

Review of: "Boring Language Is Constraining the Impact of Climate Science"

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I am sympathetic to the idea that "Boring Language Is Constraining the Impact of Climate Science", and was hoping to find evidence for this, and useful suggestions for practising climate scientists to adopt. However, the article is a referenced opinion piece rather than evidenced research.

Regarding the prevalence of boring language, it is not at all clear what sort of inference anyone is to take from word counts in the remarkably small sample of five climate change papers. It is crucial what these unidentified papers are. If they are (which is implied) primarily peer-to-peer communications, their use of precise technical terms can hardly be a criticism. The more interesting question would be evidence of the degree to which climate scientists who do both scientific and public-engagement communication are effective at adapting their language to their audience. Is the language of public engagement on climate change as "boring" as scientific writing? I suspect it is less "boring", but even so, is it "sufficiently interesting" to engage at least some audiences? What techniques and practises are specifically more effective at generating interest in the science of this topic? These are questions I hoped to see addressed in a paper with this title at a deeper-than-anecdotal level.

I also note that, even on the paper's own evidence light terms, there is in my view a huge missing aspect. Namely, this is the growing understanding of how people form opinions about topics in which they are not expert, and what sorts of communication are effective in shifting such opinions. I have not seen the degree to which communication is "boring" feature so much in that literature (although I confess I am no expert in it), so perhaps there is a fruitful angle to pursue with some actual hard research.

Indeed, it would be hard work to accumulate actual evidence for the phenomenon suggested in the title. Such hard work might indeed be very fruitful and important. But it has not been done in writing this paper.