




From *Climate Change* to *Climate Hell*: The Dynamics of Climate Discourse on Greenpeace Southeast Asia Website

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Abstract. Climate issues have drawn attention from both scientific and humanities perspectives regarding their impacts, mitigation, and dynamics in terms of government policy and public perception. One of the linguistic elements that constructs climate discourse is through words or phrases that show our perception and attitude towards the issue. By conducting a corpus-based approach, this study examines the phrase structures of the noun head *climate* on Greenpeace Southeast Asia website, focusing specifically on the *climate* pages. The collected data (9,967 sentences or 251,839 words) was uploaded and examined through a web-based corpus tool, Sketch Engine. The analytical steps included: 1) identifying the noun head *climate*, 2) examining the distribution of *climate* noun phrases through corpus query language (CQL), and 3) investigating the contextual use of *climate* noun phrases through concordances. Findings reveal that the term *climate change* is the most frequently used phrase in the corpus, aiming to introduce a common understanding of climate change as a natural phenomenon. In addition to the term climate crisis, Greenpeace strategically employs terminology such as climate justice and climate hell to foreground the anthropocentric dimensions of climate change. The metaphorical invocation of climate hell serves as a discursive mechanism aimed at fostering a shared recognition of the catastrophic environmental consequences attributable to the ecologically irresponsible conduct of fossil fuel corporations. This study ultimately concludes that the climate discourse constructed on the Greenpeace Southeast Asia website is profoundly shaped by the organization's underlying ideological orientation, which is firmly anchored in environmental advocacy and the mobilization of direct action toward climate mitigation.

Keywords: Climate, Corpus, Discourse, Ecolinguistics, Greenpeace.

1 Introduction

Climate issues have captured linguists' attention since the employment of metaphors, framings, and discursive strategies is found to be persuasive in shaping public understanding, perception, and actions [1], [2], [3]. Climate discourse has been contested in social media, including newspapers, Instagram, and websites, in the national, regional, and global contexts. One of the well-known non-governmental organisations advocating for climate issues is Greenpeace. Greenpeace is an

international organisation with over 2.8 million followers in 41 nations. This independent organisation exposes environmental problems worldwide and forces solutions for a peaceful and green future through creative, nonviolent confrontation [4]. Beyond raising ecological awareness, Greenpeace, as a prominent non-governmental organization, actively circulates written content and community stories that illuminate the interconnection between grassroots communities and the unfolding climate crisis. The organization further endeavors to establish national-level communication plans as a means of strengthening and sustaining its global environmental advocacy efforts [5].

To advocate for climate awareness, Greenpeace publishes articles that focus on climate change using resistant narratives. Amidst the institutionalised climate discourse found in newspapers, Greenpeace highlights the activities of fossil fuel companies and their negative impacts on the environment. In addition, Greenpeace shows the proactive actions conducted by Greenpeace members in voicing ecological practices and broadcasting eco-beneficial practices by local communities. These positive narratives are crafted using specific language patterns to raise public awareness about the worsening climate issues. One of the linguistic devices to convey the dynamics of climate issues is vocabulary.

This paper investigates the noun phrases of *climate* and locates them as vehicles that construct our understanding and perception of climate problems. The role of vocabulary, including noun phrases, in a discourse is essential in shaping public awareness and perception of a particular topic. Vocabulary construes the speaker/writer's experiential value to address the ideology [6]. The most common term, *climate change*, has been criticised since it frames climate problems as a natural phenomenon that does not require direct mitigation. Research also mentions that *climate change* seems to tame climatic problems [3]. Another research argues that news regarding climate issues has been contested into the political agenda between big subjects, such as politicians, scientists, and the public [7].

