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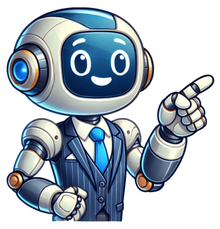

Jekaterina Nikitina / DigitalVision / Getty Images The term "loaded language" refers to words, phrases, and overall verbal and written communication that elicit a strong emotional response from the reader or listener. We use language to appeal to emotion in our everyday conversation. It's also beneficial when delivering a persuasive speech, making it a fan-favorite of politicians, public figures, advertisers, and corporations. Let's take a look at some loaded language examples to get a better sense. Loaded words are a persuasive technique that has also been called emotive language, high-inference language, or loaded terms. It is often used in order to:Gain supportSway opinionsDegrade others (such as in a political campaign)Gain a political footholdPush an agendaSome have even claimed that the use of loaded language is a brainwashing technique.The noted writer George Orwell in a discussion of using loaded language had this to say in Politics and the English Language:"The word Fascism has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies 'something not desirable.' The words democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice have each of them several different meanings which cannot be reconciled with one another. In the case of a word like democracy, not only is there no agreed definition, but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently the defenders of every kind of regime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using that word if it were tied down to any one meaning."While loaded language may have a tendency toward brainwashing (or persuasion), it's not always intended to sway the audience. Sometimes, the speaker or writer is merely trying to inform or motivate an audience. This is known as rhetoric. Rhetoric uses language that appeals to emotions but the main goal is to share logic or values. For more on that, enjoy these examples of rhetoric. Often, loaded language exists as a substitute for other words or phrases, one more negative or positive than the other depending on the circumstance. A loaded word is chosen because the speaker or writer believes it'll be more persuasive than an alternate neutral word.Examples include:Aggravate vs. annoyAgony vs. discomfortAtrocious vs. badBony vs. slimBureaucrat vs. public servantCategorical vs. specificChallenging vs. distressingDamaging vs. hurtfulDemonization vs. criticismDispleased vs. unhappyDreadful vs. badEffective vs. goodEliminate vs. removeElitist vs. expertExploit vs. take advantage ofHistoric vs. memorableInfanticide vs. abortionPhenomenon vs. eventPropaganda vs. messageSlashed vs. reducedSuperior vs. betterTremendous vs. very goodTriumphant vs. successfulVeritable vs. actualVigilante vs. crime fighter Let's take a look at some of these loaded words in action:She is making categorical selections based on favoritism.To say someone's making categorical selections, you're insisting there's a deep-set methodology behind it. She's not just making careful selections. Rather, she's being very deliberate. This makes "categorical" a bit stronger than, "She is making specific selections based on favoritism."We are making tremendous progress in our foreign relations.A favorite word of President Trump, "tremendous" is much more striking than "great" or "very good." You can see how, "We are making very good progress" doesn't have quite the same ring.He's a veritable fount of knowledge.Veritable isn't a word you hear every day. That alone makes it more striking. Beyond that, it's often used as an intensifier, particularly in conjunction with metaphors. All these components make it more striking than a more neutral (slightly overused) word like "actual." Foreign words are also often used as loaded language, providing an air of knowledge, culture or pretense. Some common examples include: Certain metaphorical phrases can also be loaded. We see these most often in idioms. These phrases aren't intended to be taken literally. Rather, they're meant to make a statement and stick in the minds of others.Examples include:Don't toe the line.He stood shoulder to shoulder with her.He played right into the hands of that card shark.I don't have an ax to grind with you.You're fishing in troubled waters.She's right in the hotbed.This machine has been rendered inoperative.I won't be subjected to your cruelty any longer.A lot of loaded language has a basis on connotation. That is, we don't take the word at its literal meaning. Rather, there's a meaning that's generally accepted or understood. For example, in the "ax to grind" example, no one's actually grinding an ax. The connotation there is that there are no sharp edges; there's no ill-will. For more on the wonders of connotation, enjoy Connotative Words: Examples and Exercises. Loaded language is widely used and very effective in gaining emotion. Now that you understand its uses, it'll be fun to keep an eye out for it. Watch for loaded language any time you hear a politician speak; you're sure to hear lots of it!There's no denying President Trump repeatedly uses his words to convey powerful messages. Take a scroll through his 20 Most Frequently Used Words. Loaded language is wording or phrasing that attempts to influence what people do, think or say by using emotional appeal. The emotional connotation may be either negative or positive, depending on the direction of sway desired. It also is known as emotive or high-inference