

**A Discourse Analysis of Crisis Communication from the Canadian Federal Department:  
Environment and Climate Change Canada**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines how Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) constructs risk, authority, and institutional identity in crisis communications from 2011 to 2021. Using James Paul Gee's (2011) discourse tools, I analyze federal messaging to understand how ECCC frames environmental risk, asserts credibility, and guides public response. These aspects are studied through qualitative analysis of a significant corpus. Findings show that ECCC's messaging evolves to become more urgent and crisis-focused, particularly in response to climate change. Shifts in identity highlight a strategic adaptation to societal and environmental contexts. This research contributes to knowledge by illustrating how federal institutions use language to mediate public understanding, build legitimacy, and respond to mounting pressures around environmental risks and crises.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Risk and crisis communication within governmental institutions has emerged as an increasingly critical area of research, particularly in light of recent global challenges such as climate change, public health emergencies, and natural disasters. In Canada, federal departments such as Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) play a central role in managing communications surrounding these complex issues. ECCC's broad mandate, ranging from environmental protection and wildlife conservation to weather forecasting and international climate negotiations, positions it as an ideal case for studying the evolution of risk and crisis communication strategies within the Canadian federal government. Despite the growing importance of crisis communication in public administration, there remains a gap in understanding how Canadian federal departments operationalize risk and crisis communication principles across different types of crises.

Through this study, I seek to address this gap by examining 134 of ECCC's communications across a range of risk and crisis events, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of governmental crisis communication practices. The motivation for this research stems from the increasing frequency and severity of environmental risks and crises, which have amplified the need for effective public communication strategies. Climate change in particular, through discussion, has transformed from a distant concern into a present-day crisis requiring urgent action. ECCC's explicit characterization of climate change as a "climate crisis" (Environment and Climate Change Canada [ECCC], 2023) underscores the department's recognition of the seriousness and immediacy of the threat. Moreover, ECCC's communications about acute events, such as extreme weather warnings and pollution incidents, demonstrate the department's engagement with more traditional, immediate forms of crisis communication.

Understanding how ECCC navigates the challenges of communicating both slow-developing and sudden crises offers valuable insights into the broader field of public sector communication and risk management.

Within the broader field of communication studies, risk and crisis communication is recognized as a unique method that examines how organizations convey information before, during, and after crises. In the governmental context, effective communication is essential not only for informing and protecting the public but also for maintaining institutional credibility and public trust. ECCC's diverse operational responsibilities allow for a comprehensive exploration of how governmental bodies position risks, convey urgency, and manage public expectations over time. This study is situated within this scholarly context, drawing on established crisis life cycle models to map ECCC's communication practices onto different phases of crisis development and resolution. The current relevance of this research is underscored by the heightened public discussion of government communications during times of uncertainty. Events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, annual wildfires, and climate-related disasters have brought risk and crisis communication to the forefront of public discourse. In Canada, there is a need to critically examine how departments like ECCC communicate risks and crises to guide public behaviour. By analyzing ECCC's communications, this research aims to illuminate patterns and potential strategies, thereby offering insights that may enhance future governmental communication efforts.

To ensure clarity and focus, this study concentrates on official public communications produced by ECCC, such as news releases, speeches, and media advisories. It will not examine internal communications, interdepartmental memos, or non-public documents. Furthermore, the analysis will primarily target communications related to environmental risks and crises,

excluding unrelated domains such as administrative or operational announcements unless they directly pertain to risk or crisis situations. By establishing these boundaries, the study maintains a focused and manageable scope, ensuring a thorough and meaningful analysis of ECCC's crisis communication practices. In sum, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on governmental risk and crisis communication by providing an in-depth case study of Environment and Climate Change Canada. Through a detailed examination of ECCC's public communications across a variety of crisis types, this study offers insights into the strategies, challenges, and implications of crisis communication in governmental communications.

### ***Research Question***

The literature review of crisis communication, governmental communication, and environmental communication has led to the development of this research question: How has the crisis communication strategy of the Canadian federal government evolved and adapted in response to different crises from 2011 to 2021? This research seeks to trace the trajectory of federal communication strategies over a decade, examining shifts in approaches and messaging. Focusing on ECCC as a case study, the analysis will explore how the government's strategies have responded to various crises, including natural disasters, public health emergencies, environmental challenges, and political developments. The timeframe of 2011 to 2021 is particularly significant as it spans two distinct political administrations: four years under the Conservative government leadership and six years under the Liberal government leadership. This period offers an opportunity to compare how differing political ideologies, policy priorities, and leadership styles influenced crisis communication strategies. For example, a Conservative-led government, focused heavily on economic development, may have positioned environmental issues in terms of their economic implications, while a Liberal-led government, emphasizing

climate action, may have adopted a more urgent and inclusive tone. This political contrast provides valuable context for understanding how governmental messaging reflects broader ideological goals.

Additionally, the final years of this timeframe include the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a global crisis that required higher levels of government communication. As the primary department responsible for addressing environmental issues, ECCC's role in pandemic-related messaging is expected to be minimal; however, detecting shifts in language use during this time period can be indicative of priorities for the department. Consider, in a time of heightened governmental communication, the department may need to prioritize what it wants the public to focus on. These intersections offer rich opportunities to analyze how ECCC adapted its strategies to address emerging crises within its mandate. Existing research on crisis communication highlights the importance of clarity, timeliness, and trust in governmental messaging. Scholars such as Timothy Coombs (2023) emphasize the need for governments to provide clear, actionable information to mitigate public uncertainty during crises. Similarly, Ted Glenn (2014) underscores the role of trust-building in maintaining public confidence. However, environmental crises present unique challenges, as they often involve long-term, systemic issues that are not easily resolved. Maurizio Abbati (2019) highlights this complexity, noting that effective environmental communication must not only inform but also inspire action, balancing urgency with empowerment.

This research builds on these theoretical insights by applying them to the Canadian context, focusing on how ECCC has operationalized these principles in its public-facing communications. As the government's environmental department, it should both protect the environment and inform the public, which requires it to balance technical accuracy with

accessibility. For example, Laura Feldman and P. Sol Hart (2021) demonstrate that linguistic choices, such as positioning climate change as a “crisis” versus a “challenge,” can significantly influence public engagement (Feldman & Hart, 2021). By analyzing ECCC’s language and framing choices, this research aims to uncover how the department navigates these tensions to achieve its communication objectives. The research question also seeks to address how ECCC’s strategies have evolved in response to different crises. Natural disasters, such as wildfires and floods, demand immediate, localized responses, while broader challenges, such as climate change, require sustained, systemic messaging. Each type of crisis presents unique communication demands, requiring tailored approaches. By examining how ECCC’s messaging has adapted over time, this research aims to identify patterns and shifts that reflect the department’s capacity for innovation and resilience. A key dimension of this analysis involves examining how political and social contexts have shaped ECCC’s communication strategies. For instance, the transition from a Conservative to a Liberal government may have influenced not only the content of ECCC’s messages but also its methods and format of dissemination. News releases, media advisories, speeches and more can be used to disseminate information to the public and are considered in this research.

To address the research question, I employ discourse analysis, focusing on ECCC’s public-facing materials, including various types of communications posted within their news archives. This approach allows for an in-depth examination of the language, tone, and framing used in ECCC’s communications. Particular attention will be paid to shifts in messaging over time, as well as variations in response to different crises. For example, through this study, I analyze how ECCC positioned its responses to immediate threats, such as wildfires, compared to long-term challenges, such as climate change. By tracing these evolutions, the research aims to

provide a comprehensive understanding of how ECCC's crisis communication strategies have developed and adapted over a decade. This analysis will contribute to the broader field of crisis communication by offering insights into the unique challenges and opportunities faced by government agencies tasked with addressing complex, interconnected crises. Ultimately, this research seeks to illuminate the ways in which governmental communication can evolve to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world, providing valuable lessons for policymakers and communicators alike.

### *Structure of the Thesis*

This thesis is structured across five chapters, each contributing to a comprehensive examination of risk and crisis communication within the context of Environment and Climate Change Canada. Chapter 1 introduces the topic, outlining the significance of governmental communication during times of crisis and defining the research objectives, scope, and central questions. It highlights the importance of effective communication in shaping public perception and response and situates ECCC as a focal institution for this analysis. It also reviews the societal and institutional context of ECCC, setting the stage for a deeper understanding of how federal messaging strategies have developed in response to evolving environmental and political challenges.

Chapter 2 establishes the theoretical grounding of the study by problematizing crisis communication as a complex field of inquiry. It reviews key concepts and frameworks from the literature, identifies a gap in current research on Canadian federal crisis communication, and explains the need for closer examination of how agencies like ECCC manage messaging around both immediate and long-term environmental risks. It further traces the evolution of crisis, risk,

environmental, and governmental communication as distinct yet overlapping fields, laying the groundwork for a more integrated analysis of their intersections in the Canadian context.

Chapter 3 details the research methodology, justifying the use of discourse analysis as a means of uncovering embedded strategies and themes in official communications. It explains the textual selection process, focusing on ECCC's public-facing messages such as press releases and social media content, and outlines how James Paul Gee's (2011) Discourse Analysis tools, particularly the Significance Building Tool, are used to analyze these texts. The chapter also reflects on the strengths and limitations of using qualitative textual analysis in the study of institutional communication, emphasizing its value in capturing subtle shifts in tone, identity, and purpose over time.

Chapter 4 presents the results and discussion, organizing findings according to key themes and shifts observed in ECCC's messaging over time. The chapter synthesizes discursive and thematic trends across a decade of messaging, highlighting how communication practices have become increasingly attuned to public sentiment, urgency, and the evolving nature of environmental crises. It interprets these results through the lens of relevant theoretical frameworks, examining how ECCC positions crisis, risk, authority, and action, and what this reveals about broader government communication practices during periods of environmental uncertainty.

Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the thesis by summarizing the key findings and their implications for both theory and practice. It reflects on the limitations of the study and offers directions for future research, particularly in the area of public sector communication strategies in times of crisis. Together, these chapters build a layered understanding of how a major

Canadian government department discursively navigates the challenges of risk and crisis communication in the 21st century. The conclusion also underscores the need for deliberate, responsive communication practices that account for the evolving nature of environmental crises and public expectations.

In an era marked by environmental volatility and public uncertainty, understanding how government agencies communicate risk and manage crises is more important than ever. This study focuses on Environment and Climate Change Canada as a key department for examining federal crisis communication strategies. By analyzing how ECCC responds to both sudden and long-term threats, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how language, strategy, and institutional responsibility intersect in moments of crisis. Through a discourse analytic approach, grounded in established theory, this thesis seeks to offer practical insights and theoretical contributions that illuminate the role of communication in guiding public understanding and action in times of uncertainty.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

To effectively address the complexities of crisis communication in the Canadian federal government through Environment and Climate Change Canada, this chapter undertakes an in-depth interdisciplinary review of theoretical and empirical literature. Crisis communication, as a field, has evolved to address the challenges posed by increasingly frequent and multifaceted crises, ranging from natural disasters to public health emergencies. At the same time, governmental institutions face unique pressures to communicate effectively during crises, balancing transparency, public trust, and policy objectives. This chapter explores key theories and paradigms shaping our understanding of crisis communication, with a particular focus on

risk communication, crisis life cycles, and the distinctive dynamics of governmental crisis response. Additionally, the literature on environmental communication provides essential context for examining the role of ECCC in addressing the unique challenges of climate-related crises. By integrating these various facets of communication research, this chapter identifies gaps and opportunities for advancing both theoretical and practical understandings of governmental crisis communication. This examination lays the foundation for formulating and approaching the research questions that guide this study, ensuring they are rooted in a clear and comprehensive understanding of the field of crisis communication research.

### ***Risk***

Risk is a key concept related to crisis communication, as it often precedes and shapes the dynamics of a crisis through the planning stages and how the crisis unfolds. While the focus of this research is crisis communication, risk precedes crisis, and understanding this component is key for the theoretical foundation. Examining risk first provides a foundation for analyzing how crises develop and how organizations anticipate, mitigate, or fail to prevent them. By establishing the distinctions between risk and crisis, this section sets the stage for exploring how crisis communication strategies are deployed once a risk escalates into a crisis. Deborah Lupton (2013) highlights the anticipatory nature of risk, defining it as not an existing phenomenon but a potential one that may occur in the future. This perspective underscores the critical role of preventative and preparatory strategies in effective crisis management, as organizations aim to address potential risks before they materialize into crises (Lupton, 2013). Situated within the initial stage of the crisis life cycle, risk provides a foundation for understanding how communication strategies anticipate and shape potential crises. While its independent functions are significant, risk communication also plays a critical role in supporting crisis communication

as part of these broader life cycle processes, a connection that will be explored further in the crisis section of this chapter.

From an environmental communication standpoint, Meredith L. Gore and Barbara A. Knuth (2009) emphasize the importance of risk communication campaigns in fostering long-term behavioural change (Gore & Knuth, 2009). For example, risk communication campaigns designed to highlight the harm caused by plastic pollution in oceans aim to encourage individuals to reduce plastic use, thus mitigating environmental risks and impacting human behaviour. In their study of wildlife risk communication campaigns in New York, Gore and Knuth (2009) investigated the role of mass media in influencing campaign outcomes and to what degree they made an impact. Gore and Knuth (2009) found that media coverage of the campaign generally presented qualitative risks, such as the impact of human-wildlife interactions on ecosystems, in a straightforward manner without exaggeration or dramatization. This representation is crucial because numerical and statistical data often fail to motivate individuals to take action or reduce risk, as they can be difficult to interpret. In contrast, accurately portraying qualitative impacts can have a stronger, more relatable influence on audiences, making the message more effective than abstract quantitative data (Gore & Knuth, 2009). Coombs (2023) also provides a similar definition for risk, stating that "risks are the foundation of crisis management and communication because risks are vulnerabilities that could develop into crises" (Coombs, 2023, p.22). Furthermore, Coombs (2023) explains that "a risk has the potential to do harm while a crisis is inflicting harm" (Coombs, 2023, p.22) this means that if crisis management is done properly, a risk will never develop to the crisis stage, as it has been effectively mitigated. These overlapping definitions explain that risk is not merely a precursor to crisis but a critical point of intervention where effective communication can prevent escalation and inspire proactive

responses. Understanding how risks are framed, communicated, and acted upon is essential for organizations aiming to mitigate potential crises and build resilience in their operations and stakeholder relationships.

Finn Frandsen and Winni Johansen (2020) further contribute to this discussion by examining the Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) model, which clarifies the nuanced distinction between risk and crisis communication. They define "risk" as the potential for adverse outcomes and their likelihood in the future, with risk communication primarily aimed at informing the public about these possibilities. This involves not only presenting potential scenarios but also persuading and informing the public so they can take preventative actions to mitigate risks before they escalate (Frandsen & Johansen, 2020). Effective risk communication is crucial in fostering public trust and preparedness, as it allows organizations to frame potential hazards in ways that encourage proactive responses rather than fear or apathy. In contrast, crisis communication addresses immediate threats and focuses on alerting the public, often necessitating a prompt response to protect lives, resources, or reputations. Their study underscores the complexity of these interconnected terms, emphasizing that while risk communication is more forward-looking and preventive, crisis communication is reactive and urgent (Frandsen & Johansen, 2020). The distinction between the two is particularly relevant in environmental contexts, where long-term risk communication strategies, such as those concerning climate change, may struggle to maintain public engagement until a crisis, such as a natural disaster, demands immediate attention. This interplay highlights the importance of integrating both risk and crisis communication approaches to ensure that risk awareness translates into effective crisis response when necessary. This distinction is particularly relevant when analyzing ECCC's strategies for communicating about both long-term risks, such as the

gradual impacts of climate change, and immediate crises, such as severe weather events. By tailoring communication approaches to the nature of the threat, whether potential or imminent, ECCC can effectively balance the need to persuade the public to adopt sustainable behaviours over time, while also responding to acute emergencies with clarity and urgency. Understanding this balance is essential for comprehensively evaluating how organizations like ECCC navigate the dynamic interplay between risk and crisis communication.

### ***Crisis Communication***

As this research aims to examine the development of risk and crisis communication within the Canadian federal government through ECCC, it is essential to begin by having a clear understanding of the main theories and paradigms which shape our understanding of crisis communication. The field of crisis communication is continually evolving as a result of one crisis following another in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. This is described by Frandsen and Johansen (2020) as a "crisis society," which highlights the need for a deeper understanding of crisis communication (Frandsen & Johansen, 2020). Due to this increasing relevance, crisis communication has been defined and explored through a myriad of theoretical lenses. One such example is how William R. Crandall, John A. Parnell, and John E. Spillan (2021) describe a crisis as a low-probability event which can significantly impact an organization. The impact of a crisis may not be immediately clear to all stakeholders, meaning some may not view it as a crisis at all, or potential impacts may be missed during planning. Missing key impacts can make it more difficult to prevent and recover from a crisis, worsening the impacts for the organization undergoing the crisis in the long run. In addition to this, the low probability nature of crises makes them difficult to plan for. Few are motivated to plan for an event which may never occur, which can result in crisis planning being considered a low priority

until one actually happens (Crandall et al., 2021). Crandall, Parnell, and Spillan (2021) also explore the idea that there are two approaches when attempting to manage a crisis; first to "Try to keep them from occurring, and [second, to] mitigate the impact of the crisis when it does occur" (Crandall et al., 2021, p.4). This approach captures the essence of crisis management; when an organization is not mitigating the impacts of an active crisis, it should be trying to prevent potential ones from occurring.

Building on this initial understanding of crisis communication, it is key to consider alternate definitions. Coombs (2023) offers a broader definition of a crisis as "some breakdown in a system that creates shared stress" (Coombs, 2023, p.3). This definition emphasizes the inherently disruptive nature of crises and their capacity to impact multiple stakeholders simultaneously. Coombs (2023) further refines this definition by categorizing crises into distinct types: disasters, public health crises, and organizational crises. Disasters, such as oil spills or environmental catastrophes, often involve large-scale disruptions that can result in additional crises depending on the organizations and stakeholders involved. An example of this may be an oil spill disaster, resulting in an additional reputational crisis for the organization if it is not managed properly. Public health crises, by contrast, impact communities across multiple geographic areas and often overwhelm healthcare systems, as seen with pandemics like COVID-19, SARS, and Ebola (Coombs, 2023). Organizational crises, while more common, are particularly complex because they frequently hinge on stakeholder perceptions. When stakeholders perceive an event as a crisis, organizations must address it to maintain trust and mitigate reputational harm. The potential impacts of organizational crises are wide-ranging, including damage to reputation, financial loss, structural damage, harm to stakeholders, and more. Within organizational crises, Coombs (2023) identifies two subtypes: operational crises

and paracrises. Operational crises refer to events that directly disrupt an organization's core functions, such as supply chain failures, data breaches, or natural disasters. These crises require immediate action to restore normal operations and minimize damage to the organization's ability to function effectively. The primary focus in managing an operational crisis is problem-solving and mitigation to ensure business continuity. Paracrises, on the other hand, do not necessarily disrupt operations but unfold in the public eye, posing significant reputational risks. These crises often stem from controversies, ethical concerns, or public backlash, such as accusations of corporate misconduct, misleading advertising, or insensitive remarks from leadership. While they may not impact the organization's ability to function, they demand careful communication management to maintain trust and credibility with stakeholders (Coombs, 2023). Together, these classifications underscore the multifaceted nature of crises and the nuanced approaches required for effective management and communication.

**Crisis Life cycles.** The theoretical framework for this research integrates an understanding of crisis life cycles, offering structured models that analyze how crises develop, unfold, and resolve. Crandall, Parnell, and Spillan (2021) present two detailed life cycle models that emphasize the progression and management of crises. The first is a four-stage life cycle which consists of: preconditions, a trigger event, the crisis, and then the post-crisis. The preconditions stage of a crisis is where smaller interacting events create circumstances that enable a trigger event to occur. Next is the trigger event stage, which marks the initial escalation of the crisis, disrupting normal operations or organizational stability. Then the crisis stage, which represents the peak escalation, results in significant impacts or damage to stakeholders, resources, or organizational reputation. Finally, the organization enters the post-crisis stage,

where organizations evaluate the crisis's aftermath, learn from the experience, and strategize for moving forward (Crandall et al., 2021).

Their second model, a five-stage life cycle, provides an even more granular perspective of the crisis life cycle. It begins with signal detection and focuses on identifying early warning signs or precursors to a potential crisis, enabling proactive organizations to take preventive measures. The second stage is preparation and prevention, which emphasizes the importance of planning to address and mitigate risks before they materialize. The third stage is containment and damage limitation, where organizations actively manage the crisis to minimize its impact and prevent further escalation. The fourth stage is recovery, which involves the resumption of activities and a return to a sense of normalcy in the organization as the crisis subsides. The final stage is learning, where organizations are encouraged to analyze their response to the crisis, address operational flaws, and implement changes to prevent future crises (Crandall et al., 2021). These models emphasize a business-oriented approach, focusing on operational processes, organizational stability, and risk management. However, for my research, I prioritize Coombs's (2023) three-stage life cycle model, as it aligns more closely with communication strategies and their role in crisis management.

Coombs (2023) outlines a three-stage life cycle that encompasses pre-crisis, the crisis event, and finally post-crisis. First is pre-crisis, which includes signal detection, prevention, and crisis preparation. This stage focuses on developing messaging that prevents and mitigates potential crises by fostering curiosity and encouraging stakeholders, including those within the organization, to explore new ideas and adopt proactive behaviours. Language at this stage should be persuasive and forward-looking, aiming to inspire action before a crisis occurs. Second is the crisis event, where the crisis is recognized, and containment efforts are undertaken.

Communication at this stage must be clear, direct, and easy to understand, as organizations "sell" the urgency of the crisis to stakeholders. Effective messaging requires a balance of transparency and reassurance, using both words and actions to maintain trust and manage stakeholder expectations. Coombs's final stage is post-crisis, which involves ensuring that the crisis has been fully resolved, leaving a positive impression on stakeholders, and preparing the organization for future challenges. Messaging during this stage typically adopts a "lessons learned" tone, focusing on the next steps, reflections on the crisis response, and positive language that underscores growth and resilience (Coombs, 2023).

Understanding these stages and the communication strategies associated with them will assist in detecting and analyzing patterns within the discourse analysis. By applying Coombs's (2023) communication-centric framework, I aim to identify how language is employed across the different stages of crisis life cycles. Given the nature of my research, I anticipate that most, if not all, of ECCC's public-facing communications will fall within the pre-crisis or crisis event stages. This is because while organizations will try to prevent crises or halt ones that are happening, the learning process often does not involve the public, which will mostly occur internally to the organization. This is especially true for messages related to climate change, where the focus is likely on early warning signs and immediate interventions rather than post-crisis evaluations. The pre-crisis phase will likely include preventative messaging about long-term climate risks, while crisis event communications will address acute emergencies, such as severe weather events. Identifying these stages in ECCC's discourse will provide insights into how the organization balances preventive strategies and immediate crisis responses in its communication practices.

## *Governmental Communications*

Now that the foundational theories and models of crisis communication have been established, it is essential to transition to the specific context of governmental communication, particularly as this research pertains to ECCC. While sharing some similarities with corporate or organizational communication, governmental communication operates under unique parameters and goals. Glenn (2014) explains that governmental communication is not simply about disseminating information but is a "management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends" (Glenn, 2014, p. 5). This approach underscores the dual objectives of government communication: to foster trust and maintain effective relationships with stakeholders, and to shape public perceptions and actions by being a knowledge-based resource. Glenn (2014) notes that these communications are explicitly designed to "influence and direct policy actions" (Glenn, 2014, p. 6). This dual function implies that governmental messaging is not only a tool for public engagement but also a strategic instrument for guiding policy and influencing its reception among diverse audiences. In the case of ECCC, communications must balance the dissemination of information about environmental and climate crises with the strategic aim of influencing public behaviour and supporting policy measures. Additionally, these communications seek to address the broader social and political contexts in which policies are developed and implemented, ensuring that policies are not only informed by public needs but also supported by them. By positioning communication as both relational and strategic, government departments like ECCC strive to achieve long-term public trust while ensuring that their messages effectively guide behaviour and policy acceptance (Glenn, 2014). Understanding this dual purpose provides a critical lens for analyzing the language, tone, and

intent behind ECCC's public-facing crisis communication, offering insights into how governmental priorities are reflected in their messaging strategies.

**Governmental Crisis Communication.** Governmental crisis communication occupies a critical space in the broader field of crisis management, combining elements of public relations, policy influence, and stakeholder engagement. Understanding its unique dynamics requires us to explore the types of crises governments encounter, the strategies they employ, and the impact of these efforts on public trust and cooperation. According to Alexis Bibeau, Adrien Cloutier, Alexandre Fortier-Chouinard, Nadjim Fréchet, Camille Tremblay-Antoine and Yannick Dufresne (2021), governmental crises can be broadly categorized into political crises, media crises, and catastrophic crises, each presenting distinct challenges. Political crises arise from internal or external conflicts, ethical violations, or governance failures. Media crises stem from negative publicity or controversies that undermine public confidence. Catastrophic crises, such as pandemics or environmental disasters, demand a heightened level of governmental involvement due to their widespread implications for public safety and policy (Bibeau et al. 2021). Of these, catastrophic crises often present the most significant communication challenges and opportunities. During such events, the government must navigate the dual responsibilities of providing accurate, timely information and maintaining public trust. The authors emphasize that governments, during catastrophic crises, often leverage traditional media to impose specific messaging that shapes public understanding. By carefully selecting the message and medium, governments can influence journalists' questions, media narratives, and public perceptions. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, governments worldwide utilized press briefings and media coverage to frame the crisis, guide public behaviour, and foster adherence to health protocols (Bibeau et al. 2021). Similarly, in environmental crises, this strategic control over

messaging enables governments to build support for policy interventions, such as climate action plans, by ensuring alignment between public understanding and governmental objectives.

