POLITICAL CORRECTNESS GONE *WOKE* IN POLARISED SOCIETY: THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW KEYWORD IN AN OLD 'CULTURE WAR' DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates firstly the current usage of *woke* through a corpus-assisted discourse analysis and, secondly, the emergence of *woke* as a discourse keyword in British newspaper discourse. The analysis of the current usage is based on a purpose-built corpus with just over 2,500 articles from five UK broadsheet newspapers across the political spectrum containing the word *woke* between October 2021 and October 2022. The corpus-based analysis shows that the collocational profile of *woke* hardly differs between left-liberal and conservative-right newspapers. However, given that the notion of *woke* is based on a public discourse characterised by increased polarisation in the context of the so-called 'culture wars', a closer look at the concordances reveals clear differences in usage: The discourse on the political right derides *woke*, whereas the discourse on the left features various ways of distancing from the out-group's derogatory uses of *woke*. These results demonstrate the extent to which the use of this discourse keyword is determined by its appropriation by the political right who speak negatively about *woke*. The analysis of collocations and concordances is complemented by using the corpus to elicit all word formation based on *woke*, which demonstrates the rapidly increased versatility of its deployment and gives further insights into differences in stance towards *woke*. The analysis of the emergence of *woke* seeks to add diachronic depth to the analysis of the current usage by looking at the first uses of *woke* as discourse keyword in the same five British broadsheets, as well as its relation to preceding words from within the 'culture wars' discourse.

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Political correctness gone *woke* in polarised society: The emergence of a new keyword in an old 'culture war' discourse

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The more I've seen of it, the more I come to believe that the word woke is a key that opens the door to understanding a polarised Western world. (Matthew Syed, 2023)

1.   Introduction: 'Culture war' discourse

In (critical) discourse studies, which seeks to understand the complex relations between discourse and society, it seems counterintuitive to limit our analyses to the uses of just one word. Some words, however, can become so notorious and ubiquitous in public discourse that they may be 'like one loose end which we have managed to find in a ball of wool: by pulling it, we may be able to unravel a whole tangled "ball" of attitudes, values, and expectations' (Wierzbicka, 1997, p. 16). *Woke* has become such a 'ball of wool', a central keyword in a controversy, often referred to as 'culture wars'.

The discourse in which the keyword *woke* forms a semantic node does not begin with the rise of this discourse keyword (DKW). *Woke* slots into discursive constellations that precede its use as DKW. While the use of *woke* as DKW originated in the US, it was subsequently incorporated into similar discursive constellations in other countries, including the UK. The debates within which it is embedded had been developing since the aftermath of the cultural and generational revolt in the late 1960s. Following this, new social movements formed from a left-liberal political spectrum and put actions against discrimination based on race, gender, and sexual orientation on the political agenda (cf. Curran et al., 2005). As these efforts started to become politically influential, in the UK leading for example, to local council initiatives in support of multiculturalism through to national legislation such as the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Race Relations Act of 1976, conservative and right-wing political actors, networks and organisations saw in these politics a danger of social fragmentation (cf. Cameron 1995, p. 160), of potential preferential treatment of minorities, of undermining traditions and national identity. One notable way in which this apprehension manifested in public discourse was attempts to dismiss, deride, and delegitimise the anti-discriminatory agenda of the left, resulting in recurring debates that are often subsumed under the label 'culture wars' (for an introductory overview see Sotirakopoulos, 2021). The label 'culture wars' was the title of a book by James Davidson Hunter published in 1991 and while it dealt with the US context, from there the term became widely used to describe similar polarising tendencies also in other societies (for Britain, cf. Duffy et al., 2019, 2021; Juan-Torres et al., 2020). Breckwoldt (2023) defines 'culture war' as pertaining to political issues that are not economic, but relate to values and morality, and as resulting from attempts at changing social norms in, or

via, domains that are outside of the direct control of politicians. He notes that it involves antagonism and hostility between different stances, generally captured as progressive (in this paper referred to as left-liberal stance) and conservative (in this paper referred to as conservative-right).

The first indication of the discourse that formed to deride and dismiss politics and policies based on shifts in values and social norms can be seen in the deriding of the 'loony left' directed especially at Labour-led London councils in the early 1980s (cf. Curran et al., 2005; Hall, 1994), which constituted a 'critique of "PC" [political correctness] *avant la lettre* ('before the term was coined').' (Fairclough, 2003, p. 24) Since the early 1990s, *political correctness* served to at the same time ridicule and dramatize value-based politicising, for example, by targeting discriminatory language. *Political correctness* served as a bogeyman figure (Conboy, 2007, p. 194; cf. also the characterisation of *woke* as bogeyman in Syed, 2023, Ep. 1) and 'politics of the smokescreen' (Conboy, 2007, p. 196). Conboy (2007) further characterises *political correctness* as follows:

> ...the phrase 'political correctness' acts as a reductive script. It signals a set position on the matter being presented and invites hostility and ridicule towards the event being covered...Invoking 'political correctness' as a short-hand but complex term of abuse invites the reader to take up an automatic position concerning anything smeared with that description. In using this script, the newspaper can reduce complexity by implying a whole range of divergent and complex social questions can be reduced to the allegedly politically motivated conspiracy of a small minority who the newspaper seeks to discredit by association. (Conboy, 2007, p. 195)

Fairclough (2003) notes that the charge of *political correctness* within constellations of political polarisation and antagonism had turned out to be 'a durable tactic, still widely resorted to' (p. 24) and that there was a 'continuing effectiveness of the strategy of wheeling out charges of "PC" against political opponents.' (p. 26) Since then, but preceding the emergence of *woke* within the same discourse contexts, the figure of the *virtue signalling / social justice warrior* had also been created as a bogeyman to be disparaged (cf. Massanari & Chess, 2018; Phelan, 2019) – see also Section 4.4 below.

As the discussion so far shows, *woke* needs to be understood as slotting into an already existing discourse in which similar DKWs with similar functions had been coined before its emergence. Both *political correctness* and *woke* originated from within the discourses of those who are being derided with these labels. *Political correctness* originated as an ironic in-group marker, a joke among leftist activists 'at their own expense' (Cameron, 1995, p. 126) before it was appropriated by the political right. *Woke* was initially 'intrinsically tied to black consciousness and anti-racist struggles' (Cammaerts, 2022, p. 5), 'a term to oppose injustice' (Syed, 2023, Ep. 1). First manifestations of references to *staying woke* in the US-American context as being aware and conscious of racism date back to 1938 and 1962 (Syed, 2023). The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) notes that the 'contemporary meaning arose in the US during the 1960s, with the idea of being well informed and aware of what was going on in society' (Oxford University Press, 2024a). It 'rose to prominence again in the context of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and

especially in the aftermath of the 2014 Ferguson protests when the hashtag #StayWoke was used a lot in conjunction with #BLM.' (Cammaerts, 2022, p. 5). It is this usage of *woke* that triggers its development into a DKW and its appropriation by the conservative-right to dismiss everything labelled as *woke*, resulting in its pejoration; 'deturning it from its initial meaning in the struggle for civil rights into an insult against anyone who fights fascism, racism and other forms of injustices and discrimination' (Cammaerts, 2022, p. 6). An entry for *woke* was added to the OED in June 2017, and since then also for *wokeism*, *wokeness*, and *wokery*. *Wokeism* and *wokery* are marked as 'derogatory' by the OED (Oxford University Press, 2024b, 2024d), and *woke* and *wokeness* are marked as 'often derogatory' (Oxford University Press, 2024a, 2024c) reflecting the successful pejoration through discourse contexts that are dismissive of 'those opposing social injustice or discrimination' and view them as 'insincere, dogmatic, or sanctimonious' (Oxford University Press, 2024b, 2024d).

2.   *Woke* as discourse keyword

As stated in the introduction to this Special Issue, discourse keywords (DKWs) have been approached from a variety of angles. Wierzbicka (1997, 2006, 2010) uses what she argues to be cultural keywords to describe and contrast key concepts and their associated lexis that are typical for, or specific to, different cultures. The cultural theorist Raymond Williams also saw value in an approach based on words which seem to encapsulate the most salient concerns of their time and place (Williams, 1983; for an updated version see Bennett et al., 2005). These cultural studies approaches to keywords usefully take into account the discursive, societal and cultural embedding of keywords that at the same time stand out in discursive contexts like points of orientation, as semantic nodes that contain and condense some of the complexity of the associated issues. Elsewhere, we (Schröter, 2024; Schröter et al., 2019; Schröter & Veniard, 2016; Taylor, 2017) have argued (a) for a more solidly empirical analysis of such lexis and (b) for a more systematic understanding of keywords.

