

FORENSIC LINGUISTICS LABORATORY  
LABORATORIO DI LINGUISTICA GIUDIZIARIA  
LALIGI

**Research Group**

**Managing board:** Patrizia Bellucci (Director), Maria Emanuela Piemontese (Co-Director), Maria Cristina Torchia (Vice-Director), Neri Binazzi, Vera Gheno, Debora Di Gioacchino, Alessandra Marilli, Ivana Azzalini, Paolo Belardinelli, Monique Porto; Wanda Butera (Organizing Secretary).

**Collaborators:** Caterina Albani, Marco Biffi, Emilia Lacroce, Vera Beatrice Massaro, Elda Padalino, Maria Palmerini, Maria Pina Santoru, Raffaella Setti, Michela Silla, Giulia Venturi.

**Objectives and research areas**

The scientific activity of the Laboratory (LaLiGi) is centered in particular on Italian forensic linguistics (linguistica giudiziaria italiana). This is a field of study of pertinent relevance not only for the linguistic research but also for the training and the ongoing linguistic education of various professions covering different sectors.

The research also seems to fill a gap in Italian linguistics. In fact, apart from a few brilliant exceptions, it has remained behind the rest of the linguistic world, with respect to forensic linguistics which in the international realm is much more practiced and firmly rooted.

While the standpoint of the work is evidently linguistic, the common objective of the group is also institutional and social. This objective is held by the strong conviction that the democratic institutions of the government and the widespread need for legality must be sustained by expert competencies.

The research - which focuses primarily on the operation of the Justice system, beginning with the criminal trials - takes into consideration aspects and problems of a linguistic nature, often with strong applicative consequences.

The various directions that the research takes are the following:

- **The preliminary investigation phase**, with particular attention to wiretaps and bugs in the strict sense (obtained through the insertion of electronic listening devices in the private residences of suspects) and to the various and complex transcribing duties, including their use during the trial.
- **The carrying out of criminal trials** analyzed starting from the hearing - seen as a ritualized and codified linguistic event, typical of asymmetrical oral interaction - to the final and successive degrees of sentence. Different types of trials are analyzed - from those considered "ordinary", to those for organized crime, mass murders, kidnapping and so on.
- **Expert consultations/examinations** (in particular forensic-psychiatric).
- **Legal interaction with sociolinguistically and socioculturally disadvantaged persons:** lower-class citizens, immigrants, women, minors, psychologically disturbed persons, etc.
- **Forensic dialectology:** dialect speakers and "semicolti" (partially educated people) in the criminal proceedings. Evaluation of political deviance in the tuscan files of the *Casellario politico centrale* (a bureau where subversives were listed).
- **Conversion of the oral communication into transcriptions of deeds.** The creation and adjustment of voice recognition systems; wiretaps and bugs (in Italian).
- **Psychoanalysis-psychiatry, language sciences and jurisdiction.**
- **Civil trials**, taking into consideration the extended impact of the civil Justice on citizens.
- **Comparative forensic linguistics** between Italy and other countries.

- **Public communication** (written, broadcast, computerized) of state institutions responsible for the implementation of the Justice system and the prevention of crime. The linguistic review and simplification of public communication systems, of institutional texts and regulatory drafting.
- **Computational and forensic-juridical linguistics.**
- **Forensic language in diachrony.**
- **The linguistic training and the ongoing education of the legal professionals** - starting from the evaluation of essential linguistic skills - the aim of which is to equally introduce these competencies to the operators of the law, investigative police, court reporters, etc. Areas of particular interest for the operators of the law are: linguistic, communicative, interactional skills for cross-examination and also textual competencies for the editing of deeds and for juridical and professional texts.
- **Media education and jurisdiction.** Law reports, radio and television transmissions of criminal trials and representation of the Justice system in mass media. The research seeks to analyze the linguistic mediation of journalists of varying media, both oral and written: newspapers, newscast (radio and television), talk shows, fiction dramas, documentaries, etc. A further aim of the research is to provide training for the media professionals: journalists, presenters, news readers, etc.
- **The ongoing education of teachers**, with the purpose of improving their ability to educate students to democratic legality from a linguistic standpoint, to teach them to analyze non-literary texts, asymmetrical interactions, variations of the linguistic repertoire and special uses of language in juridical and judicial contexts. Furthermore, the aim is to train students to a critical analysis of media (oral and written) in relation to law reports and more generally to how the Justice system is represented in massmedia.
- **Justice in art:** representation of Justice in literature, cinema, theatre, etc.
- **Reports and reviews of publications, shows and pertinent events.**

*Translation by Ivana Azzalini*