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The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

Wednesday, June 17, 2026, 15:00-16:30

Aula im. Hrynakowskiego,
Collegium Heliodori Święcicki, Grunwaldzka 6

BORROWING IN THE BALKANS: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE TYPOLOGY OF LOANWORDS

workshop

The close contact that speakers of different languages in the Balkans have had with one another has, quite naturally, led to a large number of loanwords in each of the languages. Many of these loans are trivial in a certain sense, in that they conform to what is known about the typology of borrowing and are thus to be expected in a contact situation, e.g. reflecting cultural contact (à la Bloomfield 1933) or the effects of a certain level of prestige (à la Hockett 1964) or scalar contact intensity (à la Thomason & Kaufman 1988). At the same time, though, there are loans that do not easily fit into existing typologies.

In this presentation, I first offer a critique of existing typologies and then discuss a highly prevalent type of borrowing in the Balkans that is conversationally based and expands our understanding of the typology of borrowing. I then offer some reflections on how this new borrowing type sheds light on the historical sociolinguistics of the Balkans and of Balkan contact. While in some ways like a straightforward lecture, I make this presentation more workshop-like by inviting participants, especially students, to bring up examples of borrowing from languages they know for group discussion and analysis.