language, as well as language persuasive technique. This technique does not necessarily contradict logic or reason, but the culture in which a person is present influences whatever connotations are within the language. Although emotive language is present in everyday interactions, people sometimes associate it with cults, mind control, brainwashing, politics, business and advertising due to its ability to influence people. In terms of function, a person may use emotive language to redefine or relabel something or someone. For instance, if someone calls a person a leech, he defines the person as an individual who clings and saps resources or energy away. Based on these new definitions and labels, loaded language may impair a person's ability to look at something or someone objectively, hindering truly critical thinking and reasoning. A person also may use high-inference language to form barriers or to isolate, drawing clear distinctions. Loaded language works in part because of the way the human brain is structured and operates. When a person experiences something, the brain creates a memory of the experience that connects to the emotional centers of the brain that is, the individual remembers not only facts, but also feelings. During new experiences, the brain recalls these memories. The brain is hard-wired to respond to emotion first, as having to rationalize through everything first could pose a serious threat in times of immediate danger. When someone uses loaded language, they depend on this initial emotional response, although they cannot guarantee that a listener or reader will not use the rational centers of the brain to override the emotions that are sparked. Understanding how the brain forms and recollects memories and how it connects to emotions, the key to emotive language is the connotation behind the specific words or phrases a person selects. Connotations are built based on the experiences and memories of the people within a given culture, so when experts examine loaded language, they have a glimpse into what is present within the surrounding culture at any given time. If a person knows the culture well, they can pick specific words and phrases that will ring major emotional bells with someone else. Using loaded language thus is a way to manipulate individuals to particular answers, feelings, actions or beliefs within a cultural context. Loaded language comes in three major forms, including loaded questions, snarl words and glittering generalities or virtue words. Loaded questions may be "trick" or "leading" questions. Trick questions make a person admit a belief, opinion or fact they don't hold, or they make a person deny a fact. Leading questions give a clear indication of how a person should respond, with the answer in the question. Snarl words are derogatory labels, while glittering generalities are positive labels. In looking at snarl words and glittering generalities, emotive language is connected to euphemism, which is wording or phrasing intended to eliminate other words or phrases that could be offensive or hold an undesired connotation. For instance, the word "Nazi" is a snarl word for many people because of the events of World War II and the Holocaust. To avoid this snarl word, someone might use a glittering generality instead, such as "patriot of the German homeland" or "supporter of the people's National Socialism," which are more positive but simultaneously a little more vague. This means that when a person uses euphemism, he may simply substitute one version of loaded language for another. Language & Humanities is dedicated to providing accurate and trustworthy information. We carefully select reputable sources and employ a rigorous fact-checking process to maintain the highest standards. To learn more about our commitment to accuracy, read our editorial process. Writers who make effective use of loaded language produce influential and memorable writings. A words meaning changes depending on how you use it and the meaning of other words you include with it. Loaded language exists in our everyday world. We hear them in the news, from politicians, and sometimes even from our friends and family. When someone wants to influence you, they load their words. The art of persuasion thrives off loaded language. Loaded language or emotive language is a type of language that uses loaded words or phrases to create a strong emotional response. For example, Im sorry can be a loaded word if used in a personal attack, but its not loaded if used as an apology. Charged language is like loaded language, except that it is not emotional. Instead, it includes words or phrases to insult or offend. For example, the term pie-face is a charged phrase used to insult someone. Some people might feel uncomfortable if they are referred to by a word that suggests they are different from the majority. For example, someone with a disability might prefer the phrase person with a disability rather than disabled person. Others might find the term offensive and choose not to use it. People with disabilities can have as much ability and potential as anyone else. The term person with a disability emphasizes that people with disabilities are just that people. They have the same hopes, dreams, ambitions, and needs as everyone else. Lets see how everyday words can be used as loaded words in sentences with the loaded words list below. Some of these terms are loaded all on their own, and some you may be shocked to see how they can be used as loaded