

# I. Introduction

This study aims to look at the interaction between political correctness and euphemism. While the latter is argued to be the “main tool” of the former (Halmari, 2011), it has been observed that roundabout expressions are of an ever-changing nature, or in the words of Pinker (2002), run on a “euphemism treadmill”, a process by which euphemisms fall into disuse and are replaced by new ones as the old ones are deemed inappropriate over time. To illustrate, the term “retarded” was employed as a euphemism in describing persons with a low intelligence quotient, replacing the recently-shunned “slow”. However, the term itself has undergone pejoration and is referred to euphemistically as the “r-word”.

In the sections to come, I first review previous works on political correctness, euphemism and the ways they interact with each other. (Section II) Second, I detail the methods and materials employed in determining semantic shifts of lexical items as euphemistic expressions. (Section III) Next, I present the results derived from the materials processed based on the proposed methods. (Section IV). Finally, I discuss the results and lines for future research. (Section V)

## II. Literature Review

The term political(ly) correct(ness) (PC) had not been in common use until the end of the 1970s (Wilson, 1995). In 1973, the U.S Supreme Court firstly mentioned the term PC. However, it is difficult to trace the origin of the meaning as PC has evolved with the trends of political ideologies (Kohl, 1992). At present times, politically correct language is commonly seen alongside the issue of media bias in the United States and in the United Kingdom (Lea, 2010).

As for the other term ‘euphemism’, it is considered as part of politeness, political or not, and it is involved with how to avoid

rudeness or directness. In the words of Crystal (2003), there are some words which many people avoid using because they may offend, harm or embarrass other members of the society where politeness is concerned. According to Halliday and Hasan (1985), it is important to pay attention to the “social context” when employing euphemism; doing this will enable speakers to interact accordingly, as a consequence of which euphemism should be looked upon as being attached to a given social context. In this study, it is a “news” context in which euphemism is considered a PC device. And according to Pinker (2002), political correctness, among others, rides a ‘euphemism treadmill’, as shown in Figure 2.1.