The strategic use of media in crisis communication underscores the importance of message control. The authors assert, “In times of catastrophic crisis akin to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government generally uses traditional media to impose its interpretive framework” (Bibeau et al. 2021, p.70). This level of control is vital for reducing public anxiety and fostering a sense of stability. Governments that effectively manage the narrative can not only mitigate panic but also enhance their reputation for competence and reliability. Conversely, failure to convey authority or coherence can lead to confusion, mistrust, and diminished public confidence in governmental institutions. Catastrophic crises also offer unique opportunities for governments to strengthen their relationship with the public. Bibeau, Cloutier, Fortier-Chouinard, Fréchet, Tremblay-Antoine and Dufresne (2021) suggest that these crises, unlike political or media crises, often allow governments to portray themselves positively if they demonstrate effective crisis management. The authors note, “Catastrophic crises, contrary to media and political crises, lead to crisis management strategies that portray the government in a more positive light” (Bibeau et al. 2021, p.75). However, this positive perception is not guaranteed. Public trust hinges on the government’s ability to manage both the crisis itself and the associated narratives effectively. Failure to display control over a crisis can erode trust and amplify public fear. “This demonstrates the importance of governments to be proactive in controlling the message in times of crises since crisis management can positively affect the tone of their media coverage” (Bibeau et al. 2021, p.75). In environmental crises, for instance, if governmental agencies like Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) fail to communicate effectively, they risk losing public support for critical initiatives.

Adding to this framework, Mahmoud Eid and Toby Fyfe (2009) highlight the perception-based nature of crises in governmental contexts. Their research underscores that crises are often rooted in the perception of a problem, whether real or apparent. This perception-driven framework is particularly significant in political and organizational settings, where decision-makers may hesitate to acknowledge crises due to fears of political fallout or reputational damage. This reluctance can exacerbate the crisis by delaying necessary interventions and eroding public trust. In contrast, a proactive approach that acknowledges the crisis and communicates a clear plan of action can mitigate negative perceptions and foster a sense of security (Eid & Fyfe, 2009).

Accountability is a crucial aspect of government crisis communication, influencing how stakeholders perceive the government's actions and decisions. Drawing on attribution theory, Marije H. Bakker, Marco van Bommel, José H. Kerstholt, and Ellen Giebels (2018) explain that people assess the causes of negative situations and attribute blame based on perceived responsibility. If the public believes the government is capable of managing a crisis but fails to act, trust can deteriorate. This dynamic is particularly relevant in the context of the climate crisis. For instance, if Canadians perceive their government as having the resources and authority to address climate change but observe inaction or inefficiency, their trust in governmental institutions may wane. Conversely, demonstrating competence and transparency in climate initiatives can enhance public trust and support. The authors also introduce the concept of collective efficacy, which is the belief in a community's ability to manage a crisis. This concept plays a critical role in shaping public responses to crises. Communities with high levels of collective efficacy are more likely to coordinate recovery efforts, manage resources effectively, and develop strategic plans. As the authors note, "One of the most important factors identified as

stimulating resilient communities is collective efficacy” (Bakker et al. 2018, p.279). This resilience not only aids in crisis recovery but also reinforces public confidence in both community and governmental leadership.

The government’s role in fostering collective efficacy is particularly significant during environmental crises. By emphasizing the power of collective action and providing actionable guidance, governmental agencies like ECCC can inspire public participation and build a foundation for long-term resilience. Empowerment is closely linked to collective efficacy, as it describes individuals’ feelings of competence and confidence in addressing challenges. Governments can empower citizens by delivering clear, accessible information about how to respond to crises. The authors explain that empowered individuals are more likely to prepare for and respond effectively to crises, enhancing overall resilience (Bakker et al. 2018). In the context of environmental crises, fostering a sense of empowerment and collective efficacy is crucial. If individuals believe their actions are inconsequential, they may disengage from efforts to address environmental challenges. For instance, if ECCC fails to communicate the tangible impact of individual and collective actions, public motivation to engage in climate-positive behaviours may decline. On the other hand, messaging that highlights the cumulative power of small actions, such as reducing carbon footprints or participating in community cleanups, can inspire meaningful change. Communities with high levels of empowerment and collective efficacy are better equipped to navigate crises. They note, “Empowerment describes people’s feelings of personal competence and confidence to deal with issues that arise” (Bakker et al. 2018, p.279). Governments can foster this empowerment by providing resources, information, and opportunities for public involvement. For example, ECCC’s public messaging can include practical tips for reducing energy consumption, participating in reforestation programs, or

advocating for sustainable policies. These initiatives not only enhance individual agency but also build a sense of shared responsibility and purpose.

The interplay between government communication, collective efficacy, and empowerment underscores the importance of strategic messaging during crises. By fostering trust, transparency, and collaboration, governments can not only manage crises effectively but also strengthen their relationship with the public. This dynamic is particularly relevant in the context of environmental crises, where long-term resilience depends on sustained public engagement and support. These insights provide a valuable theoretical framework for analyzing ECCC's crisis communication strategies. By examining how the language used by ECCC navigates the complexities of public perception, collective efficacy, and accountability, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of governmental crisis communication and its role in addressing the climate crisis.

### ***Environmental Communication***

Next, I will explore the field of environmental communication. While governmental communication is often focused on the straightforward transmission of information, environmental communication requires a more nuanced approach. As Abbati (2019) highlights, "Communicating [about] the Environment cannot boil down to a mere transmission of information concerning the huge world of Environmental issues" (Abbati, 2019, p. 17). This distinction arises because simply inundating audiences with information can lead to information overload, which may hinder comprehension and meaningful engagement. Environmental issues, with their complexity and interconnectedness, demand a communication strategy that exceeds mere dissemination and actively seeks to shape understanding and inspire action. Environmental

communication should be seen not merely as a channel for sharing knowledge but as an effective tool. As Abbati (2019) explains, it should aim to broaden an audience's awareness of their relationship with the natural world, fostering a deeper connection between human activity and environmental well-being. The purpose of environmental communication, therefore, extends far beyond informing, its job is “to inform, to teach, to persuade, to solve problems, to prevent negative impacts, that is our action effects or our behaviours which destroy the Environment,” (Abbati, 2019, p. 17-18). For organizations like Environment and Climate Change Canada, this framework is invaluable, as their risk and crisis communication must not only inform but also prompt actionable responses from the public.

An area of growing significance within environmental communication is the strategic use of terminology, especially concerning climate change. Since 2019, the use of crisis-related language, such as "climate emergency" or "climate crisis," has increased significantly in public discourse (Feldman & Hart, 2021). This shift prompts important questions about the psychological and behavioural impacts of these linguistic choices on audiences. As Feldman and Hart (2021) note, “Small changes to language or framing can have significant effects on people’s perceptions of climate change” (Feldman & Hart, 2021, p.2). Stronger terminology may succeed in capturing attention and emphasizing the urgency of environmental challenges, motivating audiences to see climate change as an immediate and severe threat (Feldman & Hart, 2021). However, it can also lead to unintended consequences, such as audience overwhelm or disempowerment. This phenomenon recalls the concept of collective efficacy, which is central to fostering community resilience and action. Overly dire or threatening language, while well-intentioned, may inadvertently undermine the empowerment of the very communities it aims to reach. As Feldman and Hart (2021) explain, “Climate news stories and images that convey a

strong threat can be overwhelming and disempowering” (Feldman & Hart, 2021, p.2). The balance between urgency and empowerment is delicate; tipping too far into strong language risks alienating audiences, while downplaying the severity of environmental issues might fail to inspire necessary action.

Feldman and Hart’s (2021) research offers valuable insights into the effects of crisis terminology. A study examining terms like “climate emergency” and “climate crisis” compared to the standard “climate change” found no significant effects on public engagement metrics such as fear, hope, collective efficacy beliefs, policy support, or intended political action. While some small effects were noted—for instance, “climate emergency” reduced perceived news credibility and newsworthiness compared to “climate change”, the findings indicate that terminology alone is unlikely to drive immediate behavioural or attitudinal changes. However, the authors also highlight an important limitation of the study: its focus on short-term impacts within the social media sphere. The authors caution that while immediate effects may be minimal, the long-term repetition of crisis-oriented language could have a cumulative impact on collective efficacy and audience fatigue (Feldman & Hart, 2021). This observation underscores the importance of considering both long and short-term dimensions of communication. Short-term messaging strategies might prioritize clarity and credibility to build trust, while long-term strategies could integrate repetition and reinforcement to embed environmental urgency into public consciousness without exhausting the audience.

Understanding the interplay between short-term and long-term impacts of environmental messaging is particularly relevant for ECCC’s communication strategies. As a governmental organization tasked with addressing climate change on a national scale, ECCC must navigate the challenges of engaging diverse audiences while avoiding pitfalls such as information fatigue or

perceived inaction. Abbati's (2019) framework, emphasizing the multifaceted goals of environmental communication, provides a valuable theoretical lens for analyzing ECCC's approach. The organization's messaging must consistently align with the broader goals of informing, teaching, persuading, and preventing negative impacts, ensuring that each campaign contributes to both immediate action and sustained public engagement. Feldman and Hart's (2021) findings also highlight a critical tension in environmental communication: the need to strike a balance between raising awareness and fostering empowerment. Audiences must be informed about the severity of climate challenges, but they must also feel equipped to contribute to solutions. This balance is essential for maintaining collective efficacy and preventing disengagement that can result from feelings of helplessness or despair. By crafting messages that combine urgency with actionable steps, ECCC can empower individuals and communities to take meaningful action, reinforcing their confidence in collective efforts to address environmental crises. In conclusion, the intricacies of environmental communication extend beyond the simple transmission of facts. It requires a strategic, multidimensional approach that considers both the psychological and behavioural impacts of messaging. Whether through the careful selection of terminology or the integration of short-term and long-term strategies, environmental communication plays a vital role in shaping public perceptions and actions. As this paper continues to examine ECCC's communication strategies, understanding these nuances will be key to evaluating their effectiveness in addressing the pressing challenges of climate change.

This chapter has established the foundation for examining the evolution of Environment and Climate Change Canada's crisis communication strategies within the broader context of federal government messaging from 2011 to 2021. By engaging with existing research on crisis

communication, governmental messaging, and environmental discourse, this chapter has established a theoretical foundation for analyzing ECCC's communication strategies. Specifically, the discussion on risk and crisis communication frameworks underscores the importance of strategic messaging in shaping public perception and response. Additionally, insights from studies on governmental transparency and trust-building provide a critical lens through which ECCC's communication efforts can be assessed. Unlike sudden disasters such as natural catastrophes or public health emergencies, environmental crises often unfold over extended periods, making them more difficult to define, predict, and address. This complexity requires government agencies like ECCC to navigate ongoing uncertainty while maintaining credibility and public engagement in both immediate crises and long-term ecological challenges. Through the analysis of ECCC's public-facing materials, this research aims to uncover not only how the department has responded to specific crises but also how its communication approaches have reflected shifting political priorities, emerging public expectations, and the challenges posed by evolving crises. For instance, changes in federal leadership between 2011 and 2021 may result in shifts in priorities for the department, directly influencing the tone and urgency of ECCC's messaging. Public expectations have also shifted in response to high-profile environmental disasters, such as wildfires and oil spills, demanding greater transparency and proactive communication strategies from government agencies.

The inclusion of both short-term, high-stakes emergencies and long-term, systemic challenges in the analysis broadens the scope of understanding, allowing for insights into the adaptability and resilience of ECCC's messaging strategies. By applying discourse analysis, I examine how ECCC constructs narratives of risk and crisis through word choice, how a crisis is positioned, and potential strategies. Key areas of focus include the use of scientific language

versus emotional appeals, the framing of environmental threats in relation to government action or inaction, and the role of crisis metaphors in shaping public perception. Understanding these linguistic patterns offers deeper insights into how government messaging influences public trust, policy support, and crisis response. By focusing on textual materials, this research seeks to reveal patterns of communication that may not be immediately apparent but are vital for understanding how ECCC navigates competing demands for clarity, trust-building, and action. This method also allows for an examination of how governmental messaging strategies evolve in response to shifts in political leadership, technological advancements, and public sentiment. In synthesizing theoretical insights with practical considerations, this chapter sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of ECCC's communication practices over a pivotal decade. The findings of this study will contribute to the broader discourse on crisis communication by identifying best practices for governmental messaging in environmental crises. By highlighting effective and ineffective strategies within ECCC's crisis communication over the past decade, this research provides practical insights for policymakers, communication professionals, and scholars seeking to improve transparency, public engagement, and crisis preparedness. These insights may also inform broader governmental communication strategies in addressing other slow-moving, complex crises, such as public health or economic instability.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

Understanding how government agencies communicate during crises is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of their messaging strategies. This chapter outlines the methodological approach used to analyze Environment and Climate Change Canada's crisis communication from 2011 to 2021. By conducting a discourse analysis of ECCC's English-language crisis communication messages, I seek to examine thematic shifts and strategic

adaptations over a decade. The selected approach allows for an in-depth exploration of how ECCC addresses risks, threats, and crises through its messaging. Analyzing communication over a ten-year period provides insight into how crisis strategies evolved and how they may have been influenced by different governmental administrations. This methodological choice ensures a comprehensive understanding of ECCC's crisis communication practices and the effectiveness of its messaging in shaping public perception and response. In this chapter, I explain why discourse analysis is the most appropriate method for answering the research question. This discussion will highlight the advantages of this approach in capturing the nuances of crisis communication, as well as its relevance in understanding the broader socio-political context of government messaging. The second section will provide an overview of the specific methods and procedures used in the analysis, detailing how the corpus was collected, organized, and examined. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a discussion of the study's limitations, acknowledging the challenges of managing and analyzing an extensive corpus while emphasizing the steps taken to ensure a thorough and effective investigation.

### *Tools for Analysis*

**Tools for Discourse Analysis.** To conduct a comprehensive analysis of ECCC's crisis communication messages, I employ Gee's (2011) discourse analysis framework. Gee's (2011) methodology provides a structured and systematic way to examine language, meaning, and the broader implications of discourse. By applying this framework, I can identify underlying strategies, shifts in messaging, and the role of language in shaping public perception. Gee's (2011) framework consists of 27 tools designed to analyze discourse at multiple levels, from individual word choices to broader social and institutional meanings. These tools not only offer flexibility but also encourage researchers to consider how language reflects and constructs

understandings and interpretations of messages. Since governmental crisis communication operates across multiple layers; scientific, political, and emotional, this layered approach to analysis is especially valuable. It enables a nuanced understanding of how institutions like ECCC attempt to simultaneously inform, reassure, and persuade different publics. Gee's (2011) tools enable researchers to approach discourse analytically by asking targeted questions of the text; as Gee explains, each tool "is a specific question to ask of the data" (Gee, 2011, p. x). These tools serve as both conceptual and practical devices for uncovering the intentions, assumptions, and social dynamics embedded within a communication. Through this lens, communicative acts are not viewed merely as neutral or descriptive but as purposeful strategies that perform social functions. They can shape identities, assert authority, invite particular interpretations, and guide audience response. In the context of this study, it is important to consider how language choices can influence whether the public sees a government body as credible and capable or distant and unresponsive, particularly during uncertainty. To clarify the rationale behind my selection of specific tools for analysis, it is important to first review each of the 27 tools Gee (2011) provides, as each brings a distinct angle to the interpretation of language in use.

The tools are grouped into four units based on the general approach and similar themes. Unit one brings together tools which discuss dialects, language, and the role of context in understanding discourse. The first is tool 1, the Deixis Tool, which focuses on pointer words, such as "she" or "it", that rely on context to identify their referents. This tool highlights how speakers assume shared understanding, which can obscure meaning for those outside the intended audience. Tool 2, the Fill In Tool, asks what assumptions or background knowledge are required to make sense of the communication, emphasizing how much is left unsaid but expected to be understood. The Making Strange Tool, tool 3, prompts the researcher to imagine

encountering the message without any contextual knowledge: What becomes confusing or unclear? This tool reveals taken-for-granted norms and embedded assumptions. Tool 4, the Subject Tool, examines why a particular subject has been chosen and what alternative subjects might have shifted the message's focus or tone. Tool 5, the Intonation Tool, asks how tone or emphasis influences meaning, an important consideration in speeches or public statements. The Frame Problem Tool, tool 6, encourages the researcher to consider what contextual information is included or missing and how this affects interpretation.

Unit two shifts towards six tools which focus on how meaning is constructed through linguistic choices and textual organizations, instead of what explicitly is being said. Tool 7, the Doing and Not Just Saying Tool, asks what goals might be behind the communication, beyond its literal meaning. The Vocabulary Tool, tool 8, draws attention to the specific words chosen, considering their cultural, regional, or professional origins, to explore how language positions the speaker and the message. Tool 9, the Why This Way and Not That Way Tool, asks why a message is structured in a particular way and what implications alternate structures might have. Tool 10, the Integration Tool, analyzes optional additions or omissions and their role in shaping interpretation. Tool 11, the Topics and Themes Tool, considers how the text structures its topics and what this says about the priorities or focus of the communicator. Tool 12, the Stanza Tool, examines how text is broken into sections or units, revealing potential organizational strategies.

Unit three groups together 10 tools which focuses on how language constructs significance, activities, identities, and more to shape the broader meanings of a text. Tool 13, The Context is Reflexive Tool, encourages an analysis of how the surrounding context influences interpretation. Tool 14, the Significance Building Tool, evaluates how language works to elevate or downplay the importance of specific elements within a message. The Activities Building Tool,

tool 15, examines how discourse encourages certain practices, behaviours, or understandings. Next is the 16th tool, the Identities Building Tool, which explores how the speaker positions themselves or others, and what kind of person or institution is being constructed through the discourse. Similarly, tool 17, the Relationships Building Tool, asks what kinds of relationships are being enacted between the speaker and the audience or among broader social groups. The Politics Building Tool, tool 18, considers how language constructs or reinforces the distribution of social goods, things a society views as desirable or valuable. Tool 19, the Connections Building Tool, looks at how discourse links ideas together, prioritizing some while minimizing others. Tool 20, the Cohesion Tool, investigates how well a text connects ideas and how these linkages affect the delivery and reception of the message. Tool 21, the Sign Systems and Knowledge Building Tool, asks whether certain ways of knowing or speaking are privileged within the discourse and whether alternative viewpoints are de-privileged. The Topic Flow or Topic Chaining Tool, tool 22, examines how topics shift throughout a text and how continuities may serve persuasive or organizational goals.

The final section, unit four, focuses on the bigger picture intersectional aspect of discourse analysis, highlighting how language draws on institutions, cultural narratives, and identities to shape discourse. Tool 23, the Situated Meaning Tool, considers how specific words and phrases acquire particular meanings within the context of the communication. Tool 24, the Social Languages Tool, assesses how words and signs are being drawn upon, and what social groups or institutions these connect to. Tool 25, the Intertextuality Tool, examines whether and how the message refers to other texts or topics and what effects this intertextuality has on meaning. Tool 26, the Figured Worlds Tool, focuses on the underlying assumptions or stories that the communication constructs about how the world works. Finally, Tool 27, the Big “D”

Discourse Tool, prompts researchers to analyze the identity the speaker or writer is attempting to enact or be recognized as.

In consideration of the scope of this project, I have selected five tools due to their relevance to this analysis. In order to detect the evolution of the crisis communication strategy from ECCC, the following tools will help examine the texts through the constructed identity of the communicator, the enhancement or diminishment of information, or the prioritizing of information or prompting of action. Due to this, five tools have been identified as particularly relevant to this study:

### 1. **The Big “D” Discourse Tool**

This tool prompts researchers to ask which identity the speaker or writer is attempting to enact or be recognized as. An example might be that a speaker is attempting to appear as a politician, as an expert, or as someone from a particular social group. In the case of ECCC’s crisis communication, it will help determine how the agency positions itself and asserts its authority in different crisis situations. For example, does ECCC adopt the role of an authoritative protector, a compassionate guide, or a knowledgeable expert? These identity profiles are drawn from established literature on governmental crisis communication. The knowledgeable expert reflects traits emphasized by Coombs (2023) and Glenn (2014), such as maintaining credibility, acting as a knowledge-based resource, and guiding public understanding and policy reception (Coombs, 2023) (Glenn, 2014). The authoritative protector draws on Bibeau, Cloutier, Fortier-Chouinard, Fréchet, Tremblay-Antoine and Dufresne's (2021) discussion of governments demonstrating control, coherence, and crisis leadership to maintain public trust. The compassionate guide emerges from the need to manage public fear and provide reassurance, particularly

in high-stress or emotionally charged crises, also supported by Bibeau, Cloutier, Fortier-Chouinard, Fréchet, Tremblay-Antoine and Dufresne (2021). To apply these roles in analysis, messages were coded based on where these defining attributes were most prominent (Bibeau et al. 2021). This allowed for a consistent interpretation of how ECCC discursively positioned itself in response to varying crisis contexts. The way an institution presents itself in crisis messaging is critical to understanding the intent and impact of its communication. Identifying identity markers will provide insight into how ECCC shapes its role in crisis communication and how these roles may shift over time.

## 2. **The Situated Meaning Tool**

This tool examines how words and phrases acquire meaning based on context. The interpretation of government messaging is highly dependent on situational factors, including the nature of the crisis, perceived responsibility for the crisis, and responsiveness of the organization during the crisis. By applying this tool, I will assess how ECCC's messages acquire meaning, including whether certain terms carry different connotations based on the specific crisis situation. For instance, words like "risk" or "threat" may have heightened significance during extreme weather events but have a more general meaning in long-term climate change discussions. This tool will help uncover the layers of meaning in ECCC's messaging and how these meanings shift depending on the crisis at hand.

## 3. **The Sign Systems and Knowledge Building Tool**

This tool explores how language privileges certain perspectives or de-privileges information. This can reveal bias in text when it is assumed audiences will understand certain language use. It can also reveal when ECCC is prioritizing explaining topics, not

taking public understanding for granted. For example, if ECCC prioritizes de-privileging certain topics over others, this could reveal facets of the organization's strategic approach to communication. Identifying these patterns will contribute to a broader understanding of how ECCC structures knowledge within its crisis communication – detecting patterns in communications with this tool might highlight shifting priorities over time.

#### 4. **The Significance Building Tool**

This tool assesses how language enhances or diminishes the importance of specific topics. In crisis communication, governments strategically highlight or downplay elements of a situation to guide public perception and response. I will examine how ECCC constructs urgency around particular threats, such as whether it amplifies the severity of climate-related disasters or downplays long-term environmental risks. By analyzing the linguistic and grammatical devices used to emphasize or minimize different aspects of crises, this tool will reveal how ECCC directs attention and influences public discourse. Additionally, this analysis will provide insight into what is *not* considered significant, whether certain crises receive minimal attention or if key aspects of a situation are omitted from messaging. Using this tool to examine the texts over a ten-year period will display shifts of importance over time for certain topics.

#### 5. **The Activities Building Tool**

This tool investigates what actions a communication seeks to accomplish or encourage. In the context of crisis communication, these actions typically fall into three broad categories: to inform, persuade, or prompt action. Informational messages convey facts or updates, often emphasizing transparency and public awareness. Persuasive messages go further, shaping how audiences interpret a situation, highlighting urgency, severity, or

responsibility. Messages that prompt action are explicitly directive, encouraging concrete behaviours such as evacuation, preparedness, or environmental stewardship. Feldman and Hart (2021) underscore a central tension within this communicative spectrum: the need to balance raising awareness with fostering empowerment. Environmental audiences must be made aware of the scale and seriousness of climate challenges, but they must also feel capable of contributing to solutions (Feldman & Hart, 2021). This balance is critical to avoid overwhelming audiences with fear or detachment. In ECCC's case, applying the Activities Building Tool allows for a nuanced analysis of whether its messaging remains primarily informational or actively works to persuade and mobilize the public. It also enables an assessment of whether these functions shift depending on the type or severity of crisis. However, many communications also have an overlap of these categories. In order to determine a primary code for each, I look for the primary purpose of the message and base the coding on that. For example, if the message informs in order to prompt a specific action, then it prompts action. This will allow for adequate examination of these files and a clear understanding of the findings. Understanding how ECCC constructs action-oriented discourse thus offers valuable insight into its broader communication strategies and institutional goals.

Gee's (2011) tools provide a robust and structured methodology for conducting discourse analysis. His framework allows for an in-depth examination of language used in communications, uncovering both explicit and implicit meanings in communication (Gee, 2011). By applying these tools, I will be able to track how ECCC's messaging evolves over time, identifying key shifts in tone and focus. Additionally, the flexibility of Gee's (2011) framework ensures that discourse analysis remains adaptable to the complexities of crisis communication.

Government messaging is influenced by multiple factors, including political changes, public sentiment, and emerging environmental threats (Gee, 2011). By employing these tools, I can systematically assess how ECCC navigates several of these variables in its communication strategy. Furthermore, Gee's (2011) approach is well-suited to analyzing the interplay between language and power. Crisis communication is not merely informative; it plays a crucial role in shaping public understanding, policy priorities, and behavioural responses. Gee's (2011) tools provide the analytical depth needed to uncover the potential strategic choices behind ECCC's discourse, contributing to a broader understanding of governmental crisis communication practices (Gee, 2011). By utilizing these five selected tools in this study, a rigorous and nuanced analysis of ECCC's crisis communication over the past decade is possible. These tools will help illuminate how language constructs meaning, conveys authority, and shapes public response in times of environmental crisis.

**Other Perspectives on Discourse Analysis.** While Gee's (2011) discourse analysis framework serves as the primary methodology for this research, other scholars provide complementary perspectives that enhance the depth and scope of the analysis. The works of Norman Fairclough (2003), alongside research from Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, and Heidi E. Hamilton (2001), offer additional theoretical lenses, particularly in understanding the relationship between discourse, societal structures, and power dynamics. Integrating these perspectives strengthens the analytical framework by situating ECCC's crisis communication messages within broader social and political contexts. Fairclough's (2003) approach to critical discourse analysis emphasizes the role of discourse in shaping and reflecting social structures (Fairclough, 2003). Unlike purely linguistic approaches, critical discourse analysis situates texts within their broader societal contexts, recognizing that language is deeply intertwined with

social, political, and cultural forces. Fairclough (2003) defines texts not only as written words but also as transcripts of speeches and videos, with the latter being considered texts in their own right (Fairclough, 2003). This expanded definition is particularly useful for analyzing government communication, where press releases, official statements, and video briefings all contribute to the overall discourse.

