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Title : Visualizing and Revisiting Dialect Intelligibility Networks: Mazatec as a case study

Scheduled : Monday June 23, 2014, 18:00-18:30

Abstract: Dialect Intelligibility Testing (DIT) has long been the focus of attention in Native American linguistics (Hockett, 1958: 321-30), as an alternative standpoint to taxonomies based on comparative or quantitative linguistics. It has contributed to enhance the heuristic value of continuous chain models, over discontinuous tree-like models in dialectology. DIT also highlights epigenetic trends over phylogenetic and ontogenetic assessments on dialect variation. In this talk, we'll revisit Kirk's and Casad's data on Mazatec mutual intelligibility patterns (Kirk, 1970; Casad, 1974: 46-51, 167-79) with visualizing tools such as GraphStream (http://graphstream-project.org/), and we'll question relevant thresholds in Mutual Intelligibility Networks (MIN). We'll suggest a finer-grained grid than the one initially used by Kirk & Casad, in the seventies, and we'll show how previously unobserved communal clusters may emerge from algorithmic complexity, out of raw MIN data, through visualization devices now currently used in processing complex systems.