

REDUCING BIAS. Test developers have become sensitive to cultural bias in the content of test items. Typically, panels of reviewers screen tests to eliminate questions based on situations that might be culturally unfamiliar or differentially interpreted. In a test of arithmetic problem-solving, for example, the following item probably would be thrown out:

Arnie bogeys all the odd-numbered holes and eagles all the even ones. What's Arnie's score for the entire round?

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To illustrate the types of problems that sociolinguistic analysis addresses, consider this test item adapted from a public safety officer promotion examination:

In dealing with a disruptive person who verbally harassed theatergoers waiting in line and is behaving in an emotionally unstable manner, which of the following procedures is not recommended as effective?

- A. Trying to get the person to move along, as additional activity at that location will agitate him more
  - B. Counseling the person about city agencies that would be of assistance
  - C. Assuring that you will listen to his grievance as soon as he stops behaving abusively
  - D. Using officer's detention in patrol unit until the person calms down.
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People are waiting in line outside a theater, and a man is verbally harassing them. You observe the behavior of this man, and you conclude that he is emotionally unstable. What is the **WRONG** way to handle this man? What method should you **AVOID** using?

- A. Here is the **WRONG** method: You should get the man to move to another location. More activity in front of the theater is going to agitate this man further.
- B. Here is the **WRONG** method: You should counsel this man. Tell him about city agencies that can help him.
- C. Here is the **WRONG** method: You should assure the man that you are going to listen to his grievance. Tell him that you are going to listen when he stops harassing the people.
- D. Here is the **WRONG** method: You should detain the man in your police car. You should release him when he calms down.

Rubin, D. (1992). Cultural bias undermines assessment. *Personnel Journal*, 71.5 May, 47.