

NAMING THE ENEMY AS BAD

In *The English and the Iraqis* we saw that very often the British army was doing the same thing as the Iraqi army. For example: the British 'take out', 'suppress', 'eliminate' or 'neutralise' the enemy soldiers. All these words mean 'kill' and 'destroy' but do not say so directly. This indirectness makes them less harsh. The Iraqis do 'kill' and 'destroy': no **euphemism** is used. The words chosen for both sides often have the same meaning or **denotation**. It is the **connotations** that are different: positive for the British and negative for the Iraqis.

In groups work out your own us/them comparison. Use the same denotations for both sides, with positive connotations for us and negative connotations for them. Decide who **we** are and who **they** are. For example:

students/teachers
men/women
workers/managers

Here is an example of a comparison worked out by students on an education project in 1991.

Activists

We are confident
We organise
We mobilise
We protest
We are evicted
We go into exile
We claim power
We transform
We are in the struggle
We work with the people
We use defence units
We boycott
We chant and toyi-toyi
We go on hunger strike

Liberals

They are arrogant
They discuss
They discuss
They petition
They are moved
They emigrate
They talk of power sharing
They reform
They struggle
They work for the people
They have neighbourhood watches
They prefer to stay at home
They sing and dance
They go on diet

Write your own definitions

Denotation is

Connotation is

Euphemism is