

## Stereotypes

The name Archie Bunker has become synonymous with describing an individual highly prejudiced towards another who is not like the person described. Interestingly, Carol O'Connor in real life was just the opposite of Archie Bunker, the character he played in the television program *All in the Family* (The Internet Movie Database, 2008).

Most people assume stereotypes are negative generalizations used to perpetuate prejudice and discrimination. Stereotypes by themselves are not good or bad; they can, however, be incorrect. They become negative and prejudicial only when they are incorrect or used as an overgeneralization.

Language stereotypes seem to be one of the most prevalent stereotypes. Recall Dr. Penelope Smith, whom we discussed in **Week 2**. What would your generalized perceptions be of your good doctor if she spoke with a Welsh accent? Would you make a different judgment regarding her competency as a doctor if she spoke with a Creole accent?

One of our first impressions of an individual, other than the level of eye contact and physical appearance, is oral communication. We may stereotype an individual based on the way the information is conveyed, not necessarily on content. For instance, employers might sometimes assume that an employee speaking American English with a Midwestern or Northern accent is more intelligent (and thus, more competent) than an employee who uses Appalachian English. Teachers might assume that a student who uses the so-called "Standard English" is more respectful of authority and more intelligent than a student who uses Ebonics. Landlords might assume that a person whose first language is English will take better care of a rental property than a tenant who speaks English with a Spanish accent (Zuidema, 2005).

See the linked document for information on other Categories of Stereotypes.

The Internet Movie Database.(2008). *Carroll O'Connor*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0005279>

Zuidema, L. (2005). Myth education: Rationale and strategies for teaching against linguistic prejudice. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(8), 666–675.

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## Additional Materials



View the PDF transcript for [Categories of Stereotypes](#) (media/week8/SUO\_PSY3010%20Categories%20of%20Stereotypes.pdf)