Fairclough (2003) argues that discourse is an element of social life that does not exist in isolation but rather interacts with other social structures, such as institutions, ideologies, and power relations. This perspective aligns well with the goals of this study, which seeks to understand how ECCC's crisis communication messages function within the broader societal landscape. By considering discourse as a socially embedded practice, Fairclough's (2003) framework allows for an examination of how governmental messaging both responds to and reinforces existing structures (Fairclough, 2003). Applying Fairclough's (2003) insights to this research means going beyond textual analysis to consider the social implications of ECCC's language choices. For instance, if the government frequently uses scientific terminology and risk-based context, this may reflect an effort to position itself as an authoritative institution within the climate crisis discourse. Conversely, shifts in messaging styles across different political administrations could indicate changing ideological influences on crisis communication. By linking texts to social life, Fairclough's (2003) approach provides a valuable lens through which to interpret the connotations and implications of ECCC's messaging strategies.

Another crucial perspective on discourse analysis comes from Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton (2001), who emphasize the role of power in shaping discourse. Their text highlights how discourse is not simply a means of conveying information but also a tool for establishing and maintaining control over narratives (Schiffrin et al., 2001). This perspective is particularly

relevant to government crisis communication, where messages are carefully constructed to guide public perception and media positioning. One of the key contributions of Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton's (2001) work is their assertion that discourse analysis must account for the objectives behind language use, specifically, how certain actors seek to control discussions on a given topic (Schiffrin et al., 2001).

In the context of ECCC's crisis communication, this perspective raises important questions about how language is employed to shape public understanding of environmental risks. By incorporating this power-focused perspective into the analysis, this research will examine not only what is said in ECCC's crisis communication but also what is left unsaid. The omissions and inclusions within government messaging can reveal underlying power dynamics and strategic communication efforts. For instance, if certain environmental hazards are consistently highlighted while others receive minimal attention, this may suggest an effort to direct public concern toward specific policy areas. Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton's (2001) insights provide a critical framework for analyzing these power relations, complementing Gee's (2011) tools, which also emphasize the role of discourse in constructing meaning and social identity.

**Coding.** To support this detailed discourse analysis, I will employ a systematic coding process based on Saldana's (2013) qualitative coding methods. Coding will be critical for organizing, analyzing, and identifying patterns within ECCC's crisis communication messages. By categorizing the texts, I can track recurring themes, discourse shifts, and strategic language use, aligning these coding processes with the other theoretical tools used (Saldana, 2013). This structured approach will facilitate a more comprehensive examination of how ECCC's messaging evolves over time and across different crises. Saldana (2013) describes coding as a "researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each

individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes" (Saldana, 2013, p.4). In this study, coding will serve as a systematic tool for organizing and interpreting crisis communication texts from ECCC, allowing key discourse patterns and shifts to be captured and analyzed.

Given the volume of the corpus, a structured coding framework is necessary to facilitate efficient analysis. I will primarily use descriptive coding to categorize themes, complemented by simultaneous coding where multiple meanings or functions within the text require further differentiation. These methods will provide a systematic means of examining the linguistic shifts, focus, and potential priorities within ECCC's crisis communication. Descriptive coding is used to summarize "in a word or short phrase – most often as a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data" (Saldana, 2013, p.88). This method is particularly well-suited for categorizing large volumes of texts, ensuring that key themes within ECCC's messages can be systematically identified and analyzed. By applying descriptive coding, I will be able to segment messages into categories aligned with Gee's (2011) discourse analysis tools, facilitating analysis. This will allow for a structured examination of how messaging strategies evolve, what themes are prioritized, and how language is used to construct meaning and authority within crisis communication.

While descriptive coding provides a foundational structure, I will also incorporate simultaneous coding, which allows for "the application of two or more different codes to a single qualitative datum, or the overlapped occurrence of two or more codes applied to sequential units of qualitative data" (Saldana, 2013, p.80). This approach is particularly useful in discourse analysis, where messages may serve multiple functions simultaneously, for example, conveying urgency while also establishing institutional authority. Simultaneous coding will help capture the

multifaceted nature of crisis communication, ensuring that the analysis reflects the complexity of language use rather than reducing messages to singular interpretations (Saldana, 2013). By applying multiple codes where necessary, I will be able to examine how different elements of discourse interact and contribute to broader communication strategies. The use of coding will allow me to bridge the theoretical discourse analysis tools with practical analysis, ensuring a systematic and replicable approach to studying ECCC's messages. By structuring the corpus through coding, I will be able to track patterns over time, examine how language is used, and monitor shifts in prioritized topics.

### ***Summary of methods and procedures***

Throughout this study, I employ a discourse analysis approach to examine publicly available messages from Environment and Climate Change Canada, including news releases, speeches, and backgrounders. These sources have been selected because they provide a comprehensive representation of ECCC's official communication strategies and messaging to the public. By analyzing these texts, this research aims to uncover linguistic patterns, shifts in focus, and underlying power dynamics in crisis communication. To maintain a manageable and relevant corpus, certain limitations have been imposed. During the textual retrieval process, a total of 196 documents were excluded due to their association with the Species at Risk program. These communications were removed following a preliminary review, which revealed that their content was typically brief and primarily factual, lacking the structured tone and communicative features commonly found in crisis communication. The program's name happens to contain the keyword "risk," but its messaging does not align with the research's focus on crisis-related discourse. Excluding this category prevents misleading inclusions and ensures the corpus remains relevant to the objective of this study. In short, they were determined to be more informational than

strategic, often focused on general updates about specific species or conservation efforts rather than addressing a sense of urgency or public risk. In addition, 70 communications were excluded for not relating to more than one Canadian province or territory. This decision was made to narrow the focus of the study to broad-reaching crisis events of national or significant regional importance, alongside ensuring that the corpus remained manageable. Given the volume of available texts, limiting the scope in this way helped ensure analytical manageability while maintaining relevance to federal-level communication strategies. Furthermore, 26 documents were removed on the grounds that they did not meet the parameters of crisis or risk messaging as defined within the scope of the research, even though they met the initial term criteria. These communications either lacked urgency, did not address a crisis-related issue, or were not aimed at guiding public perception or behaviour in response to a perceived threat.

**Textual Collection and Organization.** Textual collection will be conducted through systematic searches of ECCC's official website and government archives. The key tool for this process is the News archive, where searches will be filtered over a ten-year period (2011–2021) to extract relevant environmental and climate change communication. The search process involved manually reviewing texts for the presence of the key terms “crisis,” “risk,” and “threat.” Any documents containing these terms will be recorded in a structured spreadsheet for further analysis. Once identified, information such as title, date of publication, the links, and type of content will be recorded. Beyond the basic recording of this information, I will encode the texts based on the tools and theoretical supports identified, to determine more details about the crisis and risk communications collected, to facilitate analysis. Based on the information recorded, the spreadsheet consists of 17 columns. The first seven capture contextual details: the type of communication (e.g., news release, speech, backgrounder, statement, or mandate), the title of the

communication, the date of release, the relevant keyword identified during the search (such as “crisis,” “risk,” or “threat”), whether climate is referenced, the federal government in power at the time, and the link to the source. The remaining ten columns are designed to support the discourse analysis component of the study. The first of these is the “Topic” column, where I apply Saldana’s (2013) coding methods to summarize the main subject of each communication. These codes facilitate efficient pattern recognition across the corpus. The “Key Excerpt” column includes direct quotes from the texts that reference crisis, risk, or threat, allowing for detailed linguistic analysis. The “Type of Crisis” column classifies each case according to established categories, such as natural disaster, public health, environmental, or political crisis. The “Crisis Life cycle Stage” column identifies the phase of the crisis addressed in the communication (e.g., pre-crisis, crisis event, post-crisis).

In the “Big "D" Discourse Tool” column, I apply Gee’s (2011) tool to identify the persona projected by the communicator, coded as either an *authoritative protector*, *compassionate guide*, or *knowledgeable expert*. The “Situated Meaning Tool” column is used to examine how meaning is shaped by the specific context in which the communication occurs. The “Sign Systems and Knowledge Building Tool” column uses the codes *privileges* or *de-privileges* at the start of each entry, followed by a brief explanation of which types of knowledge or perspectives are emphasized or excluded within the message. The “Significance Building Tool” column assesses how the language amplifies or downplays particular topics, while the final column, “Activities Building Tool,” identifies whether the text aims to inform, persuade, or prompt specific public actions. Together, these columns enable a structured and systematic coding of the corpus. This spreadsheet will function as a foundational research instrument, allowing me to organize and analyze texts in a way that captures shifts in focus over time, power

dynamics, and linguistic strategies that may be intended to encourage public action or compliance.

**Justification of Timeframe and Methodological Approach.** The selected timeframe of 2011 to 2021 ensures a meaningful analysis of ECCC's messaging across different political and social contexts. The corpus includes communications under two different governing parties, four years under a Conservative government and six years under a Liberal government, allowing for an examination of any shifts in discourse influenced by changes in political leadership. Additionally, this timeframe encompasses the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing insight into how ECCC adapted its crisis communication strategies during a global emergency. I employ discourse analysis because it provides an in-depth, qualitative approach to understanding language use in crisis communication. Unlike surveys or interviews, which rely on self-reported perceptions, discourse analysis allows for a direct examination of language as it was used in official public messaging. This method is particularly effective for identifying patterns in framing, power dynamics, and linguistic strategies over time. The selected texts are of high value for several reasons. First, it is publicly available and ethically unproblematic, as it was intended for public dissemination. Second, it includes a variety of communication formats, offering a rich corpus to examine thematic shifts and strategic adaptations. Finally, the availability and accessibility of government archives ensures that records are comprehensive and verifiable, making the methodology transparent and reproducible. Through this approach, this research provides a detailed, systematic, and theoretically grounded analysis of how ECCC constructs crisis-related discourse, with particular attention to shifts in messaging across different crises and political contexts.

## *Conclusion*

This chapter has outlined the methodology used to analyze ECCC's crisis communication strategies between 2011 and 2021. By employing a discourse analysis approach, throughout this study, I systematically examine publicly available government messages, including news releases, speeches, backgrounders, and key web pages. The selection of textual sources, the rationale for excluding certain materials, such as the Species at Risk program, and the structured coding process have all been detailed to ensure transparency and reproducibility. The methodology incorporates Gee's (2011) discourse tools and Saldana's (2013) coding approach, provides a structured way to identify patterns, thematic shifts, and power dynamics in crisis messaging.

Despite the strengths of this approach, the research is subject to several limitations and constraints. One primary challenge is managing the volume of texts, given the broad scope of government communications from ECCC over a ten-year period. To mitigate this, measures have been placed in the study, ensuring a focused and manageable corpus including key messages from ECCC. Another constraint is the complexity and time-intensive nature of discourse analysis. While this method allows for a nuanced examination of government messaging, it requires careful and consistent application of analytical tools. Gee's (2011) framework, in particular, can be challenging to apply uniformly across different types of texts. Similarly, while Saldana's (2013) coding methods provide a systematic approach to categorizing themes, the sheer diversity of ECCC's messaging may introduce some interpretive challenges. Care will be taken when analyzing the corpus to ensure the tools are utilized appropriately with the texts gathered. Furthermore, while I examine crisis communication over two different political administrations, it does not account for all possible external influences, such as media coverage,

public perception, or global policy changes, which may also shape governmental discourse. The analysis is confined to official government messages, meaning it does not assess how these communications were received or interpreted by the public.

Despite these limitations, this methodology provides a rigorous and well-rounded framework for understanding how ECCC has adapted its crisis communication strategies over time. By analyzing linguistic structures, shifts over time, and power relations, this study contributes to broader discussions on governmental transparency, risk communication, and crisis and risk messaging. The following chapters will build on this foundation by systematically applying the outlined methods to examine the collected texts, identifying recurring themes, linguistic patterns, and strategic shifts in ECCC's crisis communication. Through this analysis, I will assess how ECCC's discourse has evolved over time in response to different types of crises, changes in political leadership, and shifting public expectations, ultimately providing a deeper understanding of how government agencies adapt their messaging strategies to maintain public trust and manage risk perception.

## **Chapter 4: Results and Discussion**

### ***Introducing the corpus***

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the Canadian federal government's crisis communication, focusing on messaging from Environment and Climate Change Canada. Using Gee's (2011) tools for discourse analysis, I explore how government discourse has evolved in tone, purpose, and communicative approach over time in response to the growing complexity and frequency of environmental crises. This analysis is grounded in the central research question guiding this thesis: How has the crisis communication strategy of the Canadian federal

government evolved and adapted in response to different crises from 2011 to 2021? This question directs attention not only to the content of crisis communication but also to how it is structured and situated within broader political and social contexts. Through this examination, this chapter contributes to a deeper understanding of how language and strategy shift in response to crisis events and how these changes reflect evolving governmental priorities. The final corpus consists of 134 texts, each representing an individual piece of public-facing crisis or risk communications issued by ECCC. These documents include news releases, advisories, statements, and other official communications designed to inform the public about emerging environmental risks, ongoing crises, or the government's response to such events. Each communication was reviewed and selected based on the defined set of criteria laid out within the Methodology chapter.

The corpus spans a politically dynamic period in Canadian governance. In early 2011, Canada was under the leadership of a Conservative minority government, which transitioned to a Conservative majority in May of that year. The Conservatives held this majority until October 2015, when the Liberal Party won a majority government (Bosc & Gagnon, 2017). This Liberal majority remained in power until the October 2019 federal election, which resulted in a Liberal minority government, an arrangement that continued following the September 2021 federal election (British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], 2019) (Clarke, 2021). In total, the Conservative Party led the federal government for four years and ten months within this corpus' timeline, while the Liberal Party governed for six years and four months. This timeline provides important context for understanding potential shifts in discourse, as changes in political leadership may correspond to differences in policy direction, tone, and communication strategy as the examination continues. Within the corpus, the Conservative government is represented by

two communications from the minority period and sixteen from the majority period. By contrast, the Liberal government accounts for eighty-two textual points during its majority and thirty-four during the minority. The uneven distribution of texts by political party may reflect a variety of factors, including changes in crisis frequency, the centrality of environmental issues in each government's agenda, or broader shifts in public expectations regarding governmental transparency and communication.

The corpus is distributed unevenly over the ten-year period, with a noticeable increase in volume over time. The earliest years, from 2011 to 2013, feature only three to four communications per year. The numbers gradually increase through 2014 and 2015, with eight and five texts, respectively, followed by a significant rise beginning in 2016 with sixteen texts. This upward trend continues as 2017 has nineteen texts, 2018 has twenty-four texts points, and 2019 has nineteen texts. The corpus dips to seven texts in 2020, potentially due to the incoming coronavirus, before peaking in 2021 with twenty-six textual points. While the earlier years may reflect a lower volume of federal communication or a more limited definition of crisis at the time, the growing number of communications in later years could signal increased public pressure, a higher frequency of environmental emergencies, or a deliberate strategic shift under the Liberal government, particularly as climate change became more central to policy discourse and public debate.

To better understand the nature and themes of these communications, the corpus was coded using Saldana's (2013) qualitative coding methods. This approach supports the identification of patterns, themes, and categories through iterative and reflective cycles of analysis. Coding allowed for the condensation of the texts into recurring categories, facilitating a deeper understanding of which issues were prioritized and how they were framed. Eighteen

distinct topics were identified in the corpus, reflecting the diversity of ECCC's crisis and risk communication. These topics include asbestos, carbon pricing, chemicals, climate change, contamination, emissions, gender, hurricanes, illegal imports, marine pollution, mercury, nature conservation, plastics, severe weather, species conservation, the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, water, and weather forecasting.

The range of topics demonstrates the complexity of environmental governance and the breadth of public-facing issues that fall under the purview of ECCC. It also provides insight into the strategic choices made by government communicators about which issues to highlight, how to present risk, and what kinds of narratives to construct. The most frequently occurring topic from the Liberal government in the corpus is climate change, with fifty-five entries, followed by emissions with eleven and plastics with seven. All three of these topics are strongly associated with the Liberal government and suggest a long-term focus on environmental reform and sustainability (Liberal Party of Canada, 2021). In contrast, the Conservative government's most frequently addressed topics include hurricanes and species conservation, each with four entries, and mercury with three. This contrast may reflect a difference in communication priorities, with the Conservative party focusing more on immediate or event-based crises and the Liberals appearing to emphasize broader systemic risks.

This chapter proceeds by offering a broad overview of the corpus' communication types, identifying patterns in the tone and structure of government messaging. Particular attention is paid to how crisis types are presented, how communication changes across different phases of crisis (pre-crisis, crisis event, post-crisis), and how tone is deployed to guide public perception and behaviour. Following this, the chapter undertakes a more granular discourse analysis using Gee's framework. This includes application of The Big "D" Discourse Tool to explore how the

government positions itself, whether as an authoritative protector, a compassionate guide, or a knowledgeable expert, within crisis narratives. The Situated Meaning Tool will then help uncover how specific terms acquire meaning in context, revealing shifts in potential strategies over time. The Sign Systems and Knowledge Building Tool will assess how certain forms of expertise or authority are established and maintained through privileged or de-privileged language. The Significance Building Tool will explore how government messaging amplifies or diminishes the perceived importance of particular events or risks. Finally, the Activities Building Tool will analyze how language is used to prompt specific behaviours in the public, such as adopting safety practices, participating in environmental programs, or simply informing them of important issues. Each of these analytic steps aims to trace both continuity and change in government discourse, ultimately offering a synthesized view of how Canadian federal crisis communication, at least within the context of environmental and climate issues, has evolved over the course of a politically dynamic and environmentally turbulent decade.

### ***Crisis communication over time***

This section presents an overview of the types of crises addressed in federal communications from ECCC, the stages of the crisis life cycle represented in the corpus, and how these communications have evolved over time. Drawing on Coombs's (2023) categorization of crises and combining this with the coded texts retrieved from ECCC, this section explores the nature, topics, and timing of Canadian federal crisis communication between 2011 and 2021. This analysis sets the stage for a more in-depth discourse-focused exploration by providing a foundational understanding of what types of crises were addressed, when, and how they were communicated in relation to their life cycle stage. Throughout the corpus, three primary crisis types emerge: environmental crises, natural disasters, and public health crises. These categories

have been identified based on Coombs's (2023) framework, which distinguishes among disasters, public health events, and organizational crises. While Coombs includes environmental catastrophes under the broader category of disasters, for the purposes of this study, a clearer distinction is drawn between natural disasters, such as fires, floods, or severe weather events, and environmental crises, which are longer-term systemic risks which are not naturally occurring like climate change, pollution, or emissions. This separation allows for a more refined analysis of how different forms of environmental concern are approached by ECCC. The third category, public health crises, refers to issues that have broad geographic and social impacts, such as the spread of communicable diseases or toxic exposure, and which often involve overlapping concerns about human and environmental health.

Of the 134 textual points analyzed, the vast majority, 100 communications or 74.6% of the corpus, focuses on environmental crises. These include messages related to climate change, emissions, pollution, and other broad, long-term ecological concerns. Twelve communications, or 8.9%, focus on natural disasters, including hurricanes and extreme weather events. Finally, 22 communications or 16.4%, deal with public health issues, which often overlap with environmental risk but are framed primarily in terms of human health impacts and safety. While these categories can have a lot of crossovers, during examination, I looked for the biggest issues. If health issues were more prevalent than environmental issues, then I determined it was an environmental crisis. These numbers indicate that environmental crises monopolize federal risk and crisis communication in this context, with natural disasters and public health issues taking up a smaller, though still meaningful, share of the discourse. Breaking these categories down by year reveals further insight into the changing focus of ECCC's communication strategy. For ease of review and clarity, all following percentages presented in this section have been rounded to

the nearest whole number. Between 2011 and 2013, public health issues account for a significant portion of the messaging. In 2011, for example, two of the three communications, 66%, relate to public health, suggesting that early in the timeline of the corpus, these issues were afforded more prominence. However, by 2015 and beyond, environmental crises overwhelmingly represents the communication output, with percentages regularly exceeding 67%, and peaking at 100%. Natural disasters maintain a small but persistent presence in the texts, never accounting for more than 25% of a given year's communications. These findings indicate a growing prioritization of systemic environmental issues, particularly climate change, as a central focus of ECCC's public messaging strategy.

**Crisis Life cycles.** Beyond crisis type, the corpus was also coded according to crisis life cycle stage. This framework allows for a distinction between pre-crisis, crisis event, and post-crisis communications. Following Coombs's (2023) definition, a risk refers to a potential hazard that has not yet materialized into a crisis, whereas a crisis is defined as an active situation that is currently inflicting harm. Post-crisis communication refers to messaging that reflects on, evaluates, or communicates the conclusion of a crisis event or management effort (Coombs, 2023). Based on this definition, 102 texts, or 76.1%, were categorized as pre-crisis. These messages focus on identifying risks, encouraging proactive behaviours, or warning about potential threats. Twenty-three communications, or 17.1%, were identified as crisis events, using active language to indicate that the threat or harm is ongoing and immediate. The remaining nine communications, or 6.7%, were classified as post-crisis, communicating outcomes, lessons learned, or long-term impacts of past events.

A year-by-year breakdown reveals how these stages fluctuate over time. From 2011 to 2014, the vast majority of communications are pre-crisis, with very few crisis or post-crisis

messages. A pre-crisis focus continues until 2019, when there is a slight increase in crisis event messaging. Notably, 2021 marks a significant shift, with 15 of the year's 26 communications, 57.7%, classified as crisis event messages. Of these, 11 specifically address climate change, indicating a distinct shift in how this issue is being communicated. Rather than being positioned as a future or potential threat, climate change in 2021 is portrayed as an active and immediate crisis, demanding urgent attention and response. This shift signals a broader change in environmental discourse at the federal level, as the department moves from preventative messaging to language that underscores the present-day impacts of climate-related events.

The consistent dominance of pre-crisis communication throughout the corpus is both expected and strategic. Risk communication aims to prevent crises by informing the public, encouraging preparedness, and supporting behavioural change. As Gore and Knuth (2009) argue, risk communication campaigns play a critical role in fostering long-term change, particularly when they aim to educate and mobilize the public before a crisis escalates (Gore & Knuth, 2009). Coombs (2023) also emphasizes the value of pre-crisis strategy, noting that if risk is addressed effectively, it need not evolve into a full crisis. From this perspective, the high proportion of pre-crisis communications in the corpus supports the idea that ECCC's strategy is oriented toward prevention and public education, which aligns with best practices in crisis management. As Coombs (2023) explains, "a risk has the potential to do harm while a crisis is inflicting harm" (Coombs, 2023, p. 22), underscoring the importance of intervening early to mitigate potential damage. This is further supported by Lupton (2013), who highlights the role of proactive messaging in preventing crises from developing or escalating (Lupton, 2013). The small and consistent presence of post-crisis communications, never exceeding two texts in a given year, suggests that once a crisis has passed, it does not often remain a priority in ECCC's outward

communication. This may reflect a strategic shift toward future preparedness rather than retrospective analysis, or it may indicate that post-crisis evaluation is handled through other channels not captured in this corpus. In either case, the low volume of post-crisis messaging suggests a limited focus on formal follow-up, lessons learned, or public reflection. To better illustrate the distinction between pre-crisis, crisis event, and post-crisis communications, a few representative quotes from the corpus are presented here. These examples provide insight into how each life cycle stage is linguistically constructed and how ECCC frames different types of information depending on the urgency of the situation.

These quotes exemplify how ECCC presents pre-crisis communication as a means of identifying, contextualizing, and encouraging the management of future risks. Pre-crisis messaging frequently emphasizes preparedness, the anticipation of potential threats, and the importance of stakeholder engagement in risk mitigation efforts. For instance, the 2014 statement, “to identify risk indicators for soils that are prone to releasing large quantities of phosphorus to surface runoff water” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 13), highlights ECCC’s use of technical language that identifies specific environmental indicators as precursors to broader ecological problems. This type of messaging reflects the department’s preventative orientation and the goal of early intervention. Similarly, the 2019 quote, “we invite you to contact your local warning preparedness meteorologist to find out more on lightning in Canada and get informed on how Canadians can better prepare in the event of lightning threats” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 94), demonstrates an emphasis on public education and community-level preparedness. It reflects ECCC’s strategy of positioning citizens as active participants in risk management by encouraging proactive behaviour. The 2018 communication, “investors want quality information to help manage the risks of climate change and profit from the opportunities that clean growth

creates” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 66), adds another layer by connecting environmental risk with economic opportunity. This message positions climate change as both a challenge and a driver of innovation, with implications for financial decision-making. Collectively, these quotes demonstrate how ECCC’s pre-crisis communication strategy seeks to build awareness, foster collaboration across sectors, and manage potential crises before they escalate into immediate threats.

In contrast to the forward-looking tone of pre-crisis communication, crisis event messaging from ECCC adopts urgent and immediate language, indicating that a crisis is actively unfolding. These communications often highlight present impacts and the necessity of a swift response. For example, a 2013 message concerning wildlife conservation states: “White Nose Syndrome has led to serious declines in bat populations throughout eastern Canada and the eastern United States. More than 5.5 million bats are estimated to have died so far” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 7). The use of both past and present-tense verbs signals that the crisis is ongoing, with measurable and devastating consequences already in effect. Similarly, a 2019 message emphasizes the urgency of biodiversity loss by stating, “Canada’s leadership is essential to reverse the drastic loss of animals, plants, and habitat worldwide” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 88). The term “drastic” conveys the severity of the situation, and the call for leadership underscores the need for immediate governmental action. Perhaps the clearest example of crisis framing appears in a 2021 message: “Climate change can no longer be considered a future threat. It is upon us. From droughts and wildfires to shoreline erosion and floods, Canadians are already feeling the effects” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 131). This statement decisively shifts the discourse from potential to present danger, reinforcing that climate change has moved from a hypothetical risk to a lived reality for Canadians.

