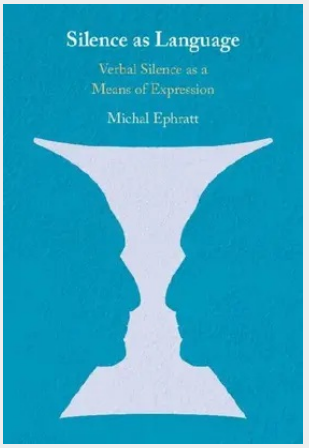
Ephratt

Silence as Language

Verbal silence touches on every possible aspect of daily life. This book provides a full linguistic analysis of the role of silence in language, exploring perspectives from semantics, semiotics, pragmatics, phonetics, syntax, grammar and poetics, and taking into account a range of spoken and written contexts. The author argues that silence is just as communicative in language as speech, as it results from the deliberate choice of the speaker, and serves functions such as informing, conveying emotion, signalling turn switching, and activating the addresser. Verbal silence is used, alongside speech, to serve linguistic functions in all areas of life, as well as being employed in a wide variety of written texts. The forms and functions of silence are explained, detailed and illustrated with examples taken from both written texts and real-life interactions. Engaging and comprehensive, this book is essential reading for anyone interested in this fascinating linguistic phenomenon.

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