

# Christmas Newsletter - December 2018

We've had another busy year at DCAL. We hope you enjoy reading about the highlights we have put together below. If you want to know any more about any of these topics, please do [contact us](#). Thank you for all of your support and interest in our work over 2018.

Thanks to support from UCL, in 2019 we will have two new members of academic staff joining DCAL. So, here's to another exciting and productive year in 2019!



## Research update

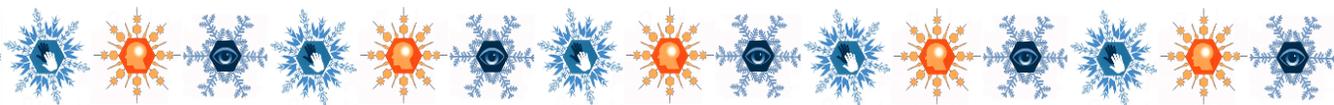
Below are just some highlights of the research published this year by DCAL researchers. You can find links to all of the DCAL papers [here](#). You can also find out more about our ongoing [research](#) and how to sign up to be [involved](#).

This year we published papers from a study in which we examined how early language experience influences attention to still faces (see [Frontiers in Psychology](#)) and videos of people speaking in hearing babies (see [Developmental Science](#)). In the study of still faces, we found that babies who were exposed to two spoken languages looked at faces faster than infants exposed to BSL and English. Infants exposed to two spoken languages may rely more on lip movements to differentiate these languages. We are interested to investigate this in deaf babies, to further examine the impact of language experience on early visual attention.



This year also saw the publication of a number of important research papers to come from the [BSL Corpus](#). In one paper in the journal [Language](#) we studied how often indicating verbs, such as 'ASK' are modified in conversation in the BSL Corpus. To our surprise, this was less than had been previously thought. Sign language corpus work has also provided important evidence for theories about the role of pointing in indicating verbs (see [Glossa](#)) and also about the notion of language as depiction, indication and description more generally (see [Frontiers in Psychology](#))

Finally, we also continued our research into the consequences of deafness for plasticity of the brain. We published a paper, in which we reported differences between deaf and hearing adults in the parts of the brain used for working memory – the ability to temporarily hold information in mind ([Cerebral Cortex](#)). Although we know that “auditory” areas of the brain are used for both signed and spoken language processing, this study also shows that the organisation of networks for cognitive tasks, such as memory, may also be shaped by deafness.



## Studying at DCAL

At DCAL we continue to run successful undergraduate and graduate degree-level modules in the Division of Psychology and Language Sciences on topics such as sign language linguistics; deafness, cognition and language; and deaf culture. We are also now beginning to publicise a new [affiliate programme in Psychology and Language Sciences](#), to begin in 2019-20. This allows undergraduate students from overseas to study abroad at UCL for one or two terms, taking modules from across the division, with an option to specialise in Sign Language and Deaf Studies via one or more of the three modules noted above.



Many professionals working in the area of deafness or sign language have told us that they are interested in these courses but don't want to sign up for a full degree course. We are therefore gathering expressions of interest to offer these modules for Continuing Professional Development credit. To express interest in this, please see [here](#)

We also run a number of modules with the UCL Centre for Translation Studies (CenTraS) on interpreting and live captioning. In addition, we run British Sign Language courses for UCL students, in conjunction the UCL Centre for Languages and International Education. Currently we offer BSL level 1 and are looking to expand to more advanced levels.

Find out more about the courses we offer on our website [here](#).

## Continuing Professional Development (CPD)/ Summer Schools/ Short Courses

### CPD and Short Courses

In addition to running lots of bespoke [CPD courses](#) both nationally and internationally this year, we have also run 'Interpreter Demystification Days'. The aim of these days has been to tell BSL interpreters more about the range of interesting assignments we have on offer. If you're interested in attending a future event – please do email [dcalcourses@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:dcalcourses@ucl.ac.uk).

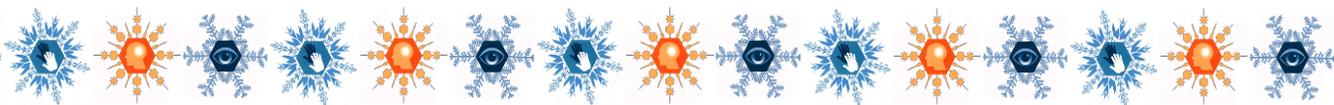


We have also spent much time this year developing new online deaf awareness courses for health professionals, which will be launched in the new year. The courses aim to improve deaf awareness in different professional groups in the health care system. Accreditation by professional associations will ensure the courses are formally recognised as key CPD for health professionals. To register interest please email [dcalcourses@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:dcalcourses@ucl.ac.uk).

### Summer schools

University of Pittsburgh students visited again to learn BSL and experience British Deaf history and culture. In 2019, [this summer school](#) will be opened to students from other universities. Please do spread the word!

In July 2018 we also ran the 'DCAL Research Skills Summer School' for the first time. [Professor Peter Hauser](#) delivered the keynote presentation. The summer school focused on research skills and methodology from DCAL's field work, corpus development, language acquisition, neuroscience and psycholinguistics research. We are now accepting applications for the [2019 research skills summer school](#). Do come and join us!

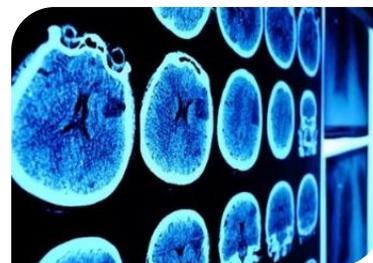


The '[Discover UCL summer school for D/deaf and Hard of hearing students](#)' ran for 3-days in August 2018. This summer schools equips deaf and hard of hearing (HoH) year 11 and 12 students for university life. Manjula Patrick won a 'UCL Provost's Excellence Award' for leading this Summer School. We are delighted and proud of her work towards making UCL accessible for deaf and HoH students.

## Impact

The [National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery](#) will shortly be issuing a press release to recognise that the NHS has agreed to fund the Neurology Clinic for Deaf people who may have degenerative brain conditions, like dementia. The clinic, established by Jo Atkinson, is the first of its kind in the world. Patients from all over the UK can be referred by their GPs. You can find more information [here](#)

The [DCAL Portal](#), provides access to the many language and cognition assessments developed at DCAL. Jo Atkinson is still helping out with Portal work – it's great to have her involved with this as well. DCAL colleagues have been assisting researchers from other countries with adaptations of various of the Portal assessments into other sign languages. These currently include adaptations of the BSL Cognitive Screen for older signers, with adaptations into DGS (German Sign Language) and Receptive Skills Test into Croatian Sign Language.



## BSL Corpus 10 year Anniversary Celebration!

A celebration of 10 years of the [BSL Corpus](#) was held in November 2018. The event gave an overview of the BSL Corpus and of the research that has been carried out on the BSL Corpus over the last 10 years. The afternoon focused on user reports from BSL teachers, students and interpreters who use the BSL Corpus themselves for teaching and learning purposes. Huge thanks to Penny Gunn, Christopher Stone and Jenny Koehring for sharing their experiences! Around 100 people from the local Deaf community attended and another 250 people from 24 countries around the world watched online via livestream. If you missed it, don't worry - a recording is [available online](#).



We continue to collect user experiences that help us maintain and improve the BSL Corpus and Signbank. If you have used these resources for teaching, learning and/or research, [please tell us about it!](#)

*Happy Christmas from all of us at DCAL*

If you'd like to contact us about anything in this newsletter or any of the work we do – please do email: [dcal@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:dcal@ucl.ac.uk) You can also follow us on twitter @DCAL\_UCL

