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978-0-521-42529-2 - Responsibility and Evidence in Oral Discourse

Edited by Jane H. Hill and Judith T. Irvine

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In *Responsibility and evidence in oral discourse* twelve prominent linguists and linguistic anthropologists examine “responsibility,” “authority,” and “knowledge”: central, but problematic, concepts in contemporary anthropology. Their detailed case studies analyze diverse forms of oral discourse – everyday conversation, conversational narrative, song, oratory, divination, and ritual poetry – in societies in the Americas, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. The studies show how speakers attribute responsibility for acts and states of affairs, how particular forms of language and discourse relate to claims and disclaimers of responsibility, and how verbal acts are themselves social acts, subject to such attributions. The volume challenges those cognitive theorists who locate responsibility for the meaning of verbal acts solely in the intentions of individual speakers. Instead, the contributors focus on the production of meaning between speakers and audiences in particular social and cultural contexts, through dialogue and interaction which mediate between linguistic forms and their interpretations.

This landmark volume will serve for years to come as a point of reference in the study, not only of responsibility and evidence, but of reported speech, authorship, and other phenomena in the social life of language. Besides linguistic and cultural anthropologists, linguists, and folklorists, it will interest also readers from pragmatics, legal studies, sociology, religion, and social psychology.

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Studies in the Social and
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The aim of this series is to develop theoretical perspectives on the essential social and cultural character of language by methodological and empirical emphasis on the occurrence of language in its communicative and interactional settings, on the socioculturally grounded “meanings” and “functions” of linguistic forms, and on the social scientific study of language use across cultures. It will thus explicate the essentially ethnographic nature of linguistic data, whether spontaneously occurring or experimentally induced, whether normative or variational, whether synchronic or diachronic. Works appearing in the series will make substantive and theoretical contributions to the debate over the sociocultural-functional and structural-formal nature of language, and will represent the concerns of scholars in the sociology and anthropology of language, anthropological linguistics, sociolinguistics, and socio-culturally informed psycholinguistics.

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