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## COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC FEATURES OF LINGUISTIC IMAGERY IN CLIMATE CHANGE DISCOURSE

**Annotation:** Climate change discourse has gained significant attention due to its impact on ecological, social, and economic domains. This study explores the cognitive-semantic characteristics of linguistic representations of climate change in English ecological discourse. Using cognitive linguistics and semantic analysis, we identify key conceptual metaphors, frames, and lexical choices that shape public perception and understanding of climate change. The study employs corpus-based methods to examine climate-related texts from scientific, media, and political sources. The findings contribute to ecolinguistics by highlighting how language influences environmental awareness and attitudes toward climate issues, emphasizing the need for precise and responsible communication to foster climate-conscious behavior and policies.

**Keywords:** Climate change discourse, ecolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphors, framing, linguistic representation, environmental communication, semantic analysis.

**Introduction.** Climate change has become one of the most pressing global challenges, with its representation in discourse playing a crucial role in shaping public perception and policy decisions. The linguistic representation of climate change in English ecological discourse reflects cognitive and semantic patterns that influence how people understand and respond to environmental issues. The study of climate discourse within ecolinguistics is essential for uncovering how language choices impact public engagement and decision-making. Climate discourse is not just a means of conveying information; it serves as a tool to frame issues, influence public sentiment, and guide policy formulation. The way climate change is discussed across different communicative domains—scientific literature, media reporting, and political rhetoric—determines how individuals and societies conceptualize environmental threats and responsibilities.

Metaphors, lexical choices, and discursive strategies play a pivotal role in shaping these perceptions. For example, media narratives may employ crisis-laden terminology to evoke urgency, whereas scientific discourse focuses on precision and neutrality. Political speeches, on the other hand, often utilize rhetorical strategies that align with economic and ideological interests.

Language functions not only as a medium for transmitting climate-related information but also as a cognitive framework that structures our understanding of the phenomenon. The framing of climate change in discourse can influence attitudes, behaviors, and policy measures, either facilitating or hindering meaningful action. Studies have shown that different linguistic strategies, such as metaphorical expressions, lexical choices, and discourse framing, shape how the public internalizes and reacts to climate change messages. Furthermore, the emotional and persuasive elements of language contribute to varying levels of engagement, from active participation in climate initiatives to skepticism and denial.

This study aims to analyze these linguistic patterns within English climate discourse to better understand how language both reflects and shapes environmental concerns. By examining a diverse corpus of texts, including scientific articles, media reports, and political speeches, this research provides a comprehensive analysis of cognitive-semantic features that influence climate discourse. In doing so, it highlights the implications of linguistic framing for climate communication, policy-making, and public engagement.

**Methodology**. This study follows a mixed-methods approach, integrating corpus-based analysis with cognitive-semantic frameworks. The research is structured around several core aspects. First, a diverse corpus of texts from scientific journals, news articles, and political speeches on climate change was compiled to ensure a comprehensive analysis of climate discourse. The corpus was then processed using qualitative and quantitative methods to detect recurring linguistic and conceptual patterns. Cognitive-semantic analysis was applied to identify conceptual metaphors such as "climate change as a war," "climate change as a disease," and "climate change as an economic burden," among others. Additionally, discourse analysis examined the framing of climate change through different linguistic strategies and rhetorical devices, considering the role of language in shaping public responses and policies.

**Results.** The analysis revealed several dominant cognitive-semantic patterns in English climate discourse, demonstrating the strategic use of language in shaping public perception and influencing policy discussions. Conceptual metaphors were a key feature, with climate change frequently represented as an enemy to be fought, an illness requiring urgent treatment, or a looming catastrophe demanding immediate intervention. These metaphors enhance public understanding by making abstract scientific concepts more relatable and tangible, but they also risk oversimplification or emotional manipulation. Lexical choices reflected a balance between scientific accuracy and persuasive rhetoric, with alarmist vocabulary such as "catastrophic," "irreversible," and "climate emergency" commonly employed in media and advocacy discourse. Meanwhile, scientific terms such as "carbon footprint," "global warming potential," and "sustainable development goals" were frequently utilized in technical and academic discussions. The framing strategies varied depending on the communicative goals of the discourse producers. Scientific discourse emphasized factual, evidence-based descriptions, whereas political and media narratives often highlighted economic impacts, moral responsibility, and the urgency of taking action.

The study also identified the use of narrative structures to frame climate issues. Media discourse often framed climate change as a crisis, focusing on disaster scenarios and worst-case predictions, while scientific discourse emphasized cause-effect relationships and long-term data trends. Political discourse was more varied, often framing climate change in economic and geopolitical terms, positioning it as a challenge that requires financial and technological solutions.