Regarding (a), investigations of keywords emerging from a broader culture studies perspective are not based on large amounts and also not systematic compilations of texts, and they tend to privilege intellectual discourse. Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS; cf. Baker, 2006; Mautner, 2009; Partington et al., 2013) allow investigating DKWs firstly in a set of systematic analytical steps and, secondly, in a manner which reduces the likelihood of bias influencing the results. This is particularly useful when working with strategically charged words such as *woke*. In this article, a CADS of the DKW *woke* will be undertaken, based on a purpose-built corpus of just over 2,500 newspaper articles (see Section 3 below).

Regarding (b), Schröter and Veniard (2016) characterise DKWs as words that occur notably frequently over a certain time span, determined by the salience of the discourse that the keyword is associated with. One example of this would be the keyword *austerity*, associated with a set of political measures during the financial crisis after 2008 (cf.

Schröter, 2024). With a view on *woke*, data from the News on the Web corpus (NoW) provided by the English corpora platform (Davies, 2016) can be used to check the frequency of occurrence of a word in news discourse in any year between 2010–2023. Figure 1 illustrates that *woke* (not differentiating between the past tense verb and the DKW use as adjective) maintains roughly the same relative frequency around eight instances per million words between 2013 and 2020. The sharp rises in frequency in the following three years point towards the establishment and increasing use of *woke* as a DKW, as well as to the salience of the associated discourse. A closer look at its emergence will be taken in Section 4.3 below.
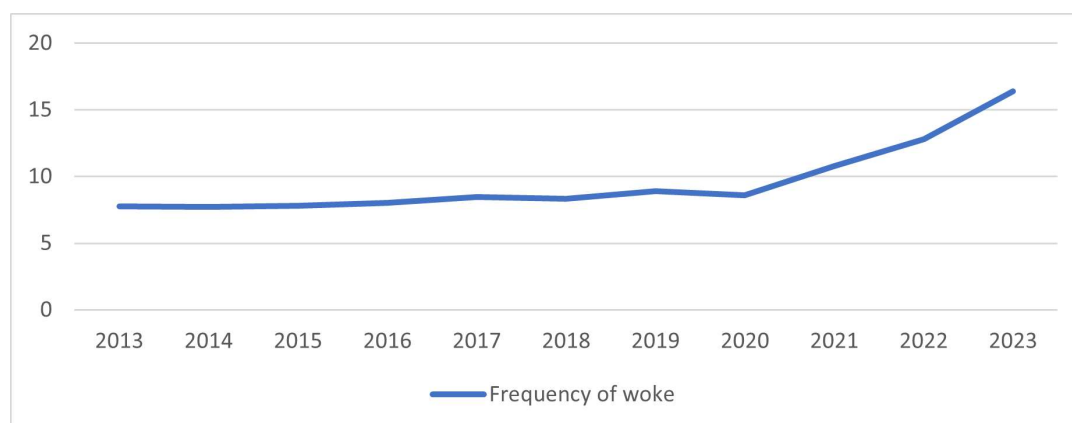

Figure 1: Frequency of woke *per million words in News on the Web corpus, 2013–2023 (Davies, 2016)*

Secondly, DKWs can function as semantic nodes in discourses. They condense a part of the ideological dispositions within the underlying discourse and encapsule the history of the underlying discourse. In this sense, they can also provide a shorthand to a range of complex issues. For example, the DKW *globalisation* provides condensed reference to a set of developments that started before the word rose to prominence and it is used both by those in favour and those opposed to processes and phenomena of globalisation. Teubert and Čermáková (2007) provide concordances reflecting such different perspectives, for example, 'globalisation is an opportunity' or 'globalisation is an open society', as well as 'globalisation is robbing nations' or 'globalisation is destroying communities' (p. 90). The analysis in 4.1 below shows that *woke* pertains to a range of complex issues, and that, while ubiquitous, notably different stances are associated with its use.

Thirdly, DKWs are not isolated phenomena in a discourse context; as nodal lexis they often form an ensemble with other words that occur notably frequently in the relevant discourse. For example, discourses of migration have yielded DKWs such as *multicultural/ism* (Schröter et al., 2019), *integration* (Schröter & Veniard, 2016), and *communities* (Taylor, 2017). Some of these might be associated with certain perspectives on the matter, such as *fortress Europe* (cf. Carr, 1998) as a criticism of European migration policies, or *bogus asylum seekers* (cf. Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008) purporting migration for illegitimate reasons. I have already above mentioned some DKWs that fulfilled similar functions as *woke* in similar contexts, most of all *political correctness*. The relatedness to

this already established 'culture wars' discourse can be further illustrated by frequency data that points to *woke* replacing *political correctness*.
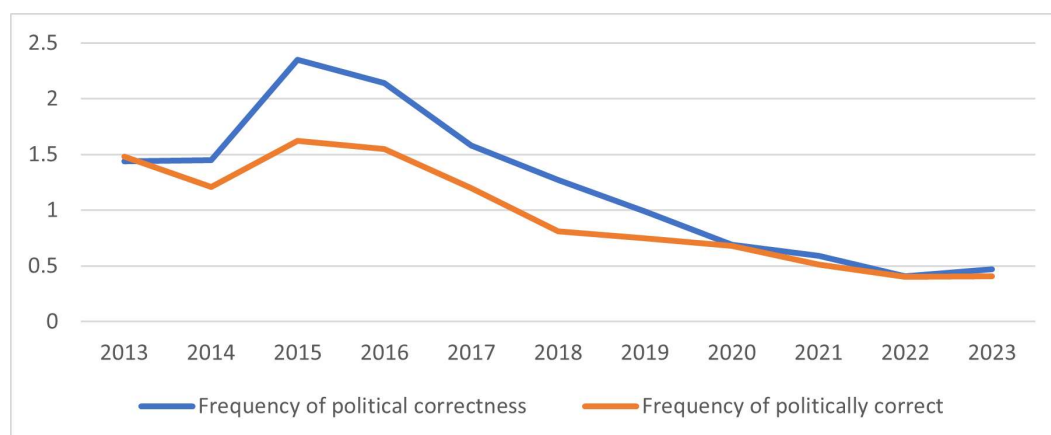
Figure 2: Frequency per million words of political correctness *and* politically correct *in News on the Web corpus, 2013–2023 (Davies, 2016)*

In addition to Figure 1 which shows that the frequency of *woke* starts to rise notably in 2021 above its previous average of around eight instances per million words, the frequencies of *political correctness* and *politically correct* (Figure 2) have more than halved in frequency since 2021 from their average in the previous years in the NoW corpus. To further substantiate this finding, I searched frequencies of the same terms in the SiBol Corpus of English broadsheet newspapers which covers English newspapers from a range of countries including UK, India, USA, Nigeria and the years 1993–2021 in intervals (1993, 2005, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2021).

Figure 3: Frequency of woke, political correctness, *and* politically correct *in SiBoL (UK newspapers) over time*

For the purpose of this article, I have only included the UK broadsheets in my query resulting in Figure 3 which demonstrates the same development that can be observed in the

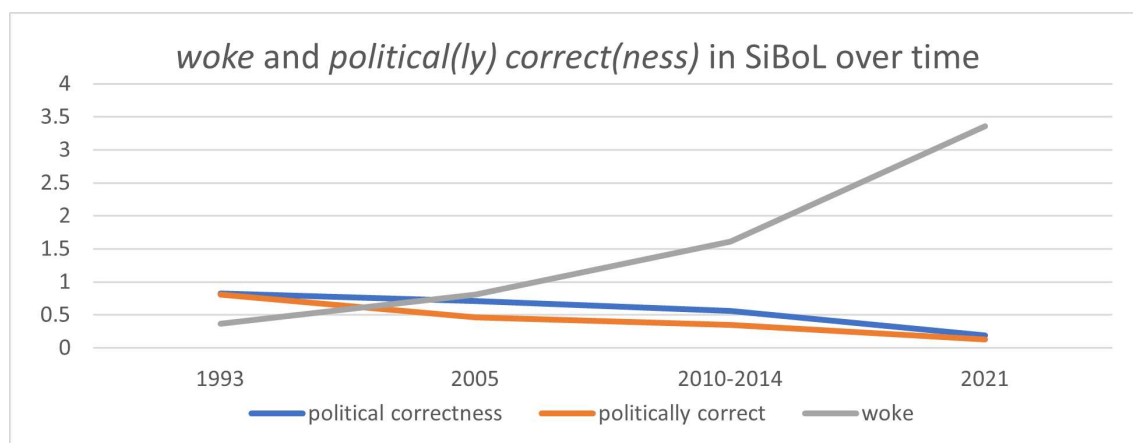NoW corpus.[1] The numbers underpinning Figures 1–3 suggest that *woke* succeeds *political correctness*, whereby both are part of a tactic of appropriating expressions from left-liberal discourse and using them pejoratively to ridicule and deride a left-liberal anti-discriminatory agenda (cf. Curran et al., 2005).

