

**DONNERSTAG, 16. MÄRZ 2017, 14.30 UHR**

## **ONOMASIOLOGICAL VARIATION AND LECTOMETRY. A FORMAL DEFINITION OF INFORMALIZATION**

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This talk is situated at the crossroads of two fields of inquiry: on the one hand, the corpus-based study of lexical and semantic variation; on the other hand, the sociolinguistic tradition that looks at recent developments in the European languages in terms of ‚destandardization‘ and ‚demotization‘.

Specifically, the talk argues

1° that the quantitative methods for onomasiological lectometry that derive from the first tradition (and which treat lexical variation among synonyms as a quantifiable sociolinguistic variable in the Labovian sense) help to clarify a number of issues related to the second tradition.

2° that the binary distinction between ‚destandardization‘ and ‚demotization‘ is not adequate enough to capture the multidimensional nature of standardization processes, in which the following three, mutually independent oppositions need to be distinguished:

- standardization versus destandardization, defined as a decrease or an increase of the differences between the levels in a stratificational continuum;
- formalization versus informalization, defined by the direction of standardization as just defined (from bottom layer to top layer or conversely);
- homogenization versus heterogenization, defined as an increase or decrease in the internal uniformity of a given layer, regardless of its relationship to the other layers.

These processes will be illustrated by means of a longitudinal study of contemporary Dutch, contrasting Netherlandic Dutch and Belgian Dutch, and zooming in on the relationship between formal and colloquial Belgian Dutch.