

Language, sex/gender and evolution: a sociolinguistic perspective

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In recent years, there has been an increasing tendency for sex/gender differences to feature prominently in both expert and popular discourse on language evolution, while conversely speculation about the origins of language and its functions among ancestral humans plays an increasingly significant role in popular and some expert discourses on sex/gender differences. In this talk I will look critically at these intersecting discourses, using evidence from sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology to evaluate the claims they make.