Following the peak of a crisis, ECCC's communications often adopt a more reflective and outcome-focused tone, characteristic of post-crisis messaging. These communications typically highlight resolved risks, institutional achievements, or the long-term impacts of past efforts. A 2011 message illustrates this shift: where the department aims to "protect the environment and human health by preventing and managing risks posed by toxic and other harmful substances" (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 1). The language implies that significant action has already been taken, and the threat is now being successfully managed. A 2016 communication looks back on a century of conservation success: "For a century, the Migratory Birds Convention has led to critical international cooperation to protect important wildlife across North America" (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 36). This retrospective framing emphasizes longevity, collaboration, and effective policy. Even when addressing ongoing concerns, post-crisis messages are often couched in reflective terms. A 2021 year-end message notes: "This year's stories clearly demonstrate that Canadians across the country are experiencing unprecedented extreme weather" (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 134). While acknowledging the persistence of environmental challenges, the positioning of the communications focused on "this year's stories", which signals a shift from immediate crisis response to reflective observation, consistent with post-crisis discourse.

In summary, this section has shown that ECCC's crisis communication strategy from 2011 to 2021 is predominantly oriented toward pre-crisis messaging, emphasizing preparedness, risk identification, and future threats. However, a notable shift emerges in the later years of the corpus, with an increasing use of crisis-event language, particularly in relation to climate change. This evolution in tone suggests a strategic response to mounting environmental, political, and societal pressures to recognize and address climate-related crises more directly. The crisis stages

outlined here provide a conceptual foundation for the following sections, where the corpus will be analyzed using Gee's (2011) discourse analysis tools. This deeper analysis will explore how ECCC constructs meaning, asserts authority, and positions both itself and the public in relation to environmental risk and action. Each of the five subsequent sections applies a different tool from Gee's (2011) discourse analysis framework, specifically, the Significance Building Tool, Situated Meaning Tool, Sign Systems and Knowledge Building Tool, The Big "D" Discourse Tool, and the Activities Building Tool. These tools offer distinct yet complementary lenses for examining how language functions within ECCC's communications to shape institutional identity, frame risk, and engage publics in environmental action.

### ***The Big "D" Discourse Tool***

The Big "D" Discourse tool, as outlined by Gee (2011), encourages researchers to analyze how language constructs identities and social roles. Specifically, it asks what identity the speaker or writer is trying to enact or be recognized as. Within the context of government communication, this question becomes particularly prominent, as public institutions often seek to project authority, inspire trust, and mobilize public action. ECCC's crisis communications between 2011 and 2021 provide a large corpus through which to explore this question. Drawing on 134 public-facing texts, this section analyzes the dominant identities enacted through ECCC's language, focusing on three primary personas: the Knowledgeable Expert, the Compassionate Guide, and the Authoritative Protector. Each of these identities corresponds to distinct discursive goals and reflects broader trends in risk communication and public trust. Frandsen and Johansen (2020) define "risk" as the potential for future harm and uncertainty, highlighting that the role of risk communication is not only to convey information but also to persuade the public to act preventatively (Frandsen & Johansen, 2020). Similarly, Glenn (2014) identifies two major aims

of government communication; to build trust and maintain relationships, while shaping public perception and behaviour by serving as a knowledge-based resource (Glenn, 2014). The enactment of identity within ECCC's messages aligns with these aims, as the department crafts a consistent public image that blends scientific authority with varying degrees of emotional appeal and governmental assertiveness.

Across the 134 communications analyzed, rounding to the whole number, the Knowledgeable Expert emerges as the dominant identity, accounting for 71% of the corpus. This prevalence reflects ECCC's primary role as a scientific institution responsible for environmental monitoring and education. The Authoritative Protector represents 20% of the texts, indicating moments when ECCC emphasizes federal leadership, action, and regulatory enforcement. In contrast, the Compassionate Guide identity appears in only 8% of messages, suggesting a less frequent but potentially strategically meaningful effort to project empathy, support, and relational concern.

**The Knowledgeable Expert.** The Knowledgeable Expert identity is by far the most common, appearing consistently across all years of the corpus. This persona is characterized by precise, often technical language that emphasizes the scientific basis of environmental risk and government response. The purpose of this identity is to inform and educate, presenting the department as a reliable, fact-based source of information. A representative example appears in a 2012 message: "Through these Regulations, we are addressing one of the largest sources of pollution in our waters. We've set the country's first national standards for sewage treatment. These standards will reduce the levels of harmful substances deposited to surface water from wastewater systems in Canada" (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 5). Here, the department explains its actions with specificity and clarity. The focus on regulation, standards, and outcomes

underscores a commitment to evidence-based policy and technical competence. Similarly, a 2016 communication states: “Air pollution can cause adverse human health effects, such as an increased risk of various cardiovascular and respiratory problems” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 30). This message conveys clear cause-and-effect relationships, emphasizing known risks and positioning ECCC as an authority on public health consequences. Importantly, the language remains accessible to a lay audience, supporting Glenn’s (2014) point that effective government communication must both inform and connect with the public. Another strong example comes from 2019: “Climate change threatens the health of Canadians. The new ClimateData.ca portal includes a specific health section with data useful for health authorities to support and inform health adaptation strategies and planning” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 99). This quote reinforces the expert identity by highlighting ECCC’s role as a provider of actionable data. The portal’s creation serves as evidence of the department’s capacity to anticipate stakeholder needs and supply relevant information. The prominence of this identity makes sense given ECCC’s institutional mission and the scientific nature of environmental issues. Whether discussing pollution, biodiversity, or climate impacts, the department consistently centers its communication on expertise, reinforcing its credibility and its role as a trusted informational resource.

**The Authoritative Protector.** The Authoritative Protector identity appears in 27 of the 134 texts, making up 20% of the corpus. This persona emphasizes ECCC’s role in taking action to safeguard Canadians, enforce regulations, and manage risk at a national scale. Unlike the Knowledgeable Expert, which is primarily informational, the Authoritative Protector asserts control, policy leadership, and governmental responsibility. A 2014 message provides a strong example: “The Government of Canada has also committed \$3.5 million annually (\$17.5 million

over 2012-2017) to protect the Great Lakes from the threat of Asian carp” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 11). The language highlights financial commitment and ongoing federal action. It presents the government not just as knowledgeable, but as an active steward and protector of Canadian ecosystems. Similarly, a 2019 message reads: “Canada’s plan includes over 50 measures that help people save energy and money, encourage innovation and new jobs, reduce pollution and enable Canadians to prepare for, and adapt to, climate risks like floods, forest fires and extreme weather” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 92). This quote combines the future-oriented risk of climate change with a proactive list of governmental interventions. The breadth of initiatives and their tangible benefits reinforce a narrative of federal leadership and preparedness. In 2021, the department states: “The Government of Canada will continue working on these priority chemicals, while proposing to better identify and help protect populations that may be at increased risk due to either greater exposure or greater susceptibility, including firefighters and children” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 124). Here, the focus is on targeted protection of vulnerable populations, demonstrating a paternalistic yet authoritative stance. The reference to specific groups like firefighters and children heightens the emotional stakes and enhances the legitimacy of government intervention. Notably, this identity peaks in 2014, during the tenure of a Conservative majority government, with 62% of that year’s messages adopting an authoritative tone. This outlier may reflect broader ideological priorities or a strategic choice to foreground governmental control in response to specific threats such as species conservation, hurricanes, emissions, or mercury contamination.

**The Compassionate Guide.** The Compassionate Guide identity appears least frequently, constituting only 8% of the corpus. Nevertheless, it plays a meaningful role in shaping the department’s relational image, particularly when the discourse involves international solidarity,

Indigenous communities, or intergenerational responsibility. This identity emphasizes empathy, care, and moral guidance. A 2015 message states: “Better early warning systems, particularly for the most vulnerable countries like small island states, that are facing an increasing number of extreme weather and climate events caused by climate change, can make a real difference” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 21). The message positions Canada as a caring actor on the global stage, advocating for vulnerable populations and offering technological support. In a 2017 message, ECCC notes: “The science of climate change is clear: Human activities are driving unprecedented changes in the earth’s climate, and these changes pose significant risks to human health, security, and economic growth. In the Arctic, these impacts are only magnified, and Indigenous Peoples are among the most vulnerable” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 48). This quote reflects a deepening of the compassionate identity through recognition of specific communities affected by climate change. The acknowledgment of Indigenous vulnerability signals both inclusivity and ethical awareness. A 2019 message further exemplifies this identity: “Our climate crisis is inextricably linked with nature. By protecting and preserving Canada’s natural spaces, we can help mitigate the effects of climate change and ensure we protect our wildlife, today and for future generations” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 100). The message invokes emotional appeal through phrases like “our wildlife” and “future generations,” drawing on values of stewardship and legacy. Although the Compassionate Guide is the least represented identity, it complements the other two by humanizing the department’s voice. When used, it serves to foster trust, broaden appeal, and align ECCC’s messaging with the lived concerns of citizens and communities.

**Trends Over Time.** From 2011 to 2021, the dominance of the Knowledgeable Expert identity remains remarkably consistent within the corpus, keeping to whole numbers, rarely falling below 65% in any year. This consistency supports the idea that ECCC views its primary

role as that of an educator and information provider. The Authoritative Protector fluctuates more, with notable spikes in 2013 and 2014, reflecting moments when the department emphasized federal action or responded to pressing events. The Compassionate Guide remains a minority identity, never exceeding 25% of communications in any year, underscoring its more selective and supplementary role. This distribution of identities suggests that ECCC strategically prioritizes scientific credibility while incorporating moments of assertiveness and empathy as needed. This identity pattern aligns with broader goals of risk communication and public trust: ECCC seeks to be seen as a competent authority that informs, protects, and occasionally comforts the public in the face of environmental uncertainty.

In summary, the Big "D" Discourse Tool reveals how ECCC primarily constructs its identity as a knowledgeable expert, with 71% of all texts enacting this role across the decade examined. This emphasis reflects the department's institutional priority on establishing scientific credibility and delivering risk-based information to the public, as outlined by Frandsen and Johansen (2020) and Glenn (2014). While the authoritative protector identity emerges in specific political and policy contexts, particularly during 2014 under a Conservative majority government, its presence remains secondary, at only 20%. The compassionate guide identity, representing care for vulnerable populations and long-term stewardship, accounts for just 8% of the corpus, illustrating a comparatively limited focus on empathetic framing. To further unpack how these communications are linguistically constructed, the next section applies Gee's (2011) Situated Meaning Tool, which focuses on the contextual and cultural meanings of key terms and phrases used throughout the texts.

### *The Situated Meaning Tool*

Situated meaning refers to how words or phrases take on particular meanings within specific contexts, shaped by cultural, institutional, or political factors. In analyzing how ECCC uses terms such as “risk,” “threat,” “crisis,” and related terminology between 2011 and 2021, it becomes clear that the meanings of these terms are not fixed. Instead, they evolve alongside changing global events, societal values, potentially departmental priorities. The Situated Meaning Tool provides insight into how these terms function in context, whether to identify a problem, communicate urgency, signal a solution, or build public trust. To conduct this analysis, I focus on examining shifts over time, in a year by year examination. This section analyzes how meanings were constructed, redefined, and embedded in broader discourses over the decade, tracing patterns in language use that reveal how ECCC sought to influence public understanding of environmental and climate-related challenges.

**From Abstract to Tangible.** Across the 2011–2021 period, one of the most prominent trends is a shift in the meaning of key terms from abstract or technical to tangible and actionable. Early references to “pollution” and “risk” tended to be broad, often describing generalized harm to the environment or health, sometimes with limited geographical specificity, such as “offshore waters.” These uses presented environmental issues as real, but the lack of specificity limited the level of concern. However, beginning in 2014, such language began acquiring a more concrete character. Pollution was no longer merely “harmful” it was described using vivid comparisons: for example, mercury levels equivalent to “five Olympic-sized swimming pools”(Appendix A, Table 1, Row 18) or emissions equated to “removing four million cars” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 15). These shifts grounded otherwise complex or invisible environmental threats in visual, measurable scenarios that could be more easily understood and remembered by the public. At the

same time, ECCC increasingly emphasized the dual social and economic consequences of environmental risk. Words like “clean growth,” “carbon pricing,” and “resilience” began to acquire layered meanings, referencing not only ecological necessity but also economic advantage. By positioning solutions as financially beneficial and socially responsible, these terms signalled a broader strategy: one in which environmental risk was integrated into national economic development. The term “resilience,” in particular, emerged as both a community attribute and a policy objective, evolving into a representation of preparedness and strength from the department. Another important shift in situated meaning involves the personalization and localization of risk. Throughout the decade, broad environmental challenges were increasingly connected to specific communities and identities. For example, risks once portrayed in general terms became tied to key demographics such as Canadian families, vulnerable populations, and Indigenous communities. The risks of climate change evolved to include not only meteorological impacts but also social and economic disruptions. This transition allowed ECCC to communicate risk in a way that acknowledged experiences of Canadians, while also reinforcing the idea that climate change is not a distant or abstract issue; it is something affecting individuals and communities now.

**2011–2013.** In the early part of the decade, the use of terms like “pollution,” “threat,” and “risk” largely served to establish baseline environmental concerns. These terms were often used in relation to water and air quality, biodiversity loss, or human health impacts. For example, water pollution was discussed as a threat to marine ecosystems and economic livelihoods, while air pollution was positioned as a public health concern. These meanings were largely static and issue-oriented, serving to name and validate the existence of environmental harms. At this stage, risk was not yet defined in economic, systemic, or security-oriented terms. Instead, it functioned

as a descriptor of undesirable environmental conditions, without broader implications. However, the language began to hint at emerging themes. There was growing attention to the idea that environmental harms extend beyond visible ecosystems and into human spaces. By connecting pollution to human health and referencing its effects on Canadian communities, the discourse began to shape an early form of collective impact, highlighting the importance for Canadians and the department.

**2014.** A notable shift occurred in 2014 when ECCC's language began incorporating tangible examples and imagery. Terms like “protect,” “restore,” and “stewardship” appear increasingly, suggesting that nature is not only at risk but also something inherently valuable that requires continuous care. Risk is now understood not just as harm, but as something that can be anticipated, mitigated, or even prevented through human intervention. This year also introduces comparisons and metaphors designed to enhance public comprehension. Descriptions such as impact levels of pollution equated to “five Olympic swimming pools” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 18) or increased significance of the impacts of even one hurricane become a tool for giving abstract or technical risks a relatable presentation. Risk becomes less about statistical uncertainty and more about visual, graspable consequences. Additionally, the phrase “world-class weather and environmental services” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 17) positions the government as a capable actor, reinforcing its role in both monitoring and responding to environmental issues. This situated meaning constructs risk as a condition that can be responsibly managed by institutional actors with the right tools.

**2015–2016.** By 2015 and 2016, the meaning of “risk” began to reflect systemic and economic complexity. The term is frequently tied to “climate change,” which is now presented as a long-term, structural concern. Words like “climate risk insurance” and “clean growth” are

introduced, emphasizing that environmental risk is no longer simply about harm; it is also a driver of innovation, investment, and development. Risk language also becomes more strategic. For instance, “pricing pollution” repositions environmental taxation as a form of economic growth rather than a financial penalty. This particular phrasing assigns a neutral, even rational character to environmental governance, where economic tools are redefined as responsible tools of action. In this context, “resilience” begins taking on a policy-specific meaning. It is no longer solely about individual or community strength but is positioned as a desirable outcome of government planning and infrastructure investment.

**2017–2018.** In the middle years of the corpus, situated meanings become increasingly personal and inclusive. Communications focus further on health effects, community impacts, and indigenous protection, representing a deliberate move toward language that centers community and societal experiences. Terms like “resilience” are now used not only in technical policy contexts but also as markers of social strength. They describe both how communities withstand environmental shocks and how the government seeks to foster stability. This period also sees the expansion of environmental risk into social and political domains. Vulnerability is no longer confined to ecological systems; it includes gender, age, and race-based disparities. For instance, women and girls are identified as “particularly at risk” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 70), linking climate impacts to existing social inequalities. Phrases such as “circular economy” acquire forward-looking and often optimistic meanings, suggesting that environmental responsibility is intertwined with broader movements for economic opportunities. Here, risk is not only something to be managed, but also something that reveals and exacerbates social conditions. This layered meaning encourages identification with environmental causes, particularly among

communities who may not have seen themselves represented in earlier technical or scientific language.

**2019–2020.** As the discourse matures, the language of risk and threat becomes increasingly embedded in policy-oriented communication. By 2019, risk is no longer framed solely as an environmental or economic issue, it is tied to social inclusion, equity, and local impacts. References to indigenous communities and youth as leaders in climate action suggest a broader, more participatory understanding of who is affected by, and capable of addressing, environmental risk. Language increasingly portrays risk as a condition that intersects with social identity, empowerment, and innovation, signalling a shift in how governments articulate both problems and solutions. 2019 signals an increase in the coupling of "climate" and "crisis", increasing the urgency of the climate impacts for Canadians. The discourse reflects heightened urgency, frequently describing the climate as a “crisis” and invoking phrases like “Our climate crisis is inextricably linked with nature” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 100). These expressions position climate risk within a wider context of protecting nature, not just for the environment, but for Canadians, highlighting the complexity and immediacy of contemporary threats.

**2021.** By 2021, the language of risk reaches a highly institutionalized form, reflecting its integration into financial, security, and strategic policy contexts. Rather than being treated solely as an environmental or public health concern, risk is now positioned as a central factor in national stability and governance. Terms such as “climate-friendly technologies” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 115) illustrate how climate-related concerns are being translated into technical categories aligned with global financial and regulatory frameworks. In this context, risk functions as both a challenge and a calculable variable—something to be monitored, disclosed, and managed through policy instruments. The discourse of 2021 also adopts a more expansive

tone, with references to the increasing intensity and systemic nature of climate-related impacts. The emergence of phrases such as “accelerating climate crisis” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 113) marks a significant escalation in how environmental risk is characterized. Rather than presenting climate change as a gradual or distant concern, this language signals a growing awareness that climate impacts are compounding more quickly and with increasing intensity. The term “accelerating” conveys a sense of urgency, where environmental disruptions are seen as interconnected with broader social, economic, and infrastructural vulnerabilities. At the same time, the presence of this language across a wide range of policy areas suggests a maturing and increasingly unified discourse. Climate risk is no longer discussed solely within environmental mandates; it now appears increasingly in communications related to economic development, infrastructure, and public health safety. This alignment indicates that climate risk has become a cross-cutting concern in national governance, with its management framed as essential to future stability, competitiveness, and leadership on the global stage.

In summary, between 2011 and 2021, the situated meanings of “risk,” “threat,” and related terms in ECCC’s public communications underwent a notable transformation. Initially associated with generalized environmental harms, these terms gradually became more layered and interconnected, describing not only ecological disruption but also its social, economic, and political dimensions. As these meanings evolved, they came to reflect broader shifts in how the Canadian government conceptualizes its responsibilities and frames environmental issues as integral to national priorities. This shift in meaning lays the groundwork for examining how language functions as a system for organizing and legitimizing knowledge. The following section applies the Sign Systems and Knowledge Building Tool to explore how language privileges certain perspectives or de-privileges information in communications.

### *Sign Systems and Knowledge Building*

This section applies the Sign Systems and Knowledge Building tool to examine how ECCC presents knowledge in its public communications from 2011 to 2021. The analysis focuses on how language either privileges or de-privileges certain types of information, shaping who can access and interpret the knowledge being conveyed. By identifying these patterns, the analysis highlights how ECCC communicates complexity, assumes levels of audience understanding, and potentially signals strategic priorities in its public discourse. Privileged language, in this context, refers to content that assumes a high level of background knowledge from the audience. This includes references to policies, regulations, or scientific programs that are not clearly explained. De-privileged language, by contrast, simplifies or explains these same concepts in plain, accessible terms. The distinction between the two provides insight into whether ECCC is assuming a technically literate audience or actively seeking to inform a broader public. It also reflects whether the communication is intended for general audiences or for more specialized readers such as policymakers or international stakeholders.

Across the 134 texts points collected for this study, approximately 55%, or 75 texts, were categorized as using privileged language, while 44%, or 59 texts, employed de-privileged language. These proportions shifted notably over time. Early in the corpus, such as in 2011 and 2012, the majority of content was de-privileged, with two-thirds of the texts explaining concepts in accessible terms. This trend continued through 2013, where all content analyzed was de-privileged. However, beginning in 2014, this pattern begins to reverse. Privileged content increased sharply, six of eight texts in 2014 used language that assumed audience familiarity with policy and regulatory contexts. By 2021, 57% of content was privileged, reflecting a broader trend toward more complex, institutional language. This shift suggests a growing

reliance on policy-heavy and technical language over time. In 2016, 62% of the entries were de-privileged, indicating that explanations and public-facing clarity remained a priority in the early years of Canada's Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. Yet as climate action policies matured and institutionalized, references to specific programs, acts, and strategies began to appear more frequently without accompanying explanations. This growing pattern is especially prominent in the years following 2018, where content repeatedly referenced mechanisms such as carbon pricing plans, reporting standards, or climate policies, often assuming an understanding of the Paris Agreement, with minimal context for a general audience.

**Intended audiences.** This increase in privileged language may not necessarily signal a disregard for public accessibility but may instead reflect a shift in audience. For instance, speeches delivered at international meetings or aimed at policy audiences may reasonably use more technical terminology. Similarly, news releases, of which 66% of the corpus is composed, may be structured with the expectation that journalists will interpret and disseminate the content in simplified terms through media outlets. In these cases, ECCC may prioritize the transmission of policy details, metrics, or programmatic updates rather than direct public comprehension. Nevertheless, the presence of de-privileged language remains an important indicator of ECCC's commitment to public understanding. In many instances, especially those concerning risk and threat, content includes clear definitions and justifications for action. De-privileged entries often contextualize environmental challenges with plain language explanations, describing how climate change may impact everyday life, health, or infrastructure. For example, from 2016 to 2021, the department's communications increased the connection of environmental risks to tangible outcomes like flooding, food security, and economic disruption. These explanations

were often framed in terms that emphasized immediacy and personal relevance, making complex issues more relatable.

Conversely, privileged language often appears in communications that highlight technological solutions, regulatory frameworks, or intergovernmental partnerships. These entries tend to signal Canada's alignment with international standards or commitment to innovation but do so through language that may be inaccessible to those without prior knowledge of the associated policies. What emerges from this corpus is an evolving communication strategy. Over time, ECCC's discourse increasingly reflects the institutionalization of climate governance, as climate risk becomes woven into the language of security, health, economic resilience, and global cooperation. As these topics become more deeply embedded in federal policy, the communication surrounding them also becomes more specialized. This may indicate that ECCC sees itself as operating within a more expert-driven or internationally competitive field, where signalling credibility and technical capacity is valued alongside public transparency. At the same time, the persistent use of de-privileged language in specific contexts suggests that public understanding remains a parallel priority. Especially in moments of crisis or heightened risk, the department continues to explain environmental challenges in human terms, emphasizing clarity, relevance, and the need for collective action. These patterns demonstrate that ECCC's knowledge-building practices are not monolithic; they are shaped by the intended audience, the nature of the communication medium, and the strategic importance of the message being conveyed.

Ultimately, the balance between privileged and de-privileged content across the decade reflects a communication strategy that is both reactive and intentional, responsive to shifting political and environmental contexts while also reflecting broader changes in how environmental

governance is conceptualized. As ECCC's role expands beyond environmental stewardship to encompass economic, infrastructural, and diplomatic concerns, the language it uses becomes a tool not only for communication but also for institutional positioning. These findings point to the importance of audience-aware messaging and raise questions about accessibility, transparency, and the role of public institutions in making complex knowledge actionable. These themes will be further explored in the next section using the Significance Building Tool.

### ***Significance Building Tool***

The significance-building tool offers a framework for assessing how language enhances or diminishes the importance of particular ideas, actions, or issues. In the context of crisis communication, the capacity to guide public perception through such communications is critical. Messages must strike a careful balance: underscoring the severity of risks to prompt public response, while also maintaining credibility and strategic clarity. Environment and Climate Change Canada, as a federal body responsible for environmental monitoring and policy, regularly engages in this form of meaning-making by amplifying certain threats and selectively foregrounding particular actions. This section will analyze how ECCC uses grammatical and linguistic features to construct urgency or downplay long-term environmental risks, revealing patterns in institutional communication over the ten-year period. In doing so, it will also examine what topics are rendered less important, primarily through omission, and how these shifts in constructed significance present priorities, social concerns, or external events.

Across the corpus, there is a clear pattern of enhanced significance placed on issues that align with emergent crises or public priorities. In earlier years, communications tended to focus on discrete environmental threats or regionally significant risks. For example, in 2011, the key

areas enhanced through communication were pollution, mercury emissions, and hurricane preparedness. These topics are contextually appropriate to the events of the time, as mercury regulations and storm readiness were central topics of communication within the corpus. The emphasis on regulatory steps taken to address pollution and hazardous materials shows how the government worked to construct a sense of accountability and responsiveness to health and safety concerns. The year 2012 saw continued attention to hurricanes and preparedness, with growing emphasis on public engagement and nature conservation. This is an early example of ECCC blending urgency with inclusivity, emphasizing not only government action but also the role of the public. The communicative strategy here constructs significance by linking environmental preparedness to community well-being and civic responsibility. This shift suggests a broader expansion: from narrowly defined environmental threats to the inclusion of public responsibility as a co-constructed solution. Notably, even as preparedness for hurricanes remained a central issue, the documents also began to highlight ongoing environmental goals, such as habitat restoration or biodiversity protection, suggesting an attempt to maintain the visibility of long-term environmental work alongside acute weather events. In 2013, attention was directed toward species conservation, hurricane preparedness, and protecting Indigenous communities. The latter represents an important addition to the communicative priorities of ECCC. While the language used still centers on protective and preventative actions, the inclusion of Indigenous communities and leadership reflects a growing effort to signify reconciliation and environmental stewardship as interlinked concepts. This enhancement of significance occurs not just through inclusion but through linguistic association with responsibility, resilience, and environmental guardianship.

