Applicative functions of Slavic verbal prefixes from a cross-linguistic perspective

Peter Arkadiev – University of Freiburg

“Applicative” is the term used in linguistic typology for valency-increasing operations adding an object to a verb’s argument structure. The languages of Europe, including Slavic, have not been traditionally described as possessing applicatives. This, however, is rather a matter of terminology than substance. Indeed, many Slavic verbal prefixes (preverbs) can act as applicatives introducing a direct or, more rarely, an indirect or oblique object, a property shared by preverbs in related languages, i.e., Baltic and Germanic.

In my talk, I shall describe the syntactic properties of applicativisation by preverband in Slavic languages as well as overview the various semantic types of applied objects in Slavic against a typological background. Slavic verbal prefixes only very rarely introduce objects with the role of beneficiary, which is perhaps the most common type of applicative cross-linguistically. Instead, Slavic applicatives often express meanings associated with increased semantic transitivity, such as affectedness or elimination, as well as a number of highly specific functions, such as surpassing or covering a distance in space or an interval in time.

Organising committee:
Daniele Artoni (daniele.aroni@univr.it), Marco Biasio (marco.biasio@unimore.it), Jelena Živojinović (jelena.zivojinovic@univr.it)