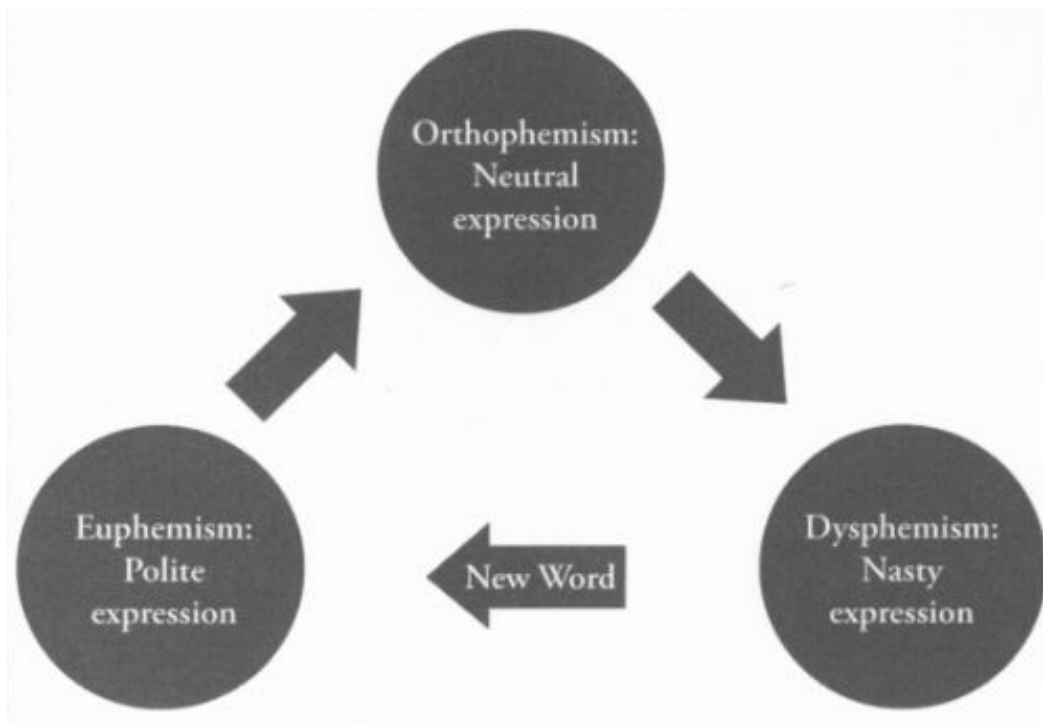


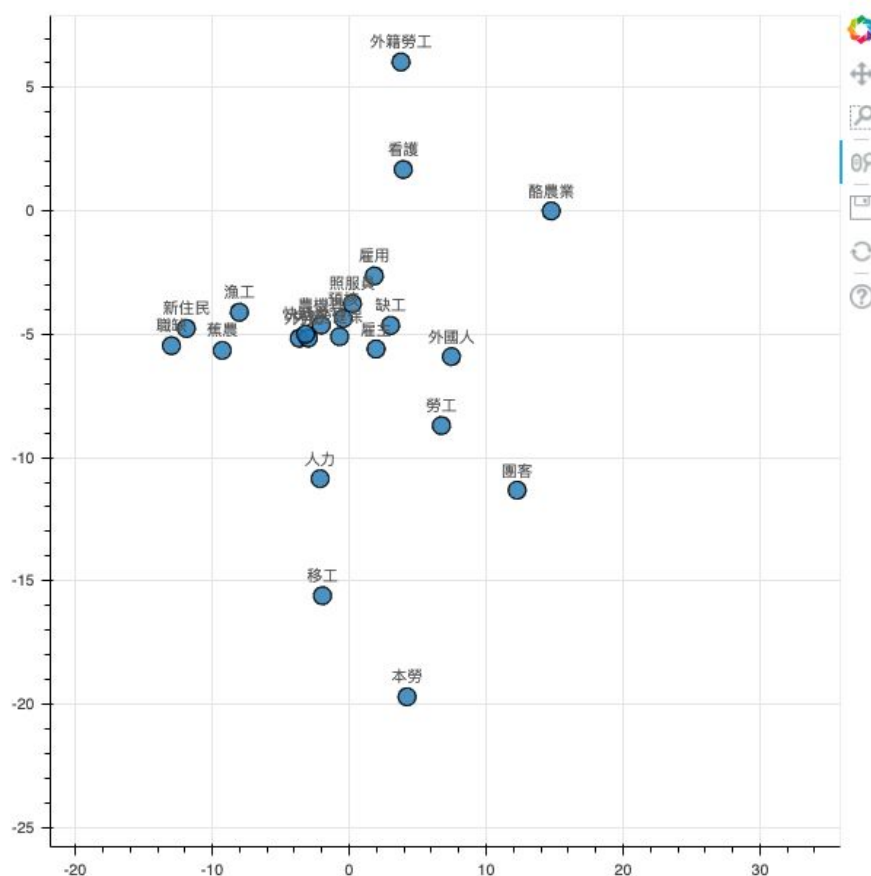
Figure 2.1 The euphemism treadmill.

### III. Methods & Materials

Using Word2Vec, I analyze all the posts in 2019 found in the PTT board of ‘Gossip’, whose titles come with a tag of ‘[新聞]’ and

without a tag of 'Re:', which means 'Response'. There are a total of 109,351 entries.