words. Evil Everything wrong is not bad, and everything bad is not evil. The term evil causes a person to think of diabolical and sinister characteristics. It is a term broadly used in religious writings. If I describe a persons voting decision as evil, Ive questioned their moral compass. Hate Someone may say, Hate is such a strong word. It is. Hate, in place of a neutral word such as dislike, communicates the level of dislike someone has for something or someone else. Terrorist It depends on who you ask, but martyrs are not considered heroes in some spheres. When the term terrorist is used to describe anyone who kills for a cause, the term becomes charged language. Murder While murder as a word is not charged, the context in which it is used can make it a loaded word. For example, suppose a politician gives a speech to potential voters who are against abortion. In that case, they may accuse abortion doctors of murder while simply performing a medical procedure. Pro-Life or Pro-Choice Pro-Life suggests a person is against abortion because they are for protecting life. Pro-Choice suggests a person favors abortion because they believe that a woman has the right to choose what she does with her own body. In both cases, there could be other reasons that have nothing to do with protecting life or protecting choice. Illegal Immigrant The word illegal used this way about immigrants suggests a person has migrated somewhere illegally. In fact, in 2019, roughly 5 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. arrived in the U.S. by following immigration rules. Death Tax This is a popular political buzz term to get constituents to oppose a tax on estates, but it has a negative connotation. Because no one is comfortable with anything that has to do with dying, saying death tax is a way to get someone to have negative feelings about estate taxes. Racial Purity As a charged phrase, this term offers the ideal that a race of people should be clean from interracial mixing or that race will become inferior. Exploit One can simply be taken advantage of, or people can exploit them. The word exploit conveys the extent of how one was taken advantage of. It could also suggest someone has been taken advantage of for quite a while. These words below are neutral and positive in their literal meaning, but if used as adjectives during talking points, they become loaded terms or key parts of loaded phrases. Success The word success by itself has no motivation or influence. But what I say, Only successful people get eight hours of sleep at night, so buy our mattress? Here, we are appealing to a buyer that their success depends on getting eight hours of sleep with the advertisers mattress. More Related Articles 23 Things to Write About For Your Next Nonfiction Book 61 Fantasy Writing Prompts To Stoke Your Creativity The Writers Handy List Of 111 Negative Adjectives To Describe A Person Happy Happy wife, happy life is a phrase that suggests that if the wife in a marriage is happy, then the husband should be as well. However, this doesnt account for same-sex marriage or the real possibility that a husband can be unhappy for other reasons even though his wife is happy. Wealthy Consider the phrases wealthy tax breaks or tax breaks for the wealthy. (Also, tax break itself is loaded) The term wealthy signals privilege and special access for those who are not wealthy. Powerful You may find the words powerful drugs when one person desires to dissuade another against a certain prescription or if you were trying to persuade someone to use holistic measures instead. You may highlight the side effects of powerful drugs to make your point. Hardworking Think about the phrase hardworking middle-class. Many believe a lower class must work harder to make ends meet. Upper-class workers may put in just as many hours of work. The difference is in their pay, not how hard they may be working. When used effectively, loaded language can be a powerful tool for a writer. It can help to create an emotional connection with the reader or listener, and it can also help to persuade them of a particular point of view. However, it is essential to use loaded language carefully, as it can also alienate readers or listeners if it is overused or used in a way that is not appropriate for the audience. Consider the purpose and audience for your message. If you are writing to an audience of vegans about building a vegan leather business, then you must write from an objective lens. Some euphemisms are so common that we dont readily recognize them as loaded or charged language. For example, if we are writing to an audience of vegans, we would not use colloquialisms like high on the hog. You could offend them without knowing it. If youre writing persuasive material, your audience must be the focus still. Instead of avoiding charge words, this is the moment you make effective use of them so you can influence them to buy. The goal is to know when to do what and how. Consider the pointers below: Use concrete and specific language to describe an event or object Use sensory language to engage the readers senses Use figurative language to create vivid images and comparisons Use emotive language to evoke an emotional response in the reader Use charged language to create a sense of urgency or excitement Loaded language can be positive or negative, depending on your chosen words. Anyone who addresses an audience, whether its through writing or speaking, should know what loaded words are and how to use them effectively. We recommend you keep a loaded words list that pertains to your niche. Your audience will appreciate you for it. Rhetoric used to influence an audience"Power word" redirects here. For the dictionary software, see PowerWord. Not to be confused with word of power.Loaded language[a] is rhetoric used to influence an audience by using words and phrases with strong connotations. This type of language is very often made vague to more effectively invoke an emotional response and/or exploit stereotypes.