Titolo: Roads to Oral Archives Development and Sustainability (ROADS)

Codice Progetto: 2022TSXM2P

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CUP: C53D23010370006

Bando: PRIN 2022 - Decreto Direttoriale n. 104 del 02-02-2022

Durata: 12/12/2023 – 11/12/2025 (24 mesi)

Budget totale progetto: 214.942,00 €

Budget UNIPD: 43.649,00 €

Abstract del progetto: Thousands of oral archives about 20th century history are scattered around Italy and secluded in the drawers and hard disks of individual scholars. They are the legacy of the "forest of works with oral sources carried out in our country from the 1970s onwards" (Bermani 1999). These data constitute a treasure trove on how different individuals and groups have used language and memory to shape their lived experiences into a set of meaningful and coherent stories about themselves and their social and cultural environment. In short, these archives are the sound memory of Italians. The scientific associations of linguists and oral historians have long pointed out the precarious condition of this submerged cultural heritage.

To unlock this treasure trove, a number of obstacles must be addressed:

- the dispersed nature of oral archives

- under-utilisation of Information and Communication Technology among Social Sciences and Humanities scholars

- the backlog in annotation and digitization

- lack of standardisation of data and metadata

- copyright and ownership issues; privacy and ethical issues involved in the use and reuse of recorded data.

While other countries have long tried to ensure that oral sources of knowledge are preserved and used, Italy is addressing the problem with a serious delay. Individual researchers and scientific communities require guidelines and indications of best practices for dealing with their oral archives; they also need a reliable and permanent national repository and digital tools that can speed up analysis. ROADS will:

- map existing oral archives collected by academic researchers

- survey existing practices for oral archive preservation

- sustain an infrastructure for oral archives integrated into the CLARIN research ecosystem

- propose user guides in accordance with technical, legal and ethical constraints

- digitise, describe and store a pilot oral archive

- transmit knowledge to junior researchers and professionals.

The 5 research units involved in the project provide fully geographical coverage (North, Centre, South of Italy) and possess truly complementary research competencies, thus ensuring that the different work packages will be implemented harmoniously. ROADS is linked to the strategic priorities of the ERIC CLARIN infrastructure and its Italian node CLARIN-IT (i.e., making digital language resources available to scholars, students and citizen-scientists from all disciplines; offering long-term solutions and technology services for deploying, connecting, analysing and sustaining digital language data). Moreover, ensuring a transition from current fragmentation to a situation in which oral archives are easy to store, find, share and reuse is aligned to the European Open Science Cloud environment, built to host and process research data to support EU science. Finally, supporting a sustainable ecosystem for oral archives is fully consistent with the National Research Infrastr. Plan 2021-27.