1. Record Nr. UNINA9910817566603321

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Titolo Talk and practical epistemology: the social life of knowledge in a

Caribbean community / / Jack Sidnell

Amsterdam; ; Philadelphia, : J. Benjamins, 2005 Pubbl/distr/stampa

1-282-15638-1

9786612156380 90-272-9409-7

Edizione [1st ed.]

ISBN

Descrizione fisica 1 online resource (272 p.)

Pragmatics & beyond, , 0922-842X;; new ser., 142 Collana

Disciplina 302.3/46

Soggetti Conversation analysis

Knowledge, Theory of

Lingua di pubblicazione Inglese

Formato Materiale a stampa

Livello bibliografico Monografia

Note generali Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph

Nota di bibliografia Includes bibliographical references and index.

Nota di contenuto Talk and Practical Epistemology -- Editorial page -- Title page -- LCC

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Sommario/riassunto

Drawing on the methods of conversation analysis and ethnography, this book sets out to examine the epistemological practices of Indo-Guyanese villagers as these are revealed in their talk and daily conduct. Based on over eighty-five hours of conversation recorded during twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork, the book describes both the social distribution of knowledge and the villagers' methods for distinguishing between fact and fancy, knowledge and belief through close analyses of particular encounters. The various chapters consider uncertainty and expertise in advice-giving, the cultivation of ignorance in an attempt to avoid scandal, and the organization of peer groups through the display of knowledge in the activity of reminiscing local history. An orienting chapter on questions and an appendix provide an introduction to conversation analysis. The book makes a contribution to linguistic anthropology, conversation analysis and cross-cultural pragmatics. The conclusion discusses the implications of the analysis for current understanding of practice, knowledge and social organization in anthropology and neighboring disciplines.