## IV. Results



### 外籍勞工

(**'移工'**, 0.5877147912979126)  
 (**'外勞'**, 0.4908375144004822)  
 ('雇主', 0.4714890122413635)  
 ('外國人', 0.4157034754753113)  
 ('外傭', 0.3917940855026245)  
 ('旅客', 0.3907437324523926)  
 ('勞工', 0.3868321180343628)  
 ('漁工', 0.3796183466911316)  
 ('看護', 0.3732090890407562)  
 ('越客', 0.3689454197883606)  
 ('看護工', 0.3589571714401245)  
 ('僱主', 0.3534747362136841)  
 ('員工', 0.3531574606895447)  
 ('陸配', 0.3506423234939575)  
 ('背包客', 0.34924373030662537)  
 ('人力', 0.3488483726978302)  
 ('女性', 0.34830164909362793)  
 ('男性', 0.3469890058040619)  
 ('聘雇', 0.3358404040336609)

### 外勞

(**'移工'**, 0.5414348840713501)  
 (**'外籍勞工'**, 0.4908375144004822)  
 ('雇主', 0.39411965012550354)  
 ('勞工', 0.3843107223510742)  
 ('本勞', 0.3836365342140198)  
 ('酪農業', 0.37462204694747925)  
 ('看護', 0.3540491461753845)  
 ('漁工', 0.34357312321662903)  
 ('預核', 0.3340599536895752)  
 ('新住民', 0.3319808542728424)  
 ('陸配', 0.3312781751155853)  
 ('勞動力', 0.3281833231449127)  
 ('越客', 0.327285498380661)  
 ('外配', 0.32576656341552734)  
 ('聘僱', 0.3121505379676819)  
 ('農機具', 0.3118855357170105)  
 ('外展', 0.3065875172615051)  
 ('勞健保', 0.3040781617164612)  
 ('臨時工', 0.3026748299598694)

### 移工

(**'漁工'**, 0.6645172834396362)  
 (**'外籍勞工'**, 0.5877147912979126)  
 ('看護工', 0.5841119885444641)  
 (**'外勞'**, 0.5414349436759949)  
 ('外傭', 0.45494544506073)  
 ('旅客', 0.437508225440979)  
 (**'賣淫女'**, 0.43625345826148987)  
 ('看護', 0.4346323311328888)  
 ('女子', 0.4212527871131897)  
 ('新住民', 0.4077722728252411)  
 ('船員', 0.401373952627182)  
 ('雇主', 0.39948660135269165)  
 (**'嫌犯'**, 0.3928937315940857)  
 ('男子', 0.39245203137397766)  
 ('越南籍', 0.3889770209789276)  
 ('遊客', 0.3853659927845001)  
 ('消防員', 0.3845124840736389)  
 ('幫傭', 0.3687635660171509)  
 ('正機師', 0.36429738998413086)

**智能障礙**

(「精神障礙」, 0.5749619603157043)  
 (「中度」, 0.4885008931159973)  
 (「身障」, 0.48769810795783997)  
 (「精障」, 0.48002544045448303)  
 (「躁鬱症」, 0.4531363844871521)  
 (「輕度」, 0.4514714181423187)  
 (「肢障」, 0.44642606377601624)  
 (「年幼」, 0.44629666209220886)  
 (「失智」, 0.444290429353714)  
 (「患有」, 0.4416050314903259)  
 (「重度」, 0.4155251383781433)  
 (「腦性」, 0.40760552883148193)  
 (「焦慮症」, 0.40717431902885437)  
 (「自閉症」, 0.40564849972724915)  
 (「憂鬱症」, 0.39706742763519287)  
 (「肢體障礙」, 0.39283061027526855)  
 (「夫之婦」, 0.39162179827690125)  
 (「生母」, 0.3905746042728424)  
 (「器障」, 0.38567960262298584)

