectual / learning
disabilities / motor disabilities / physical
disabilities or a specific condition are
becoming increasingly used when writing about those
issues.

It is becoming more and more common to refer to neurodiversity. When we speak of neurodiverse people, we refer to a broad spectrum of diverse human functioning, such as ways of perceiving the world or communicating with others. In a somewhat narrower sense, the term 'neurodivergent' is used and it is emphasised that neurodivergent people's neurological systems function differently from those of neurotypical people. From this perspective, neurodivergent people include those with autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD (i.e. attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) or ADD (i.e. attention deficit disorder).

It is necessary to know a person in order to use a particular term. For example, a person with impaired hearing may be referred to as hearing impaired, hard of hearing or auditory impaired. However, if a person identifies with the deaf community/culture (which has its own language – Polish Sign Language, customs and even humour), it is preferable to refer to them as deaf. Thus, a lot depends on a person's individual preferences, so it is worth making sure how people refer to themselves.

Interestingly, names used in medical classifications are not always accepted by individuals belonging to a given group. For example, people with autism spectrum disorders (the name used in the ICD-11 classification) are more likely to describe themselves as being on the autism spectrum.

People experiencing communication difficulties, for instance, can be referred to as people with individual communication needs, people who use a communication aid or people who rely on alternative and augmentative communication.

The following terms are becoming dated!

niepełnosprawni (w tym the disabled (including intellectually/ niepełnosprawni intelektualnie/ physically disabled)

osoby niepełnosprawne (np. disabled people (e.g. intellectually, intelektualnie, ruchowo) motorically) – yet, preferred by some

people

osoby ze spektrum autyzmu persons with autism spectrum disorder

z zespołem Aspergera with Asperger syndrome

osoby na wózku wheelchair user

osoba korzystająca z wózka person in a wheelchair

przewlekle chorzy chronically ill

ruchowo)

Some of the above names are still quite commonly used (see, e.g., www.niepelnosprawni.pl). Some people

still use terms such as Asperger syndrome or Rett syndrome, although they are no longer included in the latest classifications (generally referring to autism spectrum disorders).

Avoid!



kaleka
inwalida
ułomny
specjalnej troski
sprawny inaczej
upośledzony umysłowo
niedorozwinięty umysłowo
z niedorozwojem umysłowym
głuchoniemy
przykuty do wózka
sparaliżowany
chory psychicznie
ślepy
cierpiący na (zespół Downa,

niepełnosprawność)

cripple
invalid
handicapped
requiring special care
differently abled
mentally handicapped
mentally retarded
with mental retardation
deaf-mute
wheelchair-bound
paralysed
mentally ill
blind
suffering from (Down's
syndrome, disability)

It is not recommended to say that a person is affected by or suffers from a disability or an illness. Similarly, it is better to avoid saying that someone is a victim of, for example, a stroke. Such expressions emphasise the dependence and vulnerability of people with disabilities or disorders. On the other hand, we should not say that a deaf person is deaf-mute, even if they do not use Polish, because their natural language is sign language.

What is more, it is offensive to refer to a person with individual communication needs as mute. Similarly, terms such as autistic, paranoid, schizophrenic, and bipolar are considered inappropriate. It is worth noting that some of the terms that used to be regarded as positive or neutral are now considered insulting by those who care about the inclusivity of language.

Increasingly often, people with disabilities themselves are choosing the term used to describe a particular group, becoming spokespersons for the rights of such a group (self-advocates). Frequently, they influence the change of terms used in science. Interestingly, names used in scientific contexts which were perceived as neutral for a long time often take on a pejorative meaning with the passage of time. Terms once used in scientific publications, such as: cripple, invalid, imbecile, idiot, retard, mentally retarded, or mentally handicapped have now completely disappeared from circulation. It is likely that names

considered neutral today will not be accepted in the foreseeable future, either.



You can find more information in:

Cluley, V. (2018) "From "learning disability to intellectual disability" – perceptions of the increasing use of the term "intellectual disability" in learning disability policy, research and practice." British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 46(1), 24-32.

