



Lecture

ELLEN BIALYSTOK

**Psychology
York University**

Friday, February 29, 2008

3:30 pm

Gowen 201

Reception to follow in Communications 202

Cognitive Consequences of Bilingualism Across the Lifespan

For fluent bilinguals, both languages are active when either one is being used. The constant exercise of certain cognitive processes in bilinguals accelerates their development in children, enhances their efficiency in adulthood, and mitigates their decline in aging. At the same time, the activation of two lexical systems makes lexical generation slower or less efficient than in monolinguals. Bialystok will illustrate these consequences by describing research conducted on bilinguals of different ages who speak a large variety of languages. This lecture will show how general cognitive processes manage bilinguals' attention to two competing languages.

Ellen Bialystok is Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology at York University. Her research focuses on the effect of bilingualism on language and cognitive development, showing accelerated mastery of specific cognitive processes for bilingual children. Bialystok's recent investigations of adult processing have found that lifelong bilingualism protects older adults from cognitive decline with aging. Other research interests include literacy acquisition in young children, models of metalinguistic awareness and second-language acquisition, and the development of spatial cognition and its relation to other cognitive abilities. Bialystok is the author of six books, as well as numerous scientific articles.

Sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences, the Canadian Studies Center at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, the Department of Linguistics, and the Simpson Center for the Humanities.

For more information see www.simpsoncenter.org/bilingualism

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