**智障**

(「白癡」, 0.4378114342689514)  
 (「北七」, 0.4292713403701782)  
 (「XD」, 0.42128986120224)  
 (「廢物」, 0.4120825529098511)  
 (「神經病」, 0.41019320487976074)  
 (「綠吱」, 0.40879303216934204)  
 (「鬼」, 0.40024879574775696)  
 (「...」, 0.3980501890182495)  
 (「綠蛆」, 0.3927499055862427)  
 (「你媽」, 0.3854518532752991)  
 (「畜生」, 0.3849431276321411)  
 (「笑死」, 0.37803882360458374)  
 (「不男不女」, 0.372827410697937)  
 (「韓導」, 0.3713259696960449)  
 (「XDD」, 0.371227890253067)  
 (「肥宅」, 0.370381236076355)  
 (「騙子」, 0.3699866831302643)  
 (「世堅」, 0.36351948976516724)  
 (「XDDD」, 0.3612683415412903)

**喜憨兒**

(「人安」, 0.5895617008209229)  
 (「伊甸」, 0.5385681390762329)  
 (「文教」, 0.5253982543945312)  
 (「天使站」, 0.5061543583869934)  
 (「濃食」, 0.500623345375061)  
 (「真善美」, 0.4895782172679901)  
 (「慈善」, 0.48895400762557983)  
 (「創世」, 0.4859668016433716)  
 (「慈揚」, 0.47569096088409424)  
 (「董氏」, 0.4712268114089966)  
 (「老五老」, 0.46852999925613403)  
 (「信望愛」, 0.46166110038757324)  
 (「愛盲」, 0.4570702016353607)  
 (「弘道」, 0.4565857946872711)  
 (「勇源」, 0.4486304819583893)  
 (「天使心」, 0.4474055767059326)  
 (「群園」, 0.44691410660743713)  
 (「惠康」, 0.44633182883262634)  
 (「光合」, 0.4438646733760834)

**歧視**

(「物化」, 0.49323996901512146)  
 (「偏見」, 0.4856609106063843)  
 (「平等」, 0.4854719638824463)  
 (「羞辱」, 0.46210169792175293)  
 (「歧視性」, 0.45842763781547546)  
 (「血虐」, 0.45745137333869934)  
 (「冒犯」, 0.4436144232749939)  
 (「性傾向」, 0.4354410469532013)  
 (「貶低」, 0.43056660890579224)  
 (「貶抑」, 0.4192746877670288)  
 (「恐跨」, 0.4180503487586975)  
 (「同性戀」, 0.41274139285087585)  
 (「霸凌」, 0.4010984003543854)  
 (「種族」, 0.40108931064605713)  
 (「褻瀆」, 0.4006681442260742)  
 (「仇恨」, 0.3969738483428955)  
 (「人身攻擊」, 0.39559540152549744)  
 (「恐同」, 0.3866749703884125)  
 (「LGBT」, 0.3851871192455292)

**政治不正確**

(「偏激」, 0.4545413851737976)  
 (「過激」, 0.4219265580177307)  
 (「某些」, 0.3942658007144928)  
 (「不以為然」, 0.3894500732421875)  
 (「辛辣」, 0.35529395937919617)  
 (「粗俗」, 0.35472312569618225)  
 (「刻薄」, 0.3441900610923767)  
 (「辭彙」, 0.3410354256629944)  
 (「直白」, 0.3407009243965149)  
 (「仇恨性」, 0.3385588526725769)  
 (「歐曼」, 0.3377160429954529)  
 (「不當」, 0.3342832624912262)  
 (「歧視性」, 0.333583801984787)  
 (「低俗」, 0.33090072870254517)  
 (「趙通」, 0.32397130131721497)  
 (「不屑」, 0.3237263858318329)  
 (「課堂」, 0.3212062120437622)  
 (「粗鄙」, 0.3202601373195648)  
 (「PTT」, 0.31890517473220825)

