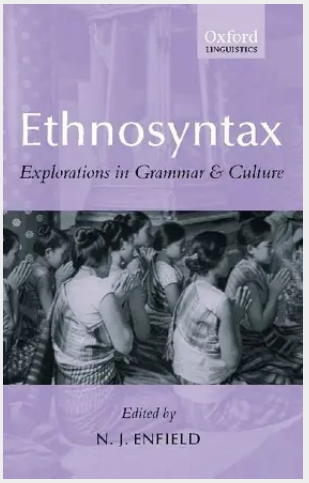
Enfield

Ethnosyntax

Explorations in Grammar and Culture



This book provides a fresh and original approach to the 'ethnosyntax' concept - the proposition that the grammar of a language is intimately linked to the culture of its speakers. It focuses on three related questions: how far culture accounts for linguistic variation; how culture and grammar are connected; and to what extent one may constitute the other. It looks, for example, at the ways in which grammatical (including semantic) resources may be constrained by social values, and at the possible sociocultural significance of grammatical devices. The chapters add up to an important and timely contribution to the renewed debate among linguists and anthropologists on the relationship between grammar, culture, and cognition. The authors represent a wide range of research traditions, some of which have not until now explicitly addressed the grammar and culture issue. They consider the subject in the context of a wide range of cultures in North America, Europe, and Australasia. The clarity and accessibility of their writing, together with Dr Enfield's introduction to the field, make this not only a work or original value and impeccable scholarship, but an excellent modern textbook on a subject of enduring fascination in linguistics and anthropology.

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