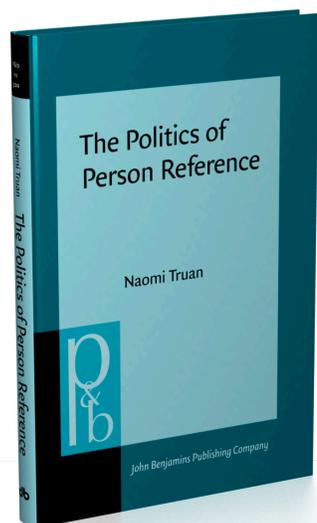


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Communication Studies / Corpus linguistics / Discourse studies / Pragmatics



The Politics of Person Reference

Third-person forms in English, German, and French

Naomi Truan

Leipzig University

This book, the first systematic exploration of the third person in English, German, and French, takes a fresh look at person reference within the realm of political discourse. By focusing on the newly refined speech role of the target, attention is given to the continuity between second and third grammatical persons as a system. The role played by third-person forms in creating and maintaining interpersonal relationships in discourse has been surprisingly overlooked. Until now, third-person forms have overwhelmingly been considered as referring to the absent, i.e. to someone outside the communication situation, other than the speaker or the hearer: the “nonperson”. By broadening the scope and finally integrating the third person, we come to understand *The Politics of Person Reference* fully, and to see the strategic, argumentative, and dialogical nature of the act of referring to other discourse participants, understood as the act of creating new referents.

[Pragmatics & Beyond New Series, 320] 2021. xvii, 279 pp.

HB 978 90 272 0839 2 EUR 95.00

E-BOOK 978 90 272 6018 5 EUR 95.00

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“After reading this pioneering book you will never see third person reference in the same light. Naomi Truan does nothing less than rehabilitating the third person, bringing to light its ‘potential of address’ and its strategic pragmatic functions in politics. In this fascinating cross-linguistic exploration of parliamentary debates in the British House of Commons, the German Bundestag and the French Assemblée Nationale, she meticulously highlights how third-person forms intertwine mention and address, thereby enacting the speech role of the target. A crucial read for anyone interested in non-canonical ways of referring to discourse participants.”

Sandrine Sorlin, *Paul Valéry University of Montpellier*

“While first- and second-person references in political discourse have been studied intensively, third-person referential expressions have largely been ignored. With her data-rich and masterfully argued monograph, Naomi Truan fills this gap, showing that such third-person expressions are strategic devices referring to the hearer, not to actual third persons. The monograph is exemplary in its breadth (covering three major European languages), its exhaustively and transparently documented data and methodology and its bold and insightful argumentation. It sets standards in corpus-based political discourse analysis that will advance the field substantially.”

Anatol Stefanowitsch, *Freie Universität Berlin*

“The book addresses an intriguing and under-researched facet of the relational aspect of language: the use of third-person forms. The innovative aspect of the author’s approach is that she demonstrates through the analysis of numerous examples from three languages that third-person forms can have a variety of discourse functions beyond just referring to someone outside the actual interaction. While carefully making her claims and paying special attention to issues concerning politeness the author treats the third person as a part of the system of person reference rather than just a separate grammatical and discourse entity. The book is a must-read for researchers and graduate students who are interested in interpersonal pragmatics, political discourse and comparative linguistics.”

Istvan Kecskes, *State University of New York, Albany*

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