By 2014, the range of topics enhanced in communications broadened considerably. This year included themes such as protecting water, addressing severe weather, reducing emissions, combating air pollution, promoting conservation, advancing environmental research, and continuing attention to mercury emissions. The sheer variety of emphasized issues suggests a shift toward thematic saturation; wherein multiple concurrent topics are positioned as equally important. The year 2015 marks a significant turning point in the corpus, with climate change becoming the most prominent issue, enhanced in importance. Communications in this year strategically highlight climate change, carbon pricing, and technological monitoring, with language that emphasizes both risk and opportunity. Carbon pricing is described not merely as a regulatory tool but as a necessary mechanism for innovation and a boost for the Canadian economy, while technology is portrayed as both a solution and a symbol of national progress. This repositioning marks a notable shift in how significance is constructed, not only as a reaction to threat but as an appeal to collective ambition. In 2016, communications emphasize collaboration, government action, and renewable energy, particularly wind energy, as well as continued emphasis on carbon pricing, climate change, and species conservation. The prevalence of collaboration as a theme is notable, as it constructs environmental responsibility as a shared burden. Collaboration refers not only to indigenous communities but to wider stakeholder engagement. The emphasis on collaborative and intergovernmental initiatives also suggests an evolving narrative where environmental stewardship is not confined to one actor but distributed across sectors and nations.

From 2017 through 2019, climate change and climate action consistently dominate as the most enhanced topics. Pollution, emissions, asbestos risks, and public health also gain significance, depending on the year. These years reflect a steady deepening of the government's

climate communication strategy, with increasingly assertive language. One example from 2019 includes "Our climate crisis is inextricably linked with nature. By protecting and preserving Canada's natural spaces, we can help mitigate the effects of climate change and ensure we protect our wildlife, today and for future generations" (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 100). Phrasing such as "climate crisis" and "mitigate" in this example show the increasing importance placed on climate change. Meanwhile, there is a steady layering of co-benefits into climate discourse: public health is linked with cleaner air; innovation is linked with clean technology; and Indigenous leadership is integrated into conservation narratives. In 2020 and 2021, communications continue to elevate climate action, clean energy, and conservation. These years also feature an increased presence of language around economic recovery. In 2021, this is exemplified by one communication which states measures "demonstrate how serious Canada is about addressing the climate crisis and meeting the economic demands of global markets, now and into the future" (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 112). Communications which pair climate change with economic growth become increasingly common within the corpus, much like this example. Climate messaging becomes tied to the language of rebuilding, exemplified by language such as "Climate action is about good jobs, Canadian innovation, clean air and water, more inclusive communities and, most of all, a better future for our kids" (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 120). This period also shows how the construction of significance can be strategic and adaptive: rather than focusing solely on environmental degradation or emissions, the emphasis shifts toward opportunity, resilience, and shared progress. Throughout the corpus, ECCC consistently enhances the significance of any new policies or regulations by embedding them within broader narratives of protection, leadership, or progress. Whether introducing carbon pricing, regulating plastic pollution, or launching clean energy programs, communications often

justify these initiatives as necessary and beneficial. At the same time, topics that do not receive emphasis, such as long-term biodiversity loss outside species-at-risk frameworks or the changes to regulations regarding chemicals, are often less significant, as they are emphasized less throughout the corpus. This pattern reflects the strategic priorities of the department and underscores how the absence of emphasis can be as revealing as its presence.

In sum, the significance-building strategies employed by ECCC from 2011 to 2021 reflect an evolution in governmental communication practices. Early years focused on tangible, localized threats, while later years constructed importance around systemic, long-term challenges such as climate change. The texts reveal a communication approach that increasingly integrates science, social values, and encourages community cooperation in various cultures. Ultimately, the significance assigned to topics through this language is not neutral but shaped by institutional goals, political context, and the changing nature of environmental threats.

### ***Activities Building Tool***

The activities-building tool provides a lens for examining how language constructs or emphasizes specific forms of action. In the context of risk and crisis communication, especially from a governmental department such as ECCC, communications are not for no reason. Rather, it serves to perform departmental work, explaining, justifying, and occasionally instructing, while strategically shaping public understanding of who should act, how, and why. The tool is particularly useful in analyzing the kinds of actions that are highlighted across different communications and how those actions relate to both institutional responsibilities and the role of the public. Across the ECCC crisis and risk communication corpus from 2011 to 2021, communicative activities fall into three categories: informing, persuading, and prompting. Each

of these categories contributes differently to how risks are communicated, solutions are proposed, and authority is established.

Of the 134 communications analyzed, 99 (approximately 73%) primarily serve to inform. This high frequency aligns with the foundational purpose of crisis and risk communication, where timeliness, accuracy, and clarity of information are essential. Informing, in this context, is more than simply sharing facts; it is the dominant mode of institutional presence. These communications often include descriptions of environmental events, summaries of new regulations, or explanations of government-led research. Such messages do not ask the public to act or attempt to shift attitudes directly. Instead, they construct ECCC as a source of expertise and authority, situating the department as a central node in the circulation of environmental knowledge. The informing function is particularly consistent across the entire corpus, comprising the vast majority of communication types in every year except 2016. In 2011, 2012, and 2013, 66% to 75% of communications were categorized as primarily informational, a trend that continued through 2014 (87%), 2015 (80%), and reached its highest point in 2020, when 100% of the analyzed communications functioned to inform. This persistent use of informative discourse reveals a cautious approach, one that privileges the dissemination of facts and aligns with the department's primary persona of the knowledgeable expert. Given that ECCC's press releases are often intended to provide background for media coverage, this emphasis is understandable. Informing supports the department's role as a neutral and objective source, reinforcing trust in its scientific and policy-based authority without necessarily inviting direct confrontation or public debate.

In contrast, persuasive activities were present in 23 of the 134 communications (approximately 17%), and their distribution over time was uneven. Notably, there were no

persuasive texts recorded between 2011 and 2015. A sudden shift occurs in 2016, where 50% of communications analyzed (8 out of 16) included persuasive language or objectives. This spike is significant and may be linked to the institutional rebranding that occurred that same year, when the department's name was changed from Environment Canada to Environment and Climate Change Canada. The inclusion of “Climate Change” in the department’s name can be interpreted as a signal of evolving governmental priorities and possibly a more proactive communicative stance. As part of this shift, persuasive language could be designed to legitimize new directions in policy, reinforce institutional authority, and align national objectives with global climate goals. Typical persuasive strategies include justifying new policies, convincing municipalities or provinces to adopt recommended practices, or framing environmental regulations as beneficial and necessary. For instance, one communication notes that “Air pollution can cause adverse human health effects, such as an increased risk of various cardiovascular and respiratory problems” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 30). This sentence does more than describe a scientific finding; it positions environmental regulation as essential for health, thereby supporting the government’s stance through appeals to public well-being. Another statement, “shows the amazing things we can accomplish when countries work together on a common goal” (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 32), is less about facts and more about aligning the audience with a cooperative, optimistic view of international climate collaboration. These persuasive efforts are subtle, often embedded within informational texts, and rarely confrontational.

The use of persuasive activity remains inconsistent after 2016; before that, it remained at 0%. In 2017 and 2019, 21% of communications were persuasive. In 2018 and 2020, there were no persuasive instances. By 2021, however, persuasive activity rose again to 26% of that year’s communications. This variability suggests that persuasion is context-dependent within ECCC’s

communication strategy, possibly mobilized in response to significant policy rollouts, international agreements, or changes in government leadership. Importantly, these shifts demonstrate that persuasion is not a default strategy; it is a selective one, used when institutional action needs to be justified or when public buy-in is seen as essential to the policy's success.

The third category, prompting action, appears the least frequently, occurring in only 12 of the 134 communications (approximately 9%). While relatively rare, prompting plays a distinct and targeted role. Unlike informing or persuading, which often speak at the societal or institutional level, prompting is directed at individual or community behaviour. These communications ask Canadians to prepare for events, modify personal habits, or seek additional resources. The most common instances of prompting involve seasonal or weather-related risks, such as hurricanes or lightning storms. For example, one release states: "Lightning-related injuries and deaths can be avoided by knowing when to take action and what to do" (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 73). Here, the message clearly outlines that action must be taken by the public to avoid harm. This activity builds the idea that the public has agency, but also responsibility, particularly in the face of natural hazards. Beyond weather events, some prompt communications extend into broader behavioural recommendations, such as reducing emissions or decreasing waste. One statement reads: "People and companies throw away more than \$100 billion worth of plastic packaging each year" (Appendix A, Table 1, Row 76). While this sentence appears to inform, the context suggests a prompting activity, raising awareness in a way that positions the reader to consider changing their own behaviours. These prompts construct environmental responsibility as shared between government and individuals, subtly inviting lifestyle changes as part of the national strategy. However, the rarity of these communications suggests that direct behavioural prompting is not a preferred or central strategy. It may be that ECCC defers such

calls to other departments, or that the risks being communicated are seen as best addressed through policy rather than personal action. The annual distribution of prompting communications reveals a consistent but low presence. From 2011 to 2021, no year had more than three prompting instances, and several years (such as 2020) had none at all. This limited use may reflect the department's preference for institutional action over public mobilization or a caution around placing too much responsibility on individuals for complex or systemic issues. In practice, prompting appears most frequently when consequences are imminent and personal safety is at risk—scenarios where the cost of inaction is high and time-sensitive.

Taken together, these three categories, informing, persuading, and prompting, reveal how ECCC constructs activities in alignment with both communicative norms and institutional objectives. Informing dominates the landscape, positioning the department as an authoritative source of credible, scientific, and procedural knowledge. Persuading emerges more selectively, particularly when new directions or policies need support or public legitimacy. Prompting remains marginal, employed primarily in contexts of acute environmental risk where public preparation is deemed necessary. These patterns also reflect underlying assumptions about responsibility, authority, and change. Informing often situates the department as the actor; persuading attempts to align others with departmental action; prompting allocates responsibility to the public. That these modes are distributed unevenly suggests that ECCC's primary communicative posture is one of institutional reporting rather than mobilization or advocacy. The rare use of prompting, for example, reflects a reluctance to overstep or instruct, which may be strategic in maintaining credibility and avoiding controversy. Meanwhile, the selective use of persuasion, particularly after 2016, signals moments when institutional action required justification, trust-building, or alignment with public values. In summary, the activities-building

tool reveals a government department that prioritizes information delivery as its core communicative function, while selectively leveraging persuasion to reinforce policy shifts and occasionally prompting the public to act in specific, time-sensitive situations. These communicative strategies, taken across a decade, show how environmental governance is not only enacted through laws and regulations but also constructed and legitimized through the language of action.

### *Synthesis*

This chapter has examined a decade of public communications from ECCC using discourse analysis to explore how the department constructs environmental risk, institutional identity, and public engagement. Drawing on five of Gee's discourse tools, the Situated Meaning tool, Significance Building tool, Sign Systems and Knowledge Building tool, Big "D" Discourse tool, and Activities Building tool, this analysis demonstrates that ECCC's communications function not merely as neutral information delivery, but as complex, strategic communicative messages. These tools, when read together, reveal a discursive system where risk is more than a topic; it becomes a central anchor through which ECCC establishes what matters, who it is, and what it wants the public to do or believe. Rather than analyzing each tool in isolation, the findings of this chapter highlight how they operate interdependently to shape ECCC's evolving institutional voice. The Situated Meaning and Significance Building tools show how ECCC increasingly grounds abstract threats like climate change in vivid, concrete, and relatable language, using description to create immediacy and urgency. This situated language elevates environmental risks from technical descriptors to emotionally and politically salient concerns. When paired with the Significance Building tool, these choices reveal shifting institutional priorities: from localized pollution events early in the decade to broader, systemic crises, such as

climate change and national resilience by the end. These shifts coincide with broader political changes, including the department's 2015 renaming, which marks a discursive turning point toward more assertive, forward-facing language and long-term policy framing.

Meanwhile, the Sign Systems and Knowledge Building Tool reveals how ECCC constructs credibility through a careful calibration of technical and accessible language. Over time, there is a clear trend toward privileging specialized terminology and policy-aligned discourse, particularly in communications targeting stakeholders or referencing international agreements. However, this is strategically balanced with plainer, more inclusive language in moments of public risk, signalling ECCC's dual orientation: engaging the general public while maintaining institutional legitimacy among expert and governmental audiences. These discursive shifts intersect with the enactment of discursive identities, as identified through the Big "D" Discourse Tool. ECCC consistently projects itself as the Knowledgeable Expert, this identity is complemented by the Authoritative Protector and Compassionate Guide personas. These identities serve as flexible roles that allow the institution to respond to diverse communicative needs: asserting regulatory power, conveying empathy, or reassuring the public during crises. Importantly, these identity enactments are not random but correspond with broader institutional goals, political pressures, and evolving public expectations.

Temporal framing also plays a crucial role. Through a combination of the Situated Meaning, Significance Building, and Activities Building tools, this chapter shows how ECCC gradually shifts from preemptive or hypothetical risk language to present-tense crisis positioning. This discursive evolution reflects a growing institutional desire to appear proactive rather than reactive, signalling responsiveness and reinforcing its role as a legitimate and timely actor in environmental governance. The Activities Building Tool further illustrates that while ECCC

predominantly informs (73% of messages), it strategically introduces persuasive or prompting communication, particularly post-2016, to align public behaviour with policy goals, justify new initiatives, or mobilize limited action during acute environmental threats. These choices reflect a careful negotiation between maintaining scientific neutrality and responding to the increasing demand for government leadership in the face of the climate crisis.

Taken together, these discourse tools reveal that ECCC's communications are not simply reactive responses to environmental events but purposeful, multi-layered efforts to construct legitimacy, build public trust, and navigate complex social and political terrains. Risk, in this context, operates as a discursive device that allows ECCC to link scientific knowledge with public values, mobilize political will, and position environmental protection as both a shared responsibility and a national opportunity. By examining how these tools reinforce one another, how significance is built through situated language, how institutional identity is constructed through discursive activity, and how technical knowledge is privileged or simplified based on audience, this chapter demonstrates that environmental crisis communication is deeply purposeful. Gee's tools not only help uncover these patterns but also reveal how language becomes a strategic resource through which institutions like ECCC perform governance. As environmental challenges grow in complexity and urgency, understanding these linguistic strategies becomes essential for assessing not only how information is communicated but also how legitimacy, authority, and action are discursively constructed and sustained over time.

## **Conclusion**

This research set out to explore how the Canadian federal government, and more specifically Environment and Climate Change Canada, has approached communication during

crisis situations spanning the decade from 2011 to 2021. Using a qualitative framework grounded in discourse analysis and operationalized through Gee's (2011) analytical toolkit, the central research question asked: How has the crisis communication strategy of the Canadian federal government evolved and adapted in response to different crises from 2011 to 2021? This investigation sought to explore not only what was communicated during periods of environmental instability but also how these messages were framed, the roles and identities constructed, and how communication strategies responded to internal and external pressures over time. The overarching aim of the study was to develop a more nuanced understanding of governmental crisis communication. Rather than evaluating the success or failure of specific messages, the research aimed to uncover the discursive strategies that underpin institutional messaging and how language is used to build credibility, authority, empathy, and trust. This research holds significance in the broader field of environmental communication and crisis studies, as it highlights how public institutions navigate increasingly complex communicative landscapes marked by political polarization, growing environmental threats, and shifting public expectations.

### ***Summary of Results***

The findings of this thesis were developed across several interlinked chapters. Chapter 2 established the theoretical and conceptual foundations, discussing the role of discourse in shaping public perception and the importance of identity, significance, and relationship-building in governmental communication. This chapter emphasized how institutions use language to perform strategic functions and cultivate legitimacy. Chapter 3 laid out the methodological framework, explaining the rationale for using Gee's discourse tools. These tools allowed for a structured yet interpretive analysis of institutional texts, including the Situated Meaning tool,

Significance Building tool, Sign Systems and Knowledge Building tool, Big “D” Discourse tool, and Activities Building tool. The use of multiple tools in combination enabled a well-rounded interpretation of the texts, capturing both the granular details of language use and the broader institutional narratives at play. This was particularly important given the variety of communicative formats analyzed, from formal speeches to more concise media statements. By applying these tools to a curated corpus of public communications from ECCC, the analysis sought to uncover recurring patterns, shifts in tone, and the underlying logics of crisis discourse. Chapter 4 presented the central empirical analysis, revealing how ECCC’s public communications construct meaning and manage risk through a dynamic interplay of discursive strategies. Rather than fixed identities, ECCC’s messaging reflects a fluid and context-sensitive positioning that adapts to the demands of different crises and audiences. During acute, high-risk events such as extreme weather, the department emphasizes an authoritative and protective voice, projecting control, urgency, and clear institutional responsibility. In contrast, slower-moving or more abstract crises, like climate change or public health concerns, invite a more compassionate and guiding tone, fostering ethical engagement and collective care. These shifts not only reflect a communicative adaptation but also signal an awareness of public sentiment and changing expectations. By adopting more emotionally resonant tones in certain contexts, ECCC attempts to humanize its institutional presence and build a sense of shared responsibility between government and citizen. Meanwhile, for long-term initiatives and scientific reporting, communications prioritize the knowledgeable expert role, underscoring credibility, evidence, and institutional expertise.

These shifting discursive positions are part of a broader communicative strategy that balances multiple goals: informing the public with factual clarity, persuading audiences toward

collective responsibility, and occasionally prompting specific actions. This balance aligns with the inherent tension in environmental communication between raising awareness of urgent risks and empowering audiences to participate in solutions. Over time, ECCC's messaging reveals increasing narrative complexity, incorporating more personalized language, future-oriented framing, and appeals to shared values such as resilience and stewardship. This evolution mirrors wider cultural and political changes, including greater public scrutiny of environmental governance, the influence of digital media, and growing societal awareness of ecological vulnerability. Overall, the chapter illustrates that ECCC's communication strategy is a carefully calibrated process, one that constructs institutional legitimacy, manages public perception of risk, and negotiates the shifting terrain of environmental crisis discourse.

### ***Importance of the Results***

The results of this study confirm that government discourse is not merely reactive but is actively crafted to manage institutional identity and influence public interpretation. Government messaging evolves in step with socio-political demands, scientific developments, and changing media environments. The findings support the idea that crisis communication is fundamentally relational; it seeks to position the institution in ways that are intelligible and persuasive to diverse publics. These insights build on and extend previous research. Scholars like Coombs (2023) have focused on credibility management in corporate crises, while Glenn (2014) emphasizes the performative function of communication in governance. This thesis adds to that conversation by showing how similar dynamics play out within the public sector, specifically within the Canadian context. It offers evidence that government departments are increasingly attuned to the need for narrative coherence, emotional resonance, and flexible identity positioning. Moreover, the study contributes to ongoing debates about the role of expertise in

public life. While expertise remains a cornerstone of institutional authority, the findings suggest that its effectiveness depends on how it is presented, whether it is delivered with empathy, clarity, and consistency. The tension between technical language and public accessibility remains a critical challenge for communicators. These findings also highlight the intentionality behind public communication. ECCC's discursive choices are rarely incidental; rather, they likely reflect a deliberate effort to balance institutional goals with the perceived needs of the public. This leads to a broader shift in the ethos of governmental communication, where transparency and responsiveness are not merely performative ideals but necessary strategies for sustaining legitimacy. By understanding how communication is shaped by evolving political, environmental, and cultural pressures, public institutions can better anticipate moments of heightened scrutiny and design messages that are both ethically sound and publicly resonant.

### ***Theoretical or Conceptual Implications***

This study reinforces the applicability of Gee's discourse analysis tools in examining institutional texts. The Big "D" Discourse Tool provided a lens for analyzing how ECCC positioned itself in relation to the public, science, and other governmental actors. The Significance Building Tool was instrumental in revealing how certain information was foregrounded or backgrounded through linguistic choices. For example, ECCC often amplified scientific texts when presenting the knowledgeable expert identity but downplayed uncertainty or political risk. One key conceptual insight is that institutional identity is not simply constructed in the moment of crisis; it is often anticipatory. Government communication pre-emptively frames crises to influence public behaviour and expectations. This suggests that crisis communication is as much about narrative foresight as it is about real-time responsiveness. The findings also challenge a purely functionalist view of government communication. Rather than transmitting

neutral information, ECCC's messaging sought to persuade and reassure as appropriate. This aligns with theories that view discourse as performative and constitutive, rather than merely descriptive.

### ***Practical Implications***

The practical implications of this research are multi-faceted. Understanding the identity dynamics in crisis messaging can help public institutions tailor their communication strategies more effectively. Agencies like ECCC should consider not only the factual content of their messages but also how their tone, structure, and persona align with the emotional and informational needs of their audiences. For example, during emotionally charged or prolonged crises, emphasizing the compassionate guide identity may foster trust and engagement. In contrast, high-stakes emergencies may benefit from the clarity and decisiveness associated with the authoritative protector. The ability to shift strategically between these identities, while maintaining coherence and credibility, is a vital skill for institutional communicators. Effective government communication is not only a matter of linguistic clarity but also one of ethical consideration. Institutions must remain aware of how their messages may be interpreted across diverse publics and how discursive choices, such as tone, metaphor, or omission, can foster trust or deepen skepticism. This study suggests that strategic communication involves a continuous balancing act between institutional authority and public engagement and trust. By attending more thoughtfully to tone, consistency, and emotional resonance, government actors can reduce the risk of alienating key audiences during moments of uncertainty.

Stakeholders who may benefit from these insights include government communications officers, public affairs consultants, Non-Government Organizations, educators, and journalists.

These groups can use the findings to better understand and critique institutional narratives, identify opportunities for collaboration, and anticipate public reactions. Training programs in public communication could integrate these findings to foster more adaptive, empathetic, and strategic messaging practices. From a societal perspective, the study highlights the ethical responsibility of public institutions to communicate transparently and consistently. In a climate of rising disinformation and distrust, strategic communication is not just about efficacy, it is about accountability, inclusion, and long-term relationship-building with the public.

### ***Limitations and Directions for Future Research***

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. Methodologically, it relies exclusively on textual analysis of formal government communications. This leaves out internal communications, less formal texts, and audience reception, all of which could offer additional insights into the design and impact of crisis messaging. Certain exclusions were made for clarity and focus. First, social media content was excluded. While platforms like Twitter and Facebook are increasingly important for crisis communication, their analysis poses methodological challenges, including size of the corpus and accurate textual gathering. Future research could investigate how ECCC adjusts its discursive strategies across these platforms and how social media users interpret these messages in real time.

Second, the term “rhetoric” was not employed as an analytical category, though rhetorical strategies were analyzed implicitly through identity and significance. This decision helped maintain coherence within the discourse analysis framework. Future studies could bring rhetorical theory into direct dialogue with discourse analysis to enrich understanding of persuasive techniques. Third, the Species at Risk program was excluded from analysis due to its

specificity and the distinct communicative practices it entails. Including it would have presented a focus less on crisis and risk communication, and more focused on program messaging.

Future research could extend this study in several directions:

- Examine social media communication strategies and how tone and identity shift across platforms.
- Integrate rhetorical frameworks to deepen analysis of persuasive elements.
- Examine how crisis communication ethics can play a role in communicative planning.
- Explore targeted programs such as Species at Risk to analyze niche communications.
- Conduct audience studies to assess how public groups interpret and respond to institutional messaging.

