

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF INTENSITY

What counts as too close for comfort? How can an entire room suddenly feel restless at the imminence of a yet unknown occurrence? And who decides whether or not we are already in an age of unliveable extremes? The anthropology of intensity studies how humans encounter and communicate the continuous and gradable features of social and environmental phenomena in everyday interactions. Focusing on the last twenty years of life in a Mayan village in the cloud forests of Guatemala, this book provides a natural history of intensity in exceedingly tense times, through a careful analysis of ethnographic and linguistic evidence. It uses intensity as a way to reframe Anthropology in the age of the Anthropocene, and rethinks classic work in the formal linguistic tradition from a culture-specific and context-sensitive stance. It is essential reading for not only anthropologists and linguists, but also ecologically oriented readers, critical theorists, and environmental scientists.

PAUL KOCKELMAN is Professor of Anthropology at Yale University. His books include *Kinds of Value: An Experiment in Modal Anthropology* (Prickly Paradigm Press) and *The Art of Interpretation in the Age of Computation* (Oxford University Press).

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The Anthropology of Intensity

Language, Culture, and Environment



PAUL KOCKELMAN
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For Mia, Zeno, and Lara

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Abbreviations

A	= asserted content
A	= absolutive case
ABS	= abstracting suffix
AF	= afinite status
AP	= adposition
APSV	= anti-passive
CF	= counterfactual status
COMP	= complementizer
CONJ	= conjunction
DAT	= dative case
DEIC	= deictic
DEM	= demonstrative
DIR	= directional
DM	= determiner
e	= event
E	= ergative case
En	= narrated event
Er	= reference event
Es	= speech event
F	= finite status
FUT	= future tense
HAB	= habitual
HOR	= hortative
IMP	= imperative
INF	= inferential
INTERJ	= interjection

List of Abbreviations

IRR	= irrealis
LOC	= locative
NEC	= necessity
NEG	= negation
NOM	= nominalizer
NS	= nonspecific
P	= proposition
PLR	= plural number
PART	= participle
PERF	= perfect aspect
PREP	= preposition
PRES	= present tense
PSV	= passive
NP	= noun phrase
q	= proposition
Q	= questioned content
Qr	= reference quantity
Qn	= narrated quantity
QUES	= question particle
RN	= relational noun
s	= singular number or ‘nonplural’
SD	= status designator
SG	= speaker’s gloss
t	= reference time
TOP	= topic
w	= world
1	= first person
2	= second person
3	= third person
/	separates alternative forms that may occur in the same syntactic position
()	indicates added material.

Vowel length (signaled by doubling letters) is phonemic in Q’eqchi’. /k/ and /q/ are velar and uvular plosives, respectively. /x/ and /j/ are palato-alveolar and velar fricatives, respectively.