

Hokkaido University Global COE Program
Slavic Research Center
& Research Faculty of Media and Communication

Special Seminar

September 29th, 2011 (Thu.)

4F Conference Room,
Slavic Research Center
(North 9, West 7)

15:00-16:15 **Vít Dovalil (Charles University Prague)**
On the status of German in the European Union

This presentation concentrates on the issue of the status of German in the European Union. Native speakers of German, a pluricentric language with a German and an Austrian standard, have been the largest group of native speakers of any language since the founding of the EC in 1950s, and German-speaking countries have been the most significant contributors to the EC budget. First, the presentation deals with methodological problems of the parameters that enable the measurement of the status of a language in language communities. Second, it conducts a survey of the most important milestones of the status of German in the European institutions, which has to do with the enlargement of the EC/EU, from the early 1970s to the present. Third, it sums up the current debates on strengthening the status of German in the EU.

16:30-17:45 **Marián Sloboda (Charles University Prague)**
How similar and mutually intelligible are Slavic languages?

The closeness and similarity of the Slavic languages and the high mutual intelligibility of some of them are well-known facts. Nevertheless, their systematic research has rather been scarce and limited so far. This lecture presents a study whose goal has thus been to learn: (1) how similar the Slavic languages are and (2) to what extent they are mutually intelligible. We have used a measure which had already been applied to Germanic languages, which allows for comparison. The linguistic distances (i.e. degrees of dissimilarity) that we obtained by the measurement can be correlated with the languages' mutual intelligibility which we have assessed using an audio test, carried out in several countries with Slavic-speaking populations.

Contact: Satoshi Hashimoto (satoshi_at_imc.hokudai.ac.jp)