Finally, because DKWs signify controversial issues, words can be criticised and alternatives created. For example, the term *illegalized migrants* was positioned against *illegal migrants* to highlight the policies that 'outlaw' people instead of sustaining a negative disposition towards migrants. Analyses of DKWs should begin with developing an understanding of the discourse and the broader context in which they occur, hence the brief introduction to the 'culture wars' context above. As the analysis in section 4.1 below will show, *woke* collocates with a notable amount and variety of metalinguistic terms, indicating the 'debatedness' of the term and the issues it encapsulates.

Based on the discussion so far, this article addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent is the use of *woke* determined by different political stances along the fault lines emerging from the 'culture wars' context? That is, are there differences in the current usage of *woke* between left-liberal and conservative-right newspapers?
2. To what extent is the use of *wok*e determined by the appropriation and pejoration of the word by the conservative-right?
3. How and when did the use of *woke* as a DKW emerge? Are there differences between left-liberal and conservative-right uses in the emergent phase? Apart from the frequencies noted above, which features point towards *woke* slotting into an already existing 'culture wars' discourse?

3. Data and methodology

To address research questions 1 and 2 above, I use corpus-assisted discourse analyses to investigate its uses in discourse contexts. For these analyses, I compiled a purpose-specific corpus from Lexis UK, a database including British newspapers. I included broadsheet newspapers because firstly, this material can satisfy the needs of my analysis in that it presents a snapshot of public discourse across a political spectrum. Secondly, from a research practical perspective, this material is accessible to me via subscription to the database by the University of Reading. I can retrieve and download newspaper content from this database in a systematic manner, allowing me to build a corpus with a suitable amount of data.

Regarding the first point, even if readers of hard copy newspapers have decreased in numbers, newspapers will still provide a good snapshot of public discourse. They may be quoted and referred to in other news formats, and their content appears online and linked across social media as well (cf. Bednarek & Caple, 2012). I also preferred broad-

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1   While I cannot for the sake of a frequency search make these two corpora distinguish between *woke* as past tense word and as adjective, it is still quite clear that the continuous previous stability in number reflects the use of the past tense verb, and that the marked increases are not due to an increase in talk about coming out of sleep, but to the emergence of *woke* as a discourse keyword.

sheet over tabloid papers because in a societal climate of polarisation not least around issues associated with 'culture wars', I was not interested in the most intense rants about *woke* so as to not privilege a discourse that is too obviously invested in a strong stance. If I can show that a discourse which should by its own standards be rational and address a fairly broad audience rather than niche views, is pejorative and polarised, it will make these observations more relevant than looking at specific groups or communicative spaces in which we can expect more heated or partisan discourse. Hence, it is worthwhile looking for evidence of polarised discourse in potentially more moderate or considered uses and explications of what *woke* is within both the political left and right. I therefore chose the two main national broadsheet papers from the political left (*The Guardian, The Independent*) and three from the political right (*The Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Daily Mail*). One of the papers included, *The Daily Mail,* can be considered somewhere between a broadsheet and a tabloid paper.

Data collection for this corpus began in November, 2022, with a view to capturing the current state of play and considering a year's worth of data a suitable empirical basis. Therefore, articles containing the word *woke* (any instance anywhere in the article) but not the phrase *woke up* from the time between 2021-10-31 until 2022-10-31 were retrieved from the database Lexis+ UK. Results still contained references to waking from sleep, so the search results had to be checked and manually (de-)selected for download. The search results display showed bits of texts around the search word, making it easy to decide which result featured *woke* as DKW or referred to waking from sleep. Articles containing *woke* as DKW were downloaded and merged into one file. The searches were conducted separately for each newspaper, resulting in separate files that were kept for each newspaper.

Newspaper	Articles downloaded	Occurrences of *woke*	Tokens	*woke* per million words
The Guardian	496	614	470,197	1.1
The Independent	361	520	363,334	1.5
The Times	806	1175	297,318	1.7
Daily Telegraph	490	506	297,773	1.5
The Daily Mail	434	711	698,534	1.7
WokeLeft (= Guardian & Independent merged)	930	1,325	833,531	1.4
WokeRight (= The Times, Daily Mail & Daily Telegraph merged)	1,657	2,386	1,293,625	1.6
WokeAll = all newspapers merged	2,587	3,711	2,127,156	1.5

Table 1. *Breakdown of downloaded data: number of articles containing* woke, *occurrences of* woke, *overall corpus size, and frequency of* woke *per million words for each newspaper, (sub-)corpus— WokeLeft (left-liberal) and WokeRight (conservative-right) newspapers, and WokeAll (merged overall corpus)*

From there, I created merged files with the data each from the two left-liberal (WokeLeft) and the three conservative-right (WokeRight) broadsheets, as well as one file with all downloaded newspaper content (WokeAll). Table 1 provides more detail about the composition of the (sub-)corpora.

For the analysis of collocations and concordances, I use the Sketch Engine corpus analysis tool (Kilgarriff et al., 2014) because the subscription-based account provided through my institution enables me to upload my own, purpose-built (sub-)corpora, in addition to using the corpora provided by the platform. Research question 1 entails that I analyse the two sub-corpora WokeLeft and WokeRight separately. For the collocation analysis, I set the span for collocations at four words to the left and four words to the right of the search words. I used the statistical measure of logDice to explore patterns of usage. I wanted to avoid a focus on the co-occurrence of relatively rare words as with the Mutual Information (MI) score (cf. Baker, 2006, p. 102), but also use a more reliable measure than t-score, which might overlook some frequent word combinations. This choice is based on the discussion in Gablasova et al., (2017). The maximum value of logDice is fixed to 14, which makes results comparable across the two differently sized sub-corpora I am using. Appendices A and B show collocations within each of the two sub-corpora above a logDice value of 7 for illustration and so as to not cover too much space. The analysis draws on a bigger pool of collocations down to a value of 5 and above.

To investigate word formations based on *woke*, I use the wildcard feature to look at word formation patterns, i.e., prefixes, suffixes and hyphenated compounds. The wildcard function involves putting an asterisk either at the beginning or the end of a search word to enable searching for a word with a range of possible prefixes or suffixes.

Sketch Engine also allows me to undertake a keyword analysis and to access other corpora for comparative purposes, especially to put *woke* in context with other preceding keywords which in part feeds into addressing research question 3. To put *woke* in relation with other and preceding keywords (Section 4.4), I compare results from my purpose-built corpus to a more general corpus of English language data, enTenTen21 (Jakubíček et al., 2013) and to the SiBol Corpus of English broadsheet newspapers, both provided by the Sketch Engine platform.

To address research question 3, I qualitatively analyse the emergence and first uses of *woke* as a keyword from 2015 onwards in the same five UK broadsheet newspapers that are used for the corpus-assisted analysis of current usage. Particular attention will be paid to metalinguistic commenting, explanation and explication of meaning, distance markers, and to who or what is characterised as *woke*. To trace the emergence of *woke*, I used the Lexis UK database to search the word *woke*, but not the phrase *woke up* – which again had to be checked to exclude references to waking from sleep – in *The Guardian, The Independent, The Times, The Daily Telegraph,* and *The Daily Mail* after 2015-01-01. I use 2015 as a starting point because of the above noted popularisation within the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement arising from the protests in reaction to the shooting of Michael Brown by the police in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014. *The Guardian* is the only paper in which the

use of *woke* in relation to social issues can be observed as far back as 2015, but only four times, hence there was no point in extending this search beyond 2015.

4. Analysis

4.1 *Collocations of* woke *in current usage*

In WokeLeft, there are 447 collocates with a logDice score higher than 5, whereby the highest scoring lexical collocate has a score of 10.4. In WokeRight, there are 845 collocates with a logDice value higher than 5, with the highest score of 9.9.