Seale, J., Nind, M., & Simmons, B. (2014) "Transforming positive risk-taking practices: the possibilities of creativity and resilience in learning disability contexts." Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research,15:233-248.https://doi.org/10.1080/15017419.2012.703967

Żyta, A., Ćwirynkało, K. (2013) "Nowe kierunki i tendencje pedagogiki osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną – zmiany terminologiczne." Niepełnosprawność. Dyskursy Pedagogiki Specjalnej, 10, 52-61.

4. How to refer to people with regard to their background (ethnicity/nationality)?

When talking about or to a person of a certain (usually different from your own) ethnic or national origin or skin colour, avoid highlighting these features. It is better to use the phrases "a person from...", "a person of ... nationality". Do not use terms such as race (it is better to talk about skin colour) and refrain from using sayings that may stigmatise particular nationalities, people of a certain skin colour or ethnic origin, e.g. Kochajmy się jak bracia, liczmy się jak Żydzi (Eng: 'Let's love each other like brothers, but do business like Jews') or sto lat za Murzynami (Eng. 'a hundred years behind Negroes').

Best practice!



persons/students from... (e.g. a particular continent - Africa, Asia, North America, South America, southern Europe; or a particular country/ city, e.g. Afghanistan, Sweden, Seoul), residents of (e.g. a particular country)



The following terms are becoming dated!

osoby/studenci/studentki black persons/students

czarnoskóre

czarnoskórzy/czarni mieszkańcy black-skinned/black African

people

Azjaci, Azjatki Asians Asians

Afrykanie Africans

Afroamerykanie/Afroamerykanki African-Americans (about

(o osobach pochodzących people from the United States)

ze Stanów Zjednoczonych)

It is worth noting that terms such as Arabs / an Arab man / an Arab woman are used to describe people living in the Middle East and North Africa. Arab diasporas are also found in European countries (e.g. France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, UK) as well as in North America. It is necessary to remember that citizenship does not determine being an Arab. One of the elements of Arab identity is ancestry (ethnicity). It should not be generalised that all Arabs are Muslims, as such an assumption is false. Among the Arabs living in the Middle East and in North Africa, there are people who follow Christianity, Judaism, or other religions, as well as nonbelievers. Not all Muslims are Arabs, since declaring and practising Islam as your religion does not make you Arab. In contemporary Europe, the word 'Arab' has negative connotations and is often mentioned to refer to Arabs being Muslim.



Murzyn, czarny, żółty, żółtek, skośnooki, Indianin / Indianka Negro, black, yellow, with slanted eyes, Indian (referring to Native Americans)

Although some linguists are comfortable with terms such as **Murzyn** (whose closest equivalent in English is Negro), most language specialists recommend avoiding them. Also, different people approach terms such as an Indian in different ways. It may seem surprising that it is recommended that games such as "Cowboys and Indians" or dressing up as an Indian are not played. In this context, it is much more appropriate to use the term 'Native Americans.

You can find more information in:

BBobako, M. (2014) "Rasa i religia. "Trajektornie antysemityzmu i islamofobii, 3(13), 37-56.

Jakubczyk, M.(2021) "Indus, Hindus, Hinduista? Jak mówić o mieszkańcach Indii." Karto-Teka Gdańska, 2(9), 88-94.

Korzeniowski, P. (2021) "Siedem powodów, dla których nie powinniśmy używać słowa "Indianin"." Społeczeństwo. Retrieved from: https://noizz. pl/spoleczenstwo/dlaczego-slowo-indianin-jest-obrazliwe-jak-mowic-o-ludnosci-rdzennej/64xrfb7

Synowiec, O. (2020) "Dlaczego przestałam używać słowa "Indianie"." Przekrój. Retrieved from: https://przekroj.org/sztuka-opowiesci/dlaczego-przestalam-uzywac-slowa-indianie/

Siereda, N. "Arabowie, czyli kto?" Retrieved from: https://kierunek-wschod.pl/arabski-arabowie-czyli-kto/

5.

