

Culture Bias

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about cultural bias and how to avoid it in your speech. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Cultural Bias in Public Speaking
 - a. What Is Bias?
 - b. What Is Cultural Bias?
 - c. How Cultural Bias Impacts Your Speech

1. Cultural Bias in Public Speaking



In a world of seven billion people, author David J. Smith reduced the world down to just 100 inhabitants. Of those 100, Smith breaks the world down into the following locales and languages:

- 61 are from Asia
- 13 are from Africa
- 12 are from Europe

- 8 are from South and Central America
- 5 are from the United States and Canada
- 1 is from Oceania
- 22 speak a Chinese dialect (18 speak Mandarin)
- 9 speak English
- 8 speak Hindi
- 7 speak Spanish
- 4 speak Arabic
- 4 speak Bengali
- 3 speak Portuguese
- 3 speak Russian

When reduced to such simple terms, Smith's "global village" illustrates the wide swath of diversity among the people of our planet. How we communicated with one another in spite of and in support of our diverse backgrounds is at the heart of **intercultural communication**.

Our unique cultural backgrounds can be the proving ground for commonality. Unfortunately, more often than not our cultural backgrounds serve as reminders of the ways in which we differ from one another and that our bias can serve as barriers to communication.



TERMS TO KNOW

Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is a form of global communication. It is used to describe the wide range of communication problems that naturally appear within an organization made up of individuals from different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. Intercultural communication is sometimes used synonymously with cross-cultural communication. In this sense it seeks to understand how people from different countries and cultures act, communicate, and perceive the world around them.

1a. What Is Bias?

Bias is the state at which we all exist; that is, a non-neutral state of inclination, predilection, and prejudice.

By the sheer virtue of differences in human experience, we each harbor bias in some way because we're all bringing something a little different to the table.

1b. What Is Cultural Bias?

Cultural bias exists when you try to navigate the experiences of others through the framework of your personal compass of cultural experience.

Your cultural experience inherently makes you biased against dissimilar cultural experiences to your own. Remember, bias doesn't necessarily mean exclusion, so bias can mean a preference for one culture over another.

This cultural bias may exist in the form of affinity towards one culture or cultural experience over another or complete detachment from one cultural experience over another.

1c. How Cultural Bias Impacts Your Speech

Cultural bias exists in two forms when speaking in public. There's the cultural bias you bring to the podium. The other exists in the minds of your audience, as they bring cultural biases with them to the auditorium. Both can impact your speech.

This dissonance between these biases can affect the ways your audience receives you as a speaker, in both trustworthiness and reliability as subject matter expert. Additionally, your cultural bias may impact your mannerisms and speaking patterns as you deliver your speech.

From a rhetorical perspective, your cultural bias may impact the strength and comprehensiveness of your argument. If your cultural bias only allows you to see things in a certain cultural context, there may be parts of your argument that aren't fully developed simply because you don't have the cultural context to even realize that part of your argument was not fully formed. To overcome cultural bias, take a step back from your speech.

Consider the following questions as you attempt to recognize and address cultural bias in your speech:

- What cultural context does your audience bring to your speech?
- What is the race, ethnicity, nationality, and heritage of your audience?
- What language barriers may exist?
- What cultural context do you bring to the table?
- What cultural biases might your audience have about you as speaker?
- What is the cultural context of both your argument and supporting evidence?



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that **cultural bias** exists when you try to navigate the experiences of others through the framework of your personal compass of cultural experience. Both you and your audience bring cultural bias to your speech: how you perceive and communicate with them and how they perceive and receive your words. **Cultural bias can impact your speech** through mannerisms, gestures, and rhetorical components. Try to avoid cultural bias if you can, and if you can't, at least acknowledge it. Read your speech from a distanced perspective while considering the cultural context both you and your audience bring to the speech and how it will be received. This will only make your argument more robust.

Source: Boundless. "Culture Bias." Boundless Communications Boundless, 14 Mar. 2017. Retrieved 22 May. 2017 from <https://www.boundless.com/communications/textbooks/boundless-communications-textbook/wording-the-speech-11/understanding-bias-in-language-61/culture-bias-243-10637/>



TERMS TO KNOW

Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is a form of global communication. It is used to describe the wide range of communication problems that naturally appear within an organization made up of individuals from different

religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. Intercultural communication is sometimes used synonymously with cross-cultural communication. In this sense it seeks to understand how people from different countries and cultures act, communicate, and perceive the world around them.