Studies about climate change in the Southeast Asian context have been found recently: frames of climate change in the Indonesian mass media [2], climate migration in the Southeast Asian context [8], criticism toward the term *climate security* in ASEAN [9], and language use in the United Nations Reports with the ASEAN style of multilateralism [10]. Those studies argue that the role of language is essential in shaping ASEAN's attitudes, policies, and actions in climate mitigation. Language that shapes climate discourse should be reconsidered to reflect urgency, consequences, and direct impacts of climate problems. Therefore, to fill this gap, this paper addresses the climate-related noun phrases on the Greenpeace Southeast Asia website. Noun phrase analysis is crucial for developing alternative discourse to shape public perceptions, understandings, and actions regarding climate-related issues. As language is a cognitive and social vehicle to share public understanding of climate discourse, the (re)production of the wordings referring to climate change reflects how the public perceives, understands, and behaves to adapt to climate change.

2 Method

The present study adopts an Ecological Discourse Analysis (EDA) framework to investigate how the term *climate* is dynamically constructed and deployed across noun phrases featured on the Greenpeace Southeast Asia Website (GPSAW). EDA, as a mode of critical inquiry, is characterized by its engagement with varied forms of discourse that advance alternative viewpoints and promote environmentally beneficial perspectives [11]. EDA is interested in the role of language as a social, cognitive, and ecological vehicle that constructs our understanding and actions towards the environment. This paper argues that GPSAW intends to raise environmental awareness through its wording, including noun phrases regarding the term *climate*. This eco-beneficial ideology can be promoted through vocabularies that trigger our understanding of our surrounding discourses [12].

Using Bootcat [13], Employing a semi-automated data collection procedure, the corpus of this study was derived from textual materials published on the Greenpeace Southeast Asia website, retrieved from <https://www.greenpeace.org/southeastasia/>. The collected corpus consists of 291,606 tokens from 9,967 sentences, focused on *climate* pages from the following topics: *clean energy*, *climate change*, *climate and energy*, and *climate justice and liability*. Upon compilation, the corpus was imported into Sketch Engine, a web-based corpus linguistic tool, for systematic analysis. The platform enabled a comprehensive examination of the data across several analytical dimensions, encompassing word frequency distributions, keyword identification, collocation patterns, word sketch profiles, and concordance-based investigations [14].

As this study adopts corpus-based analysis as its approach [15], The analysis was carried out through four methodologically distinct procedures: (1) quantifying the frequency of *climate* in the corpus using word list features; (2) identifying collocational patterns of *climate* through the application of Corpus Query Language (CQL), specifically employing the search formula `[lemma="climate"][tag="N.*"]`; (3) charting the noun phrase configurations of *climate* and interrogating their discursive functions via concordance lines; and (4) subjecting the discourse to critical evaluation from an ecological philosophical standpoint. CQL was indispensable to this analytical process, as it enables the detection of lexical co-occurrence patterns that manual inspection of corpus data is inherently ill-equipped to capture. The interpretive framework adopted for analyzing the dynamics of *climate* phrases is grounded in deep ecology philosophy, which conceptualizes the environment as the essential substrate of cultural development and posits the natural world as holding equivalent intrinsic value to that of humanity [16].

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

The investigation of the lemma *climate*'s frequency distribution within the corpus was initiated through the word list function of Sketch Engine. This analytical feature

facilitates the systematic organization of lexical items by their respective parts of speech, including nominal, adjectival, adverbial, and verbal categories, thereby enabling targeted frequency-based retrieval. This study sorts the most frequent nouns in the corpus and finds that the lemma *climate* appears 2,428 times. Seen from the word lists, *climate* appears as the first lexical lemma, followed by *greenpeace* (1,586), *people* (891), *community* (844), and *government* (736). Below are some examples of how the lemma *climate* is used on GPSAW.

1. ...Filipino citizens who personally experienced the wrath of super typhoon Haiyan and hurricane Sandy and will share their stories on how climate change has affected their lives and livelihoods.
2. Clean and safe renewable energy, and more efficient use of energy, can run our planet. We can avoid the climate chaos of these 14 major coal, oil and gas projects.

