AT THE BOUNDARIES OF SYNTACTIC PREHISTORY: METRIC AND NON-METRIC DISTANCES

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in Sala Cappella, ex Ospedale Militare, via Fabio Severo 40,
e online on Zoom

Abstract:

The remarkable case of the Romanian language, on which we shall linger extensively, shows in a convincing way, that the syntactic signal is definitely more robust than the lexical one, even if it is on the latter that traditional linguistic phylogeny has been built and has allowed linguists to achieve an extraordinary success not limited to Indo-european languages; syntactic classification has been considered a hard nut to be dealt with, to say the least. Instead, the linguistic school lead by G. Longobardi (York, UK, Reggio Emilia and Trieste) have turned this point of view upside down and have built a deep-rooted linguistic phylogeny based precisely on syntactic parameters. Tools used, as happens in bioinformatics and in DNA phylogeny, resort to the mathematical notion of string distance and offer the chance to discuss the purport of this elusive notion.

Basic references:

A. Ceolin, Cr. Guardiano, G. Longobardi, M.A. Irimia, L. Bortolussi e A. Sgarro: At the boundaries of syntactic prehistory, Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B, 2021

M.M. Deza, E. Deza: Encyclopedia of Distances, 4th ed., Springer V., 2016