



Tuesday, June 24th, 14:00-14:30, room 4

Ruti **Vardi**

Radboud University Nijmegen

Emotions and social order in Biblical Hebrew

Emotions in the Hebrew bible are expressed by emotion- and related terms, metaphors, and idiomatic constructions. In addition, emotions are present at the individual as well as the social levels. The distribution of affection and sadness over the biblical texts indicates a strong relation between these emotions and social order. This relation implies the operation of social cognition, in addition to embodied cognition, in the conceptualisation of these emotions in Ancient Israel.

With her ethnography of emotional life on a Micronesian atoll, Catherine Lutz was one of the pioneers in the field of emotions & culture studies. Based on her linguistic-anthropological analysis of Ifaluk, the language spoken on the atoll, she emphasises the pre-eminently cultural nature of emotion experience, the role of emotion concepts in communication, moral, and culture, and the influence of cultural systems on emotion meaning (Lutz, 1988). By applying a corpus linguistic study on affection and sadness, in combination with *construction grammar* methodology, I aim to explore the conceptualisation of these emotions in Biblical Hebrew (BH) and to specify their relations with social systems (see for example Goldberg, 1995; Fillmore, Kay, & O'Connor, 1988; Stefanowitsch & Gries, 2003).

In my talk I will present two case studies from the domain of affection. The first concerns an idiomatic construction of the expression of 'favour', the [X find favour in Y'es eyes] construction. The other study deals with the role of grammatical gender in women metaphors. I will show how emotion language in BH reflects social hierarchies, and will argue for the possible role that emotions play in shaping and preserving social systems.

References

1. Fillmore, C. J., Kay, P, & O'Connor, C. (1988). Regularity and idiomaticity in grammatical constructions: The case of *let alone*. *Language* 64, 501-538.
2. Goldberg, A. E. (1995). *Constructions: A construction grammar approach to argument structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
3. Lutz, C. A. (1988). *Unnatural emotions: Everyday sentiments on a Micronesian atoll and their challenge to Western theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
4. Stefanowitsch, A., Gries, S. TH. (2003) Collostructions: Investigating the interactions of words and constructions. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 8(2), 209-243.