### *Closing Reflections*

This thesis has demonstrated that crisis communication within the Canadian federal government, particularly ECCC, is a complex, adaptive, and identity-driven process. It is not just a matter of relaying facts but of framing narratives, projecting values, and managing public relationships. The most powerful insight is that language, when strategically deployed, becomes a form of governance; it guides perception, shapes policy debates, and builds institutional legitimacy. Reflecting on the research journey, one of the most surprising findings was the subtle but persistent presence of narrative structures in seemingly technical and informative communications. Looking forward, there is reason for cautious optimism. As governments confront overlapping crises, climate change, health emergencies, and social unrest, communication will be a frontline tool for resilience and reform. By investing in strategic, transparent, and responsive discourse, public institutions can strengthen civic trust and collective

problem-solving. In revisiting the scope of this work, one lesson becomes clear: communication should not just be a downstream activity that follows policy decisions; it can be part of the infrastructure of governance itself. The communicative practices examined in this thesis are foundational to how institutions define their roles, justify their actions, and maintain public confidence. As such, continued scholarly and practical attention to these practices is essential. Future efforts should not only scrutinize how messages are crafted but also foster cultures of communication within government that prioritize integrity, clarity, and inclusivity from the outset. Ultimately, this research underscores a broader imperative: improving crisis communication is not simply an academic endeavour; it supports democratic and environmental work. In an era defined by uncertainty, the ability of governments to communicate effectively and ethically may well determine their capacity to lead.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#	Link	Topic	The Big "D" Discourse Tool	The Situated Meaning Tool	The Sign Systems and Knowledge Building Tool	The Significance Building Tool	The Activities Building Tool
1	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2011/01/attempted-illegal-export-hazardous-material-brings-30-000-penalty.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2011/01/attempted-illegal-export-hazardous-material-brings-30-000-penalty.html</a>	Importing products illegally	knowledgable expert	Referring to "pollution" in regards to human health makes this both an environmental and public health issue	Privileged. government Acts are taken for granted to be understood	Enhances signifigance on pollution Diminishes background information	Inform
2	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2011/02/government-canada-begins-regulation-products-containing-mercury.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2011/02/government-canada-begins-regulation-products-containing-mercury.html</a>	Mercury	knowledgable expert	Referring to "risk" as a descriptive word for a strategy, it is not the focus of this communication.	De-privilege. "mercury" by explaining it's impacts, explains the purpose of the act being created	Enhances signifigance on reducing mercury emissions	Inform
3	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2011/05/canadian">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2011/05/canadian</a>	Hurricanes	Authoritative protector	Referring to a threat to Canada's "offshore waters" or "waters",	De-privilege. accessing hurricane information	Enhances signifigance on	To prompt preparations, and

	<a href="http://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2011/05/canadian-hurricane-centre-ready-2011-hurricane-season.html">an-hurricane-centre-ready-2011-hurricane-season.html</a>			places importance on not only the threat to our cities, but focuses on waters.		preparing for hurricanes	remaining vigilant through available resources
4	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2012/05/canadian-hurricane-centre-ready-2012-hurricane-season.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2012/05/canadian-hurricane-centre-ready-2012-hurricane-season.html</a>	Hurricanes	Authoritative protector	Referring to a threat to Canada's "offshore waters" or "waters", places importance on not only the threat to our cities, but focuses on waters.	De-privilege. the danger of hurricanes. Expands the risk to tropical storms, encouraging people to be more vigilant	Enhances signfigance on preparing for hurricanes	To prompt preparations, and remaining vigilant through available resources
5	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2012/07/harper-government-increases-protection-canada-water-quality.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2012/07/harper-government-increases-protection-canada-water-quality.html</a>	Marine Pollution	knowledgable expert	Relating "pollution" to human health, creates a public health issue	De-privilege. the risks posed by wastewater	Enhances signfigance on engagement and flexibility. By explaining they engaged provinces and municipalities, as well as putting "risk" within thier explanation of timelines, focuses on this.	Inform
6	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2012/09/j-">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2012/09/j-</a>	Importing products illegally	knowledgable expert	Relating "threat" to the conservation of nature implies it is	privileged. an understanding of	Enhances signfigance of the conservation of	Inform

	<a href="http://health-food-international-ltd-sentenced-illegal-importation-plant-species.html">health-food-international-ltd-sentenced-illegal-importation-plant-species.html</a>			something that we are working to protect in the minds of readers	why these species could be a threat	nature, by describing the importing of these items as a threat	
7	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2013/04/environment-canada-announces-funding-fight-threat-white-nose-syndrome-bats.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2013/04/environment-canada-announces-funding-fight-threat-white-nose-syndrome-bats.html</a>	Species conservation	Authoritative protector	Relating "threat" to this disease attempts to stress the importance	De-privilege. the risks posed by this disease to the species	Enhances signfigance of species conservation	Inform
8	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2013/05/canadian-hurricane-centre-ready-2013-hurricane-season.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2013/05/canadian-hurricane-centre-ready-2013-hurricane-season.html</a>	Hurricanes	Authoritative protector	Referring to a threat to Canada's "offshore waters" or "waters", places importance on not only the threat to our cities, but focuses on waters.	De-privilege. the danger of hurricanes. Expands the risk to tropical storms, encouraging people to be more vigilant	Enhances signfigance on preparing for hurricanes	To prompt preparations, and remaining vigilant through available resources
9	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2013/10/ivory-smuggler-guilty-narwhal-tusk-trafficking-case-">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2013/10/ivory-smuggler-guilty-narwhal-tusk-trafficking-case-</a>	Species conservation	knowledgable expert	Situating excessive commercial exploitation as a threat focuses on the cause of the crisis, not the crisis itself,	De-privilege. information about the Narwhal species	Enhances signfigance on species conservation	Inform

	<a href="#">ends-385-000-penalty-conditional-sentence-court-orders.html</a>			which is that this species is being depleted			
10	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2013/10/canada-signs-global-treaty-reduce-mercury-emissions.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2013/10/canada-signs-global-treaty-reduce-mercury-emissions.html</a>	Mercury	Compassionate Guide	Situates a global factor as a risk to Canadians and the Canadian environment, places importance on the benefits of this initiative	De-privilege. information on Mercury, explains how this will be helpful and why	Enhances signfigance on the impact on indigenous communities by placing it right after risk	Inform
11	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2014/04/government-canada-invites-comment-important-great-lakes-agreement.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2014/04/government-canada-invites-comment-important-great-lakes-agreement.html</a>	Species conservation	Authoritative protector	Phrases like “protect,” “restore,” and “conserve” are used to emphasize the enduring value of the Great Lakes and the necessity of ongoing stewardship.	Privileged. The text uses technical and policy-oriented language (e.g., “COA,” “Area of Concern,” “Great Lakes Nutrient Initiative”) that assumes familiarity with environmental management and regional policy frameworks.	Enhances signfigance of protecting awater by linking the agreement to public health, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability.	Inform

12	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archives/2014/05/environment-canada-canadian-hurricane-centre-is-ready-2014-hurricane-season.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archives/2014/05/environment-canada-canadian-hurricane-centre-is-ready-2014-hurricane-season.html</a>	Hurricanes	Authoritative protector	<p>“it only takes one hurricane making landfall to make it a bad season” emphasizes that even if the overall activity is below average, the impact of a single event can be severe.</p>	De-privilege. The language is accessible and straightforward, ensuring that the forecast and preparedness advice are clear to the general public.	Enhances significance of being prepared for severe weather	To prompt preparations, and remaining vigilant through available resources
13	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archives/2014/05/lake-winnipeg-basin-stewardship-fund.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archives/2014/05/lake-winnipeg-basin-stewardship-fund.html</a>	Marine Pollution	knowledgeable expert	<p>“stewardship” stands out, as it connotes a deep, proactive responsibility for caring for and managing the Lake Winnipeg Basin, not merely managing it, but actively restoring and protecting its ecological health.</p>	De-privilege. The language is accessible and designed to be understood by a broad audience, ensuring that complex environmental management concepts are clearly communicated.	Enhances significance of protecting water by focusing on providing clean water, supporting economic activities, and sustaining ecosystem health	Inform

14	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archives/2014/06/proposed-multi-sector-air-pollutants-regulations.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archives/2014/06/proposed-multi-sector-air-pollutants-regulations.html</a>	Emissions	knowledgable expert	Phrases like “air pollutants” and “regulations” are used to underscore that these hazards are managed through coordinated, science-based interventions rather than isolated actions.	Privileged. The text uses specialized terminology and regulatory language (e.g., “multi-sector,” “air pollutants,” “regulations”) that assumes the reader has some familiarity with environmental policy.	Enhances signficance of emissions	Inform
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15	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2014/06/speech-honourable-leona-aglukkaq-minister-environment-minister-canadian-northern-economic-development-agency-minister-arctic-council.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2014/06/speech-honourable-leona-aglukkaq-minister-environment-minister-canadian-northern-economic-development-agency-minister-arctic-council.html</a>	Emissions	Authoritative protector	<p>The speech uses phrases like “While air pollution is not always visible, its impact is clear” and compares the reduction of nitrogen oxides to “removing four million cars from the road.” These comparisons reframe abstract pollutant reduction into tangible benefits, highlighting the serious impact of air quality on public health and the environment.</p>	Privileged. The speech employs technical regulatory terminology (e.g., “Multi-Sector Air Pollutants Regulations,” “mandatory national emissions standards”) that assumes a level of familiarity with environmental policy among its audience.	Enhances significance of addressing air pollution by quantifying benefits and emphasizing collaboration, thereby underlining the critical role of these regulations in protecting public health and the environment.	Inform
16	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2014/06/minister-environment-applauds-european-union-decision-trade-polar-bear.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2014/06/minister-environment-applauds-european-union-decision-trade-polar-bear.html</a>	Species conservation	Authoritative protector	<p>The reference to a “Circumpolar Action Plan” conveys the idea that international cooperation is essential to addressing the broader, shared risks to polar bears, adding</p>	Privileged. The statement employs technical and policy-specific language—such as “land claims agreements,” “Aboriginal Traditional	Enhances significance of conservation by stressing Canada’s effective management system and the value of	Inform

				weight to Canada’s role on the global stage.	Knowledge,” and “Circumpolar Action Plan”—that assumes the reader is familiar with environmental governance and conservation policy.	international recognition	
17	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2014/08/government-canada-investments-support-new-research-weather-environmental-services.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2014/08/government-canada-investments-support-new-research-weather-environmental-services.html</a>	Weather forecasting	knowledgable expert	Phrases like “world-class scientific innovations for improving environmental predictions” and the emphasis on improved forecasting transform the abstract concept of risk into tangible benefits—showing how investments can directly mitigate potential severe weather impacts. This redefines “risk” as something manageable through	Privileged. The text uses technical terminology (e.g., “environmental services,” “forecasts,” “research initiatives”) that assumes the reader is familiar with environmental policy and scientific research concepts.	Enhances signficance of investing in environmental research by emphasizing their role in protecting public safety and improving national resilience against severe weather and environmental challenges.	Inform

				enhanced scientific capabilities.			
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18	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2014/11/harper-government-introduces-regulations-prevent-mercury-releases-environment.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2014/11/harper-government-introduces-regulations-prevent-mercury-releases-environment.html</a>	Mercury	Authoritative protector	<p>The speech uses phrases like “protect Canadian families” and emphasizes the comparison of mercury contamination (e.g., Mercury in a typical fever thermometer could contaminate the equivalent of five Olympic-sized swimming pools beyond limits for the protection of aquatic life), which transforms an abstract risk into a tangible, alarming threat. This redefines “risk” as something that can be proactively managed through regulation.</p>	Privileged. The text employs technical regulatory language (e.g., “Products Containing Mercury Regulations,” “manufacture and importation”) that assumes familiarity with environmental policy and technical concepts.	Enhances significance of environmental protection and public health by stressing the significant benefits of reducing mercury emissions, thereby underscoring the government's commitment to safeguarding Canadians and the ecosystem.	Inform
19	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2015/">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2015/</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	Climate change is described as a threat in this situation, places weight on the	De-privilege. the evidence for climate change by explaining it	Enhances significance of climate change	To prompt preparations, and remaining

	<a href="http://11/remarks-for-the-honourable-catherine-mckenna-minister-of-environment-and-climate-change.html">11/remarks-for-the-honourable-catherine-mckenna-minister-of-environment-and-climate-change.html</a>			importance of this initiative			vigilant through available resources
20	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2015/11/carbon-pricing-leadership-coalition.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2015/11/carbon-pricing-leadership-coalition.html</a>	Carbon pricing	Knowledgable Expert	The text uses "risk" in regards to financial investments and policy, focusing less on impacts of carbon.	Privileged. language specific to climate policy, and assumes that readers know what "carbon pricing" is.	Enhances signfigance of climate change. Enhances signfigance of carbon pricing.	Inform
21	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2015/12/canada-announces-10-million-to-support-investments-in-climate-risk-and-early-warning-systems-crews-.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2015/12/canada-announces-10-million-to-support-investments-in-climate-risk-and-early-warning-systems-crews-.html</a>	Climate Change	Compassionate Guide	Pairs "climate" with "risk" and focuses on mesurable events rather than eventual concerns	De-privilege. by explaining why these climate systems are important	Enhances signfigance of early warning systems, focuses on the long term impact of this system.	Inform

22	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2015/12/canada-to-invest-50-million-in-g7-climate-risk-insurance-initiative-in-developing-countries.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2015/12/canada-to-invest-50-million-in-g7-climate-risk-insurance-initiative-in-developing-countries.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>"resilience" takes on dual meaning in this situation, economic and environmental</p>	<p>Privileged. The text assumes knowledge of climate finance, international aid, and risk insurance. While not highly technical, it could be inaccessible to readers unfamiliar with climate policy.</p>	<p>Enhances signfigance of climate change. Enhances signfigance of climate pricing.</p>	Inform
23	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2015/12/canada-at-the-21st-conference-of-the-parties.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2015/12/canada-at-the-21st-conference-of-the-parties.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>“Threat” is used to emphasize the urgency of climate change, particularly for small-island states. “Historic opportunity” shifts the framing from a negative crisis to a positive transformation. “Climate risk” in initiatives like "Climate Risk Insurance" refers to financial protection</p>	<p>Privileged. The text assumes familiarity with international climate agreements, carbon pricing, and clean technology initiatives, which may not be accessible to a general audience.</p>	<p>Enhances signfigance of climate change. Positions Canada as a climate leader</p>	Inform

				rather than immediate disaster response.			
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24	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/02/remarks-for-catherine-mckenna-minister-of-environment-and-climate-change.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/02/remarks-for-catherine-mckenna-minister-of-environment-and-climate-change.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>The terms “threat” and “risk” are used in relation to climate change but with a long-term, systemic focus rather than an immediate emergency.</p> <p>The phrase “climate-related risks” is framed as something that requires municipal preparedness rather than an unavoidable disaster.</p>	Privileged. language familiar to policymakers and environmental advocates (e.g., “sustainable economy,” “low carbon economy”).	Enhances significance of municipal action and federal-municipal collaboration through repeated mentions of local initiatives and partnerships.	Persuade (convince municipalities to take action)
25	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/03/the-government-of-canada-releases-the-first-national-comprehensive-evaluation-of-mercury-in-the-">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/03/the-government-of-canada-releases-the-first-national-comprehensive-evaluation-of-mercury-in-the-</a>	Mercury	Knowledgable Expert	The term "risk" is used in a scientific context, specifically referring to mercury exposure risks for vulnerable populations	privileged. as it assumes familiarity with environmental science and policy terminology (e.g., "ambient air levels," "methylmercury," "global emissions")	Diminishes the immediate urgency by focusing on trends over decades rather than framing it as a crisis requiring immediate intervention.	Inform

	<a href="http://canadian-environment.html">canadian-environment.html</a>						
26	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/04/remarks-of-the-minister-of-environment-and-climate-change-the-honourable-catherine-mckenna-at-the-canadian-wind-energy-association-canwea-spring-forum.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/04/remarks-of-the-minister-of-environment-and-climate-change-the-honourable-catherine-mckenna-at-the-canadian-wind-energy-association-canwea-spring-forum.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	"Clean growth" frames environmental action as an economic opportunity rather than a burden.	Privileged. Assumes the audience is familiar with climate policy, renewable energy, and governmental initiatives.	Enhances signfigance of wind energy and government action	Persuade (Encourages the audience to support clean energy investments)

27	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/05/environment-and-climate-change-canada-s-canadian-hurricane-centre-is-ready-for-the-2016-hurricane-season.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/05/environment-and-climate-change-canada-s-canadian-hurricane-centre-is-ready-for-the-2016-hurricane-season.html</a>	Hurricanes	Authoritative protector	<p>"it only takes one hurricane making landfall to make it a bad season" emphasizes impact over statistics, reinforcing preparedness despite the "near-normal" forecast.</p>	De-privilege. the language is accessible to the general public, avoiding technical jargon while explaining hurricane risks.	Enhances significance of preparedness by stressing that even one storm can have major consequences.	To prompt preparations, and remaining vigilant through available resources
28	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/05/government-of-canada-invests-over-490-million-to-protect-canadians-and-the-environment-from-harmful-chemicals.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/05/government-of-canada-invests-over-490-million-to-protect-canadians-and-the-environment-from-harmful-chemicals.html</a>	Chemicals	Authoritative protector	<p>"Risks of harmful chemicals" is emphasized, reinforcing the need for action without suggesting an immediate crisis. "World-leading" and "internationally recognized" position Canada as a leader in chemical management.</p>	De-privilege. the language is accessible to the general public, avoiding technical jargon.	Enhances significance of government action by highlighting investments and achievements.	Inform

29	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/05/the-chemicals-management-plan.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/05/the-chemicals-management-plan.html</a>	Chemicals	Knowledgable Expert	<p>“Risk management actions” reinforces a proactive approach rather than responding to an immediate crisis. “Precautionary approach” suggests a regulatory stance focused on prevention.</p>	De-privilege. the language is accessible and avoids technical jargon, making it understandable to the general public.	Enhances signficance of government action by highlighting achievements and international leadership.	Inform
30	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/06/proposed-regulations-amending-the-off-road-small-spark-ignition-engine-emission-regulations.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/06/proposed-regulations-amending-the-off-road-small-spark-ignition-engine-emission-regulations.html</a>	Emissions	Knowledgable Expert	<p>The phrase "level playing field" is used to emphasize fairness for industry</p>	De-privilege. the language is technical but still accessible to a general audience, avoiding excessive jargon.	Diminishes the economic burden on manufacturers by framing costs as relatively low and offset by benefits.	Persuade (justify regulations by highlighting benefits)

31	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/07/carbon-pricing-leadership-coalition.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/07/carbon-pricing-leadership-coalition.html</a>	Carbon pricing	Knowledgable Expert	<p>The phrase “carbon pricing” is used as a broad economic and policy tool rather than just a tax. “Investment risks and opportunities” reframes climate action as a financial consideration rather than just an environmental one.</p>	<p>privileged. The text assumes the audience is familiar with carbon pricing concepts and policy mechanisms, making it more accessible to policymakers, economists, and corporate leaders rather than the general public.</p>	<p>Enhances signficance of carbon pricing. The language emphasizes carbon pricing as a necessary, globally endorsed policy tool, associating it with economic benefits and innovation.</p>	<p>Persuade (justify initiative, and encourage use)</p>
32	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/07/canada-s-environment-and-climate-change-minister-travels-to-vienna-for-high-level-meeting-on-greenhouse-gas-emission-reduction.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/07/canada-s-environment-and-climate-change-minister-travels-to-vienna-for-high-level-meeting-on-greenhouse-gas-emission-reduction.html</a>	Emissions	Knowledgable Expert	<p>The phrase "one of the greatest threats of our time" elevates climate change to a crisis-level issue, even though the text primarily frames it as a long-term risk. "Phasing down" is used instead of words like “banning” or “eliminating,” suggesting a gradual transition rather than</p>	<p>privileged. The text assumes familiarity with climate agreements like the Montreal Protocol and Paris Agreement, making it more accessible to policymakers and environmental professionals rather than the general public.</p>	<p>Enhances signficance of climate change by positioning it as "one of the greatest threats of our time"</p>	<p>Persuade (build support for the discussed policies, posititons it as a positive step</p>

				an immediate restriction.			
33	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/08/canada-s-minister-of-the-environment-to-visit-atlantic-canada-to-meet-with-four-provincial-counterparts.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/08/canada-s-minister-of-the-environment-to-visit-atlantic-canada-to-meet-with-four-provincial-counterparts.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	"Opportunity" is used to position climate action as economically beneficial.	De-privilege. The language is accessible, emphasizing collaboration and solutions without assuming prior expertise.	Enhances signfigance of climate action by framing it as both a necessity and an economic opportunity.	Inform

34	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/08/federal-and-atlantic-provincial-ministers-of-the-environment-meet-to-discuss-clean-growth-opportunities-and-climate-change.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/08/federal-and-atlantic-provincial-ministers-of-the-environment-meet-to-discuss-clean-growth-opportunities-and-climate-change.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>“Risk” is used in the context of climate impacts, emphasizing the need for proactive management. “Clean growth” frames economic and environmental goals as aligned rather than conflicting.</p>	De-privilege. The language is accessible and broad, avoiding overly technical or policy-specific terms.	Enhances signfigance of climate action by framing it as essential for economic growth.	Inform
35	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/08/canada-and-the-us-celebrate-100-years-of-migratory-birds-protection.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/08/canada-and-the-us-celebrate-100-years-of-migratory-birds-protection.html</a>	Species conservation	Knowledgable Expert	<p>“Crisis” is used retrospectively to describe past threats, reinforcing the success of conservation efforts.</p>	De-privilege. The language is accessible, using historical narratives and widely understood conservation terms.	Enhances signfigance of species conservation by linking it to international cooperation and long-term commitments.	Inform

36	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/09/canada-150-108-109-celebrating-canadian-pride-migratory-bird-conservation.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/09/canada-150-108-109-celebrating-canadian-pride-migratory-bird-conservation.html</a>	Species conservation	Knowledgable Expert	<p>The phrase "prevent threats to their survival" suggests an ongoing concern about climate change.</p> <p>"Icons in society" extends the meaning of birds beyond ecology to cultural significance.</p>	De-privilege. It is written in accessible language, making conservation and cultural topics understandable to a broad audience.	Enhances signfigance of species conservation by emphasizing their cultural, ecological, and historical significance.	Inform
37	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/10/government-canada-announces-canadian-pricing-carbon-pollution.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/10/government-canada-announces-canadian-pricing-carbon-pollution.html</a>	Carbon pricing	Knowledgable Expert	<p>"Pricing pollution" reframes taxation or regulation as a means to combat environmental harm, giving "pollution" an economic dimension.</p> <p>"Threatens our clean air and oceans" positions pollution as an immediate danger, emphasizing urgency.</p>	Privileged. Assumes the audience is familiar with terms like "carbon pricing," "cap-and-trade," and "emission targets" without further simplification.	Enhances signfigance of economic benefits (job creation, middle-class prosperity) while diminishing the financial burden or challenges of implementation.	Persuade (that carbon pricing is beneficial and necessary)

38	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/11/canada-national-statement-cop22-marrakech-morocco.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/11/canada-national-statement-cop22-marrakech-morocco.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>The phrase “You can’t stop the waves from hitting the beach” is metaphorical, suggesting climate action is inevitable. “You don’t skate to where the puck is now, you skate to where it’s going” reframes climate action as forward-thinking and strategic, borrowing from hockey culture.</p>	De-privilege. The speech is broadly accessible, avoiding technical jargon and using metaphors (e.g., waves, hockey) that a general audience can understand.	Enhances signficance of economic benefits (job creation, middle-class prosperity) while minimizing the financial burden or challenges of implementation.	Persuade (that climate action should be a global priority)
39	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/11/remarks-honourable-catherine-mckenna-minister-environment-climate-change-toronto-region-board-trade.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2016/11/remarks-honourable-catherine-mckenna-minister-environment-climate-change-toronto-region-board-trade.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>The term “threat” is used in a security context, linking climate change to national security. The phrase “We are the first generation to feel the impacts of climate change. And we are the last generation that has the opportunity to</p>	De-privilege. as it presents climate change in accessible terms while including business and policy jargon for credibility.	Enhances signficance of climate change urgency and economic benefits while diminishing opposition viewpoints by portraying them as extreme.	Persuade (build support for the discussed policies, positons it as a positive step)

				stop it.” emphasizes urgency.			
40	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/02/government_of_canadasupportsprojecttoimprovedry-cleaningchemical.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/02/government_of_canadasupportsprojecttoimprovedry-cleaningchemical.html</a>	Chemicals	Compassionate Guide	“Threaten” (in “substances that threaten human health or Canada’s environment”) - This word emphasizes potential harm, framing chemical pollution as a serious risk.	De-privilege. The language is accessible and avoids excessive technical jargon, making it easier for the general public and industry professionals to understand.	Diminishes immediate danger – While the text acknowledges pollution risks, it does not frame the situation as an urgent environmental disaster.	Inform
41	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/04/the_government_ofcanadaratifiesthemnamataconventiononmercury.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/04/the_government_ofcanadaratifiesthemnamataconventiononmercury.html</a>	Mercury	Compassionate Guide	The term "risk" is used in the health and environmental context, referring to mercury exposure.	De-privilege. The language is accessible to the general public, explaining technical aspects of mercury reduction in simple terms.	Enhances significance of Canada’s environmental leadership and collaboration with Indigenous communities.	Inform

42	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/04/the_government_ofcanadasupportsthelistingofchrysotileasbestostot.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/04/the_government_ofcanadasupportsthelistingofchrysotileasbestostot.html</a>	asbestos	Knowledgable Expert	<p>The word "protect" is emphasized multiple times, reinforcing the government's role in safeguarding health. "Irrefutable evidence" strengthens the urgency of action but does not frame asbestos as an immediate crisis.</p>	De-privilege. The language is accessible, using straightforward explanations rather than technical jargon.	Enhances signficance of asbestos regulation by emphasizing scientific consensus, health risks, and international cooperation.	Inform
43	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/05/environment_and_climatechangecanadascanadianhurricanecentreisready.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/05/environment_and_climatechangecanadascanadianhurricanecentreisready.html</a>	Hurricanes	Authoritative protector	<p>“it only takes one hurricane making landfall to make it a bad season,” stands out by emphasizing that even a single event can have a catastrophic impact. This reframes the risk by focusing on the potential severity rather than just the number of storms.</p>	De-privilege. The language is accessible and clear, ensuring that the forecast and preparedness messages are understandable to the general public.	Enhances signficance of preparedness by highlighting the potential for a single damaging event	To prompt preparations, and remaining vigilant through available resources

44	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/05/proposed_regulationstoreducethe_releaseofvolatileorganiccompounds.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/05/proposed_regulationstoreducethe_releaseofvolatileorganiccompounds.html</a>	Emissions	Knowledgable Expert	<p>The use of technical phrases like “volatile organic compounds” and quantified benefits (e.g., “102 kilotonnes of volatile organic compound emissions,” “43 fewer premature deaths”) reinforces the severity of the risk and the tangible benefits of the regulations, thereby lending a data-driven weight to the concept of risk mitigation.</p>	<p>Privileged. The text uses technical and specialized terminology (e.g., “volatile organic compounds,” “methane emissions,” “kilotonnes”) that assumes the reader has some familiarity with environmental policy and industrial processes.</p>	<p>Enhances signficance of reducing emissions by clearly quantifying both the health and environmental benefits, thereby emphasizing the critical role of these regulations in protecting public health and the environment.</p>	Inform
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45	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/06/canada_celebratescleanairday2017.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/06/canada_celebratescleanairday2017.html</a>	Emissions	Knowledgable Expert	<p>Phrases like “protect our environment” and “healthy communities” repurpose the concept of air quality to emphasize both public health and economic well-being, reinforcing the idea that clean air is integral to quality of life.</p>	<p>De-privilege. The language is accessible and avoids overly technical jargon, ensuring that the message about air quality improvements is clear to a broad audience.</p>	<p>Enhances signficance of reducing emissions by linking clean air to improved public health, economic benefits, and national pride. It reinforces the role of government initiatives in sustaining these benefits.</p>	Inform
46	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/06/remarks_from_the_honourable_catherine_mckennaminister_of_environmental_affairs.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/06/remarks_from_the_honourable_catherine_mckennaminister_of_environmental_affairs.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>the effects of climate change are no longer a distant threat. Across our own country, we see its impacts seared on the landscape.</p>	<p>Privileged. The speech uses technical and policy-specific terms (e.g., “Paris Agreement,” “low-carbon economy,” “clean-growth century”) that assume the audience is familiar with contemporary climate discourse</p>	<p>Enhances signficance of climate action by framing it as both a necessity and an economic opportunity.</p>	<p>Persuade (Canadians to suport the proposed climate policies and to support the Paris agreement)</p>

					and economic policy.		
47	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/06/the_government_ofcanadatodevelopanationalstrategyforthefutureofcanada.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/06/the_government_ofcanadatodevelopanationalstrategyforthefutureofcanada.html</a>	Mercury	Knowledgeable Expert	"risk to Canadian ecosystems and human health," highlights that the issue is a hazard that needs to be managed	Privileged. The text uses specialized, policy-oriented language (e.g., "National Strategy," "Bill C-238," "voluntary Code of Practice") that assumes a degree of familiarity with environmental legislation and regulatory frameworks.	Enhances significance of protecting public health and the environment	Inform

