Non-directive imperatives in Slavic and Baltic: Areal aspects

(Abstract for Grammar of non-standard varieties in the East of the Circum-Baltic area)

Imperatives are known to have non-directive uses in many languages: hypothetic imperatives (Give me a place to stand and I will move the earth) and rhetorical imperatives (Go and catch a falling star) are so widespread as to be almost trivial. The Slavic and Baltic languages furthermore have less trivial non-directive types. In this talk I will address mirative/dramatic imperatives (Russian i slučis’ emu odnaždy..., Lithuanian ir pasitaikyk tu man) and echoic imperatives (Russian a ja rabotaj, Lithuanian o man dirbk). At first glance, their occurrence in Slavic and Baltic hardly looks like a coincidence, but a closer scrutiny shows many differences. I will pause over language-internal developments and possibilities of contact-induced development. I will also look at a few types of use in non-standard varieties, though this domain still awaits a more thorough investigation.