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Review of Eskenazi et al. (2026)

Robert Maranto, University of Arkansas, USA. E-mail: rmaranto@uark.edu

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With the serious caveat that this is not my area of research, making my observations less useful than others, this seems a fine paper on a severely understudied area. Well-written. Good literature review. Sound studies and analyses. Important topic. Some of the parenthetical historical discussions (master bedroom!) are fascinating. If only Stanford or APA had done that sort of research before embracing and attempting to enforce Newspeak. It is also good that you note that not all linguistic changes are lamentable: cognitive challenge may make a real improvement.

So why do these topics remain unstudied? Relatedly, why did this paper did not make it into a more prestigious journal? Perhaps because of the topic? I suspect, and you may want to discuss this, this subject is understudied in part since critical theorists argue that empirical work testing their models cannot be trusted since there are no objective truths, and/or because logic and measurement are tools of white supremacists, as intellectuals from the late poet Audre Lorde to law professor Richard Delgado argue. This means that studies like those here are considered racist and thus prohibited. Indeed, since 2017 whole new areas of supposed research. Quantcrit and Critquant, have arisen to say that you can use quantification to study racial issues, but only if your findings accord with critical theory. To me it does not seem scientific to specify allowable findings in advance (<https://doi.org/10.1080/10457097.2025.2466962>). That seems worth mentioning. A sidenote: I do not necessarily consider critical theorists to be bad people per se, but they are certainly bad social scientists.

Second, the sample seems to me slightly whiter and better educated than the U.S. population. (I assume all are U.S.?) That would likely bias the sample in the direction of finding words offensive, as Musa al-Gharbi suggests in *We Have Never Been Woke* (Princeton, 2024); thus findings may be even stronger than you propose.

Third, as al-Gharbi shows, you might say more about how many supposedly vulnerable groups do not like these language changes. For example, only 3-4% of Hispanics like the term Latinx, and the Hispanic Congressional Caucus has banned its use since it signifies one is out of touch with

constituents. al-Gharbi argues that rapid linguistic changes and other forms of virtue signaling reflect elite overproduction, with (mainly white) elites using specialized and constantly changing language to as class markers, a social competition utterly irrelevant and occasionally harmful to racial and ethnic minorities and low-income people. Darel Paul (*From Tolerance to Equality*, Baylor University Press, 2018) makes a somewhat similar case, arguing that dynamic language and practices justified as improving intergroup relations (even though they generally do not do so) justify the growth of a large managerial class.

Finally, after this peer reviewed version is published, I think you should do a magazine version.