[1][2][3] Loaded words and phrases have significant emotional implications and involve strongly positive or negative reactions beyond their literal meaning.Loaded terms, also known as emotive or ethical words, were clearly described by Charles Stevenson.[4][5][6] He noticed that there are words that do not merely describe a possible state of affairs. "Terrorist" is not used only to refer to a person who commits specific actions with a specific intent. Words such as "torture" or "freedom" carry with them something more than a simple description of a concept or an action.[7] They have a "magnetic" effect, an imperative force, a tendency to influence the interlocutor's decisions.[8] They are strictly bound to moral values leading to value judgements and potentially triggering specific emotions. For this reason, they have an emotive dimension. In the modern psychological terminology, we can say that these terms carry "emotional valence",[9] as they presuppose and generate a value judgement that can lead to an emotion.[10]The appeal to emotion is in contrast to an appeal to logic and reason. Authors R. Malcolm Murray and Neboja Kujundi distinguish "prima facie reasons" from "considered reasons" when discussing this. An emotion, elicited via emotive language, may form a prima facie reason for action, but further work is required before one can obtain a considered reason.[2]Emotive arguments and loaded language are particularly persuasive because they exploit the human weakness for acting immediately based upon an emotional response, without such further considered judgement. Due to such potential for emotional complication, it is generally advisable to avoid loaded language in argument or speech when fairness and impartiality is one of the goals. Anthony Weston, for example, admonishes students and writers: "In general, avoid language whose only function is to sway the emotions".[1][2]One aspect of loaded language is that loaded words and phrases occur in pairs, sometimes as political framing techniques by individuals with opposing agendas. Heller calls these "a Boo! version and a Hooray! version" to differentiate those with negative and positive emotional connotations. Examples include bureaucrat versus public servant, anti-abortion versus pro-life, regime versus government, and elitist versus expert.[11]Politicians employ euphemisms,[12] and study how to use them effectively: which words to use or avoid using to gain political advantage or disparage an opponent. Speechwriter and journalist Richard Heller gives the example that it is common for a politician to advocate "investment in public services," because it has a more favorable connotation than "public spending."[11]In the 1946 essay "Politics and the English Language", George Orwell discussed the use of loaded language in political discourse:The word Fascism has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies "something not desirable." The words democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice have each of them several different meanings which cannot be reconciled with one another. In the case of a word like democracy, not only is there no agreed definition, but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently the defenders of every kind of regime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using that word if it were tied down to any one meaning.[13]Code word (figure of speech)DiscourseDistancing languageDog-whistle (politics)If-by-whiskeyIllocutionary actIntensionLanguage of thought hypothesisLoaded questionMarkednessNeuro-linguistic programmingNewspeakObfuscationParsingPersuasive definitionPrecising definitionPropagandaSymbol (formal)Tabloid journalismThick conceptThought-terminating clichTruth-bearerTypetoken distinctionVariation (linguistics)Wooden language^ Also known as loaded terms, strong emotive language, high-inference language, language-persuasive techniques, and rhetorical language.^ a b Weston 2000, p.6.^ a b c Murray & Kujundzic 2005, p.90.^ Lavender, Larry (1996). Dancers Human Kinetics. Human Kinetics. 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For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Loaded language is a group or category of words that are designed to stir emotions in people, sometimes positive and sometimes negative.This group of loaded words, adjectives and phrases can carry significant power as a writer, and its well worth understanding what loaded language is, how its used, and the impact it can have. To help you with that, you can find a complete definition below, along with scores of examples of emotive words.Loaded words or language refers to words or phrases that carry strong emotional connotations, often used to influence an audiences perception or sway their opinions. These terms are crafted to evoke a specific response, bypassing rational analysis and appealing to feelings like fear, anger, or sympathy. For example, calling a protest a riot versus a demonstration can change how its perceived, even