

Interactive comment on “Flooded by jargon: how the interpretation of water-related terms differs between hydrology experts and the general audience” by Gemma J. Venhuizen et al.

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This is an interesting paper, which addresses an important question in hydrogeological communication, the type and use of words labelled as jargon. The paper addresses this question using a very appropriate and intuitive analysis method of comparing Bayes Factors to measure the similarities between expert and laypeople’s definitions of select hydrogeological terms. The conclusions drawn in the paper are logical and supported by the data presented, however there are a few things that I feel would improve the overall impact of this paper.

Firstly, in the method section, it is not made clear how exactly the pictures and def-

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initions used in the survey were actually chosen? If they were written/selected only by a panel of experts with no input from non-experts then that represents a significant limitation in the work as the choices made by the experts may not include important representations that the layperson might have selected. This does not mean that the layperson, when interviewed would not select one of the options regardless, but that actually their true representation was not an option. This would then lead me to ask how representative are the definitions of lay people's definitions?

Secondly, in the presentation of the results, having the numerical data is fantastic and really allows me to pick apart the patterns for myself, but in terms of ease of reading, a bar chart of this data would really help with legibility here.

Thirdly, in the results section, I found the repeated use of the phrase 'no disagreement' quite confusing and it frequently threw me out of the text as I tried to understand what it was saying - if possible the use of the phrase 'agreement' here would make things much easier to follow.

Fourthly it might be useful to the authors to consider some of the work on climate change communication as it may have more parallels to hydrogeological communication than medical (although I really do like Castro's definition of jargon). I would suggest the authors take a look at 'Somerville, R. C., & Hassol, S. J. (2011). Communicating the science of climate change'. *Physics Today*, 64(10), 48' and 'Nerlich, B., Koteyko, N., & Brown, B. (2010). Theory and language of climate change communication. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 1(1), 97-110' as these have some very relevant sections that will strengthen the context of your work.

There are a few grammatical and text based changes that I have highlighted in the attached pdf as highlights and comments, but overall I think that this is a good paper that, with a few tweaks and a little extra information, very much deserves to be published.

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Please also note the supplement to this comment:

<https://www.hydrol-earth-syst-sci-discuss.net/hess-2018-297/hess-2018-297-RC1-supplement.pdf>

Interactive comment on Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/hess-2018-297>, 2018.

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