

FRIDAY

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24

3 p.m.

Gambrell 429

Expanding notions of “Black Language” through representation of Black Linguistic diversity on TikTok

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Co-Sponsored by

The Department of Anthropology and the Linguistics Program

Abstract: Analogous to Black Twitter (Brock 2020, Clark 2015), Black Tumblr (Calhoun 2020) and other distinct networks of Black social media users, Black TikTok is an online community formed through shared ethnoracial identity and Black-centered discourse practices. The widespread use of the video-sharing platform and its varied technological capabilities have afforded highly diverse representations of Blackness that differ from those in mainstream media and on other social media platforms. In this talk, I analyze data from Black TikTok to explore how representations of Black linguistic diversity on the platform expand and challenge dominant representations of Black language practices and explore how this phenomenon contributes to sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological understandings of the relationship between language and race. I demonstrate how representing the diversity of Black language is one form of Black TikTok creators’ practices that subvert essentialist ideas of what Blackness means in society and in digital spaces and that de-sensationalize and humanize Blackness through representations of everyday Black life.

Bio: Dr. Kendra Calhoun is a University of California President’s Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Anthropology at UCLA. She earned her M.A and Ph.D in Linguistics from UC Santa Barbara and her B.A. in English Language and Literature and Psychology from the University of South Carolina. Her interdisciplinary research critically examines the intersections of language, race, identity, and media, focusing on the experiences of Black communities in the U.S. She has researched African American discourse practices as Black cultural practice on social media platforms including Vine and Tumblr. She has also studied the impacts of diversity ideologies and practices on Black graduate students and other graduate students of color in U.S. higher education. Dr. Calhoun’s work has been published in outlets across disciplines including *Language*; *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*; *Pedagogy*; and *AoIR Select Papers in Internet Research*. She is currently studying linguistic and other cultural practices on TikTok, including self-censorship in response to content moderation policies and constructions of Black cultural identity.



If you would like to attend via Zoom please email either Monica Barra (mbarra@seoe.sc.edu) or Atieno Adongo (adongoa@mailbox.sc.edu) for a link.