Semantic cluster	Collocations specific to WokeLeft subcorpus	Collocations in both left- and right-wing newspapers	Collocations specific to WokeRight subcorpus
Meta-linguistic	suppose	word, mean, so-called, term, language, label, criticism, claim, allege, phrase, speech	debate
Stance or belief	out-of-touch, bias, self-righteous, garbage, feminist	ideology, indoctrination, nonsense, mind virus, psychodrama, rubbish credentials, progressive, leftist, lefty, liberal, politically correct, political correctness, virtue-signalling, discrimination, anti-woke, idea	illiberalism, dogma, orthodoxy, obsession, doctrine, mad, prejudice
Social actors	CEO, protester, women, worker, feminist	warrior, brigade, mob, activist, police, generation, critic, people, corporation, leftist, young, snowflake, millennial, elite, charity	victim, boss, institution
Conflict	argument, army	war, against, attack, fight, tackle, target, over	battle, controversy, militant
Process		go, become, recent, new, turn, increasingly, too	modern, fashionable, trendy
Political action		agenda, issue, cause, push, impose, policy, pander	pursue

Table 2. *Semantic grouping of lemmatised collocations of* woke *with logDice score above 5 occurring either in WokeLeft, or in WokeRight, or in both*

Not least with a view on practicability, it makes sense to not consider each individual collocate by itself, especially since some collocates are grammatical words or cohesive devices such as *and*, *of*, and *but*. Again, with a view on practicability given the high number of collocates, I include in the analysis below all collocates with a logDice score above 7, which are listed in Appendices A and B.

For the discourse analytical purpose here, I will focus on content words and ignore function words. A number of the collocates appear to refer to similar phenomena, forming semantic clusters which point to similar contexts and concerns associated with the deployment of *woke*. I have therefore grouped the collocates as indicated in Table 2 for the purpose of offering a coherent discussion of relevant patterns of usage. The collocates are lemmatised, so that different word forms (singular/plural of nouns so that the collocate PHRASE also subsumes *phrases*, and past/present tense so that the collocate ATTACK also includes instances of *attacked*). With such a semantic grouping of collocates, I follow an established practice in CADS (e.g., Baker, 2006; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Koca-Helvacı, 2019; Taylor, 2017). The order in which the collocates are listed follows from highest to lowest logDice score as reflected in Appendices A and B.

Table 2 shows that while there are differences between WokeLeft and WokeRight, there are more shared than different collocates. The shared collocates are listed in the middle column and they outweigh those specific to each corpus. Table 2 also shows that the majority of content word collocations can be allocated to the same semantic categories across the two sub-corpora. As evident in Appendix A and B, there was no further sizeable semantic cluster of lexis left unallocated in either corpus. Only in the two smallest categories, referring to *woke* as a process over time, and to political action, there are no collocates specific to WokeLeft. At first glance, these two aspects point to an overall similarity of the discourses on the left and on the right. However, the metalinguistic collocate *mean*, for example, yields a first interesting case of opposing points of view (Concordances 1–2):

> (1) Leaving aside the now pejorative emphasis slyly laid onto the word **woke**, which *means* little more than decency and good manners,

> (2) A quick scan through other newspapers indicates to me that **woke** *means* self-righteous, puritanical, bossy and intolerant.

Concordances 1–2 are from WokeLeft and indicate different views on what *woke* means. In both, however, *woke* is determined by a discourse that does not belong to the authorial voice: Concordance 1 indicates awareness of a strategic usage which differs from the own definition and Concordance 2 notes such uses in 'other newspapers'. I will in the following focus on shared collocates but explore their uses in WokeRight and WokeLeft separately. Looking at another shared metalinguistic collocate, *term*, further illustrates such differences in usage. Concordances 3–5 from WokeLeft include:

> (3) At the same time, use of the *term* "**woke**" frees Tory ministers from having to engage in the actual debates

(4) showed how cornered and defeated progressives can be by letting the *term* "**woke**" go uncontested, while being entirely pinned down by its assaults

(5) frames anti-racist activism as an attack on British values, with the *term* "**woke**" as a shorthand for "bad" or "un-British"

Again, these show a perception both of the word being deployed as a strategic diversion (Concordance 3), as a strategic political weapon (Concordance 4), and as being deliberately manipulated (Concordance 5), pointing to usage not by the authorial in-group, but by a different out-group. In WokeRight, I find Concordances like 6–8 below, which reflect a critical stance of what is perceived to be *woke*:

(6) said of Díaz: 'They become a parody of a social vigilante who repeats **woke** *terms* like a soupedup algorithm

(7) Braverman is wellplaced to take on what she memorably *termed* '**woke** rubbish'

(8) powerful fashion editors and directors who bring new meaning to the *term* **woke** warriors

A second semantic cluster of collocations refers to words denoting (political) stance or beliefs (*ideology, indoctrination, dogma, orthodoxy*) and aberrant, overly intense or pathologised stances (*nonsense, mind virus, psychodrama, rubbish, obsession*). I grouped these together because the collocations denoting political stance are already overwhelmingly negative, and both *ideology* and *nonsense* co-occur more saliently with *woke* than the only neutral term in this group, which would be *views*. The latter appears more often and with a higher logDice score in WokeRight (8.53) than in WokeLeft (6.24) and nearly exclusively refers to Penny Mordaunt's alleged *woke* views in the context of the Conservative Party leadership contest in Autumn 2022, a period included in the data. This means that the only neutral term in this group is applied to a conservative politician, whereas others that 'hold woke views' are much more likely to be portrayed as rigid or irrational. The following concordance lines (9–11) illustrate the co-occurrences of *woke* with *ideology* and *nonsense*, both of which have among the highest logDice scores in both WokeLeft and WokeRight (see Appendices A and B).

(9) understand the laws that protect our society, but indoctrinating them with **woke** *ideology* is dangerous and irresponsible

(10) socialist regime we have in Cardiff Bay, who seem intent on imposing a **woke** *ideology* right across Welsh public life

(11) like saying we can't have St George's flags anymore. This **woke** *nonsense* has no place in football

The notions of danger, imposition, and divisiveness (Concordances 9–11) are typical for the co-occurrence of *woke* and *ideology* in WokeRight. By contrast, Concordances 12–14

from WokeLeft illustrate awareness of strategic references to *woke nonsense* for political point-scoring.

(12) gesturing with hands to the sky, lambasting "**woke** *ideology*" and cancel culture.

(13) swing an axe in the culture wars, readily denouncing "**woke** *nonsense*" at every opportunity

(14) Rishi Sunak launches attack on '**woke** *nonsense*' in bid to turn around failing leadership campaign

A third group of collocates refers to social actors associated with *woke*. The relevant collocates listed in Table 2 reflect the negative labelling of those who are portrayed as *woke*, especially the statistically most salient collocates in this group, *warrior, brigade*, and *mob*. The negativity is further reflected in the concordances with these three words through the actions ascribed to the groups of people labelled like this, as Concordances 15–19 from WokeRight show:

(15) the last bastion of freedom of expression, has fallen to the **woke** *warriors*

(16) policing of people's opinions by **woke** *warriors* and mounting Twitter pile-ons targeting those with opposing opinions

(17) The unfunny winning joke at the Edinburgh Fringe shows the **woke** *brigade* have killed comedy

(18) launched a tsunami of furious complaints from the **woke** *brigade*

(19) stand up for the patriotic majority so loathed by the frenzied "**woke**" *mob*

Here, *woke* is associated with acting irrationally and over-emotionally (*frenzied, pile-on, furious, tsunami*) with limiting the scope of action for others (*cancelling, opposing, killing*), and with armed conflict (*fallen to, targeting*). In WokeLeft, Concordances 20–22 characterise the talk about *woke* as tiresome and strategically motivated (*rail against, seeking to frame, busy fighting*):

(20) and then proceeded to rail against (yawn) "the **woke** *mob*" and "cancel culture"

(21) seeking to frame those who are calling on the government to do more on the climate crisis as "culture warriors " and "**woke**" *activists*

(22) whether she will have time to come after the net zero target or will be too busy fighting **woke** *warriors*

Other collocations in this third group concerning actors associated with *woke* indicate that *woke* is presented to the newspapers' readers as a concern of people who are younger than them, as indicated by the collocates *generation, young, snowflake*, and *millennial*. In

WokeRight, the tendency is to portray this as a negative development, as shown in Concordances 23–24:

> (23) have been "cancelled" and will explore "why a new '**woke**' *generation* is trying to rewrite the rules on what can and can't be said

> (24) Briggs encounters the kind of **woke** and wimpy self-obsessed *millennials* that would clearly,

Concordances 25–26 from WokeLeft further illustrate the duality characteristic for this discourse, indicating disagreement with the negativity with which *woke* is usually characterised.