48	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/08/minister_mckenalanchesthestudentsonicearcticexpedition.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/08/minister_mckenalanchesthestudentsonicearcticexpedition.html</a>	Climate Change	Compassionate Guide	<p>The speech states that “the consequences of climate change are already being felt” and provides concrete examples that transform abstract climate risks into tangible challenges.</p>	<p>De-privilege. The language is accessible and engaging, using clear explanations and relatable examples to ensure that complex scientific issues are understandable to a wide audience, including youth.</p>	<p>Enhances significance of climate change by linking environmental impacts to tangible human experiences and future economic</p>	Inform
49	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/08/the_government_ofcanadacreatesa_nexpertpanelonadaptingtoclimatechange.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/08/the_government_ofcanadacreatesa_nexpertpanelonadaptingtoclimatechange.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgeable Expert	<p>The phrase "resilience" is used repeatedly with acquired meaning, signaling a technical/governmental framing of strength against climate impacts rather than general emotional or physical resilience.</p>	<p>Privileged. The language assumes familiarity with government programs, technical climate change adaptation terminology, and policy frameworks like the "Pan-Canadian Framework," which may not be accessible to all readers.</p>	<p>Enhances significance of climate change adaptation and resilience through references to financial investments, expert involvement, and past disasters as justification.</p>	Inform

50	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/09/canada_hosting_the46thsessionoftheintergovernmentalpanelonclimate.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/09/canada_hosting_the46thsessionoftheintergovernmentalpanelonclimate.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	"our policies must be based on the best available science", explains that we have to work with what we know, so it is best to base things off our current available facts	De-privilege. The language is formal but accessible, intended to inform a general audience about the event and scientific efforts. It avoids technical jargon.	Enhances signficance of climate change science and international cooperation by emphasizing leadership, global participation, and the role of evidence-based decision-making.	Inform
51	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/09/canada_celebrates30thanniversaryofthemontréalprotocol.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/09/canada_celebrates30thanniversaryofthemontréalprotocol.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases like “limiting global warming below two degrees Celsius by the end of the century” add a forward-looking, economic dimension to environmental protection.	Privileged. The communication uses technical and policy-specific terms (e.g., “hydrofluorocarbons,” “Kigali Amendment,” “Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change”) that assume the audience has a background in	Enhances signficance of environmental protection and global cooperation by highlighting the measurable benefits of the Montreal Protocol and the critical role of further actions in preventing climate change.	Inform

					environmental policy and science.		
52	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/10/minister_mckennaandpresidentobedadvancecooperationonenvironmental.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/10/minister_mckennaandpresidentobedadvancecooperationonenvironmental.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	The speech reframes risk by linking it to the disproportionate impact of climate change on Inuit communities and the opportunity to innovate through collaborative governance.	Privileged. The text uses specialized terminology (e.g., “Inuit Nunangat,” “Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change,” “Indigenous guardians programming”) that assumes familiarity with Canadian environmental and Indigenous policy discourse.	Enhances signficance of environmental protection and Indigenous participation	Inform

53	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/10/minister_catherinemckennaconcludesasuccessfulvisittoLondonandDubai.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/10/minister_catherinemckennaconcludesasuccessfulvisittoLondonandDubai.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases like “opportunities for clean growth and investing in clean innovation” reframe climate action as an economic opportunity rather than merely a response to risk.	Privileged. The communication uses technical and policy-specific terminology (e.g., “Paris Agreement,” “low-carbon economy,” “global alliance”) that assumes familiarity with climate policy and environmental issues.	Enhances signficance of climate action by framing it as both a necessity and an economic opportunity.	Inform
54	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/10/closing_remarks_bytheministerofenvironmentandclimatechange.catherin.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/10/closing_remarks_bytheministerofenvironmentandclimatechange.catherin.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	phrases such as “putting a price on what we don’t want—pollution” stand out, placing economic importance on the issue	Privileged. The speech uses technical and policy-specific language (e.g., “Paris Agreement,” “we know that the environment and the economy go together,” “the world’s largest carbon market”) that assumes the audience is familiar	Enhances signficance of climate action and international cooperation	Persuade (seeking support for climate action)

					with climate policy discourse.		
55	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/10/quebec_company_guilty_of_illegally_exporting_polar_bear_skin_rugs.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/10/quebec_company_guilty_of_illegally_exporting_polar_bear_skin_rugs.html</a>	Species conservation	Authoritative protector	The text uses phrases such as “illegal trafficking of wildlife is not acceptable” and underscores severe penalties to reframe the exploitation of threatened species as a critical risk.	Privileged. The text employs technical and legal terminology (e.g., “Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act,” “CITES agreement”) that assumes familiarity with environmental law and conservation policy.	Enhances significance of wildlife protection	Inform

56	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/11/canada_s_national_statement_at_cop23_speaking_notes_of_stephane_dion.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/11/canada_s_national_statement_at_cop23_speaking_notes_of_stephane_dion.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgeable Expert	<p>Phrases such as “the momentum is unstoppable” and references to the Paris Agreement and global climate summits transform the abstract risk of climate change into a dynamic, collective challenge</p>	<p>Privileged. The language is technical and policy-focused, using terms like “Paris Agreement,” “COP23,” “clean growth,” and “Gender Action Plan” that assume the audience is familiar with the discourse of international climate policy.</p>	<p>Enhances significance of climate action by framing it as both a necessity and an economic opportunity.</p>	<p>Persuade (seeking support for climate action)</p>
57	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/12/canada_and_the_world_bank_group_tosupportthecleanenergytransition.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/12/canada_and_the_world_bank_group_tosupportthecleanenergytransition.html</a>	Climate Change	Compassionate Guide	<p>Phrases that focus on 'at-risk communities' and developing countries position Canada as helping others in the fight against climate change</p>	<p>Privileged. The communication uses technical and policy-specific terminology (e.g., “Paris Agreement,” “low-carbon economy”) that assumes familiarity with climate policy and environmental issues.</p>	<p>Enhances significance of climate action by framing it as both a necessity and an economic opportunity.</p>	<p>Inform</p>

58	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/12/leaders_commit_to_regional_cooperation_on_carbon_pricing_in_the_americas.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2017/12/leaders_commit_to_regional_cooperation_on_carbon_pricing_in_the_americas.html</a>	Carbon pricing	Knowledgable Expert	Terms like “carbon pricing” acquire additional meaning by reframing market-based solutions as both an economic opportunity and a necessary tool for mitigating long-term climate risk.	Privileged. The text uses technical and policy-specific terminology (e.g., “Carbon Pricing in the Americas,” “cap-and-trade,” “Paris Agreement”) that assumes the readers are familiar with climate change and environmental policy discourse.	Enhances signficance of climate action by framing it as both a necessity and an economic opportunity.	Persuade (seeking support for climate action)
59	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/01/proposed_new_regulation_to_protect_canadians_from_exposure_to_asbestos.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/01/proposed_new_regulation_to_protect_canadians_from_exposure_to_asbestos.html</a>	asbestos	Knowledgable Expert	The term “ban asbestos” and the emphasis on preventing new asbestos from entering the market, focusing on future risk	De-privilege. explains risks of asbestos and what is being done to prevent future risks	Enhances signficance of protecting public health and the environment by clearly outlining the severe health risks associated with asbestos	Inform

60	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/01/the_government_ofcanadaproposes_newregulationstoprotectcanadiansf.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/01/the_government_ofcanadaproposes_newregulationstoprotectcanadiansf.html</a>	asbestos	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases such as “significant health risks” and “life-threatening diseases” emphasize the severe risks associated with asbestos exposure	De-privilege. explains risks of asbestos and what is being done to prevent future risks	Enhances signfigance of protecting public health and the environment by clearly outlining the severe health risks associated with asbestos	Inform
61	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/01/output-based_pricingsystemregulatoryframework.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/01/output-based_pricingsystemregulatoryframework.html</a>	Carbon pricing	Knowledgable Expert	Terms like “apply carbon pricing to offshore oil” and “federal carbon pricing” acquire additional meaning by linking environmental risk to financial performance and innovation.	De-privilege. uses clear simple language to explain economic portions of carbon pricing	Enhances signfigance of carbon pricing by framing it as both a necessity and an economic opportunity.	Inform

62	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/02/the_government_ofcanadaoutlinesnextstepsinclean-energytransition.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/02/the_government_ofcanadaoutlinesnextstepsinclean-energytransition.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases such as “Powering Past Coal” and “just transition” acquire additional meaning by placing connotations of ease on moving away from coal power	Privileged. The text uses technical and policy-specific language (e.g., “Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change,” “greenhouse gas regulations,” “carbon pollution”) that assumes familiarity with environmental policy and regulatory processes.	Enhances signfigance of climate action by highlighting the significant environmental, health, and economic benefits.	Inform
63	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/03/minister-mckenna-travels-to-mexico-for-meetings-on-marine-plastics-and-coastal-resilience.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/03/minister-mckenna-travels-to-mexico-for-meetings-on-marine-plastics-and-coastal-resilience.html</a>	Plastics	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases such as “more plastics in our oceans than fish, by 2050” transform abstract statistics and concepts into tangible warnings	Privileged. The text employs technical and policy-specific language (e.g., “G7 priorities”) that assumes the reader has familiarity with environmental policy and climate change discourse.	Enhances signfigance of climate action by using compelling statistics and by linking these issues to global economic and public health concerns.	Inform

64	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/04/the-government-of-canada-is-helping-canadians-understand-and-adapt-to-our-changing-climate.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/04/the-government-of-canada-is-helping-canadians-understand-and-adapt-to-our-changing-climate.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	The term “climate services” and tools like the “Climate Atlas of Canada” are used to transform abstract climate risks into tangible, actionable knowledge	De-privilege. The language is accessible, explaining technical concepts in clear, understandable terms for a broad audience.	Enhances signficance of climate action by linking improved environmental understanding with better preparedness, public safety, and economic benefits for future generations.	Inform
65	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/04/canada-and-the-united-kingdom-team-up-with-bloomberg-philanthropies-to-support-global-efforts-to-phase-out-coal-power.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/04/canada-and-the-united-kingdom-team-up-with-bloomberg-philanthropies-to-support-global-efforts-to-phase-out-coal-power.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases like “powering past coal” and descriptions of coal pollution as something that “choking cities” and causes “premature deaths” transform the abstract risk of coal power into a tangible threa	Privileged. The text employs technical and policy-specific terminology (e.g., “Powering Past Coal Alliance,” “reduce carbon pollution and harness the economic opportunities it presents,” “clean-energy solutions”) that assumes the reader is familiar with environmental policy and the	Enhances signficance of phasing out coal power by emphasizing the significant benefits to public health, environmental quality, and economic growth, while also stressing the global urgency of transitioning to clean energy.	Inform

					broader discourse on climate change.		
66	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/04/government-of-canada-launches-expert-panel-to-help-canada-tap-into-trillion-dollar-opportunity-from-clean-growth-and-climate-action.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/04/government-of-canada-launches-expert-panel-to-help-canada-tap-into-trillion-dollar-opportunity-from-clean-growth-and-climate-action.html</a>	Climate Change	Authoritative protector	Terms like “clean growth” transform the concept of climate risk into an economic opportunity	Privileged. The text employs specialized terminology (e.g., “sustainable finance,” “TCDF,” “G7 presidency”) that assumes the audience is familiar with environmental policy and economic concepts.	Enhances signficance of climate action by framing it as both a necessity and an economic opportunity.	Inform

67	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/04/on-earth-day-government-of-canada-targets-plastic-waste-and-marine-litter-with-launch-of-online-consultation.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/04/on-earth-day-government-of-canada-targets-plastic-waste-and-marine-litter-with-launch-of-online-consultation.html</a>	Plastics	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases like “zero plastic waste” and the “G7 Shoreline Sweep Challenge” add acquired meaning by transforming the abstract risk of plastic pollution into tangible, actionable targets	De-privilege. The language is accessible and clear, designed to engage a broad audience by explaining environmental issues in everyday terms and inviting public participation.	Enhances signficance of addressing plastic pollution by linking it to global challenges, public health, and the economic benefits of a cleaner environment, thus underscoring the urgency of collective action.	Inform
68	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/04/dialogue-on-plastic-waste-online-consultation-for-moving-canada-toward-zero-plastic-waste.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/04/dialogue-on-plastic-waste-online-consultation-for-moving-canada-toward-zero-plastic-waste.html</a>	Plastics	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases like “circular economy” acquire added meaning by framing the issue as not just an environmental threat but as an economic opportunity.	De-privilege. The text is written in accessible language that explains technical concepts (e.g., extended producer responsibility, product stewardship) in a way that can be understood by the general public.	Enhances signficance of addressing plastic waste by linking environmental protection to public health and economic opportunity, thereby emphasizing the urgency of collective action.	Inform

69	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/04/dear-minister-george-heyman.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/04/dear-minister-george-heyman.html</a>	Trans Mountain Expansion	Knowledgable Expert	This reinterprets “risk” as a manageable challenge through rigorous regulation and scientific oversight.	Privileged. The text employs technical and policy-specific terminology (e.g., “legally-binding conditions,” “Oceans Protection Plan,” “polluter-pay principle”) that assumes the audience is familiar with environmental law and regulatory processes.	Enhances signficance of robust environmental regulation and oversight by stressing the stringent conditions and extensive safety measures that have been put in place. It links these measures directly to public trust, environmental protection, and economic stability.	Inform
70	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/05/summit-highlights-the-essential-role-women-leaders-play-in-climate-">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/05/summit-highlights-the-essential-role-women-leaders-play-in-climate-</a>	Gender	Compassionate Guide	The emphasis on women and girls being “particularly at risk” due to climate change redefines “risk” to include social and gender equity dimensions.	De-privilege. The language is accessible and designed to resonate broadly, avoiding overly technical jargon while making the importance of gender and climate issues clear.	Enhances signficance of climate action and gender equality by framing women’s leadership as vital to advancing effective climate policies and	Inform

	<a href="#">action-around-the-world.html</a>					ensuring a sustainable future.	
71	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/05/backgrounder-disaster-mitigation-and-adaptation-fund.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/05/backgrounder-disaster-mitigation-and-adaptation-fund.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgeable Expert	Phrases like “coast-to-coast-to-coast” acquire additional meaning by emphasizing the national scale of preparing for climate-related hazards	De-privilege. Although some technical terminology is used, the language is generally accessible, making the details of the funding program understandable to a broad audience.	Enhances signficance of climate action and disaster mitigation by clearly outlining the substantial financial commitment, the comprehensive application process, and the broad eligibility for projects that protect communities and critical infrastructure.	Inform

72	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/05/environment-and-climate-change-canadas-canadian-hurricane-centre-is-ready-for-the-2018-hurricane-season0.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/05/environment-and-climate-change-canadas-canadian-hurricane-centre-is-ready-for-the-2018-hurricane-season0.html</a>	Hurricanes	Authoritative protector	"encouraging Canadians to prepare" urges Canadians to take action in a way that is not inducing fear	De-privilege. The language is clear and accessible, ensuring that technical meteorological terms are explained in a way that the general public can understand.	Enhances significance of preparedness by stressing that accurate, timely weather forecasts are critical to mitigating the risks posed by hurricanes.	To prompt preparations, and remaining vigilant through available resources
73	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/06/when-thunder-roars-go-indoor.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/06/when-thunder-roars-go-indoor.html</a>	Weather forecasting	Authoritative protector	"When thunder roars, go indoors!" both provides simple instructions, and is a fun and catchy way to help people, especially children, remember it	De-privilege. The language is straightforward and accessible, ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, understands the safety message.	Enhances significance of lightning safety by clearly linking the sound of thunder to the imminent risk of a lightning strike, thereby emphasizing the need for immediate protective action.	Prompt Canadians to seek shelter when they hear thunder

74	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/06/canada-enforcement-officers-work-with-international-partners-to-combat-wildlife-crime-and-illegal-trade-of-protected-species.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/06/canada-enforcement-officers-work-with-international-partners-to-combat-wildlife-crime-and-illegal-trade-of-protected-species.html</a>	Species conservation	Authoritative protector	<p>“wildlife crime” is used to frame illegal trade not only as an environmental issue but as a transnational threat that undermines global law enforcement</p>	<p>Privileged. The language includes technical and enforcement-specific terminology (e.g., “INTERPOL’s Operation Thunderstorm,” “seizures,” “international operation aimed at averting illegal trade in wildlife, plants, and timber”) that assumes familiarity with international wildlife law and enforcement practices.</p>	<p>Enhances significance of species conservation by emphasizing the significant quantities of seized materials and the broad international cooperation required, thereby underscoring the critical need for stringent enforcement measures.</p>	Inform
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75	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/06/government-of-canada-is-working-to-improve-canadas-law-on-pollution-prevention-and-toxic-chemicals-the-canadian-environmental-protection-act-1999.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/06/government-of-canada-is-working-to-improve-canadas-law-on-pollution-prevention-and-toxic-chemicals-the-canadian-environmental-protection-act-1999.html</a>	Chemicals	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases like “overhauling the Canadian Environmental Protection Act” stand out by redefining the concept of risk.	Privileged. The text employs specialized terminology (e.g., “Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999,” “regulatory gap on First Nations reserve lands”) that assumes the audience is familiar with environmental policy and legal frameworks.	Enhances signficance of updating environmental laws by emphasizing the severe risks of toxic chemical exposure	Inform
76	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/09/thousands-of-canadians-to-tackle-plastic-pollution-across-the-country.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/09/thousands-of-canadians-to-tackle-plastic-pollution-across-the-country.html</a>	Plastics	Authoritative protector	Phrases like "serious threat" and "alarming" heighten the perception of risk.	De-privilege. The language is accessible, avoiding technical terms and inviting all Canadians to participate, including families, schools, and businesses.	Enhances signficance of plastic pollution and community action	Prompt Canadians to organize or join cleanups and register their efforts.

77	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/09/g7-environment-meetings-in-halifax-focus-on-climate-action-and-the-26-trillion-opportunity-of-clean-growth-and-tackling-air-pollution.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/09/g7-environment-meetings-in-halifax-focus-on-climate-action-and-the-26-trillion-opportunity-of-clean-growth-and-tackling-air-pollution.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	The phrase "climate change is already imposing a high price" uses economic language to convey human and environmental impacts, presenting the crisis in financial terms.	Privileged. The text uses technical language, assuming familiarity with terms like "Paris Agreement," "climate risk insurance." This language is designed for policy-makers, rather than a general audience.	Enhances signficance of economic opportunity of clean growth and the critical need for gender equality in climate action. These emphases position climate change as both an urgent challenge and a major opportunity.	Inform
78	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/10/the-government-of-canada-takes-measures-to-ban-asbestos-and-asbestoscontaining-products.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/10/the-government-of-canada-takes-measures-to-ban-asbestos-and-asbestoscontaining-products.html</a>	asbestos	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases such as "final step to ban asbestos" and "the science is clear" elevate the risk associated with asbestos exposure	Privileged. The text uses specialized regulatory and technical terminology (e.g., "Canadian Environmental Protection Act," "Export Control List Regulations") that assumes the reader is familiar with environmental policy.	Enhances signficance of protecting public health and the environment by emphasizing the life-threatening risks of asbestos exposure and by framing the ban as a critical, long-overdue measure.	Inform

79	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/10/canada-joins-the-netherlands-in-new-global-commission-on-adaptation-to-build-resilience-to-the-effects-of-climate-change.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/10/canada-joins-the-netherlands-in-new-global-commission-on-adaptation-to-build-resilience-to-the-effects-of-climate-change.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	The concept of “resilience” is used to position potential threats into opportunities for innovation and sustainable growth.	Privileged. The text employs specialized terminology (e.g., “Global Commission on Adaptation,” “International Development Research Centre,” “resilience”) that assumes familiarity with climate policy and adaptation frameworks.	Enhances signficance of climate action by stressing the economic and environmental benefits of building resilience,	Inform
80	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/10/government-of-canada-to-partner-with-independent-climate-experts-to-support-ambitious-action-on-clean-growth-and-climate-change.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/10/government-of-canada-to-partner-with-independent-climate-experts-to-support-ambitious-action-on-clean-growth-and-climate-change.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	"Evidence-based advice" emphasizes credibility and depoliticizes the issue by aligning it with scientific research.	Privileged. The language assumes familiarity with climate policy terms like “clean growth” and “cutting pollution” rather than simplifying them for a general audience.	Enhances signficance of climate research	Inform

81	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/11/canada-contributes-to-international-effort-to-combat-marine-pollution-crime.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/11/canada-contributes-to-international-effort-to-combat-marine-pollution-crime.html</a>	Marine Pollution	Authoritative protector	Phrases such as “marine litter is choking our waters” and “unprecedented global effort to deter polluters” reposition the risk by highlighting both the severity of the threat and the critical need for coordinated action.	Privileged. The text uses technical and enforcement specific terminology that assumes the audience is familiar with environmental policy and international cooperation	Enhances signficance of combating marine pollution by emphasizing the scale of international enforcement efforts and the economic and environmental stakes involved.	Inform
82	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/12/canadas-top-ten-weather-stories-of-20180.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/12/canadas-top-ten-weather-stories-of-20180.html</a>	Severe Weather	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases such as “record wildfires,” “global summer heat wave,” “a cruel, cold, and stormy April,” and the assertion that “the science is clear: Climate change is real” position abstract risks into concrete, measurable events.	Privileged. The text employs technical language and specific metrics (e.g., “record wildfires,” “economic effects,” “top news story”) that assume the reader is familiar with environmental reporting and climate change discourse.	Enhances signficance of climate action by emphasizing the significant human, economic, and environmental impacts of extreme weather events.	Inform

83	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/canadas-climate-is-warming-twice-as-fast-as-global-average.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/canadas-climate-is-warming-twice-as-fast-as-global-average.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>Phrases such as “Canada’s climate is warming twice as fast as global average” and “this report is a wakeup call for all Canadians” reposition abstract scientific data as an urgent, tangible risk. This language emphasizes that the rate of warming is not just a statistic but a serious threat that demands proactive action.</p>	De-privilege. Explains scientific findings with real understandable impacts to make it easier for all Canadians to understand	Enhances signfigance of climate action by clearly linking rapid warming with the potential for more frequent and severe extreme weather events	Inform
84	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/ministers-mckenna-and-wilkinson-respond-to-the-spring-2019-reports-of-the-commissioner-">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/ministers-mckenna-and-wilkinson-respond-to-the-spring-2019-reports-of-the-commissioner-</a>	Species conservation	Knowledgable Expert	<p>"Threat" is used to emphasize the potential danger posed by aquatic invasive species, reinforcing their impact on both the environment and the economy.</p>	privileged. The language assumes familiarity with environmental policies, government programs, and scientific research.	Enhances signfigance of species conservation and pollution while reinforcing the government’s proactive role.	Inform

	<a href="#">of-the-environment-and-sustainable-development.html</a>						
85	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/canadas-changing-climate.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/canadas-changing-climate.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases such as “Canada’s climate has warmed and will warm further” and “on average, about double the magnitude of global warming” transform abstract climate data into a concrete warning.	De-privilege. Explains the findings of the report in clear, simple terms, Short language.	Enhances signfigance of climate action by quantifying the accelerated warming in Canada and outlining its extensive impacts on natural systems, water resources, and coastal communities.	Inform

86	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/government-of-canada-responds-to-ontario-court-hearing-on-greenhouse-gas-pollution-pricing-act.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/government-of-canada-responds-to-ontario-court-hearing-on-greenhouse-gas-pollution-pricing-act.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgeable Expert	Phrases such as “no longer free to pollute” and descriptions of climate change as a “national and global crisis” reframe the issue as an urgent, systemic risk.	Privileged. Text is written using formal language, which may make it harder for some to understand.	Enhances significance of climate action by emphasizing the national and global implications of greenhouse gas emissions	Inform
87	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/nature-champions-call-to-action.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/nature-champions-call-to-action.html</a>	Nature Conservation	Compassionate Guide	“Nature Champions” and phrases like “putting nature first” acquire special meaning by reinterpreting nature conservation as not only an environmental necessity but also an opportunity for sustainable economic growth and social well-being.	Privileged. The text employs specialized language (e.g., “biodiversity,” “sustainable development,” “nature-based solutions”) that assumes the reader is familiar with environmental policy and global climate initiatives.	Enhances significance of conservation, biodiversity, and sustainable economic development by framing these issues as both critical for the planet and as powerful opportunities for global collaboration and positive change.	Persuade global stakeholders, and citizens to join the Call to Action, emphasizing the need for ambitious efforts to protect nature.

88	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/canada-hosts-nature-summit-to-boost-global-action-on-biodiversity-crisis.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/canada-hosts-nature-summit-to-boost-global-action-on-biodiversity-crisis.html</a>	Nature Conservation	Knowledgable Expert	"crisis" is used in this situation, emphasizing the weight of the issue, and justifying the global participation	Privileged. technical and policy language (assumes familiarity with environmental terms and international frameworks).	Enhances signfigance of conservation through strong language (e.g., "essential," "swift progress," "largest investment").	Persuade - aims to reinforce Canada's leadership role on biodiversity protection.
89	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/canada-supports-new-international-research-on-economic-value-of-protecting-nature.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/canada-supports-new-international-research-on-economic-value-of-protecting-nature.html</a>	Nature Conservation	Knowledgable Expert	"Opportunities" shifts the conversation toward positive economic and policy actions.	Privileged. technical and policy language (assumes familiarity with economic and environmental policy frameworks).	Enhances signfigance of conservation by linking biodiversity protection to economic stability.	Persuade - aims to validate the economic case for and encourage investment in conservation.

