

# Bilingual well-being: what is it and why should we care?



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Annick De Houwer is Professor Emerita of Language Acquisition and Multilingualism at the University of Erfurt, Germany. Previously, she held professorships in Language Learning and Language Teaching (also at the University of Erfurt) and in Communication Science (at the University of Antwerp, Belgium). She is the President of the International Association for the Study of Child Language, IASCL.

Dr. De Houwer's 1990 Cambridge University Press book *The acquisition of two languages from birth* constituted pioneering work in bilingual acquisition, and her 2009 textbooks with *Multilingual Matters*, *Bilingual First Language Acquisition* and *An Introduction to Bilingual Development*, are used all over the world. She is co-editor (with Lourdes Ortega) of the 2019 *Cambridge Handbook of Bilingualism*.

**MONDAY, SEPT 30  
12:00 PM**

Location: Wells Hall, B342

Abstract:

Both younger and older bilinguals may feel perfectly fine navigating two or more languages and/or dialects in their daily lives. Others may have persistent issues with that bilingual functioning, or with the use or non-use of multiple language varieties by people who are important to them. Yet others may be persecuted and even killed because of their bilingualism. In bilinguals, then, individual socio-emotional well-being is closely linked to language use. Based on examples from different kinds of bilinguals, this talk explores manifestations of both higher and lower degrees of bilingual well-being. It also discusses why harmonious bilingualism, that is, an overall neutral or positive experience with bilingualism associated with high degrees of well-being, is something society at large and educational institutions in particular should strive to support.

**If you are interested in a meeting with Dr. De Houwer, please send an email to [vangorpk@msu.edu](mailto:vangorpk@msu.edu)**



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