5. How to refer to people with regard to their religion?

Inclusive language manifests itself in a style which is oriented towards making space in communities for diverse groups and people who have various needs. Language is an important element that contributes to creating a world where every person can live and be accepted. Stereotypes related to being believers and non-believers show in various ways, especially through language, yet we should not reinforce or repeat them. It is definitely not desirable for them to appear in a university space, with students coming from different social groups and a variety of countries, often representing different cultures and religions. Students as well as university staff need to be openminded and willing to learn.

Following a given religion/denomination or saying that one is a non-believer can prove to be a factor that increases the risk of being discriminated against. Yet, university is a place that should be free from discriminatory behaviour based on religion/belief. It is also a meeting space for people where relationships with the Other are initiated, regarding a range of aspects, e.g. intelligence, sensitivity, empathy, and personal manners. People studying and working at the university should not be divided and differentiated by their religious preferences. Therefore, it is not acceptable to favour or belittle someone because of

their faith or not following any denomination.

Here are examples of acceptable forms that we can use to refer to people as regards their religion/denomination:

Best practice!



ateiści atheists buddyści Buddhists deiści Deists

grekokatolicy Greek Catholics chrześcijanie Christians

katolicy Catholics

konfucjoniści Ruists muzułmanie Muslims

prawosławni Orthodox Christians

rodzimowiercy followers of the Slavic native faith szintoiści followers of the Shinto religion

żydzi Jews

(see glossary)

It is worth noting that according to the rules of Polish spelling, terms such as Żydzi (Jews) are capitalized when they mean nationalities, yet names of religious groups are written in lowercase (żydzi). However, there is a tendency to use a capital letter to write Żydzi in both meanings.

Avoid!



katole fundies (to refer to

Catholic fundamentalists)

mahometanie Muhammadans

islamiści Islamists

poganie pagans

żydki kikes

The Polish term 'katol,' (in plural 'katole') is meant to be derogatory towards a Catholic. It denotes a zealous, intolerant, diehard follower of the Roman Catholic Church. It is also inappropriate to use the term Muhammadans, since Muhammad is considered a prophet in Islam, not God. Therefore, calling Muslims Muhammadans will be perceived as negative and even offensive.

The term 'Islamist' refers to followers of Islamic fundamentalism, which uses religion (Islam) as a tool to establish a religious state. The word is not synonymous with Muslim.

The term 'pagan' is a pejorative term used for followers of non-Christian religions. Similarly, terms such as 'goy' (used by Jews in reference to non-Jewish people), or 'giaour' (used by Muslims to talk about infidels/unbelievers) are also seen as derogatory. 'Kike' is another disparaging word to be avoided.

6.

How to refer to people with regard to their age?

Ageism means discrimination against people because of their age. It refers both to the stereotypical perception of the elderly as people who are dependent on others and who have a lower place in the social hierarchy, as well as to the stereotypical perception of young people as inexperienced or incompetent.

The linguistic – often subconscious – perception of senior citizens or young people as less competent or less able (e.g. due to hearing or memory problems, which may develop in old years) is a clearly negative, discriminatory behaviour. As we can see in studies analysing the issue, ageism can take a distinctly hostile form, but it can also occur in a less overt form – interlocutors may not realise that they discriminate against people in regard to their age.

This is why it is essential to become aware of our attitudes towards seniors and young people. Do we use baby talk (elderspeak) – a form of communication characterised by diminutive, simplified language? Do we treat them with excessive familiarity? Finally, when thinking and talking about the elderly or the young, do we suggest that they are less valuable, undermining their knowledge, skills, experience and ability?

Best practice!



seniorzy/seniorki seniors / senior people /

senior citizens

young people / the young

młodzi (in a neutral or positive sense)

These terms are neutral and often find their way into official language. However, care should be taken not to associate them with the baby talk context ('our beloved seniors' analogous to: 'our beloved ladies/ children,' or 'our precious students').

You can also use these!

osoby starsze - the elderly

This term is unlikely to offend seniors. However, according to surveys, some of them prefer the term 'osoba stara' (Eng. 'old person'). Yet, we can only use this name if a senior citizen wishes so.

