



# UConn BIRC Speaker Series

Wednesday, May 1st from 1:30–2:30pm in Arjona 307

## ***Evidence of age-related phonological impairments in language production***

Michele Diaz, PhD, Pennsylvania State University



**Abstract:** Although decline in cognitive functions is often observed with aging, language functions show a pattern of both impaired and spared performance. Semantic processes, such as vocabulary, are well maintained throughout adulthood. In contrast, older adults show impairments in phonological aspects of language production such as in increased slips of the tongue and increased pauses during speech. This asymmetric pattern suggests a fundamental difference in the cognitive and neural organization of these two language abilities. In this talk, I will discuss our work which has looked at semantic and phonological decisions, as well as more recent work that has examined inherent aspects of words, such as phonological and semantic neighborhood densities. Our work examines how cognition, behavior, and neural factors relate to each other and how they contribute to language function in healthy younger and older adults.

*Bio: Professor Michele Diaz, PhD is currently Associate Professor of Psychology and Linguistics as well as Director of Human Imaging, at the Social, Life, & Engineering Sciences Imaging Center (SLEIC) at Pennsylvania State University. Previously, she has used electrophysiology to examine how semantic and phonological processes interact during spoken language comprehension. Using functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), she has investigated the neural substrates of orthographic, lexical, and semantic aspects of visual word processing, and the influence of conscious perception on the engagement of brain regions that support these processes. Finally, her involvement with the Biomedical Informatics Research Network (BIRN) project has allowed her to explore technical issues related to multi-site imaging, such as quality assurance measures and reliability. This experience facilitates her current role as the Director of Human Imaging at the Social, Life, and Engineering Sciences Imaging Center.*

*To read more about Professor Michele Diaz, see her full bio, visit: <https://psych.la.psu.edu/directory/mtd143>*

**Please email us if you would like to meet with Professor Michele Diaz.**

**Shuttle between UCHC & Storrs:** [transpo.uconn.edu/blank/uconn-health-center/](https://transpo.uconn.edu/blank/uconn-health-center/)

**Remote access:** [ucsf.zoom.us/j/7384800369](https://ucsf.zoom.us/j/7384800369)

**Contact:** [BIRC@uconn.edu](mailto:BIRC@uconn.edu)

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