if the events described are identical.The power of loaded language lies in its subtlety. It can be used to frame a narrative in a way that aligns with the speakers intent, often without the audience realizing it. This makes it a potent tool in rhetoric, politics, and media, where the goal is often to persuade rather than inform. Recognizing loaded language is crucial for critical thinking, as it helps us to see beyond emotional manipulation and assess the true intent and meaning behind the words.So thats what loaded language is, lets take a deeper look at the impact before turning to consider some examples. Loaded words are emotionally charged terms that evoke strong feelings, either positive or negative, beyond their literal meaning. For example, freedom or tyranny can provoke deep emotional responses depending on context. These words are often used in persuasive writing or rhetoric to sway opinions.Loaded language, by contrast, refers to the broader use of such emotionally charged words or phrases in a text or speech. While loaded words are individual terms, loaded language describes the overall rhetorical strategy. This means that loaded words are the building blocks of loaded language, both aimed at influencing perception and eliciting emotional reactions.Loaded language has the potential to shape a persons perceptions, emotions, and decisions without them being fully aware of it. When someone encounters loaded language, it triggers an emotional response that can override logical thinking. This can lead them to adopt certain beliefs or take actions that align with the speakers intent, often without critically analyzing the situation.For instance, words with negative connotations like terrorist versus freedom fighter can frame individuals or groups in vastly different lights. Loaded language can also polarize debates, creating an us versus them mentality that hinders constructive dialogue. The emotional impact of these words can deepen biases, fuel fear or anger, and make it harder for individuals to consider alternative perspectives. So now we understand the impact loaded language can have, lets look at some specific words and examples we can use to trigger both positive and negative emotions.As the name suggests, a positive loaded word is one that triggers a good emotional response. Here are some examples:HeroicLoaded Aspect: Implies bravery and moral superiority. Example Sentence: The firefighter made a heroic effort to save the child from the burning building.InnovativeLoaded Aspect: Suggests creativity and forward-thinking. Example Sentence: Her innovative approach to solving the problem won her the companys highest award.CourageousLoaded Aspect: Conveys strength and fearlessness in the face of danger or adversity. Example Sentence: The soldiers courageous actions on the battlefield earned him a medal of honor.ResilientLoaded Aspect: Implies strength and the ability to recover from difficulties. Example Sentence: Despite the setbacks, the resilient community rebuilt their homes after the flood.VisionaryLoaded Aspect: Suggests exceptional foresight and leadership. Example Sentence: The company thrived under the visionary leadership of its CEO.CharitableLoaded Aspect: Implies generosity and concern for others. Example Sentence: The charitable organization raised millions to help those in need.InspiringLoaded Aspect: Suggests that something or someone motivates others positively. Example Sentence: Her inspiring story of overcoming adversity moved the audience to tears.NobleLoaded Aspect: Connotes moral excellence and integrity. Example Sentence: He made a noble decision to donate his entire fortune to charity.EmpoweringLoaded Aspect: Implies giving strength or confidence to others. Example Sentence: The workshop was empowering for women seeking to start their own businesses.CompassionateLoaded Aspect: Suggests deep empathy and kindness. Example Sentence: Her compassionate care made a significant difference in the lives of her patients.DynamicLoaded Aspect: Conveys energy, activity, and progressiveness. Example Sentence: The dynamic speaker captivated the audience with his enthusiasm and ideas.HonorableLoaded Aspect: Implies adherence to high moral standards. Example Sentence: His honorable actions during the crisis earned him widespread respect.GenerousLoaded Aspect: Suggests a willingness to give or share freely. Example Sentence: The generous donation helped the school build a new library.TriumphantLoaded Aspect: Conveys victory and success. Example Sentence: The team felt triumphant after winning the championship against all odds.DedicatedLoaded Aspect: Implies commitment and unwavering effort. Example Sentence: The dedicated volunteers worked tirelessly to improve the community center.GracefulLoaded Aspect: Suggests elegance and refinement. Example Sentence: She delivered a graceful performance that left the audience in awe.OptimisticLoaded Aspect: Conveys a positive outlook and hopefulness. Example Sentence: His optimistic view of the future inspired everyone around him.PassionateLoaded Aspect: Implies strong enthusiasm or commitment. Example Sentence: The passionate teacher inspired a love of learning in her students.InclusiveLoaded Aspect: Suggests fairness and equality, welcoming diversity. Example Sentence: The inclusive policy ensured that everyone felt valued and respected.SupportiveLoaded Aspect: Implies encouragement and help to others. Example Sentence: Her supportive friends were always there when she needed them