Avoid!



stara/stary
staruszka/staruszek
babcia
dziadek
ty
małolat
młody (w pejoratywnym znaczeniu)

Addressing older people as 'granny' or 'grandpa' (if not based on actual relationships) and younger people as 'youngsters' or 'kids' is impolite and unethical. These forms devalue seniors and young people and are a kind of demonstration of the agerelated (usurped) superiority of the conversation partners. Calling an older or younger (but adult) person by their first name, when not based on a mutually established relationship, also appears to be a clear breach of etiquette and may lead to a feeling of diminished dignity and, thus, of being disrespected. Other unacceptable expressions include 'old guy,' 'old man,' 'old woman.'

7. How to refer to people with regard to their appearance?

Inclusive language rules out the use of terms and phrases that could in any way offend the person or make them feel uncomfortable. Most importantly, in official language or when we do not know the interlocutor well, it is better to completely refrain from any comments expressing our opinion regarding that person's appearance, even if we mean it to be positive (e.g. "You are a very pretty woman"). However, social etiquette allows people to compliment their interlocutor's outfit, although to a limited extent.

You can use these!

Świetny krawat! A great tie!

Jaka elegancka What an elegant sukienka! dress!

Professional etiquette presents clear boundaries of the sphere within which it is possible to comment on (and compliment) a person's appearance. As professionals, we should avoid judging other people's appearance, in relation to both colleagues and students. Below are examples of inappropriate statements.

Avoid!



I invite all the gorgeous ladies to the conference room! Doctor X has quite a body.

You can find more information in:

"Komplementy – jak reagować, jak dawać i czy zawsze warto?" https://be.unum.pl/komplementy-jakreagowac-jak-dawac-i-czy-zawsze-warto/



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. Terms related to discrimination and inclusion

- **Ableism** discrimination on the grounds of disability, understood as unequal, unfair treatment of people because of the level of their ability.
- Ageism discrimination on the grounds of age, usually understood as unequal treatment of people over 50. It can also mean discrimination against young people (known as adultism).
- **Allies** people who do not belong to a given marginalised group but who actively support representatives of this group by showing them acceptance, empathy and solidarity.
- Anti-discrimination education a deliberate action that improves the knowledge and skills and influences attitudes of particular groups or individuals. It aims to prevent discrimination and violence motivated by prejudice, and to promote equality and diversity.
- **Antisemitism** discrimination against Jews and people of Jewish origin.

- **Chauvinism** a conviction that one's own group (group chauvinism) or nation (national chauvinism) has some unique assets, accompanied by underappreciation of other groups/nations.
- Classism hostility towards groups belonging to a particular class or social stratum, e.g. the belief that people from rural schools have no chance of acquiring the kind of knowledge and skills that would offer them a chance similar to that of a city school graduate
- Cultural integration a situation in which characteristics and values of two cultures are combined based on a sense of mutual acceptance. Each time, a decision is made as to which cultural background to draw on to deal with a given situation.
- **Direct discrimination** when someone is treated unfairly or less favourably than others in a comparable situation.
- Discrimination unequal and, at the same time, unfair (harmful) treatment of a person because of their actual or perceived association with a particular group (social, demographic, etc.). Discrimination manifests itself in actions towards individuals and groups, leading to a situation in which they are deprived of access to goods, opportunities and socially esteemed values. Any such action constitutes a breach of the principle of equal treatment and is a violation of

fundamental human rights and freedoms. Discrimination takes place when there is a relationship of authority (dependence) between individuals, namely when one person can decide whether or not (an)other person(s) will have access to resources or services, such as a job, education, career advancement, transportation options, information, etc. Discrimination can be classified as direct and indirect.

Discrimination by association – discrimination against a person who, although not the bearer of a legally protected characteristic as such, is nonetheless subject to unequal treatment on account of association with such a person, e.g. refusal to employ a primary school teacher because her son is transgender.

Discrimination by assumption – discrimination against a person who is wrongly assumed to be part of a certain group, e.g. a person is treated less favourably because of their darker skin colour and is perceived as an immigrant, a non-Pole.

Discrimination on the grounds of religion – a situation in which, based on religious beliefs or practices, a person or group is restricted or deprived of access to goods and values valued by society. Discrimination on the grounds of religion or denomination may also be expressed through unfair, prejudicial treatment of

a person/persons because of their publicly expressed views and opinions.

