**Cukier-Goldstein-Goren Center for Mind, Cognition and Language,**
**School of Philosophy, Linguistics and Science Studies,**
**Department of Linguistics**

## THURSDAY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM

**Thursday 22/05/2025**
**16:15-17:45**
**Webb 103**

**Mandy Cartner, Tel Aviv University**

**Online dependency resolution given competing structural pressures: The case of fronted reflexives**

 Dependency resolution is a predictive process. In filler-gap dependencies, a filler triggers an active search for its gap, reflected in the filled-gap effect (FGE): increased difficulty when a potential gap position is filled (e.g., Stowe, 1986). Likewise, in cataphoric dependencies, a cataphor triggers an active search for an antecedent, reflected in difficulty when a potential antecedent mismatches the cataphor's features (e.g., Giskes &amp; Kush, 2021). We investigate readers' online predictions when these two searches are triggered simultaneously, in sentences headed by a "reflexive-filler", e.g., "Which picture of herself". Grammatically, the two searches triggered by the reflexive-filler are not independent: the antecedent must be hierarchically higher than the gap, and bind the reflexive in its base position. In 3 online reading studies, we investigate whether this grammatical constraint informs online predictions, focusing on filled-gap (FG) sentences, e.g. (1).

(1)  Which picture of <u>herself</u> did the {queen | king} see **the girl** admiring _ ?

When the matrix subject matches the reflexive's features ('queen'), a gap would be grammatical in the FG position (object of 'see'); when they mismatch ('king'), it would not. Does this grammatical constraint affect gap prediction, modulating the FGE on 'the girl'? We report evidence that the FGE on 'the girl' is *smaller* following a mismatching subject ('king'), suggesting that gap prediction is sensitive to the requirements of the reflexive-filler. However, the FGE persisted even without an antecedent, which is unpredicted if the parser were grammatically driven: grammatically, no gap should be posited unless an antecedent was identified. Interestingly, this is unlike Island structures, which are evidenced to fully block gap prediction (Stowe, 1986; Keshev &amp; Meltzer-Asscher 2017; Levy, 2008).

*Click here to see the colloquium program.*