

## Public Speaking in a Multicultural World

- 1) Cultural diversity.
  - a) Words change from language to language, as do ways of thinking and of seeing the world.
  - b) The meanings attached to gestures, facial expressions, and other non-verbal signals vary from culture to culture.
    - i) In the U.S., affirmation by nodding head up and down; say no by shaking head back and forth.
    - ii) In Thailand, the opposite.
    - iii) In the U.S., the all is well sign is the classic “OK” sign; in Brazil, this means what extending the middle finger does in the U.S.
  - c) Public speakers can ill afford to overlook their listeners’ cultural values and customs.
- 2) Avoiding ethnocentrism.
  - a) Ethnocentrism is the belief that one’s own group or culture is superior to all other groups or cultures.
  - b) Tend to see our values, beliefs, and customs as being natural while believing that others are unnatural.
  - c) If speakers are to be successful, they must show respect for the cultures of the people they address.
  - d) When preparing a speech, be aware of the growing diversity of life in the modern world and be alert to how cultural factors might affect the way listeners respond to your speeches.
  - e) If there is a puzzled look on listeners’ faces, restate your point to make sure it is understood.
    - i) “Am I making myself clear?”
    - ii) “Did I explain this point fully enough?”