



Invitation to a guest-lecture by Dr. Disa Sauter



Title: Disentangling happiness: Evidence for distinct positive emotions from vocal signals
Day: Thursday, 23rd of October 2014
Time: 10.15 am - 12.00 pm
Room: BIN-1-D-22, Binzmühlestrasse 14/7, 8050 Zürich
Email: D.A.Sauter@uva.nl
URL: <http://www.uva.nl/over-de-uva/organisatie/medewerkers/content/s/a/d.a.sauter/d.a.sauter.html>

Abstract

Although great advances in scientific understanding of emotional processes have been made in the last decades, research has been strongly biased towards the investigation of negative affective states. While studies typically distinguish between different negative emotions, such as disgust, sadness, anger, and fear, most researchers use only one category of positive affect, “happiness” which is assumed to encompass all positive emotional states. In my talk, I will present research showing that some positive affective states are associated with discrete, innate, and universal vocal signals. I will argue that understanding the functions, signals, and mechanisms of emotions requires abandoning the unitary concept of happiness, and entertaining the possibility of several basic positive emotions. Finally, I will suggest that this conceptualization has implications for our understanding of impairments of emotional functioning in patient populations, using the example of Huntington's disease.

Relevant References

Sauter, D. A., Eisner, F., Ekman, P., & Scott, S. K. (2010). Cross-cultural recognition of basic emotions through nonverbal emotional vocalizations. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(6), 2408-2412.

Sauter, D. (2010). More Than Happy The Need for Disentangling Positive Emotions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 19(1), 36-40.

Short Bio

Dr. Sauter's first degree was in Psychology and Cognitive Science at University College London (1999-2002), followed by a PhD in the same department (2002-2006). She then worked as a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London (2006-2007), after which she received an ESRC fellowship, which she took up at Birkbeck College London (2007-2008). From 2008 to 2011 she held a staff researcher position at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen. She currently holds a Veni grant (2011-2015) from the Dutch Science Foundation, and has a joint appointment as a research fellow and lecturer in the Department of Social Psychology at UvA.