

**PHILOLOGY AND CENSORSHIP: WHO CONTROLS LANGUAGE NORMS?****Yazdonova Makhfuza Alisher kizi,***Teacher-trainee of department of applied aspects of the English language, faculty of English philology, Uzbekistan State World Languages University*

**Abstract.** Language has always functioned as both a medium of communication and an instrument of social power. In contemporary society, linguistic norms are increasingly shaped not only by traditional philological institutions such as academies, educational systems, and literary authorities, but also by governments, media corporations, digital platforms, and algorithmic moderation systems. This article investigates the relationship between philology and censorship through the lens of critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and theories of power. The study examines how language norms are established, regulated, and contested within political, educational, and digital contexts. Drawing on the theoretical contributions of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Norman Fairclough, and Deborah Cameron, the paper analyzes the mechanisms through which linguistic authority operates. The methodology combines qualitative discourse analysis with comparative examination of political, academic, and online communication. The findings demonstrate that censorship in modern societies rarely appears as direct prohibition alone; rather, it functions subtly through institutionalized norms, inclusive language policies, media framing, and algorithmic filtering.

**Key words:** philology, censorship, language norms, discourse analysis, linguistic ideology, sociolinguistics, political correctness, media discourse.

**Аннотация.** Язык всегда функционировал как средство коммуникации и инструмент социальной власти. В современном обществе языковые нормы все чаще формируются не только традиционными филологическими институтами, такими как академии, образовательные системы и литературные авторитеты, но и государствами, медиакорпорациями, цифровыми платформами и системами алгоритмической модерации. Данная статья исследует взаимосвязь филологии и цензуры через призму критического дискурс-анализа, социолингвистики и теорий власти. В исследовании рассматривается, каким образом языковые нормы устанавливаются, регулируются и оспариваются в политическом, образовательном и цифровом контекстах. Опираясь на теоретические труды Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Norman Fairclough и Deborah Cameron, статья анализирует механизмы функционирования языковой власти. Методология сочетает качественный дискурс-анализ с сравнительным изучением политической, академической и онлайн-коммуникации. Результаты исследования показывают, что цензура в современных обществах редко проявляется исключительно в форме прямого запрета; скорее, она действует скрыто через институционализированные нормы, политику инклюзивного языка, медийное фреймирование и алгоритмическую фильтрацию.

**Ключевые слова:** филология, цензура, языковые нормы, дискурс-анализ, языковая идеология, социолингвистика, политкорректность, медийный дискурс.

**Annotatsiya.** Til har doim ham muloqot vositasi, ham ijtimoiy hokimiyat quroli sifatida faoliyat yuritib kelgan. Zamonaviy jamiyatda til me'yorlari nafaqat akademiyalar, ta'lim tizimlari va adabiy avtoritetlar kabi an'anaviy filologik institutlar, balki hukumatlar, media korporatsiyalar, raqamli platformalar va algoritmik moderatsiya tizimlari tomonidan ham shakllantirilmoqda. Ushbu maqola filologiya va senzura o'rtasidagi munosabatni tanqidiy diskurs tahlili, sotsiolingvistika hamda hokimiyat nazariyalari nuqtai nazaridan o'rganadi. Tadqiqot til me'yorlarining siyosiy, ta'limiy va raqamli kontekstlarda qanday belgilanishi, tartibga solinishi va bahs-munozaralarga sabab bo'lishini tahlil qiladi. Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Norman Fairclough va Deborah Cameronning nazariy qarashlariga tayangan holda, maqolada lingvistik hokimiyatning amal qilish mexanizmlari tahlil qilinadi. Metodologiya sifatli diskurs tahlilini siyosiy, akademik va onlayn kommunikatsiyaning qiyosiy tahlili bilan uyg'unlashtiradi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, zamonaviy jamiyatlarda senzura ko'pincha faqat bevosita taqiqlar shaklida namoyon bo'lmaydi; aksincha, u institutsionallashgan me'yorlar, inklyuziv til siyosati, media freyming va algoritmik filtrlash orqali nozik tarzda faoliyat yuritadi.

*Kalit soʻzlar:* filologiya, senzura, til meʼyorlari, diskurs tahlili, lingvistik ideologiya, sotsiolingvistika, siyosiy korrektilik, media diskursi.

**Introduction.** Language is not merely a neutral instrument of communication; it is deeply connected to ideology, identity, and social power. Throughout history, institutions such as governments, religious organizations, educational systems, and literary academies have attempted to regulate language in order to preserve political authority and cultural values. In the modern era, censorship no longer operates exclusively through direct prohibition or state control. Instead, it increasingly functions through subtle forms of linguistic regulation, including political correctness, inclusive language policies, media framing, and algorithmic moderation on digital platforms.

The relationship between philology and censorship has become particularly significant in the twenty-first century because of globalization, digital communication, and the rapid transformation of public discourse. Questions surrounding “acceptable” language, hate speech, misinformation, and ideological neutrality have intensified debates regarding freedom of expression and linguistic authority. As a result, scholars from sociolinguistics, discourse studies, and media theory have begun to explore who possesses the power to define linguistic norms and how such norms shape public consciousness.

Michel Foucault (1972) argued that discourse functions as a mechanism of power through which societies regulate knowledge and truth. Similarly, Pierre Bourdieu (1991) emphasized that language possesses symbolic power because certain groups or institutions gain legitimacy to determine “correct” linguistic usage. Contemporary researchers such as Fairclough (1995), van Dijk (2008), and Wodak (2015) further demonstrated how discourse reflects ideological structures within politics and media.

This article seeks to examine how censorship and philological regulation interact within contemporary society. Specifically, it investigates the institutions and mechanisms that control language norms and evaluates the implications of such control for freedom of expression and cultural identity.