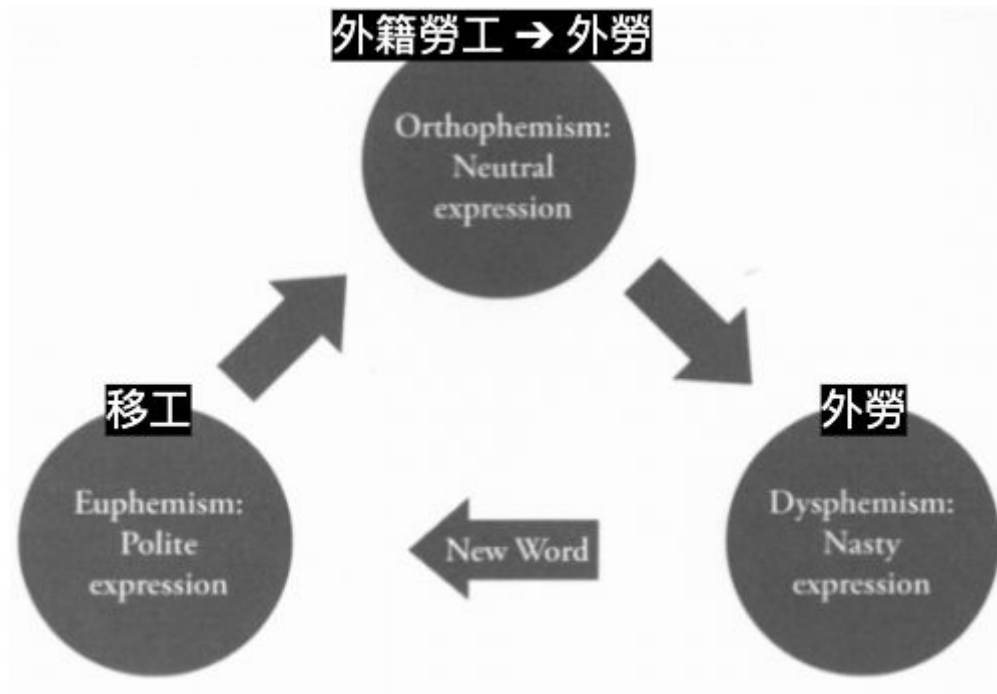
**政治正確**

(「不擇手段」, 0.3547917604446411)  
 (「邪惡」, 0.35232675075531006)  
 (「迷信」, 0.3393425941467285)  
 (「憑甚麼」, 0.33449721336364746)  
 (「刻薄」, 0.33100149035453796)  
 (「愚蠢」, 0.3245650827884674)  
 (「所動」, 0.31999343633651733)  
 (「你」, 0.31949809193611145)  
 (「救贖」, 0.31934982538223267)  
 (「側衛」, 0.31769123673439026)  
 (「破四舊」, 0.3148314952850342)  
 (「叛徒」, 0.31455308198928833)  
 (「吹哨人」, 0.31353193521499634)  
 (「幹話」, 0.3122199773788452)  
 (「叛國」, 0.3109782040119171)  
 (「Payitaht」, 0.31095728278160095)  
 (「社會主義」, 0.3097667694091797)  
 (「可恥」, 0.3075236678123474)  
 (「一詞」, 0.3069395422935486)

