**DESCRIPTION**

The next century will see more than half of the world’s 6,000 languages become extinct, and most of these will disappear without being adequately recorded. Written by one of the leading figures in language documentation, this fascinating book explores what humanity stands to lose as a result.

- Explores the unique philosophy, knowledge, and cultural assumptions of languages, and their impact on our collective intellectual heritage
- Questions why such linguistic diversity exists in the first place, and how can we can best respond to the challenge of recording and documenting these fragile oral traditions while they are still with us
- Written by one of the leading figures in language documentation, and draws on a wealth of vivid examples from his own field experience
- Brings conceptual issues vividly to life by weaving in portraits of individual ‘last speakers’ and anecdotes about linguists and their discoveries
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nicholas Evans is head of the Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University. He has worked on a wide variety of Australian Aboriginal languages as linguist, anthropologist and interpreter, and has recent extended his fieldwork into Papuan languages of the Trans-Fly region. He has written widely both on Aboriginal languages and across a broad spectrum of general linguistic topics, including grammars of Kayardild (1995) and Bininj Gun-wok (2003), dictionaries of Kayardild (1992) and Dalabon (2004, with Francesca Merlan and Maggie Tukumba), plus edited books on linguistics and archaeology (with Patrick McConvell), on polysynthesis (with Hans-Jürgen Sasse), on the classification of north Australian languages, and on grammar-writing (Catching Language: the standing challenge of grammar writing, with Felix Ameka and Alan Dench).

FEATURES

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