> (25) recent years there have been many references to this *generation* being '**woke**' - meant in a derogatory sense

> (26) at a party as, "this is Victoria... she's very PC." Nowadays, of course, they'd say "**woke**" or "*snowflake*". The meaning is still the same, and still intended as an insult

Further collocates such as *new, recent,* and *modern,* play into the impression that *woke,* despite the precedent of *political correctness* (see also Concordance 26) is portrayed as a new phenomenon.

A fourth group of collocates refers to conflict: *war, against, attack, fight, tackle, target,* and *battle.* In WokeLeft, action directed against *woke* is seen as strategically motivated and disproportionate, as shown in Concordances 27–29:

> (27) deliberate stoking of "culture wars" and straw man arguments used to perpetuate a "*war* on **woke**"

> (28) stoking culture wars, *attacking* so-called "**woke**" culture and attempting to stifle debate

> (29) they're using these *attacks* on '**woke**' corporations as a way of energizing their base so they can win

Concordances 30–32 below from WokeRight show a suggested need for resistance against 'wokeness', and endorsement of public figures who speak out against *woke*:

> (30) cringing in the face of **woke** *attacks,* Britain should proudly assert its role in abolishing the slave trade

> (31) has previously *attacked* "**woke**" politics for launching an "assault on our cultures, our traditions

> (32) *tackle* "lefty **woke** culture" and never let "political correctness" get in the way of people's safety

A fifth group of collocates portrays *woke* as something that people turn into; they *go, become* or *turn woke,* together with the collocates *increasingly* and *too,* which indicate *woke*

could be exaggerated. These collocates relate to those in the second group, indicating an overly intense stance and rigid views, as shown in Concordances 33–35:

(33) fear the party is now *becoming* 'a **woke**, trendy, lefty outfit

(34) victory for a self-serving, *increasingly* **woke**, Remainer establishment,

(35) reverse Doctor Who's plummeting viewing figures amid criticism that the show has become *too* **woke**

Concordances 33–35 from WokeRight illustrate negativity in that such developments are to be feared. In WokeLeft, all concordances featuring collocations from this group are quoting somebody's stance, so that it is never an authorial stance that there is *too much wokeness*, as shown in Concordances 36–37:

(36) Ms Braverman is also said to have criticised the civil service for being *too* "**woke**"

(37) One commentator suggested the game has become "*too* **woke**" with all its rule changes

Finally, a sixth group of collocates refers to political actions associated with *woke*, such as *agenda*, *issue*, *cause*, as well as verbs such as *push*, *impose*, and *pursue*. That these nouns and verbs can be considered together as a group is also illustrated by some of these collocates co-occurring in the same context. Again, these co-occurrences serve to portray *woke* in a negative light and indicate the illegitimacy of *woke* agenda, issue or causes, as Concordances 38–40 from WokeRight illustrate:

(38) indoctrinating children with Left-wing ideology by pushing a '**woke**' *agenda*

(39) after it imposed a '**woke**' *agenda* which breached political impartiality rules

(40) shooting itself in the foot by prioritising **woke** *causes* above efficient business

In WokeLeft, again we find distancing from the way in which others refer to *woke* and the notion that *woke* is deployed strategically, as shown in Concordances 41–43:

(41) smacks of special pleading and deploying the phrase "**woke** *agenda*" in the process

(42) happy to publicly slam his colleagues for pursuing what he called "**woke**" *issues*

(43) obsessed with what right-of-centre commentators describe as '**woke**' *causes*

4.2. *Word formations with* woke *as basis in current usage*

Word formations based on *woke* can highlight patterns of usage but also variability in its deployment. In order to find such word formations, I searched the WokeAll corpus (see Table 1) for *woke* with elements to the left by using the wildcard feature (i.e., search for **woke*) provided by the corpus analysis tool, with * representing any element. However,

this search also includes results with no element to the left, therefore results for *woke* with word formation to the left are included in a large number of hits for *woke* without such elements to the left, yielding 4,055 results. A search without the wildcard element helps carving out the number of word formations, as it shows 3,712 results. The difference between these two numbers must be specifically those results with an element to the left, and this difference is a figure of 343. I then checked the results manually and noted all elements to the left, many of which re-occurred. Once I noted different forms, I searched for them individually to ascertain their frequency, as shown in Table 3.

Word formation based on woke with elements to the left	Number of occurrences in WokeAll
anti-woke	255
ultra-woke	9
un-woke	15
pro-woke	14
non-woke	8
out-woke	3
uber-woke	3
super-woke	2
examples of unique creations (unique creations each occur only once in WokeAll)	Hollywoke, opposite-of-woke, oh-so-woke, hyper-woke, lefty-woke, now-woke

Table 3. *Word formations based on* woke *with elements to the left in WokeAll, organized according to frequency of occurrence*

Given that the use of *woke* as DKW only gained ground in 2018 when the word partly still required explanation, and the fact that an adjective based on the past tense form of a verb shows such word formation productivity just four years later underline the salience of the new keyword.

The formations with elements to the left indicate polarity and intensity. Notions of polarity can be seen in the juxtaposition of *anti-woke* and *pro-woke*, whereas anti-woke is notably more frequent and appears to be a means of political positioning, as occurrences in strings like *anti-woke platform, anti-woke campaign,* and *anti-woke candidate* show. These patterns indicate that political actors use their opposition against *woke* for political profiling. On the other side of the debate, *agenda, brigade,* and *warriors* are also applied to the *anti-woke,* indicating a critical perspective on those raging against a *woke* strawman, as shown in Concordances 44–45:

(44) Using antisemitism to peddle the right's "anti-woke agenda" is below the belt

(45) though he has signed up the anti-woke warrior Oliver Dowden to his campaign team

Polarity can also be seen in the juxtaposition of either not being *woke* at all (*un-woke*) and being *woke* intensely. Intensity is indicated by combining *woke* with intensifiers (such as *ultra-* and *super-*), in the notion to *out-woke* (someone), and the unique creations *oh-so-woke* and *hyper-woke*.

Elements to the right were found with the same procedure described above. There are 4215 results when searching with the wildcard to the right, i.e., for *woke**. As noted above, the results without any wildcard total 3,712, so the difference here totals 503 and captures the number of occurrences with word formation elements to the right, detailed in Table 4.

Word formation based on *woke* with elements to the right	Number of occurrences in WokeAll
wokery	149
wokeness	120
wokeism	59
wokerati	28
woke-washing	13
wokest	11
wokeist(s)	7
wokedom	6
wokefulness	4
wokes	4
wokester	4
woke-bashing	3
woke-ish	2
woke-lahoma	2
woke-fest	2
woke-ificiation	2
examples of unique creations (unique creations each occur only once in the WokeAll corpus)	Woke-ageddon, wokeshow, woke-athon, woke-afflicted, wokeford, woke-blathering, woke-obsessed, woke-speak, wokery-pokery, woke-lite, wokees, woke-blaspheming, wokester-in-chief, woke-hating, woke-skeptic, wokeplace, wokescreen

Table 4. *Word formations based on* woke *with elements to the right in WokeALL, organized according to frequency of occurrence*

The most frequent suffix is *-ery*, forming a noun of *woke*; *-ness*, *-ism* and *-dom* enable the same change of word class for *woke*. The suffix *-ery* denotes 'the state, condition, or quality of what is denoted by the adjective: *bravery, grotesquery*' (Stein, 2007, p. 50 [italics in the original]). However, it can also have a 'depreciatory reference as in *knavery* or *tomfoolery*' (Quinion, 2005, p. 74). Given that *-ness* and *-ism* are more common suffixes for forming nouns from an adjective basis, it seems odd that in my purpose-built corpus, *-ery* is the most common. It looks as though this is the case because of the precedent of depreciation, as shown in Concordances 46–47:

> (46) HR-speak gobbledegook, this ludicrous toolkit lays down the ground rules for spookery in the age of wokery

> (47) combat the pernicious new ideology of wokery that is distracting the West from

With regard to *wokerati*, Quinion (2005) notes that the suffix *-(er)ati* 'has become a fashionable ending in popular journalism for groups of people with common interests or characteristics, sometimes with implications of triviality' (p. 25). Most of the occurrences refer to a quote from former Tory leadership contestant and then Home Secretary Suella Braverman, deriding 'Guardian-reading, tofu-eating wokerati' (Casciani, 2023). Other uses are free-floating and show associations with censorship and over-reaction, as shown in Concordances 48–49:

> (48) Since censorship of words and ideas is rife among the wokerati, I propose censoring all trigger warnings on anything at all

> (49) She has questioned the efficacy of green levies and pledged to rout the blob – both of which will see her vilified by the wokerati

As discussed in Section 4.3 below, initially, the word required some introduction in the conservative papers. Both the varied word formation with a range of prefixes and suffixes, as well as the wordplay apparent in the unique creations show how familiar and well-understood the word is assumed to be only four years after it had been integrated into the 'culture war' discourse.