90	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/05/the-canadian-hurricane-centre-is-ready-for-the-2019-hurricane-season.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/05/the-canadian-hurricane-centre-is-ready-for-the-2019-hurricane-season.html</a>	Hurricanes	Knowledgable Expert	<p>“It only takes one hurricane making landfall to make it a bad season” emphasizes that even a single significant event can have a major impact.</p>	<p>de-privilege. The language is clear and accessible, ensuring that technical weather forecast information is understandable by the general public.</p>	<p>Enhances signfigance of of preparedness by linking the scientific forecast data to the practical need for Canadians to take proactive steps in the face of potential severe weather.</p>	Inform
91	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/government-of-canada-supports-inuit-led-climate-change-strategy.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/government-of-canada-supports-inuit-led-climate-change-strategy.html</a>	Climate Change	Compassionate Guide	<p>Phrases like “Inuit have a relationship with the environment that is steeped in meaning” and “a hopeful, forward-looking plan in the face of potentially catastrophic change” reframe environmental risk as both a cultural and existential challenge.</p>	<p>Privileged. The text employs terminology such as “Inuit Nunangat,” “National Inuit Climate Change Strategy,” and “traditional knowledge,” assuming that the audience is familiar with Indigenous and environmental policy discourse.</p>	<p>Enhances signfigance of Indigenous leadership in climate action and underscores the urgency of protecting the environment in northern Canada.</p>	Inform

92	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/canadas-plan-for-climate-change-and-clean-growth.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/canadas-plan-for-climate-change-and-clean-growth.html</a>	Climate Change	Authoritative protector	Phrases such as “clean growth,” and “massive economic opportunity” reposition the risk of climate change as both an urgent challenge and a significant opportunity for sustainable economic development.	Privileged. The text uses specialized terminology that assumes the reader is familiar with environmental policy and economic development discourse.	Enhances significance of environmental protection and clean growth by framing them as essential to both mitigating climate risks and driving economic prosperity.	Inform
93	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/greenhouse-gas-emissions-from-the-trans-mountain-project.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/greenhouse-gas-emissions-from-the-trans-mountain-project.html</a>	Emissions	Knowledgeable Expert	Phrases such as “offset the estimated 1 million tonnes of emissions” reposition the potential risk from the project as already being managed within the national emissions framework.	Privileged. The text uses specialized, technical terminology that assumes familiarity with environmental policy and regulatory frameworks.	Enhances significance of managing emissions and reinforces the role of policy measures and offsets in supporting Canada’s transition to a low-carbon economy.	Inform

94	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/be-weather-wise-when-thunder-rolls-and-lightning-strikes-the-sky.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/be-weather-wise-when-thunder-rolls-and-lightning-strikes-the-sky.html</a>	Severe Weather	Authoritative protector	<p>“When thunder roars, go indoors!” both provides simple instructions, and is a fun and catchy way to help people, especially children, remember it</p>	<p>de-privilege. The language is straightforward and accessible, ensuring that all Canadians can easily understand the safety tips without requiring specialized knowledge.</p>	<p>Enhances significance of lightning safety by using vivid imagery and clear instructions, stressing that timely action is critical to prevent injury and ensure personal safety.</p>	<p>Prompt. The goal is to prompt Canadians to adopt specific safety behaviours to mitigate the risk of lightning.</p>
95	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/transforming-canadas-water-monitoring-program.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/transforming-canadas-water-monitoring-program.html</a>	Water	Knowledgeable Expert	<p>“transforming Canada’s water-monitoring program” suggests a major, forward-thinking shift in how water resources are managed, underscoring the idea that robust, modernized data collection is essential to preempt and mitigate the risks of water-related disasters.</p>	<p>Privileged. The text uses specialized technical terms (e.g., “National Hydrological Service,” “in-river structures,” “stilling wells”) that assume the reader has some familiarity with environmental monitoring and policy.</p>	<p>Enhances significance of water monitoring as a critical tool for climate adaptation and disaster preparedness by emphasizing the need for accurate, real-time data and innovative technologies.</p>	<p>Inform</p>

96	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/canada-announces-next-steps-to-drive-clean-growth-and-climate-action.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/canada-announces-next-steps-to-drive-clean-growth-and-climate-action.html</a>	Carbon pricing	Knowledgable Expert	The term "price on pollution" is political language designed to reposition carbon pricing as punishing bad actors rather than taxing the public.	De-privilege. The language is accessible to the general public, explaining complex mechanisms like OBPS and federal offsets in simplified terms.	Enhances signficance of climate action and clean growth by linking them to positive outcomes like job creation, innovation, and competitiveness.	Inform
97	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/canada-announces-new-support-for-international-climate-action-and-coal-phase-out.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/canada-announces-new-support-for-international-climate-action-and-coal-phase-out.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	Phrases like “global transition away from coal” acquire additional meaning by repositioning the phasing out of coal as a crucial, globally coordinated strategy to reduce pollution and spur economic opportunity.	Privileged. The text employs specialized terminology and policy-specific language that assumes the audience is familiar with climate policy discussions.	Enhances signficance of climate action and transitioning away from coal by linking these measures to substantial economic opportunities	Inform

98	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/07/government-of-canada-invests-116-billion-to-continue-cleaning-up-contaminated-sites.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/07/government-of-canada-invests-116-billion-to-continue-cleaning-up-contaminated-sites.html</a>	Contamination	Knowledgeable Expert	<p>“undo the harmful effects of past practices” positions the cleanup not only as a remedial action but also as a critical investment in future public health and economic growth.</p>	<p>Privileged. The text uses specialized language and technical details that assume familiarity with environmental regulation and remediation processes.</p>	<p>Enhances significance of environmental remediation and public health protection.</p>	Inform
99	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/08/canadas-climatedataca-portal.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/08/canadas-climatedataca-portal.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgeable Expert	<p>“climate data at the daily level available to view and download at a resolution of about 10 × 10 km” enhance the perception of precision and reliability</p>	<p>Privileged. The text uses specialized language, assuming the audience is familiar with environmental science and policy terminology.</p>	<p>Enhances significance of collecting and using detailed climate data.</p>	Inform

100	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/09/government-of-canada-supports-climate-action-by-nature-canada.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/09/government-of-canada-supports-climate-action-by-nature-canada.html</a>	Climate Change	Compassionate Guide	"climate crisis is inextricably linked with nature" links the impacts of climate change on society to the impacts in nature	Privileged. The text employs terminology which assumes the reader is familiar with environmental policy and climate change discourse.	Enhances significance of conservation and climate action by emphasizing the critical role that protecting natural ecosystems plays in mitigating climate change	Inform
101	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/12/cop25.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/12/cop25.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgeable Expert	The text uses specific examples which reinforce the seriousness of the risks being communicated	Privileged. The statement uses specialized and technical language, assuming a level of familiarity with international climate policies and environmental terminology.	Enhances significance of climate action by strongly linking the environmental risks of climate change to both ecological impacts and socio-economic opportunities	Persuade the international community to commit to fighting climate change

102	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/12/a-healthy-environment-and-a-healthy-economy.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/12/a-healthy-environment-and-a-healthy-economy.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	The text links the environmental benefits and the economic benefits of climate action	Privileged. The communication uses specialized terminology that assumes the reader is familiar with climate policy and economic discourse.	Enhances signficance of environmental protection and economic transformation	Inform
103	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/02/government-of-canada-supports-small-businesses-developing-innovative-solutions-to-plastic-pollution.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/02/government-of-canada-supports-small-businesses-developing-innovative-solutions-to-plastic-pollution.html</a>	Plastics	Authoritative protector	Positions abstract risk of plastic pollution into a concrete, innovative initiative that stimulates economic opportunity and sustainability.	Privileged. The text employs specialized terminology which assumes familiarity with environmental policy and innovation frameworks, thereby privileging readers who are versed in this language.	Enhances signficance of addressing plastic pollution and supporting clean innovation	Inform

104	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/05/canadian-hurricane-centre-ready-for-2020hurricane-season-with-forecast-of-above-average-activity-levels.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/05/canadian-hurricane-centre-ready-for-2020hurricane-season-with-forecast-of-above-average-activity-levels.html</a>	Hurricanes	Authoritative protector	The mention of “above normal” activity, along with precise figures, reinforces the severity of the risk.	Privileged. The text employs technical meteorological terminology and specific forecast metrics, which privilege an audience already familiar with such language and analytical frameworks.	Enhances significance of preparedness and accurate forecasting by highlighting the potentially high impact of an above-normal hurricane season	Inform
105	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/06/canada-to-celebrate-clean-air-day-with-new-members-of-the-powering-past-coal-alliance-including-quebec-based-desjardins-group.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/06/canada-to-celebrate-clean-air-day-with-new-members-of-the-powering-past-coal-alliance-including-quebec-based-desjardins-group.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgeable Expert	“Powering Past Coal Alliance” acquires heightened significance by symbolizing the global movement to end coal power.	Privileged. The text employs technical and policy-oriented language that assumes the readers are familiar with environmental policy discussions and the broader context of the global transition to clean energy.	Enhances significance of transitioning away from coal by emphasizing both the environmental and economic opportunities inherent in shifting to clean energy	Inform

106	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/11/increasing-knowledge-on-plastic-pollution.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/11/increasing-knowledge-on-plastic-pollution.html</a>	Plastics	Knowledgable Expert	N/A	De-privilege. (the language is technical but broadly accessible to a general audience familiar with environmental topics; it does not assume deep scientific expertise).	Enhances signfigance of plastic pollution and its impacts by linking it to human health and environmental risks.	Inform
107	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/11/government-of-canada-charts-course-for-clean-growth-by-legislating-a-path-to-net-zero-emissions-by-2050.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/11/government-of-canada-charts-course-for-clean-growth-by-legislating-a-path-to-net-zero-emissions-by-2050.html</a>	Emissions	Knowledgable Expert	“Accountability” strongly emphasizes transparency and responsibility, reinforcing the seriousness of action.	De-privilege. (makes language accessible to the general public, explains obligations, processes, and impacts clearly).	Enhances signfigance of climate action and government accountability through strong, formal language and repeated emphasis on legal obligations and transparency.	Inform

108	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/11/government-of-canada-charts-course-for-clean-growth-by-introducing-bill-to-legislate-net-zero-emissions-by-2050.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/11/government-of-canada-charts-course-for-clean-growth-by-introducing-bill-to-legislate-net-zero-emissions-by-2050.html</a>	Emissions	Knowledgable Expert	<p>"Risk" is used specifically to describe climate change impacts on financial decisions, not only environmental harm</p>	De-privilege. (makes language accessible to the general public).	Enhances signfigance of climate action and planning for a net-zero economy.	Inform
109	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/01/canada-launches-climatewest-hub-to-support-climate-change-adaptation-in-the-prairies.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/01/canada-launches-climatewest-hub-to-support-climate-change-adaptation-in-the-prairies.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>The speech highlights "climate resilience" and the importance of tailored, region-specific data. The use of terms like "climate projections," "adaptation," and "resilience" reinforces the technical and scientific approach to risk management.</p>	Privileged. certain language by using technical terminology that assumes readers are familiar with climate science and regional challenges.	Enhances signfigance of preparedness by underscoring the need for specialized tools and services	Inform

110	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/01/canada-and-the-uk-host-round-table-discussion-on-climate-risks-and-opportunities-with-finance-leaders-and-mark-carney-un-special-envoy-for-climate.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/01/canada-and-the-uk-host-round-table-discussion-on-climate-risks-and-opportunities-with-finance-leaders-and-mark-carney-un-special-envoy-for-climate.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>"Unabated coal power," "climate risk," and "market support" acquire specialized meaning here. These terms highlight the intersection of environmental and financial policy, underscoring the need for coordinated climate finance measures.</p>	<p>Privileged. technical and policy-oriented terms. It assumes that the audience is knowledgeable about climate finance, thereby privileging a community of policy makers and financial experts.</p>	<p>Enhances signfigance of transitioning away from coal power, and of aligning financial investments with climate risk mitigation</p>	<p>Persuade stakeholders to recognize climate risks and adjust thier strategies accordingly</p>
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111	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/02/canada-us-high-level-climate-ministerial.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/02/canada-us-high-level-climate-ministerial.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>“Nationally Determined Contributions,” “net-zero emissions,” “short-lived climate pollutants,” and “climate adaptation, resilience and security” are used technically. This vocabulary acquires an enhanced meaning in the context of coordinated international climate policy.</p>	<p>Privileged. technical and policy-specific terminology. It assumes that the audience is familiar with climate policy and international negotiations, thus not simplifying terms for a broader public audience.</p>	<p>Enhances signficance of climate action by stressing the economic opportunity in a low-carbon transition and the need for rigorous policy alignment to mitigate environmental risks.</p>	<p>Persuade policymakers and stakeholders to support a coordinated climate strategy that preempts future environment and economic risks</p>
112	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/02/government-of-canada-delivers-on-commitment-to-appoint-an-independent-net-zero-advisory-body.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/02/government-of-canada-delivers-on-commitment-to-appoint-an-independent-net-zero-advisory-body.html</a>	Emissions	Knowledgable Expert	<p>“net-zero,” “climate crisis,” and “accountability” carry specialized meaning in contemporary climate policy. These terms are employed to stress the urgency and long-term risks of climate change</p>	<p>Privileged. technical language. The speech assumes that its readers are familiar with climate policy</p>	<p>Enhances signficance of climate change and the need for rigorous, transparent, and expert-driven action toward achieving net-zero emissions</p>	<p>Inform</p>

113	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/03/powering-past-coal-alliance-global-summit-co-hosted-by-minister-wilkinson-shows-global-momentum-toward-the-phase-out-of-coal-and-strengthens-resolv.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/03/powering-past-coal-alliance-global-summit-co-hosted-by-minister-wilkinson-shows-global-momentum-toward-the-phase-out-of-coal-and-strengthens-resolv.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	"Accelerating climate crisis" uses "accelerating" to imply worsening and urgency beyond a static threat.	De-privilege. The language is made broadly accessible to an international and multi-sector audience	Enhances signfigance of phasing out coal and supporting workers during the transition.	Persuade. It aims to persuade governments, industries, and financial institutions to commit to moving away from coal.
114	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/03/federal-greenhouse-gas-offset-system.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/03/federal-greenhouse-gas-offset-system.html</a>	Emissions	Knowledgable Expert	"permanence" is used several times in this text to portray authority and long term change	Privileged. It assumes that readers have background knowledge in environmental policy, carbon markets, or government regulatory systems.	Enhances signfigance of of GHG reductions and compliance	Inform

115	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/04/joint-statement-by-the-us-environmental-protection-agency-and-environment-and-climate-change-canada-on-environment-and-climate-change.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/04/joint-statement-by-the-us-environmental-protection-agency-and-environment-and-climate-change-canada-on-environment-and-climate-change.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>“Transboundary pollution,” “net-zero,” and “climate-friendly technologies” are used with specialized significance that goes beyond their everyday use, underscoring key concepts within climate diplomacy and environmental regulation.</p>	<p>privileged. The text assumes familiarity with climate policy frameworks (e.g. the Paris Agreement, net-zero targets) and uses technical language that is common in environmental science and policy circles.</p>	<p>Enhances signfigance of international cooperation, regulatory alignment, and shared environmental action.</p>	<p>Persuade policymakers and stakeholders to support continued cross-border collaboration for climate action.</p>
116	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/04/canadas-enhanced-nationally-determined-contribution.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/04/canadas-enhanced-nationally-determined-contribution.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>"climate crisis" are used deliberately to stress the seriousness and urgency. "Crisis" here elevates the perceived threat level compared to just saying "climate change."</p>	<p>De-privilege. The language is made accessible to a general audience without assuming deep prior knowledge.</p>	<p>Enhances signfigance of climate action and emission targets.</p>	<p>Inform</p>

117	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/05/the-canadian-hurricane-centre-is-prepared-for-an-above-average-2021-hurricane-season.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/05/the-canadian-hurricane-centre-is-prepared-for-an-above-average-2021-hurricane-season.html</a>	Hurricanes	Knowledgable Expert	The text uses specific numerical forecasts to quantify the risk.	De-privilege. it is presented in clear, accessible terms that do not assume specialized scientific knowledge, making it understandable to a broad audience.	Enhances signfigance of preparedness and awareness.	Inform
118	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/05/minister-of-environment-and-climate-change-and-minister-of-natural-resources-participate-in-g7-climate-and-environment-ministers-meeting.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/05/minister-of-environment-and-climate-change-and-minister-of-natural-resources-participate-in-g7-climate-and-environment-ministers-meeting.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	The speech emphasizes global collaboration and urgency by referencing significant partnerships and linking climate action to economic recovery and transformation.	Privileged. it assumes that the audience is familiar with terms and concepts related to clean-energy transition.	Enhances signfigance of climate action and clean-energy investments by emphasizing global commitments, significant economic opportunities, and the urgency to act in the face of environmental risks.	Persuade stakeholders and policymakers to maintain and build efforts and commitments to climate action

119	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/05/the-government-of-canada-invests-in-plastics-science-research-to-further-understand-environmental-threats.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/05/the-government-of-canada-invests-in-plastics-science-research-to-further-understand-environmental-threats.html</a>	Plastics	Knowledgable Expert	<p>terms like “microplastics” and “nanoplastics” to underscore the complexity of the issue and the need for precise, science-based solutions</p>	Privileged. technical and specialized environmental terminology. It assumes that the audience has some familiarity with terms associated with plastic pollution and environmental science	Enhances signfigiance of plastic pollution as a critical environmental threat by emphasizing the necessity of research to understand its impacts	Inform
120	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/07/government-of-canada-confirms-ambitious-new-greenhouse-gas-emissions-reduction-target.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/07/government-of-canada-confirms-ambitious-new-greenhouse-gas-emissions-reduction-target.html</a>	Emissions	Knowledgable Expert	<p>The comparison of tackling climate change to the COVID-19 pandemic gives new weight to the idea of a “determined response” against a "global crisis.</p>	De-privilege. The language is made accessible to the general public, not just specialists or insiders.	Enhances signfigiance of climate action.	Persuade Canadians that climate action is necessary and beneficial.

121	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/07/canada-launches-climatlantic-to-help-atlantic-canadians-adapt-to-climate-change.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/07/canada-launches-climatlantic-to-help-atlantic-canadians-adapt-to-climate-change.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>"Resilience" and "adaptation" are used with acquired meaning, emphasizing community strength and preparation beyond their basic definitions.</p>	De-privilege. The language is made accessible to the general public, not just specialists.	Enhances signfigance of climate change and the need for accessible climate data and services.	Inform
122	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/07/canada-selected-to-co-lead-work-to-build-an-international-climate-finance-action-plan-ahead-of-cop26.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/07/canada-selected-to-co-lead-work-to-build-an-international-climate-finance-action-plan-ahead-of-cop26.html</a>	Climate Change	Authoritative protector	<p>"Climate crisis" stands out with acquired meaning. It frames climate change as an urgent, active threat rather than a future risk, intensifying the emotional weight of the situation.</p>	De-privilege. The language is made accessible to a broader public rather than assuming specialist knowledge.	Enhances signfigance of climate change, urgency, and Canada's leadership role	Inform

123	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/08/government-of-canada-announces-action-plan-to-protect-firefighters-from-harmful-chemicals.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/08/government-of-canada-announces-action-plan-to-protect-firefighters-from-harmful-chemicals.html</a>	Chemicals	Compassionate Guide	<p>"Protect" and "harm" are emphasized repeatedly, giving them a heightened emotional weight related to firefighter safety.</p>	<p>De-privilege. The language is made accessible to the general public, not just specialists or insiders.</p>	<p>Enhances significance of firefighter safety and the dangers of flame retardants through strong, supportive language.</p>	Inform
124	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/08/helping-to-protect-firefighters-from-harmful-chemicals.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/08/helping-to-protect-firefighters-from-harmful-chemicals.html</a>	Chemicals	Authoritative protector	<p>Phrases such as “comprehensive action plan” and “identify and help protect populations that may be at increased risk” lend additional weight to the protective measures being implemented.</p>	<p>De-privilege. Although it includes some technical terms, the explanation is accessible and designed to be understood by a broad audience</p>	<p>Enhances significance of firefighter safety and stresses the need for preventive action against chemical hazards</p>	Inform

125	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/08/government-of-canada-releases-adapting-to-the-impacts-of-climate-change-in-canada-an-update-on-the-national-adaptation-strategy.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/08/government-of-canada-releases-adapting-to-the-impacts-of-climate-change-in-canada-an-update-on-the-national-adaptation-strategy.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>phrases such as “devastating impacts,” and “bold action,” signal the urgency of the underlying risks. Emphasizes climate change.</p>	Privileged. technical and policy-based terminology	Enhances signficance of climate action and resilience measures by detailing investments	Inform
126	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/08/government-of-canada-announces-340-million-to-support-indigenous-led-conservation.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/08/government-of-canada-announces-340-million-to-support-indigenous-led-conservation.html</a>	Climate Change	Authoritative protector	<p>The text reinforces the idea that Indigenous approaches are essential to addressing the environmental crisis. Emphasizes climate change.</p>	Privileged. It assumes that the audience understands specific terms related to Indigenous rights and conservation	Enhances signficance of Indigenous leadership in climate action and underscores the urgency of protecting the environment	Inform

127	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/10/canada-joins-over-40-countries-at-final-formal-multilateral-opportunity-to-prepare-for-cop26.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/10/canada-joins-over-40-countries-at-final-formal-multilateral-opportunity-to-prepare-for-cop26.html</a>	Climate Change	Authoritative protector	<p>The text uses terms which are understood within the context of decades of environmental and climate policy discourse.</p> <p>Emphasizes climate change.</p>	Privileged. Uses specialized climate policy and finance terminology that assumes a readership familiar with international climate negotiations and policy processes	Enhances signficance of climate change	Inform
128	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/10/minister-guilbeault-will-accompany-prime-minister-trudeau-and-the-canadian-delegation-to-un-climate-change-conference-cop26.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/10/minister-guilbeault-will-accompany-prime-minister-trudeau-and-the-canadian-delegation-to-un-climate-change-conference-cop26.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>"global crisis," "devastating," and "build trust" are employed in a way that amplifies the severity of the issue and the responsibility of international leadership.</p> <p>Emphasizes climate change.</p>	Privileged. assumes that readers are familiar with climate policy frameworks.	Enhances signficance of climate action.	Persuade audiences that stronger, coordinated global climate action is urgently needed.

129	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/11/canadas-climate-finance-commitments-are-helping-developing-countries-adapt-to-climate-change.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/11/canadas-climate-finance-commitments-are-helping-developing-countries-adapt-to-climate-change.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	<p>phrases such as “devastating impacts,” “severe droughts,” and “immense suffering” to underscore the urgency and severity of the climate crisis. Emphasizes climate change.</p>	Privileged. Assumes that the audience is familiar with climate policy frameworks and global climate finance mechanisms	Enhances signficance of climate action and international climate finance.	Inform
130	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/11/the-government-of-canada-increases-nature-protection-ambition-to-address-dual-crises-of-biodiversity-loss-and-climate-change.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/11/the-government-of-canada-increases-nature-protection-ambition-to-address-dual-crises-of-biodiversity-loss-and-climate-change.html</a>	Nature Conservation	Knowledgable Expert	<p>The text reinforces the urgency of protecting natural ecosystems as essential for climate action. Emphasizes climate change.</p>	Privileged. Assumes that the audience has a degree of familiarity with environmental policy and scientific concepts.	Enhances signficance of conservation.	Inform

131	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/11/canada-reaffirms-support-for-high-ambition-coalition-with-cop26-leaders-statement.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/11/canada-reaffirms-support-for-high-ambition-coalition-with-cop26-leaders-statement.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	"no longer be considered a future threat" emphasizes climate change	Privileged. Assumes that the audience has a degree of familiarity with environmental policy and scientific concepts.	Enhances signfigance of climate change impacts and international cooperation	Inform
132	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/11/ministers-steven-guilbeault-and-jonathan-wilkinsons-joint-statement-on-five-reports-tabled-by-the-commissioner-of-the-environment-and-sustainable-d.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/11/ministers-steven-guilbeault-and-jonathan-wilkinsons-joint-statement-on-five-reports-tabled-by-the-commissioner-of-the-environment-and-sustainable-d.html</a>	Climate Change	Knowledgable Expert	"climate crisis" is emphasized, framing climate change as an urgent and ongoing emergency rather than a distant or future problem. Emphasizes Climate Change.	De-privilege. It uses accessible, public-facing language to ensure broad understanding.	Enhances signfigance of climate change and climate action	Inform

133	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/12/canada-to-launch-consultations-on-new-climate-commitments-this-month-establish-emissions-reduction-plan-by-the-end-of-march-2022.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/12/canada-to-launch-consultations-on-new-climate-commitments-this-month-establish-emissions-reduction-plan-by-the-end-of-march-2022.html</a>	Emissions	Knowledgable Expert	<p>"Crisis" and "threat" are used deliberately to elevate the urgency around climate change, rather than their everyday meanings. Emphasizes Climate Change.</p>	De-privilege. The language is accessible to a broad audience.	<p>Enhances signfigance of climate action. Words like biggest threat and urgency of the crisis amplify the importance of climate action.</p>	<p>Prompt a specific behaviour. It calls for engagement in consultations and actions toward emissions reductions.</p>
134	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/12/the-impacts-of-a-changing-climate-canadas-top-ten-weather-stories-of-2021.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/12/the-impacts-of-a-changing-climate-canadas-top-ten-weather-stories-of-2021.html</a>	Severe Weather	Knowledgable Expert	<p>"Flood of Floods" stands out as an acquired phrase emphasizing the unprecedented scale of flooding. Emphasizes natural disaster.</p>	De-privilege. Makes language accessible to the general public	<p>Enhances signfigance of climate change. Emphasizes the seriousness of climate change impacts.</p>	Inform

*Appendix B*

<b>Species at risk</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Messages</b>
2011	27
2012	8
2013	9
2014	21
2015	0
2016	15
2017	14
2018	27
2019	35
2020	19
2021	21