most.As you can no doubt guess, a negative loaded word is designed to trigger a poor emotional response in a person, such as anger or outrage. Here are some examples:TyrannicalLoaded Aspect: Implies oppressive and unjust rule or behavior. Example Sentence: The tyrannical leader suppressed any form of dissent with brutal force.ManipulativeLoaded Aspect: Suggests deceitful and controlling behavior. Example Sentence: His manipulative tactics in the negotiation left the other party feeling deceived.CorruptLoaded Aspect: Implies dishonesty and moral decay, especially in positions of power. Example Sentence: The corrupt politician accepted bribes in exchange for government contracts.IncompetentLoaded Aspect: Conveys a lack of ability or effectiveness. Example Sentence: The project failed due to the incompetent management of the team leader.GreedyLoaded Aspect: Suggests excessive desire for wealth or power at the expense of others. Example Sentence: The greedy corporation put profits before the safety of its workers.VindictiveLoaded Aspect: Implies a desire for revenge and spitefulness. Example Sentence: Her vindictive actions after the breakup hurt not only her ex but also mutual friends.DestructiveLoaded Aspect: Conveys harm and damage, either physically or metaphorically. Example Sentence: The destructive policies led to the downfall of the company.IgnorantLoaded Aspect: Implies a lack of knowledge or awareness, often willfully so. Example Sentence: His ignorant remarks about the issue offended many people.CowardlyLoaded Aspect: Conveys a lack of courage and moral strength. Example Sentence: His cowardly refusal to stand up for his beliefs disappointed everyone.HypocriticalLoaded Aspect: Suggests insincerity and double standards. Example Sentence: The politicians hypocritical statements were exposed when his own actions contradicted his words.ArrogantLoaded Aspect: Implies an inflated sense of self-importance and disdain for others. Example Sentence: His arrogant attitude alienated both colleagues and friends.DishonestLoaded Aspect: Conveys a lack of truthfulness and integrity. Example Sentence: Her dishonest behavior during the investigation led to her dismissal.MaliciousLoaded Aspect: Suggests intent to cause harm or suffering. Example Sentence: The malicious rumors spread quickly, damaging the victims reputation.DisruptiveLoaded Aspect: Implies causing disorder and interrupting normal function. Example Sentence: The disruptive students prevented the class from progressing smoothly.IntolerantLoaded Aspect: Conveys an unwillingness to accept views or behaviors different from ones own. Example Sentence: The intolerant attitude of the group made it difficult for new members to feel welcome.DeceitfulLoaded Aspect: Suggests deliberate misleading and dishonesty. Example Sentence: His deceitful actions during the deal betrayed the trust of his partners.OppressiveLoaded Aspect: Implies unjust and cruel treatment, often by those in power. Example Sentence: The oppressive regime silenced any voices of opposition through fear and violence.SelfishLoaded Aspect: Conveys a lack of consideration for others, focused only on personal gain. Example Sentence: His selfish decision to abandon the project left his colleagues struggling.HostileLoaded Aspect: Implies aggression and antagonism. Example Sentence: The hostile takeover of the company left many employees uncertain about their future.UntrustworthyLoaded Aspect: Conveys a lack of reliability and integrity. Example Sentence: After breaking several promises, he was considered untrustworthy by his peers.One of the best examples of loaded words that we can look to is its use in propaganda. If youre unfamiliar with this word, it means to sway the opinions of others by using false or misleading information. Its often found in politics. To give you an idea of how impactful this type of language can be, I wanted to share a case study.The Nazi regime in Germany (19331945) provides a chilling example of the strategic use of loaded words in propaganda to manipulate public opinion and consolidate power. Led by Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda, the Nazis employed emotionally charged terms to evoke fear, loyalty, and hatred, shaping societal beliefs and justifying atrocities.One of the most pervasive terms was Volksgemeinschaft (peoples community), a euphemism that idealized a harmonious, racially pure German society. The word carried positive connotations of unity and belonging, yet excluded Jews, Romani people, and other marginalized groups. By contrast, the regime used derogatory terms like Untermenschen (subhumans) to dehumanize these groups, fostering societal acceptance of their persecution.Additionally, the term Lebensraum (living space) became a rallying cry for expansionist policies. Framed as a necessity for the survival of the German people, it concealed the violent displacement and genocide underlying the campaign.Loaded words were also used to frame the Allies as the plutocratic oppressors and enemies of culture, while depicting Hitler as the Fhrer (leader), a term imbued with reverence and paternal authority. These carefully chosen words appealed to national pride, economic anxiety, and existing prejudices, creating an emotional framework that rendered dissent unpatriotic and resistance unthinkable.The Nazi propaganda machine illustrates the power of loaded words in shaping perceptions, normalizing inhumanity, and rallying a populace around destructive ideologies. It remains a stark