4.3. The Emergence of woke as DKW, 2015-2020

The following analysis addresses research question 3 about the emergence of *woke* as a DKW in the two left-liberal and the three conservative/right-wing papers. This is done as a qualitative analysis and hence the examples are quotes illustrating the earliest uses of *woke* as DKW rather than concordances, because the first occurrences from 2015 onwards are not included in the corpus that I compiled for the corpus-assisted analysis above, which is limited to a year between 31-10-2021 and 31-10-2022.

The first uses in *The Guardian* and in *The Independent* occur and rise in numbers earlier than in the right-leaning papers, as Figure 4 shows. These first uses neither go along with explications of what the word means, nor with it being labelled as a new word, youth slang or fashionable expression. This suggests that the readers' familiarity

with the word is assumed. Because the emergence is being traced here, it is useful to not quote the following examples as concordances, but to date these quotes from the individual newspapers.
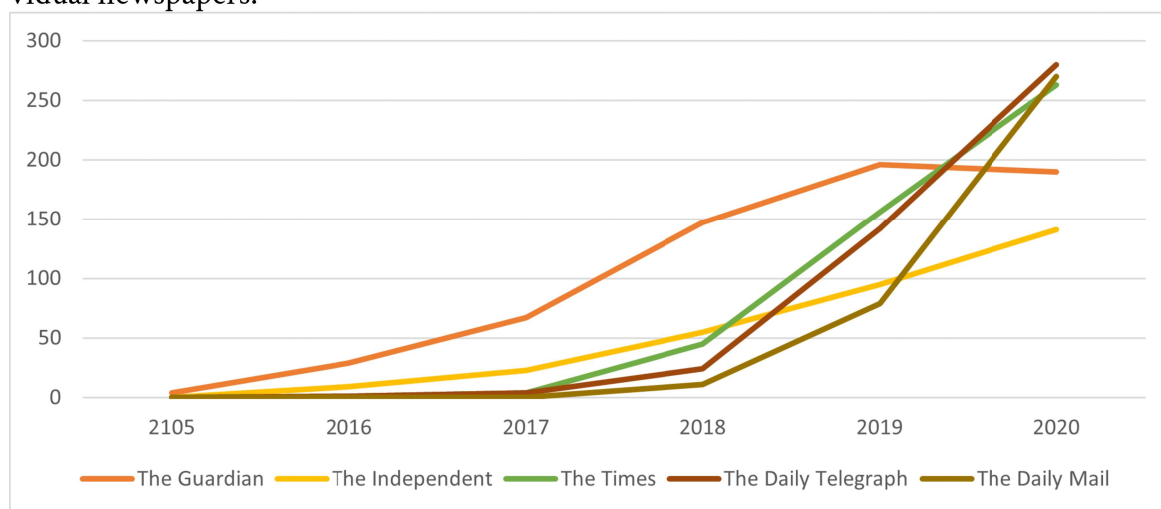
Figure 4: Frequency of woke *in five UK newspapers from the SiBol corpus between 2015 and 2020*

The first uses in *The Guardian* (Excerpts 50–52) occur as early as 2015 and are in the original sense that underlies the use as DKW within the phrase *stay/get woke*, without any indication of distancing from this stance:

> (50) to ask questions of myself and those around me—to pay attention, to stay woke, if you
> will. (*The Guardian*, 2015-06-28)

> (51) Rihanna may be tired enough of fielding questions about domestic violence [...] before
> even considering putting in the effort required to "stay woke". (*The Guardian*, 2015-10-07)

> (52) I loved that the Force Awakens is more than just maudlin nostalgia or giving my favorite
> characters another moment on the screen: it's about a brother getting woke. (*The
> Guardian*, 2015-12-19)

The first three uses in *The Independent* (Excerpts 53–55) equally suggest that familiarity with the term is assumed:

> (53) accused of being racially insensitive, using black women's bodies as a 'commodity' and hit
> by suggestion s the "get woke and fast" The feminist blog Jezebel claimed her use of the
> lyric was problematic [...] (*The Independent*, 2016-05-20)

> (54) Those who aren't politically woke aren't really to blame [...] the Libertarian party has been
> completely ignored by the media. (*The Independent*, 2016-06-01)

> (55) but by all accounts its (sic!) nothing short of transphobic, with Vulture describing it as
> "about as woke as a coma". (*The Independent*, 2016-09-12)

In the three conservative-right newspapers, the use of *woke* only increased from 2018, as Figure 4 demonstrates. At the onset, it was mentioned by these newspapers as some kind of new fancy word on the block with explications of its meaning and references to its addition to the Oxford English Dictionary, as illustrated in Excerpts 56–58:

> (56) The words "woke" and "post-truth" have been added to the Oxford English Dictionary as the changing political landscape gives rise to new terms. Woke—used as an adjective to mean "alert to racial or social discrimination and injustice" - was added after being popularised by supporters of the Black Lives Matter campaign. (*The Daily Telegraph*, 2017-06-28)

> (57) Woke—Are you woke? That's not poor grammar it's the fashion way of asking whether you're fashionably right-on. Meghan and her vegan leather and eco-friendly outfits is [sic!] very woke. (*The Daily Mail*, 2018-02-21)

> (58) Woke Someone who is switched-on, tuned-in and right-on. They champion social justice, marched for #MeToo, backed Hillary Clinton and know a terrifying amount about sustainability. (*The Daily Mail*, 2018-02-26)

With the first uses in *The Times*, the word is explained as 'alert to injustice in society' (2016-11-16), '[a]lert to injustice in society, especially racism' (2017-06-26), and characterised as a word that people under 25 years old would use for 'what everyone else calls socially aware' (2017-07-21). The word is also associated with people positioned as younger than the readership; *The Daily Mail* characterises it as 'millennial jargon' (2018-10-08), *The Daily Telegraph* refers to '"woke" millennials' (2017-09-09), and *The Times* characterises it as 'a piece of urban youth slang' (2017-05-13), associating it with 'censorious millennials' (2018-02-12). It should be noted that among the first eleven uses in 2018, *The Daily Mail* links *woke* twice to *political correctness*, by explaining *woke* as 'the fashionable phrase that means being attuned to every nuance of the latest politically correct behaviour' (2018-10-14) and as 'having sensibilities in line with politically correct ways of thinking' (2018-12-20).

Having noted these differences in chronology, initial quantity, and usage, there are also some commonalities. Common across all broadsheets is the initial use of *woke* in the contexts of critics writing about films (*The Daily Mail,* 2018-10-05, 2018-10-10; *The Daily Telegraph*, 2017-12-23; *The Guardian*, 2015-12-19; *The Independent*, 2016-09-12), celebrities (*The Daily Mail*, 2018-12-20; *The Daily Telegraph*, 2017-09-09; *The Guardian*, 2015-10-07; *The Independent*, 2016-09-12), and media (*The Daily Mail*, 2018-12-10; *The Times*, 2017-11-23). Considered together, the metalinguistic commenting in the conservative-right papers, the ease and familiarity of use without indicators of controversy in the left-liberal papers, and the dominant contexts of cultural criticism suggest that at the onset, *woke* was not so much drenched in controversy and negativity as it became later on. It is also notable in Figure 4 that from 2018 onwards, the use of *woke* increases dramatically only in the conservative-right papers, and more moderately in the left-liberal papers. This appears to be the tipping point where *woke* gets appropriated into an anti-left-liberal dis-

course, used predominantly in a stigmatising and derisive way. In 2020, each of the three conservative-right papers use *woke* more than the two left-liberal papers.