The hypothesis of this study is that modern censorship operates primarily through indirect and institutionalized forms of discourse control rather than explicit prohibition, thereby making linguistic regulation more pervasive and socially normalized.

**Methodology.** This study employs a qualitative research methodology grounded in critical discourse analysis (CDA) and sociolinguistic theory. Critical discourse analysis was selected because it enables examination of the relationship between language, ideology, and institutional power [5, 1995]. The research combines theoretical analysis with comparative examination of examples from political communication, educational language policies, and digital media discourse.

*The methodological framework* draws primarily on the theories of Foucault (1972), Bourdieu (1991), and van Dijk (2008). Foucauldian discourse theory provides a foundation for understanding how power structures regulate acceptable forms of

expression, while Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power explains how linguistic legitimacy is socially constructed. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach contributes insight into the ideological functions of media discourse.

The data analyzed in this study include:

academic literature on linguistic censorship and discourse regulation;

examples of politically sensitive language reforms;

online moderation practices on digital platforms;

institutional language policies in education and media.

The study uses interpretive textual analysis to identify recurring patterns of linguistic control, ideological framing, and normalization of discourse standards. Comparative analysis is employed to examine differences between traditional forms of censorship and contemporary algorithmic or socially mediated regulation.

*Results.* The analysis reveals that language norms in contemporary society are controlled through multiple interconnected institutions rather than a single centralized authority. Three major mechanisms of linguistic regulation emerged from the study: institutional authority, media discourse, and digital moderation.

*Institutional regulation of language.* Educational systems and governmental institutions continue to play a major role in establishing language standards. Official dictionaries, grammar policies, and academic curricula often define what is considered "correct" or "appropriate" speech. Linguistic purism, which attempts to preserve linguistic "cleanliness," remains influential in many societies (Burrige, 2006). Such regulation frequently reflects broader ideological or national interests.

The findings also demonstrate that political correctness and inclusive language reforms have transformed contemporary discourse practices. While supporters argue that such reforms reduce discrimination and promote equality, critics contend that they may restrict open debate and produce forms of self-censorship. Deborah Cameron (1995) described this phenomenon as "verbal hygiene," referring to societal attempts to regulate speech according to moral or ideological standards.

*Media and ideological framing.* Media institutions significantly influence language norms by determining which forms of expression become socially acceptable. Fairclough (1995) argued that media discourse reproduces dominant ideologies through repeated linguistic patterns and framing strategies. The analysis confirms that news media frequently employ selective terminology to shape public perception of political and social issues.

Van Dijk (2008) noted that discourse can manipulate collective cognition through strategic lexical choices and narrative structures. The present study found that media discourse often marginalizes alternative perspectives by labeling them as extremist, inappropriate, or socially unacceptable. Thus, censorship increasingly functions through normalization and framing rather than direct prohibition.

*Digital platforms and algorithmic censorship.* One of the most significant findings concerns the role of digital technologies in regulating language. Social media platforms utilize automated moderation systems to remove or suppress content deemed offensive, harmful, or politically sensitive. Unlike traditional censorship, algorithmic moderation operates rapidly and often invisibly.

Recent studies on artificial intelligence and content moderation indicate that algorithmic systems shape public discourse by prioritizing or restricting specific forms of language [8, 2025]. The findings suggest that algorithmic censorship differs from historical censorship because it combines corporate interests, technological automation, and social pressure. Consequently, language regulation has become decentralized yet more pervasive than in previous historical periods.

**Discussion.** The results support the hypothesis that modern censorship functions primarily through indirect and institutionalized mechanisms rather than overt prohibition. Foucauldian theory is particularly relevant in explaining how discourse regulation operates through normalization and social discipline rather than visible coercion [7, 1972].

The study also confirms Bourdieu's argument that linguistic authority is connected to symbolic capital and institutional legitimacy. Educational institutions, media organizations, and digital corporations possess the social power necessary to define legitimate discourse. Consequently, language norms are not naturally occurring but socially constructed through ideological processes.

One important implication of this study is that censorship has become increasingly difficult to identify because it often appears under the guise of protection, inclusivity, or safety. Political correctness, moderation policies, and ethical communication guidelines may simultaneously promote social equality while restricting linguistic diversity and open debate.

Furthermore, the emergence of AI-driven moderation systems raises ethical concerns regarding transparency and accountability. Unlike traditional state censorship, algorithmic regulation frequently lacks clear public oversight. As digital communication becomes central to global discourse, technological corporations acquire unprecedented influence over linguistic norms and public expression.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that some forms of linguistic regulation may serve necessary social purposes, particularly in preventing hate speech, harassment, or violent extremism. Therefore, the issue is not whether language should be regulated at all, but rather who possesses the authority to regulate it and according to which ideological principles.

**Conclusion.** This study examined the relationship between philology and censorship in contemporary society through the frameworks of critical discourse analysis and sociolinguistics. The findings demonstrate that language norms are shaped through

complex interactions among educational institutions, governments, media organizations, and digital technologies.

Unlike traditional censorship, which relied primarily on direct prohibition, modern linguistic regulation functions through subtle mechanisms such as discourse normalization, political correctness, media framing, and algorithmic moderation. These mechanisms often operate invisibly, making censorship more socially acceptable and institutionally embedded.

The article concludes that control over language norms is increasingly decentralized yet simultaneously more extensive due to globalization and digital communication technologies. Philology therefore remains essential for understanding how power operates through language in modern societies.

Future research should further investigate the ethical implications of AI-based moderation systems, cross-cultural differences in linguistic censorship, and the relationship between inclusive language policies and freedom of expression. As language continues to evolve within digital environments, the question of who controls linguistic norms will remain central to both philological scholarship and democratic society.

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