reminder of the ethical responsibility inherent in language use.Using loaded language in your writing can be a powerful tool to influence your audiences emotions and shape their perceptions. Loaded language consists of words or phrases that carry strong connotations, either positive or negative, that evoke an emotional response beyond the literal meaning of the words. When used effectively, it can enhance persuasion, emphasize a point, or subtly guide readers toward a particular viewpoint.To use loaded language, first identify the emotional response you want to elicit. For positive emotions, choose words like heroic, innovative, or inspiring to paint your subject in a favorable light. For negative emotions, words like corrupt, manipulative, or vindictive can cast your subject in a more critical or hostile light.Next, consider the context and your audience. Loaded language should align with your overall tone and purpose. In persuasive writing, such as speeches or opinion pieces, it can strengthen your argument by appealing to your audiences values or fears. However, be cautious not to overuse it, as excessive loaded language can make your writing seem biased or manipulative, potentially alienating readers.By carefully selecting and strategically placing loaded language, you can subtly influence your audience, making your writing more compelling and impactful.If youd like to continue to expand on your vocabulary beyond the loaded language found here, check out the guides below which have lots more, plus their definitions. Richie Billing writes fantasy fiction, historical fiction and stories of a darker nature. He's had over a dozen short stories published in various magazines and journals, with one adapted for BBC radio. In 2021 his debut novel, Pariah's Lament, an epic fantasy, was published by Of Metal and Magic. Richie also runs The Fantasy Writers' Toolshed, a podcast devoted to helping writers improve their craft. Most nights you can find him up into the wee hours scribbling away or watching the NBA. Loaded language is wording or phrasing that attempts to influence what people do, think or say by using emotional appeal. The emotional connotation may be either negative or positive, depending on the direction of sway desired. It also is known as emotive or high-inference language, as well as language persuasive technique. This technique does not necessarily contradict logic or reason, but the culture in which a person is present influences whatever connotations are within the language. Although emotive language is present in everyday interactions, people sometimes associate it with cults, mind control, brainwashing, politics, business and advertising due to its ability to influence people. In terms of function, a person may use emotive language to redefine or relabel something or someone. For instance, if someone calls a person a leech, he defines the person as an individual who clings and saps resources or energy away. Based on these new definitions and labels, loaded language may impair a person's ability to look at something or someone objectively, hindering truly critical thinking and reasoning. A person also may use high-inference language to form barriers or to isolate, drawing clear distinctions. Loaded language works in part because of the way the human brain is structured and operates. When a person experiences something, the brain creates a memory of the experience that connects to the emotional centers of the brain that is, the individual remembers not only facts, but also feelings. During new experiences, the brain recalls these memories. The brain is hard-wired to respond to emotion first, as having to rationalize through everything first could pose a serious threat in times of immediate danger. When someone uses loaded language, they depend on this initial emotional response, although they cannot guarantee that a listener or reader will not use the rational centers of the brain to override the emotions that are sparked. Understanding how the brain forms and recollects memories and how it connects to emotions, the key to emotive language is the connotation behind the specific words or phrases a person selects. Connotations are built based on the experiences and memories of the people within a given culture, so when experts examine loaded language, they have a glimpse into what is present within the surrounding culture at any given time. If a person knows the culture well, they can pick specific words and phrases that will ring major emotional bells with someone else. Using loaded language thus is a way to manipulate individuals to particular answers, feelings, actions or beliefs within a cultural context. Loaded language comes in three major forms, including loaded questions, snarl words and glittering generalities or virtue words. Loaded questions may be "trick" or "leading" questions. Trick questions make a person admit a belief, opinion or fact they don't hold, or they make a person deny a fact. Leading questions give a clear indication of how a person should respond, with the answer in the question. Snarl words are derogatory labels, while glittering generalities are positive labels. In looking at snarl words and glittering generalities, emotive language is connected to euphemism, which is wording or phrasing intended to eliminate other words or phrases that could be offensive or hold an undesired connotation. For instance, the word "Nazi" is a snarl word for many people because of the events of World War II and the