Discrimination on the grounds of worldview – harmful, demeaning or exclusionary actions taken against a person who expresses in public their worldview based on a system of beliefs, attitudes, judgements and norms concerning the nature of the world, man's role in society, the meaning of life and the resulting hierarchy of actions.

Diversity – all aspects in which people are similar and different, such as sex, age, skin colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, denomination, lack of religious denomination, (dis)ability, skills, education, work experience, life attitudes, lifestyle, learning style, job, group role, response styles, place of residence, neighbourhood, etc.

Emigrants – people who leave their country and migrate to another. This can be voluntary or forced. The reasons for emigration can, therefore, be political, economic, religious, etc.

Equal treatment – treatment free from all forms of discrimination on grounds such as gender, age, ethnic and national origin, race, religion and belief, disability and sexual orientation, among others. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, all citizens are equal before the law. Everyone has the right to

equal treatment by public authorities. No one may be discriminated against in political, social or economic life for any reason. This is a fundamental human rights concept.

Hate speech – verbal or written public statements and visual (iconic) representations that express negative feelings and extreme views towards individuals or groups. These include demeaning, insulting, slanderous, defamatory, accusatory and derisive statements. Statements considered to be hate speech most often relate to racism, hatred of sexual minorities and xenophobia.

Homophobia – unfounded fear or prejudice-based aversion to homosexual and bisexual people.

Immigrants – people who voluntarily change their country of residence to improve their living conditions, to develop or to get to know other countries.

Indirect discrimination – when an apparently neutral, non-discriminatory practice, legal provision or accepted criterion in some practice puts certain individuals or groups at a disadvantage, unless such a provision, criterion or practice is justified by a legitimate aim and the means used to achieve the aim in question are appropriate and necessary.

Islamophobia – discrimination against Muslims (followers of Islam).

Intercultural competence – the learner's ability to behave appropriately and competently when confronted with the actions, attitudes and expectations of foreign cultures. Appropriateness and competence mean that a person is aware of the cultural differences between their own and a foreign culture and is able to cope with the problems arising from these differences.

Interculturalism – a phenomenon that refers to interactions between different cultures that allow relationships to be built between them and mutual learning to take place. The essence of interculturalism is communication, which makes it possible to recognise a situation when there is an interaction between representatives of different cultures. The exchange of knowledge, ideas, thoughts, concepts and emotions between representatives of different cultures.

Migrants – people who change their country of residence for various reasons: political, economic or purely tourism-related. Most often, they do so out of their own choice, not under any compulsion.

- Multiple discrimination (cross/intersectional) unequal treatment of persons due to their association with two or more discriminated groups, e.g. being a Muslim with a disability.
- National and ethnic minorities communities permanently residing in Poland, having Polish citizenship, yet exhibiting a sense of national or ethnic distinctiveness. In Poland, there are nine national minorities (Belarusians, Czechs, Lithuanians, Germans, Armenians, Russians, Slovaks, Ukrainians and Jews), and four ethnic minorities (Karaites, Lemkos, the Romani people and Tatars). They cultivate national and religious traditions in their communities but are also part of the same cultural system as all Poles.
- Nationalism an ideology that treats national identity as a basic component of social identity, while the national bond is seen as a basic type of social bond, implying that one needs to be particularly loyal to fellow compatriots.
- Positive discrimination when the state applies certain temporary solutions, takes measures or introduces certain legal steps in order to grant equal chances to people belonging to certain minority groups, e.g. people of a different nationality, with a view to reducing the actual inequalities experienced by these people.

- **Prejudice** a biased and generalised opinion about individuals or groups based on their real or imagined characteristics or qualities.
- **Racism** discrimination against persons on the grounds of their race.
- Refugee someone who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of [their] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail [themself] of the protection of that country" (definition according to the Geneva 1951 Refugee Convention).
- **Romaphobia** discrimination and hostile attitudes towards the Romani people.
- Safer space a term describing a social environment and physical space that is welcoming to people from marginalised and discriminated groups. A safer space is not entirely free of problems affecting these groups however, it is built around the capacity and willingness of the community that creates it to respond appropriately when these problems do arise.
- **Sexism** prejudice and negative attitude towards others because of their sex.