Figure 1 illustrates the key cognitive-semantic features identified in climate change discourse, including conceptual metaphors, lexical choices, framing strategies, regional variations, and responsibility attribution. The corpus analysis revealed regional and cultural variations in linguistic representation. For example, U.S. political discourse frequently linked climate change to economic concerns and national security, while European discourse emphasized global cooperation and environmental responsibility. These differences highlight the role of cultural and ideological factors in shaping climate discourse across different societies.
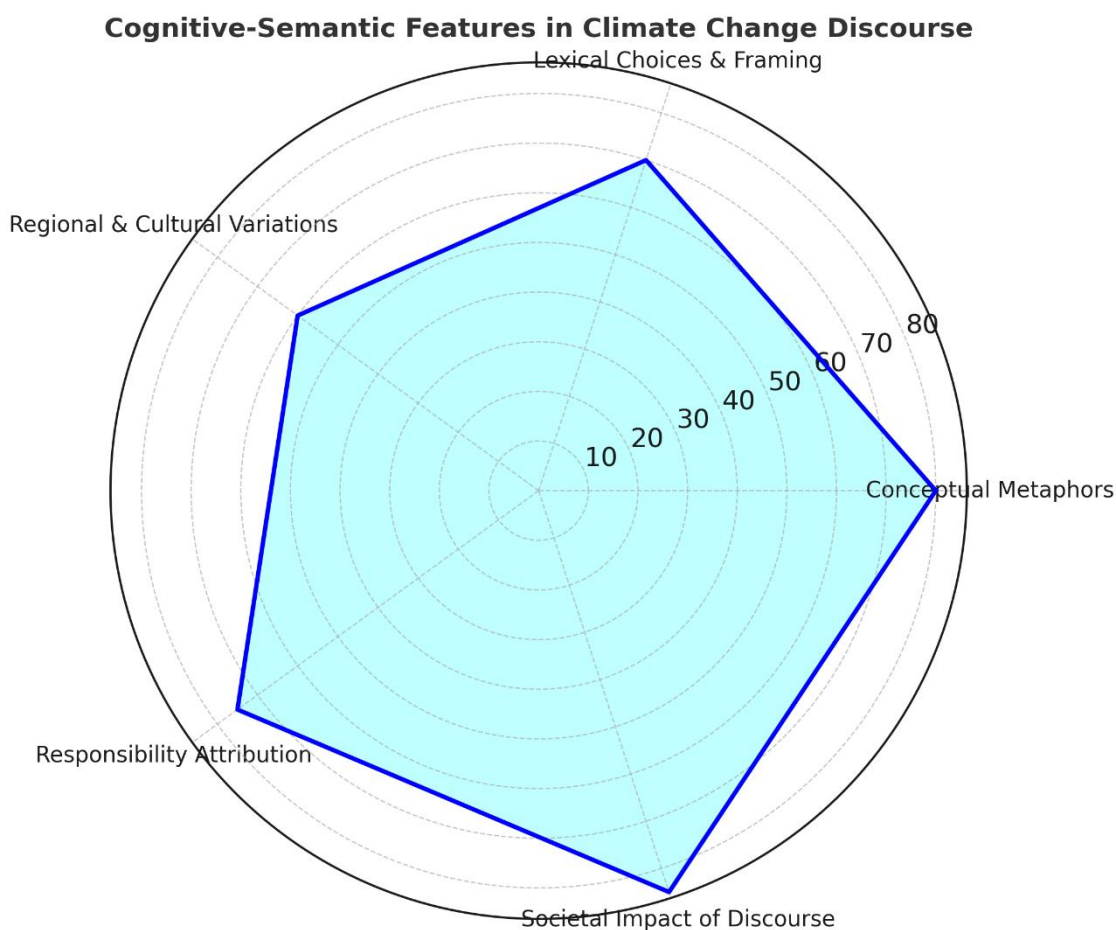
Figure 1.

**Discussion.** The findings suggest that cognitive-semantic features in climate change discourse significantly shape public perception and engagement. Conceptual metaphors provide mental models for interpreting climate-related phenomena, but their usage also influences emotional responses and political inclinations. The choice of metaphor can encourage either proactive engagement or passive fatalism, depending on whether climate change is framed as a solvable challenge or an inevitable crisis. For example, framing climate change as a "war" can create a sense of urgency and collective action, while framing it as an "unstoppable force" may lead to resignation and inaction.

Furthermore, the interplay between lexical choices and discourse strategies determines how accessible and persuasive climate messages are to different audiences. Scientific discourse aims for precision and neutrality, avoiding exaggerated claims while emphasizing data-driven evidence. However, this approach may fail to resonate with the general public, as technical jargon can be difficult to grasp. In contrast, media and political discourse frequently utilize emotive language to simplify complex issues and mobilize public opinion. While this can be effective in driving awareness and action, it can also contribute to polarization or misinformation if climate change is framed in ways that align with specific ideological or economic agendas.

Another key aspect of climate discourse is the role of responsibility attribution. Some narratives emphasize individual responsibility (e.g., reducing personal carbon footprints), while others highlight systemic and corporate accountability. The linguistic framing of responsibility affects policy-making and public attitudes toward climate solutions. By analyzing these discourse strategies, this study underscores the need for effective climate communication that balances urgency with accuracy, ensuring that messages lead to constructive engagement rather than fear or apathy.

The findings also highlight the importance of cultural and regional differences in climate discourse. The contrast between economic, scientific, and moral framings of climate change suggests that linguistic strategies must be adapted to different audiences to ensure effective communication. Policymakers, journalists, and scientists must be aware of these framing effects to craft messages that inspire action without inciting unnecessary fear or complacency.

**Conclusion.** This study contributes to the field of ecolinguistics by identifying key cognitive-semantic features in English climate discourse. The research highlights the importance of language in shaping public understanding and responses to climate change, demonstrating how linguistic strategies influence perceptions, emotions, and actions. Recognizing these linguistic patterns is essential for enhancing climate communication and fostering informed discourse. Future research can expand this study by incorporating multilingual perspectives and examining cross-cultural variations in climate discourse. Additionally, further investigation into the effectiveness of different framing techniques in promoting climate action could provide valuable insights for environmental advocacy and policy development.

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