

# Impact of second-person pronouns in scientific reviews

## 第二人稱代名詞在科學論文評審過程中的影響



Subtle differences in pronoun use (e.g., using “we” vs. “I”) can sometimes make a big difference in how readers process and respond to the text. This study focuses on the psychological and behavioral impacts of second-person pronouns (“you,” “your,” or “yours”). Indeed, while the effect of these pronouns has already been understood in various contexts, their roles and impacts in bilateral, dynamic interactions beyond close relationships remain underexplored.

**Prof Yiwei LI**, Associate Professor of Lingnan’s **Department of Marketing and International Business** (MKT), and **Prof Clark CAO**, Assistant Professor of MKT aim to bridge this gap. Their team analysed 25,679 instances of peer review correspondence with *Nature Communications*, employing a multidisciplinary approach involving both difference-in-differences and experimental methods.

Their findings reveal that during review process, authors who address their reviewers using (vs. not using) second-person pronouns receive fewer questions, shorter responses, and more positive feedback. Further analyses provide converging evidence that this is because the use of “you” (vs. non-“you”) fosters a more personal and engaging dialogue. By examining the peer review process of scientific papers, this research thus highlights how second-person pronouns influence written interactive communication psychologically and behaviorally.

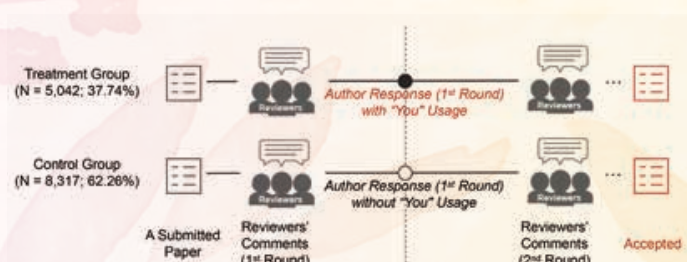
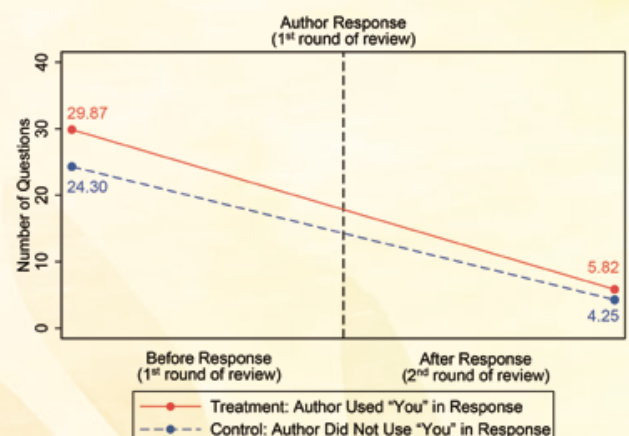
The study was published in the *Nature Communications*.

代名詞用法上的細微差異（例如使用「我們」與「我」），有時能顯著影響讀者對文本的理解與應對。本研究聚焦於第二人稱代名詞（例如：「你」、「你的」和「你們的」）的心理及行為效應。儘管這類代名詞的影響在許多情境中已有所認識，但在雙向且動態的互動情境（尤其是非親密關係）中的作用與影響，仍有待深入探索。

嶺南大學市場及國際企業學系副教授**李宜威**與助理教授**曹聰**的團隊，透過分析 25,679 筆與《自然通訊》期刊相關的同行評審往來記錄，並以跨學科的研究方法，包括差異中之差異（difference-in-differences）及實驗研究，試圖填補這方面的空白。

研究結果顯示，在同行評審過程中，當作者使用第二人稱代名詞（相比於不使用）回應審稿人時，審稿人會提出較少問題、回覆較短，且給予更正面的評價。進一步分析證明，此效應是由於使用「你」能促進更個人化、更具參與感的對話。透過分析科學論文的評審過程，本研究凸顯第二人稱代名詞對書面互動溝通的心理及行為影響。

有關研究已在國際知名期刊《自然通訊》發表。■



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