



# **Edible Gender, Mother-in-Law Style, and Other Grammatical Wonders: Studies in Dyirbal, Yidiñ, and Warrgamay**

*R. M. W Dixon*

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This book builds on R. M. W. Dixon's most influential work on the indigenous languages of Australia over the past forty years, from his trailblazing grammar of Dyirbal published in 1972 to later grammars of Yidiñ (1971) and Warrgamay (1981). *Edible Gender, Mother-in-Law Style, and Other Grammatical Wonders* includes further studies on these languages, and the interrelations between them. Following an account of the anthropological and linguistic

background, part I provides a thorough examination of, and comparison between, the gender system in Dyirbal (one of whose members refers to 'edible vegetables') and the set of nominal classifiers in Yidiñ. The chapters in part II describe Dyirbal's unusual kinship system and the 'mother-in-law' language style, and examines the origins of 'mother-in-law' vocabulary in Dyirbal and in Yidiñ. There are four grammatical studies in part III, dealing with syntactic orientation, serial verb constructions, complementation strategies, and grammatical reanalysis. Part IV covers grammatical and lexical variation across the dialects of Dyirbal, compensatory phonological changes, and a study of language contact across the Cairns rainforest region. The two final chapters, in Part V, recount the sad stories of how the Yidiñ and Dyirbal languages slowly slipped into oblivion.

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