Excerpt (1) is about how climate change affects the Filipino people. It specifically highlights the distressing impact of Typhoon Haiyan and Hurricane Sandy, both of which are represented as catastrophic events directly linked to climate change. GPSAW aims to establish a clear connection between the disastrous events and the localised experiences of Filipino communities, emphasising how climate-related events alter daily life and challenge resilience among the affected populations. On the other hand, excerpt (2) adopts a different strategy by centring on the noun head *chaos*, modified by *climate*. The use of *climate chaos* is selected to involve fossil fuel companies as the responsible actors whose activities contribute significantly to climate change. Additionally, GPSAW advocates for critical action to protect the environment, emphasising the importance of public solidarity in mitigating this climate chaos. Greenpeace Southeast Asia advocates for the mobilization of collective action directed at the adoption of clean and renewable energy alternatives, positioning such a transition as both a feasible countermeasure to the detrimental impacts of climate change and a foundational step toward achieving long-term environmental sustainability.

Based on the examination of noun phrases of *climate* through a corpus query language (CQL), this study finds that *climate change* appears in the highest frequency in the corpus (504). Some of the exact noun phrases appear in a different frequency since Sketch Engine differentiates the capitalisation of the lemmas, such as found in *Climate Justice* (313) – *climate justice* (119) and *climate emergency* (86) – *Climate Emergency* (32). The CQL results treat the noun phrases as words other than the lemma, so the capitalised and non-capitalised phrases are counted as different findings. In total, there are 167 *climate* noun phrases in the corpus, with a total frequency of 2,228 phrases. To limit the analysis, Table 1 displays the first 21 noun phrases of *climate* in the corpus and takes the *climate hell* as the sample to represent the dynamics of climate phrases generally. Seen from the frequency, *climate hell* appears four times.

Table 1. Noun phrases of *climate* on Greenpeace Southeast Asia website

word	Frequency	Freq. per million
<i>climate change</i>	504	1728,3595

climate crisis	313	1073,36612
Climate Justice	194	665,28124
climate justice	119	408,08488
climate impacts	117	401,22631
Climate Change	104	356,64561
climate emergency	86	294,91849
climate action	72	246,9085
climate talks	41	140,60067
Climate Emergency	32	109,73711
Climate change	22	75,44426
climate polluters	20	68,58569
Climate Action	19	65,15641
climate litigation	18	61,72712
climate disasters	18	61,72712
Climate Walkers	17	58,29784
climate negotiations	16	54,86856
climate summit	15	51,43927
climate policy	14	48,00999
climate injustice	12	41,15142
Climate Strike	12	41,15142
....
climate hell	4	34,71714

Table 1 shows the dynamics of climate issues broadcast on GPSAW. Climate issues have been contested from a natural phenomenon, shown in *climate change*, to a punishment, shown in *climate hell*. The shift of discourse is constructed ideologically to raise public awareness of the local and direct impacts of climate change. In addition, the GPSAW also underlines the roles of fossil fuel companies' activities as triggering factors that worsen environmental impacts. Below are some examples from the corpus.

3. The Philippines awaits the Resolution to the landmark climate change and human rights petition filed in 2015, seeking to hold biggest fossil fuel companies accountable for their contribution to the climate crisis.
4. We're currently facing another strong typhoon, yet we are still dealing with the same problem—the same greed of big polluters that have stolen our future and blocked progress to attain climate justice," he said.

Excerpt (3) tells us how people in the Philippines are actively engaged in the action to call for the resolution of their petition in 2015. The Filipinos have fought for the responsibility of fossil fuel companies for their business operations that are harmful to

the environment. Therefore, the phrase *climate crisis* is selected to highlight the urgent solutions. Excerpt (4) uses *climate justice* as a goal that has been blocked by big polluters, which refer to fossil fuel companies. GPSAW juxtaposes a strong typhoon with environmental problems resulting from the companies' activities. The salience of the *climate crisis* is the second most frequent noun phrase, and it aims to stress the urgency and severity that *climate change* may lack. The *climate crisis* term highlights the immediate and drastic impact of environmental degradation, which is essential to mobilise public and political actions [17], [18]. The term *climate crisis* can drive behavioural change by making the issue more relatable and pressing. When people perceive the situation as a crisis, they are more likely to adopt pro-environmental behaviours and support mitigation efforts. Studies show that awareness campaigns and educational programs can effectively promote climate activism and sustainable practices [19], [20].

