

Social Theory and Language

This volume offers a comprehensive treatment of the historical developments underpinning our present understandings of the relationship between language and the social by integrating the study of language with key strands of sociological theory.

The book posits that theory conditions how objects are constructed and, in turn, the meanings allocated to them, and explores the implications for the relationship between language and the social. The volume traces this relationship from its foundation in the work of Enlightenment philosophers, in which sociology and linguistics emerged as coherent disciplines. Taking this work as a point of departure, the book examines the unfolding of the interplay between language and the social across developments in sociological theory in subsequent eras, encompassing such strands as Marxism, functionalism, interactionism, anti-foundationalism, post-structuralism, Critical Theory, and critical realism. A final chapter turns its eye toward contemporary sociolinguistics and its treatment of different sociological perspectives and future directions for its continued development.

Reflecting on trajectories in sociological theory toward informing our understanding of the relationship between language and the social today, this book will be key reading for students and scholars in sociolinguistics, philosophy of language, and those working in sociology and geography with an interest in language issues.

Glyn Williams has authored or co-authored fourteen books, including *Sociolinguistics: A Sociological Critique* (1992) and *French Discourse Analysis: The Method of Poststructuralism* (1999).