

Dean Gladish

### Words' Associations

Vargas uses effective rhetoric in his article, "Immigration Debate: The Problem with the Word *Illegal*" to persuade his audience to support his objection to the commonly used term. In his piece, he uses the rhetorical techniques of development and logos to convey his argument more effectively. Vargas uses narration to describe the impact that the issue described has had on his own life. He recalls, "For more than a decade, I lied about my immigration status so I could get jobs, pay taxes and provide for myself and my family" (Vargas 2). He includes this narration of his life to make the story of many people easier to comprehend and to gain empathy from the reader. He uses his experience to show that he was not simply an illegal immigrant but a real person with ties to the community in which he lived. His story allows the audience to understand that because he lacked documentation, he had the same challenges as those who were in the United States with documentation as well as the problem of living with his lies.

Throughout the piece, he cites numerous instances in which prominent political figures have used the term *illegal* to stir up negative reactions. Vargas writes, "How can using *illegal immigrant* be considered neutral, for example, when Republican strategist Frank Luntz encouraged using the term in a 2005 memo to tie undocumented people with criminality?" (Vargas 1). This question serves to support his contention that the term *illegal* is not a neutral term, and to help the audience understand the impact that the term has on people's perceptions. By using this example, he exposes the negative connotations associated with the term *illegal*. He uses this instance to show that the association of undocumented people with criminality is an

inaccuracy, and that the usage of the term implies the implementation of an underlying political strategy which seeks to invalidate and disregard the reality of the situation.