- **Social exclusion** one of the forms of social marginalisation which refers to a situation in which participation in many areas of social life is limited or completely impossible for an individual or group.
- **Social inclusion** the process of removing obstacles and social barriers of various types that prevent individuals or groups from functioning in society.
- **Stereotype** a simplified and generalised set of opinions about a group of people, including their distinctive psychological and physical characteristics, as well as preconceptions about a group's supposed behaviour and attitudes.
- **Transmisandry (transandrophobia)** negative attitudes towards transgender men.
- **Transmisogyny** negative attitudes towards transgender women. Part of it is the belief that transgender women are not 'real' women, that their femininity is not authentic and that they are, by definition, less feminine than cisgender women.
- **Transphobia (enbyphobia)** unfounded fear or prejudice-based aversion towards transgender people.

Worldview – a relatively fixed set of opinions (often value judgements), beliefs and views about the surrounding world, drawn from various fields, mainly from science, art, religion and philosophy

Xenophobia – aversion or overt hostility towards individuals and groups defined as outsiders, e.g. foreigners, people of a different skin colour than the dominant one in the area, different sexual orientation, and followers of minority religions.

2. Terms related to sexual orientation and gender identity

- **Bisexual person** a person capable of engaging in romantic and erotic relations with persons of different sexes.
- **Cisgender** a term used to refer to people who identify with the sex determined at birth. It serves to distinguish them from transgender persons.
- **Cisgender person** a person whose sex determined at birth corresponds to their gender.
- Coming out ("to come out of the closet") the process of self-disclosure of disability, illness, sexual orientation, gender identity or specific views when one belongs to a minority of the population to other people (e.g. family, friends, acquaintances or colleagues).
- Gender (as opposed to sex) a term referring to sociocultural (rather than biological) differences between women and men, which are acquired (assimilated through upbringing and socialisation). Gender is a set of attributes, attitudes, social roles, and behaviours attributed to a man or a woman according to the widely understood culture. Social mechanisms mean that women and men are expected to comply with these norms and roles, and failure to fulfil these

patterns and tasks is punished. Gender as a set of norms can change over time, depending on the cultural circle in which it operates as well as on the dominant religion.

- **Gender affirmation** synonymous with transition, particularly its legal and medical aspects (legal gender affirmation, medical gender reassignment).
- **Gender binary** the belief perpetuated in society that there are only two genders male and female.
- Gender dysphoria the feeling of discomfort resulting from the discrepancy between different aspects of our gender (the sexual characteristics of our body, how we look, how others perceive us). Gender dysphoria is often split into two categories (but this does not apply to all trans people) depending on what causes it: physical dysphoria or social dysphoria.

Gender identity – a person's perception of their gender.

- **Heteronormative person** a person who, according to social norms, identifies as heterosexual and identifies with the traditional model of family and relationships (i.e. between a man and a woman).
- **Heterosexual person** a person capable of engaging in romantic and erotic relations with persons of the opposite sex.

- Homosexual person (gay, lesbian) a person capable of engaging in romantic and erotic relationships with persons of the same sex. Their sexual orientation is emotionally and sexually directed towards persons of the same sex.
- Intersex person a person born with diverse sexual characteristics development. Their sex characteristics do not clearly fit into the traditional division into male and female. An intersex person may have traits of both sexes or traits that do not fit either sex.
- Legal transition (legal gender reassignment / affirmation) change of gender designation in identity documents and birth certificates, replacement of other documents.
- **LGBTQIAP** (a simplified form of the acronym also commonly used: LGBTQ+) lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and aromantic, pansexual.
- **Medical transition** diagnostics, medical procedures (hormone replacement therapy, cosmetology procedures, plastic surgery, genital surgery) leading to gender affirmation.
- **Misgendering** use of incorrect grammatical gender (e.g. speaking with masculine forms to a trans woman). Misgendering can be malicious and

transphobic, but it can also be accidental and result from misjudging someone's gender based on appearance. Both these situations can cause considerable discomfort because they mean that someone is not perceived by the other person in a way consistent with their gender.