Another prominent noun phrase found is *climate emergency*. Below are some examples that involve a *climate emergency*.

5. With the ongoing climate emergency, it's imperative for Thai leadership to take a stand when it comes to fossil fuel use and its detrimental effects to people and planet.
6. We are in a climate emergency. It's unfolding now, just as the pandemic. And yet, many refuse to do something about it; particularly those most responsible for the carbon pollution behind the problem: fossil fuel companies and their backers.

The term *climate emergency* underscores the need for immediate and drastic action, contrasting with the slower pace of traditional ecological transitions [21]. This sense of urgency can stimulate society and governments to implement rapid and comprehensive measures to address climate change. Declaring a climate emergency can lead to a general mobilisation of society, which encourages collective action and economic planning that might otherwise be delayed or fragmented. The framing of climate change as an emergency can influence individual and collective behaviours. Environmental psychology suggests that recognising the severity of the climate crisis can motivate pro-environmental behaviours and readiness to change [22]. This is supported by psychological models that assess and promote sustainable actions. The term *climate emergency* can alter public perception, making the risks of inaction more tangible and immediate. This can lead to increased support for policies and personal behaviours that mitigate climate impacts [23].

The other important noun phrase to note on GPSAW is the existence of the noun phrase *climate hell*. Below is an example from the corpus.

7. Boris Johnson's government should be working around the clock to make sure the Glasgow summit is a turning point in humanity's efforts to stop catastrophic climate change. We need concrete policies to cut carbon emissions as fast as possible, phase out fossil fuels, transform our food system and deliver more cash to the countries worst hit by the climate crisis. This climate summit is a critical moment for us to halt our progress on the highway to climate hell.

The excerpt above is a statement by the UK Greenpeace chief scientist, Dr. Doug Parr, given to the IPCC panel at Geneva in 2021. Dr. Parr underlines the worsening catastrophic impacts that lead to climate hell. Dr. Parr insists on the UK government's role, as the host of COP 26, to concretise the policies regarding carbon emissions resulting from fossil fuels. The phrase *climate hell* articulates that the impacts of climate change are not limited to environmental damage but also include significant disruptions to social and economic systems. This can lead to a need for relocation of industries and communities, further contributing to the *hellish* scenario [24].

3.2 Discussion

Seen from the frequency and topics of climate phrases, GPSAW employs *climate change* as the most frequent noun phrase, which refers to natural phenomena with scientific characteristics such as temperature and sea level rise. Seen from the word frequency, terms related to climate have transformed from a natural phenomenon (shown by *climate change*) to a disaster that threatens us (shown by *climate hell*). GPSAW, as an organisation advocating for environmental issues, intentionally raises our awareness of the direct impacts that we have experienced and will experience in the future. The transformation of the climate issue from a natural phenomenon to a threatening hell in the future underscores the severe impacts we may face. The term also calls for a collective understanding of hell as a place for punishment after death, as believed by most religions. This term refers to punishment for our sins and wrongdoings on earth. Hence, this metaphorical term is a strategy to communicate the severe impacts of climate problems more easily compared to scientific terms like rising temperature, sea level rise, drought, and flooding.

The identification of climate justice as a recurring and significant term in the corpus represents a noteworthy finding that aligns closely with the core principles of deep ecology philosophy. Deep ecology posits that all living beings are endowed with inherent value that exists independently of human utility, and calls for a radical reorientation of human consciousness toward a recognition of the interconnected and mutually dependent nature of life and the environment. [25]. Therefore, *climate justice* also fosters an ecological consciousness that integrates social equity and environmental responsibility, which is crucial for both short-term and long-term structural changes needed to achieve climate justice [26]. Even though a past study notes that changing the term *climate change* to *climate crisis* did not result in a significant intention to act [27], this study advances the argument that language, in its capacity as both a cognitive tool and a social construct, exercises a formative influence over the ways in which individuals and communities perceive, interpret, and respond to environmental realities. The reproduction of terms like *climate crisis* or *climate emergency* in discourses around us reflects our intention to construct climate discourse as merely a change or a crisis that requires direct mitigation.

