

The Language of Deception

Student Handout: **Uses of Language**

Type of Language	Description	Examples
Informative	Language that communicates information. We use language informatively when we make the sorts of statements that can be either true or false.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Today is Wednesday. - The Cubs win the pennant. - Blue cheese is tangy. - Heroin addiction is bad.
Expressive	Language that conveys a certain feeling or attitude. We use language expressively when we want to make our feelings apparent or to convince others to have/share a certain feeling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? - In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. - Kobe has the hot hand.
Directive	Language that motivates a certain action. We use language directly when we give a command or request an action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shut the door. - Thou shalt not steal. - Walking on the grass is strictly forbidden. - Beware of dog.
Performative	Language in which the saying constitutes the action. We use language performatively when the act of saying something is the act itself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I now pronounce you man and wife. - I forgive you. - Bless you. - You are under arrest.

Cognitive and Emotive Meaning

- **Cognitive meaning:** This is the sort of meaning that one finds in the dictionary. A word's cognitive meaning is the literal definition of the word itself.
- **Emotive meaning:** This refers to the emotional impact that a word might have. Some words have negative emotive overtones; some have positive emotive overtones; some have mixed emotive overtones (meaning that some people react positively and others react negatively); and some words have neutral emotive meanings.

Words with Positive Emotive Meanings	Words with Negative Emotive Meanings	Words with Mixed Emotive Meanings	Words with Neutral Emotive Meanings
Freedom Spring Courage Hope Love	Oppression Fool Nazi Terrorist Hate	Socialism Marijuana God American Cat	Sun Car Prospective Computer Doctor

- Con artists, for example, may use the emotive side of language (a) to mask cognitive meaning by whipping up emotions so that reason is overlooked, and (b) to dull the force of language so as to make acceptable what otherwise might not be.
- The latter task is often accomplished by means of euphemisms, which are less offensive or duller expressions used in place of more offensive or emotively charged locutions. There are lots of these that we use every day.

Original Term	Euphemism	Original Term	Euphemism
Fired	Laid off / Downsized	Genocide	Ethnic cleansing
Died	Passed away	Prison	Internment camp
Land mines	Area denial munitions	Fat	Full-figured
Unemployed	Job seeker	Liberal	Progressive