**Vous êtes cordialement invités à une**

communication dans le cadre du Séminaire du CRLAO sur les

**« Recherches actuelles en linguistique»**

présenté par

**Johann-Mattis LIST**

DFG Research Fellow

CRLAO

**«Computer-Assisted Language Comparison and its Application to Chinese Dialectology»**

**le mercredi 4 février 2015**

**de 16h à 18h**

**INaLCO**

**Salle des Plaques**

**2, rue de Lille**

**75007 Paris**

During the last two decades, historical linguistics has experienced a quantitative turn, reflected in multiple publications on such diverse topics as phonetic alignment, automatic cognate detection, and phylogenetic reconstruction. Unfortunately, the new methods have created a gap between the “new and innovative” quantitative methods and the traditional approaches which date back to the beginning of the 19th century: While traditional linguists complain about a lack of *quality* in computational approaches, computational linguists complain about a lack of *structure* in traditional approaches. This also holds for Chinese linguistics and Chinese dialectology, where quantitative approaches haven an even longer tradition, dating back at least to the 1960s.

My research project on “Vertical and lateral aspects of Chinese dialect history”, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) has two major goals: Firstly, it proposes an interdisciplinary, data-driven approach to Chinese dialectology, where – based on cooperation with biologists and sinologists – quantitative methods originally designed to study lateral gene transfer in evolutionary biology are used to explore vertical (inheritance-related) and lateral (contact-related) aspects of Chinese dialect history. Secondly, the project aims to bridge the gap between traditional and quantitative approaches in historical linguistics by establishing a new framework of “computer-assisted language comparison” which develops interactive interfaces which help to compensate both the lack of *structure* in traditional, and the lack of *quality* in quantitative historical linguistics.

In this talk, I will briefly summarize the current state of the art for quantitative methods in historical linguistics, pointing out their specific prospects and challenges. I will then introduce the major ideas behind the framework of “computer-assisted language comparison” and give some examples on how it can be applied in the field of Chinese dialectology and Chinese dialect history.

*Pour information :*

Les séminaires du CRLAO sont organisés par Hilary Chappell (CRLAO-EHESS) commenceront le 14 janvier 2015 et se dérouleront les mercredis du 16h à 18h jusqu’en fin juin.Pour toute information complémentaire, euillez contacter Hilary Chappell sur hmchappell@gmail.com ou au CRLAO, 131 bd St Michel,  M. Hugues Feler au 01 53 10 53 71.