

Prejudice

Prejudice involves making a prejudgment based on membership in a social category/group. While prejudice can be positive or negative (cf. stereotypes), there is a tendency for most of us to think of it as negative.

Similarly to stereotyping, we all are prejudiced to some degree, this is natural and unavoidable. It is the result of our being socialized as members of our ingroups (i.e. cultural groups). We tend to be positively prejudiced toward our ingroups (i.e. “us”) and negatively prejudiced toward outgroups (i.e. “them”).

Examples of types of prejudice

Prejudice based on sex.....sexism

Prejudice based on age.....ageism

Prejudice based on gender orientation.....homophobia

(From Gudykunst, W.B. *Bridging Differences. Effective Intergroup Communication*. 4th edition, London: Sage Publications, 2004, p. 134-135)

Prejudice and communication

Prejudiced communication includes blatant forms: hate speech, written discriminatory policies, extreme symbolism (swastika)

Prejudiced communication can have also a subtle form (example):

Interviewer: Did you ever have any unpleasant experiences [with foreigners]?

Interviewee: I have nothing against foreigners. But their attitude, their aggression is scaring. We are no longer free here. You have to be careful.
(van Dijk, 1984, p. 65)

Categories of prejudiced communication:

(1) “they are different (culture, mentality)”; (2) “they do not adapt themselves”; (3) “they are involved in negative acts (nuisance, crime)”; and (4) “they threaten our (social, economic) interests” (van Dijk, 1984, p. 70).

Examples of behavior of prejudiced communicators:

When communicating with strangers from other ethnic groups, prejudiced communicators may use *controlling talk* (e.g., controlling the conversation by interrupting strangers), being impolite, or being pedantic.

When communicating with elderly adults, prejudiced communicators may use “secondary baby talk” (e.g., use simple language, loud language).

(From Gudykunst, W.B. *Bridging Differences. Effective Intergroup Communication*. 4th edition, London: Sage Publications, 2004, p. 140-142)

“If we do not speak out when other people use ethnocentric speech or make prejudiced comments or behave in a discriminatory manner, we are partly responsible for the consequences of the remarks or behavior.”

(ibid., p. 145)