

The secret life of pronouns. What our words say about us.

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The Secret Life of Pronouns. What Our Words Say About Us

The Secret Life of Pronouns. What Our Words Say About Us. James Pennebaker. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011. *xii + 352 pp.* ISBN 978-1-608194-80-3. \$28.00 (*hardback*).

[John Nerbonne](#)

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This is a great book that aims to popularize the study of how function words such as pronouns, but also articles, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs, reveal personality traits and roles within relationships. James Pennebaker is a social psychologist who has made major contributions in understanding how people who have gone through traumatic experiences may be helped by writing about them. He has also invested a good deal of time in developing techniques for counting function words and interpreting differences in their distributions. And while Pennebaker focuses on interpreting differences in distributions as reflections of different personality types or different roles in relations, he is interested in a wide range of other topics in which the interpretation of the word frequencies might play a role, including psychological health, emotions, honesty...

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