Holocaust. To avoid this snarl word, someone might use a glittering generality instead, such as "patriot of the German homeland" or "supporter of the people's National Socialism," which are more positive but simultaneously a little more vague. This means that when a person uses euphemism, he may simply substitute one version of loaded language for another. Language & Humanities is dedicated to providing accurate and trustworthy information. We carefully select reputable sources and employ a rigorous fact-checking process to maintain the highest standards. To learn more about our commitment to accuracy, read our editorial process. Loaded language is wording or phrasing that attempts to influence what people do, think or say by using emotional appeal. The emotional connotation may be either negative or positive, depending on the direction of sway desired. It also is known as emotive or high-inference language, as well as language persuasive technique. 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Rhetoric used to influence an audience"Power word" redirects here. For the dictionary software, see PowerWord. Not to be confused with word of power.Loaded language[a] is rhetoric used to influence an audience by using words and phrases with strong connotations. This type of language is very often made vague to more effectively invoke an emotional response and/or exploit stereotypes.[1][2][3] Loaded words and phrases have significant emotional implications and involve strongly positive or negative reactions beyond their literal meaning.Loaded terms, also known as emotive or ethical words, were clearly described by Charles Stevenson.[4][5][6] He noticed that there are words that do not merely describe a possible state of affairs. "Terrorist" is not used only to refer to a person who commits specific actions with a specific intent. Words such as "torture" or "freedom" carry with them something more than a simple description of a concept or an action.[7] They have a "magnetic" effect, an imperative force, a tendency to influence the interlocutor's decisions.[8] They are strictly bound to moral values leading to value judgements and potentially triggering specific emotions. For this reason, they have an emotive dimension. In the modern psychological terminology, we can say that these terms carry "emotional valence",[9] as they presuppose and generate a value judgement that can lead to an emotion.[10]The appeal to emotion is in contrast to an appeal to logic and reason. Authors R. Malcolm Murray and Neboja Kujundi distinguish "prima facie reasons" from "considered reasons" when discussing this. An emotion, elicited via emotive language, may form a prima facie reason for action, but further work is required before one can obtain a considered reason.[2]Emotive arguments and loaded language are particularly persuasive because they exploit the human weakness for acting immediately based upon an emotional response, without such further considered judgement. Due to such potential for emotional complication, it is generally advisable to avoid loaded language in argument or speech when fairness and impartiality is one of the goals. Anthony Weston, for example, admonishes students and writers: "In general, avoid language whose only function is to sway the emotions".[1][2]One aspect of loaded language is that loaded words and phrases occur in pairs, sometimes as political framing techniques by individuals with opposing agendas. Heller calls these "a Boo! version and a Hooray! version" to differentiate those with negative and positive emotional connotations. Examples include bureaucrat versus public servant, anti-abortion versus pro-life, regime versus government, and elitist versus expert.[11]Politicians employ euphemisms,[12] and study how to use them effectively: which words to use or avoid using to gain political advantage or disparage an opponent. Speechwriter and journalist Richard Heller gives the example that it is common for a politician to advocate "investment in public services," because it has a more favorable connotation than "public spending."[11]In the 1946 essay "Politics and the English Language", George Orwell discussed the use of loaded language in political discourse:The word Fascism has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies "something not desirable." The words democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice have each of them several different meanings which cannot be reconciled with one another. In the case of a word like democracy, not only is there no agreed definition, but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently the defenders of every kind of regime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using that word if it were tied down to any one meaning.[13]Code word (figure of speech)DiscourseDistancing languageDog-whistle (politics)If-by-whiskeyIllocutionary actIntensionLanguage of thought hypothesisLoaded questionMarkednessNeuro-linguistic programmingNewspeakObfuscationParsingPersuasive definitionPrecising definitionPropagandaSymbol (formal)Tabloid journalismThick conceptThought-terminating clichTruth-bearerTypetoken distinctionVariation (linguistics)Wooden language^ Also known as loaded terms, strong emotive language, high-inference language, language-persuasive techniques, and rhetorical language.^ a b Weston 2000, p.6.^ a b c Murray & Kujundzic 2005, p.90.^ Lavender, Larry (1996). Dancers Human Kinetics. Human Kinetics. 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