

The Department of French & Italian presents a PhD Dissertation Defense

Lucia Casiraghi

“Non parlo mica così in real life”: Italian Youth’s Translanguaging Practices on Social Media

2:00 pm, Monday, July 29, 2024, on Zoom, in English

For more information, please contact Prof. Ciccarelli at aciccare@indiana.edu.

In a globalized world, geographical and symbolic mobility processes influence language uses and attitudes. Digital environments like social media create unprecedented possibilities for language contact, blurring and unpredictably shifting the boundaries between languages. In this dissertation, I apply the concept of translanguaging to analyze these dynamics in the Italian context, where (a) the rise of Computer-Mediated Communication has produced changes in the types and features of written Italian; (b) the spread of English has influenced the languages of science, politics, advertising, entertainment, etc.; (c) migratory movements have produced new linguistic and cultural diversity, and bilingual second-generation Italians. In Italy, the predominantly English-speaking internet culture interacts with standard Italian, regional varieties, local languages (dialetti), minority languages and immigrant languages. By adopting a digital ethnography perspective to the study of Italian Gen-Zers’ linguistic habits on social media, I investigate the meanings and purposes behind their practices. I delve into their use of linguistic resources to locate themselves in contemporary transnational spaces and negotiate relations of power between languages and cultures. Four key insights emerge: (a) the ability to engage with diverse languages within mixed, multilingual communications, including fragmented linguistic repertoires represents an element of a shared sense of generational identity; (b) in their navigation of global and local dimensions, younger users often challenge the dominant influence of English and the US-centric model; (c) although the use of local languages is widespread in younger users’ online interactions, optimistic perspectives on their revitalization through social media need to be problematized; (d) the playful nature of youth-generated digital content, marked by recontextualization, resemiotization, reappropriation, translocalization, and linguistic boundary transgressions, fosters unique “we-codes” that enhance emotional and social connections, especially among those with mobility backgrounds or international ties.



Committee:

Andrea Ciccarelli, Ph.D., chair (French and Italian)

Marco Arnaudo, Ph.D. (French and Italian)

Colleen Ryan, Ph.D. (French and Italian)

Massimo Scalabrini, Ph.D. (French and Italian)

Susan C. Herring, Ph.D. (Information and Library Science)