

**The Department of Linguistics
is pleased to present**

***Uri Mor (UC Berkeley)*
and
*Ivy Sichel (UC Santa Cruz)***

speaking on

**The Double Standard in Modern Hebrew:
The Rise of Modern Vernacular Hebrew in the 1940s and 1950s**

Friday, January 13, 2023

1:20 - 3:00 PM

in HUM 1- 202

Abstract:

How did the new native vernacular (NNV) variety of Modern Hebrew eclipse the prestigious prescriptive variety to become a Hebrew standard? We analyze the social meanings associated with the new Hebrew style as a complex positive stance towards NNV, constructed via differentiation from its alternatives. NNV is reflexive, and it speaks for itself: for the authority of experience, as opposed to the traditional authority of the text. We explore this emergent subjectivity as a set of ideological coordinates in relation to language, and specifically, to speech: to be a subject, in this context, is to participate in the enregisterment, by way of speech, of a collective set of ideas about NNV.

We also explore the consolidation and dissemination of these values by cultural agents. We focus on one typical example: *Ma nishma*, a weekly column by Dahn Ben Amotz published in the 1950s. The texts present snapshots of “everyday life” in multiple sites in Palestine/Israel, as part of the modernist project of constructing a hegemonic folk identity. We show how variation in the use of spoken Hebrew, together with other tropes such as location and ethnic descent, are implicated in the construction of a new folk identity and an imaginary local past that normalizes the presence of European Jews in the land.