Non-binary person – a person who does not feel exclusively female or exclusively male.

Physical/body dysphoria – a feeling related to the discomfort as regards the anatomical gender characteristics of our body.

Pronouns – transgender people use pronouns and other gender-specific linguistic forms (grammatically inflected) in accordance with their gender identity. Pronouns used by transgender people include feminine, masculine and gender-neutral. Some non-binary people use different pronouns alternately. The use of appropriate pronouns and grammatical forms constitutes the essence of savoir- vivre towards trans people.

Sexual orientation, romantic orientation – these orientations determine towards whom we direct our sexual and/or romantic interests, and they do not necessarily coincide. Among sexual orientations, we can mention homosexuality, bisexuality, pansexuality, asexuality and heterosexuality; among romantic

orientations, we can mention homoromanticism, biromanticism, panromanticism, aromanticism and heteroromanticism. We also use enbian in relation to non-binary people who find other non-binary people sexually and/or romantically attractive. We define a person's orientation in terms of their gender identity and the gender identities of the persons towards whom they feel sexually and/or romantically attracted – we do not define someone's orientation in terms of the sex assigned at birth.

- **Social dysphoria** a feeling related to the discomfort of functioning in society how we are perceived and to what gender we are assigned by the people and institutions around us.
- **Social transition (social gender reassignment / affirmation)** functioning in society having one's gender identity respected (in family, in places of work, in schools and universities, among friends and acquaintances and in other social circles to which the person belongs).
- **Transgender** a term used to describe the entire spectrum of people who fall outside the essentialist categories of gender identity, who do not identify (although to varying degrees and in different ways) with their biological sex assigned to them at birth and/ or associated cultural gender.

- **Transgender person** a person who was assigned a biological sex at birth that is different from their self-perceived gender. Their gender identity does not match the sex assigned to them at birth. Transgender people may identify themselves as being of the opposite sex (other than the sex assigned at birth) or as a non-binary person, i.e. a person whose gender identity does not fit into the traditional gender divide.
- **Trans man (female-to-male, FTM)** a transgender person who was born with a body considered biologically female and adopts a male identity, often also taking steps to reassign their body and/or legal identity.
- **Trans woman (male-to-female, MTF)** a transgender person who was born with a body considered biologically male and adopts a female identity, often also taking steps to reassign their body and/or legal identity.

Transition / gender affirmation / gender reassignment

a multifaceted process that includes aspects of social functioning – medical and legal. It is not a single act but a series of processes (social, medical, legal, psychological) that a transgender person goes through. The transition may be very different for different transgender people and may include all or just some of the processes that make up transitions, depending on the needs and resources of the individual person.

3. Terms related to religious, denominations and non-religiousness

Atheist – a person who does not believe in God or gods.

Buddhist – a follower of the Buddhist religion, which originated in India. It is the religion with the largest number of practitioners in central and eastern Asia, which is based on the teachings of Buddha. The main elements of Buddhism are: self-improvement (including through meditation), the pursuit of enlightenment, the belief in reincarnation, the possibility of achieving inner peace and the end of suffering. Buddhism has a loose and varied doctrine, depending on the variant or school.

Deist – a person who adheres to the view that God is the creator and lawgiver of the universe but does not govern it.

Greek Catholic – a person belonging to the Catholic Church of the Eastern Byzantine tradition (Orthodox Church).

Muslim – a follower of Allah, practising the religion of Islam. The word 'Muslim' is not synonymous with the word 'Arab.'

- Orthodox a person belonging to the Eastern Church characterised by continuity of tradition since apostolic times, distinctive liturgy and independence of local churches.
- **Ruist** a practitioner of the ethical and religious system created by Confucius and his disciples in China. Such a person preaches the virtues of love towards others, kindness and justice.
- Slavic native faith follower a person who follows indigenous beliefs. The Native Church of Poland is a native religious association that refers to the ethnic, pre-Christian beliefs of the Slavs.
- Shinto religion follower a person who follows the indigenous religion of Japan founded on Japanese mythology, characterised by polytheism and a diversity of beliefs and cults.

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