4.4. Keywords related to, and/or preceding woke

In Section 1 above, I outlined, based on secondary literature, how *woke* relates to a discourse that precedes its uses as a DKW which derides the political left as *virtue signalling / politically correct / social justice warriors*. To illustrate both this point and, more generally, how discourses produce repeated patterns of speech, it is worthwhile briefly considering the relations between such previous keywords and *woke*.

First of all, the association between *woke* and *political correctness* can be observed when calculating the statistical keywords in my purpose-built corpora against a general, large corpus of English. For this purpose, I used the keyword tool in Sketch Engine and the general enTenTen21 web corpus provided by the platform. Indeed, *political correctness* as well as *social justice, social justice warrior, culture war* and *virtue signal* occur as a statistical keyword in both WokeLeft and WokeRight sub-corpora. This means that the occurrence of these words in my purpose-built corpora containing discourse around *woke* is statistically much more typical and characteristic, compared to another, general English language corpus. As shown above, *warriors* is also a collocation of *woke* in the phrase *woke warriors*, which can be seen as transfer of a pattern established with *social justice warriors*.

Secondly, I compare the collocations of *woke* found in my corpora with those of *politically correct* and *political correctness*. In order to check the usage of *politically correct* and *political correctness* in UK newspapers, I used the SiBol corpus of English Broadsheet Newspapers covering the years 1993–2021, selecting only those newspapers within SiBol that are also included in my own purpose-built corpus for *woke*. In this corpus, *political correctness* occurs 2,310 times and *politically correct* 1,761 times. I used the same settings to retrieve collocations here as described Section 3.

This comparison shows that *political correctness* co-occurs with lexis in a similar semantic cluster of denoting (political) stance and/or beliefs (*ideology, dogma, doctrine, agenda*) and/or aberrant, overly intense or pathologised stances (*orthodoxy, mad, absurd/ity, nonsense, extreme, obsession*) as found for *woke* (see Section 4.1 above). Other collocations shared between these two words point to the enforcement of related stances (*police/policing, impose*). *Politically correct* shares the following collocates with woke: *brigade, dogma, ideology, agenda, nonsense, trendy, liberal, credential, fashionable, elite, rubbish, impose, critic*, and more.

As outlined in Section 1, the secondary literature suggests that a discourse with similar, related keywords already exist at the point at which *woke* emerges. Section 2 demonstrates that at the same time as the uses of *woke* increase in frequency, the use of *political correctness/politically correct* declines in frequency, pointing towards *woke* taking its place in the already existing discourse. The similarities of the collocational profiles of *woke* and *political correctness* outlined just above add further evidence to this observation. Kramer (2024) assumes a similar process of replacement of *political correctness* by the more recent expression *cancel culture*. Both *woke* and *cancel culture* slot into an already existing 'culture

wars' discourse where they do not appear out of the blue, but build on, and succeed already existing, similar DKWs.

5. Conclusions

The above analyses aimed at demonstrating (a) the difference in usage of *woke* between the political left and right; (b) its appropriation by the political right who speak negatively about *woke*; and (c) how *woke* slots into an already existing 'culture war' discourse.

Based on relevant existing scholarship, I assumed a polarised discourse and hence analysed right-wing and left-wing discourses separately. The CADS analyses of recent contextual uses of *woke*, including word formation as detailed in Section 4.2 suggest that this assumption and the measure was appropriate. It also demonstrates the importance of checking concordances. In the case of *woke*, the collocational profile is very similar in WokeLeft and WokeRight. The collocational profile of *woke* clearly points to a negative evaluation of the phenomena referred to as *woke*. However, a closer look reveals ambiguity: Even when in combination with the same collocates, the discourse on the political right tends to plainly dismiss and deride *woke* while the discourse on the left only reflects, but does not adopt this derision. This becomes clear through the occurrence of *woke* in speech that is marked as emerging from an out-group, through the use of various distance markers, and through pointing out the functionalisation of *woke* as a political battle axe. Hence, the discourse on the left, while unable to reclaim the word in a more positive way, provides at least a critical commentary on the way in which it is (ab-)used. This reflects the history of the DKW, having been appropriated away from the left-liberal political sphere and then pejorated. The fact that the overall collocational profile of *woke* is very similar in both left- and right-leaning newspapers suggests that the negativity which has been implemented after appropriation and use by an out-group is irreversible. The link to polarisation here is that the word is used with two very different stances: one of certainty of its use and its negativity, where *woke* pertains to a criticised set of strong ideological beliefs, and one where *woke* is symptomatic of a discourse that derides an anti-discriminatory political agenda.

The first uses in the left-liberal papers reflect the origin of *woke* within anti-racist activism, and it is used here with an insider perspective, without much explanation or distancing. The conservative-right papers start using this word later and look at it from the outside as a fashionable new-fangled thing before slotting it into the familiar trenches of the anti-political correctness discourse in an ongoing 'culture war' and the decrying of 'identity politics'. This appropriation was not the first and needs to be seen in the context of a metapolitical strategy on part of the political right, aiming at (re-)gaining cultural hegemony by shifting discourses (cf. Cammaerts, 2022). If the anti-political correctness discourse is the first notable move of this kind, then this working away at public discourse has been going on for about three decades by now. The attempt to reign in and inhibit a leftist political agenda emerges clearly, and also the success in pejorating words appropriated from the left. Further research should look into the implications of such dis-

course strategies for articulating a political viewpoint or agenda, e.g., hedges like 'this is not/I don't want to sound woke, but…'

I showed both by drawing on existing scholarship in Section 1 as well as through an analysis of statistical keywords and a comparison of collocational profiles, how *woke* slots into an already established 'culture war' discourse, how closely related *woke* is to other preceding lexis within this discourse, and how similar it is in collocational profile to its closest predecessor, *political correctness.* The qualitative study of the emergence of *woke* in Section 4.3 also demonstrates that the term *woke* was appropriated by an out-group, which is parallels the discourse history of the related words *social justice* (Phelan, 2019) and *political correctness* (Cameron, 1995; Fairclough, 2003).

Finally, I also hope to have shown that the study of an individual lexical item on a broad empirical basis and in a corpus-assisted discourse analysis framework can be fruitful for critical discourse analysis, if linked to a specific discourse about a socio-politically or culturally relevant issue in its time and place. The article also seeks to illustrate the value of combining several analytical steps in the investigation of a DKW, from a qualitative mapping of its emergence over a corpus-assisted analysis of its collocational profile, to a frequency and collocational comparison with related words from the same discursive context and including further proliferation through word formation. All of these methodological steps help capturing the characteristics of DKW outlined in Section 2 above.

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Competing interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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Appendix A

Lemmatised collocations (4L, 4R, logDice) in WokeRight down to logDice score of 7

Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	logDice
agenda	80	288	9.9371
warrior	68	142	9.7837
'	532	17924	9.7454
brigade	61	87	9.6587
"	501	20622	9.4788
ideology	55	230	9.4282
culture	65	901	9.3398
war	52	656	9.1296
;	72	1880	9.1113
go	83	2569	9.1004
too	58	1212	9.045
activist	41	320	8.9556
by	126	6513	8.8579
nonsense	34	138	8.786
on	168	10228	8.7696
over	55	1802	8.7493
the	902	70590	8.6619
against	41	1002	8.6313
.	733	59320	8.6046
of	447	35378	8.5994
be	692	56615	8.5862
with	126	8512	8.5655
view	36	795	8.5347
for	158	11774	8.5143
police	36	847	8.5113
their	76	4440	8.5111

Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	logDice
not	147	10968	8.4947
issue	36	916	8.4808
as	129	10031	8.4112
and	341	31109	8.382
?	68	4371	8.3653
capitalism	25	109	8.359
have	211	18838	8.3477
it	163	14075	8.342
this	82	5898	8.3414
to	390	37344	8.3294
call	35	1199	8.3215
its	48	2548	8.3164
now	44	2195	8.298
a	377	36865	8.298
critic	25	256	8.2764
word	29	696	8.2683
generation	25	352	8.225
or	55	3696	8.211
make	48	2956	8.2018
these	32	1235	8.1778
about	57	4117	8.166
world	31	1205	8.144
that	164	16685	8.1385
become	31	1297	8.1075
new	34	1660	8.1052
in	212	23068	8.0923
they	72	6280	8.0888
,	594	69588	8.0791
virus	20	52	8.0705
all	47	3404	8.0552
from	61	5131	8.0548
mind	22	330	8.0522
but	74	6854	8.0358
so-called	20	114	8.0342
than	37	2292	8.0178

Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	logDice
say	73	6846	8.0174
language	21	315	7.993
who	59	5364	7.9627
today	23	639	7.9608
-	67	6516	7.9462
stop	22	551	7.9393
fight	21	464	7.9156
score	18	71	7.9072
more	41	3270	7.892
some	31	1917	7.8831
want	29	1642	7.8821
thing	26	1352	7.8324
attack	19	358	7.8259
will	45	4158	7.8159
our	32	2359	7.7878
embrace	17	136	7.7871
cause	19	433	7.787
get	32	2385	7.7799
criticism	17	178	7.7633
movement	17	185	7.7594
how	28	1851	7.7585
mean	21	792	7.7584
obsession	16	85	7.7291
into	28	1971	7.7182
take	29	2142	7.7133
:	44	4521	7.7056
such	25	1570	7.694
up	32	2723	7.6812
because	26	1770	7.6795
student	19	686	7.663
social	20	852	7.661
row	16	216	7.6546
should	25	1733	7.6358
rule	17	446	7.6199
impose	15	113	7.6198

Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	logDice
out	30	2631	7.6143
corporation	15	124	7.6134
at	50	5989	7.612
politics	17	476	7.6047
she	49	5905	7.5974
young	19	853	7.5866
value	16	358	7.5779
do	52	6712	7.5491
push	15	249	7.5433
why	19	994	7.5251
what	31	3129	7.5251
brand	15	285	7.5237
no	27	2428	7.5219
being	14	117	7.5179
label	14	117	7.5179
so	30	2979	7.5175
where	20	1200	7.5138
even	23	1747	7.5106
just	25	2141	7.4995
time	25	2162	7.4928
we	41	5097	7.4882
them	24	2010	7.483
claim	17	756	7.47
school	18	984	7.4514
Britain	18	993	7.4475
I	68	10427	7.4421
would	32	3661	7.438
show	20	1417	7.429
civil	14	285	7.4242
hit	14	294	7.4193
late	15	526	7.3991
every	16	770	7.3761
rise	14	386	7.3706
!	16	798	7.3634
increasingly	13	220	7.3528

Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	logDice
try	16	834	7.3472
when	28	3260	7.3443
wake	24	2503	7.3296
liberal	13	275	7.3227
he	53	8469	7.3219
cancel	14	486	7.3195
mob	12	78	7.3182
find	17	1132	7.3069
his	40	5894	7.3065
after	22	2179	7.303
people	27	3289	7.2845
think	21	2049	7.2776
like	22	2279	7.2718
one	28	3637	7.2511
policy	14	637	7.2456
term	13	423	7.2446
can	25	3075	7.2289
broke	11	18	7.2282
use	17	1352	7.2194
while	16	1144	7.2146
dogma	11	53	7.2074
orthodoxy	11	56	7.2056
credential	11	59	7.2038
accord	12	346	7.1692
if	24	3081	7.1684
Whitehall	11	130	7.1625
kind	12	367	7.1582
know	17	1525	7.1541
lesson	11	152	7.15
could	18	1808	7.1358
green	11	187	7.1302
give	16	1380	7.1212
diversity	12	502	7.0891
rubbish	10	37	7.0794
other	17	1746	7.0748

Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	logDice
ban	11	303	7.0666
her	31	5207	7.0637
millennial	10	65	7.0628
)	20	2569	7.0473
trial	10	96	7.0446
down	14	1093	7.0429
lobby	10	101	7.0417
gender	12	612	7.0352
many	15	1367	7.0331
leave	13	885	7.0249
university	12	635	7.0242
there	22	3200	7.0118

Appendix B

Lemmatised collocations (4L, 4R, logDice) in WokeLeft down to logDice score of 7

Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	logDice
'	176	2715	10.4793
war	79	673	10.3394
culture	71	807	10.0918
ideology	44	104	9.97864
"	795	25563	9.92014
nonsense	41	91	9.88995
mob	37	65	9.76858
too	43	618	9.50219
agenda	32	185	9.43967
or	66	2458	9.15908
word	29	386	9.11736
so-called	22	103	8.97965
attack	26	371	8.97252
go	43	1663	8.8813
on	122	7372	8.84444
cancel	22	255	8.83372
mean	24	483	8.76478

Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	logDice
not	112	7113	8.76467
call	29	863	8.76258
as	104	6604	8.74752
warrior	18	87	8.7064
and	264	20508	8.63017
Act	17	94	8.6168
lefty	16	27	8.59912
stop	19	306	8.57639
be	405	34081	8.55007
?	37	1949	8.53261
term	18	301	8.50281
virus	14	40	8.39267
by	56	4315	8.34588
this	48	3540	8.33674
left	15	203	8.32946
-	58	4594	8.32684
psychodrama	13	19	8.30812
against	20	796	8.2714
.	339	34938	8.25893
the	446	46685	8.24985
about	39	2986	8.2116
generation	13	112	8.2116
to	226	23893	8.19801
for	84	8140	8.18393
snowflake	12	50	8.15975
leave	16	509	8.15922
now	22	1204	8.15508
he	58	5735	8.07253
of	194	22445	8.06306
all	27	2026	8.04451
they	38	3419	8.03604
,	368	44946	8.02574
out	24	1718	8.01368
some	21	1358	8.00269
service	13	338	8.00087

Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	logDice
a	192	23357	7.99379
civil	12	218	7.99344
it	73	8160	7.97839
issue	16	756	7.97694
politics	13	415	7.93557
brigade	10	19	7.92961
liberal	12	297	7.9214
painful	10	33	7.91466
but	38	3892	7.89892
capitalism	10	49	7.89776
their	27	2432	7.87952
that	87	11188	7.8318
use	15	867	7.80886
say	45	5332	7.7912
mind	10	161	7.78471
Stop	9	13	7.78406
from	32	3457	7.7766
claim	13	633	7.76527
with	45	5490	7.75736
have	83	11666	7.70981
corporation	9	88	7.70538
who	30	3448	7.68621
become	13	747	7.68363
we	28	3155	7.67807
(	20	1900	7.66684
company	11	460	7.65772
such	13	789	7.65468
report	11	486	7.63686
me	13	818	7.63502
anti	8	20	7.60661
kind	10	365	7.59912
what	20	2058	7.59784
pander	8	30	7.59592
into	15	1230	7.58778
try	11	568	7.57297

Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	logDice
:	27	3322	7.5728
elite	8	59	7.56537
in	98	15708	7.55866
label	8	76	7.54776
at	28	3608	7.53911
accuse	9	263	7.53693
anti-woke	8	130	7.4932
tackle	8	131	7.49221
fight	9	317	7.48869
its	15	1439	7.47435
another	10	526	7.46784
police	10	528	7.46628
should	12	939	7.4403
push	8	198	7.4273
awake	7	17	7.41719
rubbish	7	19	7.41504
just	14	1366	7.41343
there	17	1989	7.3931
!	9	437	7.38693
…	9	452	7.3747
cause	8	285	7.34716
will	19	2508	7.34367
allow	8	295	7.33822
she	24	3542	7.33615
do	28	4354	7.33593
more	17	2129	7.33341
how	12	1216	7.27378
so	14	1642	7.27257
language	7	162	7.26917
you	20	2945	7.26191
)	15	1915	7.24511
which	15	1958	7.22609
out-of-touch	6	12	7.20018
indoctrination	6	18	7.19372
like	13	1588	7.19215

Collocate	Freq	Coll. freq.	logDice
slam	6	27	7.18408
ditch	6	31	7.17982
meaning	6	37	7.17345
would	16	2337	7.16158
feminist	6	55	7.15451
being	6	57	7.15242
correct	6	58	7.15138
politically	6	79	7.12964
need	9	789	7.12417
define	6	88	7.12042
bank	6	91	7.11736
describe	7	334	7.11126
gender	7	334	7.11126
then	9	838	7.09111
stay	6	126	7.08213
I	26	4973	7.07976
over	11	1346	7.07627
them	10	1129	7.06101
activist	6	164	7.04483
Tory	9	909	7.04451
idea	7	416	7.04165
no	11	1416	7.03895
people	15	2439	7.02884
every	7	442	7.02027
want	9	973	7.00376
after	11	1491	7