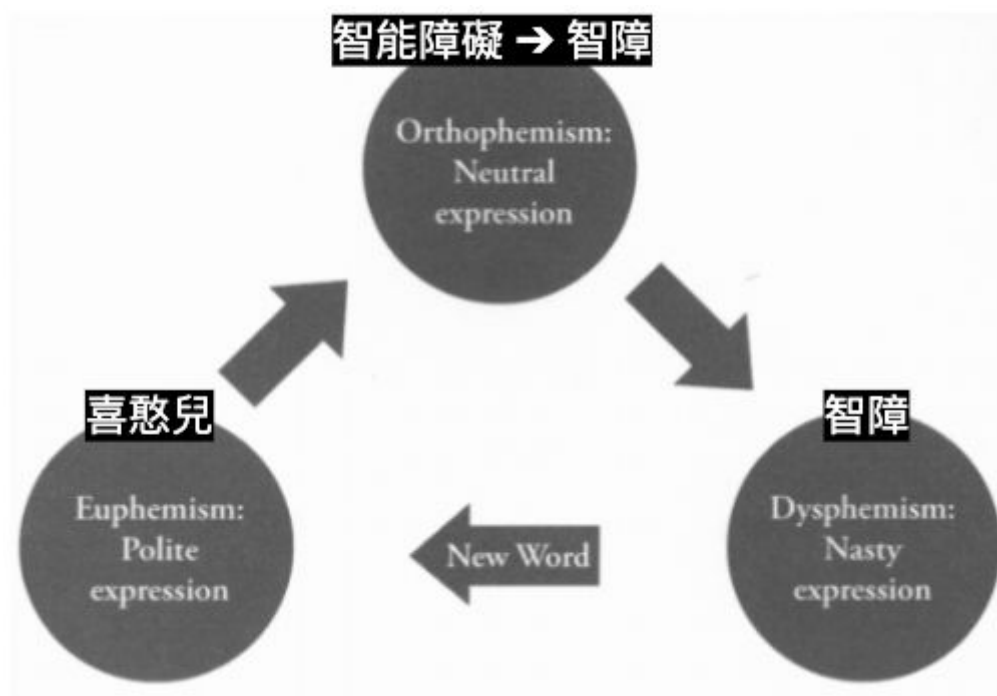
## V. Discussion

It is observed that the group [外籍勞工, 外勞, 移工] runs on a treadmill as such:

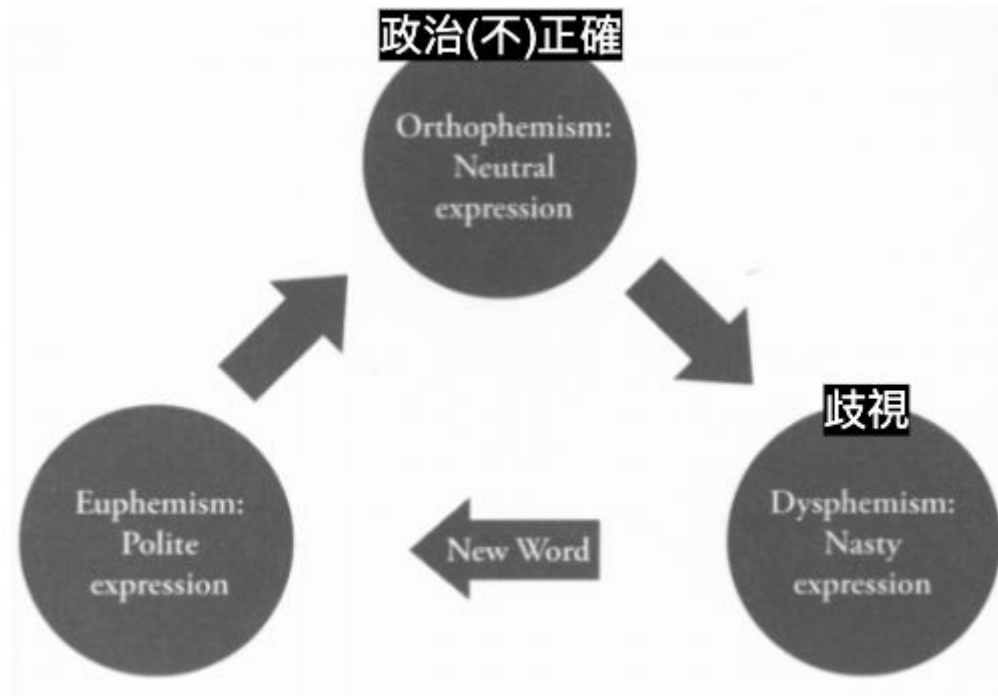




And the group [智能障礙, 智障, 喜憨兒] as such:



And lastly, '政治不正確' can be considered a PC version of '歧視', as shown in the following figure.



## References

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