Deep ecology aims to encourage a holistic view of environmental issues, which considers the long-term impacts of human actions on the planet. Based on the findings of the most frequent word lists, the presence of *climate crisis*, *climate impact*, *climate emergency*, and *climate polluters* highlights the anthropocentric causes that create

apocalyptic implications on the environment. The phrase *climate polluters* refers to fossil fuel companies' activities that increase carbon emissions. The long-term impacts are identified through health impacts and ecosystem disruptions. Deep ecology conceptualizes the environment as the nurturing ground of cultural flourishing, such that any degradation of this ecological foundation engenders biodiversity depletion and disrupts the delicate balance of natural systems. The immediate repercussions of the climate crisis, including escalating temperatures, intensified weather extremes, and the progressive acidification and thermal elevation of ocean waters, pose existential threats to marine ecosystems and sensitive biomes such as coral reefs and polar territories. In response to these realities, GPSAW cultivates a constructive environmental discourse through the publication of articles addressing climate polluters and the broader spectrum of climate-related noun phrases documented in Table 1, effectively foregrounding anthropocentric conduct and the ecological consequences generated by fossil fuel corporations. In addition, GPSAW also includes local communities' roles in advocating environmental sustainability, which is in line with the principle of deep ecology.

GPSAW involves terms like *climate polluters* and *climate disasters* to refer to dominant and influential agents, such as fossil fuel companies, that exploit natural resources. This linguistic strategy is beneficial based on the deep ecology principle since it locates fossil fuel companies as the social actors that cause apocalyptic events, such as natural disasters, natural resource scarcity, and forced migration. Therefore, GSAW also uses the term *climate justice* at a high frequency to highlight the systemic power imbalance that exacerbates environmental degradation and social inequalities. It also calls for inclusive policies that prioritise the needs of vulnerable populations and address these imbalances [28], [29]. Taken together, these strategies demonstrate how GPSAW constructs a morally charged narrative that not only attributes responsibility but also mobilises support for transformative climate action. Taken together, these strategies demonstrate how GPSAW constructs a morally charged narrative that not only attributes responsibility but also mobilises support for transformative climate action.

4 Conclusion

This study addresses the climate noun phrases on Greenpeace Southeast Asia website within a corpus-based method. Using the word list and CQL methods, this study maps the frequencies and uses of climate noun phrases. This study demonstrates that incorporating a corpus-based method is beneficial in identifying the most frequent noun phrases. Additionally, the CQL method is useful in mapping the lexical patterns of climate noun phrases. This study finds that, despite the salience of *climate change* as the most frequent phrase (504), GPSAW also includes some provoking terms like *climate crisis* (313), *climate impacts* (117), *climate emergency* (86), and *climate polluter* (20) to highlight the anthropocentric causes of climate change. In addition, the presence of *climate hell* (4) shows an evolution of *climate change* from a natural phenomenon to a future threat. Thus, reproducing those provoking noun phrases is

intentionally selected by GPSAW to call for global commitment, understanding, and actions to mitigate climate change.

This study highlights the need to introduce terms beyond *climate change* to shape the public's understanding of the climate issue. Despite portraying climate change as a natural phenomenon, it is essential to identify anthropocentric and non-ecological actions that exacerbate the climate crisis. By shifting the narration from climate change to climate crisis, emergency, and hell, GPSAW aims to include the public and humans as a part of the ecosystem. Climate change is not merely an environmental issue; public involvement and understanding are essential for effective climate adaptation and mitigation. Given that this study is restricted to the noun phrase of *climate*, future studies can involve larger corpora and examine the noun phrase of *climate* diachronically. By doing so, we can more comprehensively examine the human-nature relationship and seek a more beneficial narrative for an ecologically sustainable ecosystem.

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