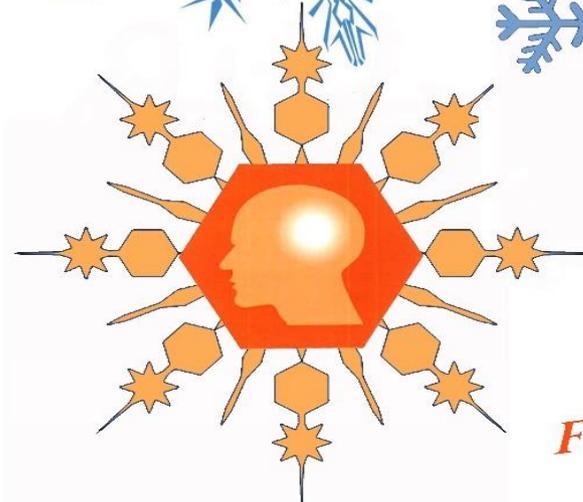




**Happy Christmas
&
best wishes for 2017**



From everyone at DCAL

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A message from DCAL's outgoing Director Professor Bencie Woll



The end of 2016 brings some important changes to DCAL. Our 11 years of core funding from the Economic and Social Research Council is now at an end. With UCL's support, new permanent academic and support posts have been created, so that DCAL can remain a key centre for research and teaching, and DCAL colleagues are applying for new research grants, as well as developing new teaching programmes, including on-line courses, CPD for deaf and hearing professionals, and new degree programmes. Another major change is that I will be handing over the role of Director of DCAL to my colleague Mairéad MacSweeney from January 1st 2017. Mairéad has been a DCAL colleague since 2006 and a co-Director of DCAL since 2011 and it will be great to have her as Director as DCAL moves into its next phase. I will still be working actively at DCAL and I'm looking forward to having a chance to catch up on all the writing-up that I've been putting off for years. I'd like to thank all my colleagues and those who've helped us with our research since the start of DCAL. We hope to continue to work with you all in the future and hope you'll visit the DCAL website www.dcal.ucl.ac.uk frequently for updates and information. Best wishes for a happy Christmas and for a happy, healthy and peaceful 2017.

Introducing DCAL's New Director Dr. Mairéad MacSweeney



Having been a co-Director of DCAL for the last 5 years, and having worked in the field of cognition, language and deafness for 22 years, I am delighted to be taking over as the new DCAL Director in January 2017. I intend to ensure that DCAL continues to be important to the international academic community, by providing unique insights into cognition and language, and also to the communities who benefit from the translation of DCAL research into important societal impact.

One of the key roles for future research at DCAL is to take into account the fact that the landscape of deafness is changing. It is vital to the future success of DCAL that the research moves with this changing landscape. I envisage future research at DCAL that will embrace this broader view of language and communication. We will also continue the vital role that DCAL plays in ensuring that DCAL research can be used an applied in real life settings to ensure it achieves real impact.

Introducing DCAL's New Reader in Sign Language Linguistics - Dr. Kearsy Cormier

We are delighted to announce that Dr. Kearsy Cormier is has been appointed by UCL as a Reader in Sign Linguistics. She will take up the position at DCAL, and also affiliated with the Linguistics department, in January 2017. You can find out more about her new research grant on BSL syntax below.

DCAL courses update

Did you know we offer continuing professional development courses and bespoke short courses?

During 2016 we provided bespoke courses in places such as Sweden, Greece, China and Denmark as well as around the UK. In 2017 we are already planning presentations and courses in Japan, the USA, and Greece – with others being arranged.

We offer courses to a range of groups, organisations and universities on topics including :

- Linguistics of sign language
- Deaf culture
- Sign language teaching
- Notetaking
- Deaf interpreters, and
- The Deaf Brain and neuroscience of sign language

We also look forward to welcoming a group of students from Pennsylvania in the USA who will be coming to DCAL to learn BSL and about British Deaf history and culture. We have had groups of students in the past from the Moscow State Linguistics University. London is a vibrant and exciting international city and this will make it even more memorable for university students.

Contact us if you would like us to develop a bespoke course for you or for your organisation! If you have a group of students who would like to come and learn BSL and the British Deaf community, do get in touch: our email is DCALcourses@ucl.ac.uk

New Project on BSL syntax

A new project “A broadly usage-based account of British Sign Language syntax” aims to document and describe word order and non-manual feature in different types of BSL sentences. The project, led by DCAL’s Kearsy Cormier with co-investigators Adam Schembri (University of Birmingham) and Jordan Fenlon (Heriot-Watt University), is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council UK and will run for 3 years from December 2016.

The project will conduct the first ever large-scale, detailed investigation of the grammatical system of British Sign Language (BSL), combining the use of converging evidence from both experimental data and spontaneous conversation data with corpus-based, cognitive/functional and sociolinguistic approaches. Corpus-based studies of language are those that rely on large, representative, computerised collections of language recordings (such as the British National Corpus of English). Cognitive/functional theories of grammar assume that our knowledge of language arises out of the many ways we use it. Sociolinguistics is the study of how social factors, such as a person's gender or age, are involved in language variation and change. There is growing recognition in the field of linguistics that there is considerable overlap across these three areas of study - as they all rely on language

use. This broadly usage-based, multi-pronged approach to studying grammatical structure constitutes the current state-of-the-art in linguistic theory and description for spoken languages and will be applied here to a sign language for the first time, using evidence from the BSL Corpus. Other data collected will include both production (i.e., signed responses to stimuli such as cartoons) and judgement data (i.e., asking BSL signers for their intuitions about the acceptability of various grammatical structures). The team will use these data to study clause structure of BSL including word order and structure of non-manual features in declaratives, questions and negation.

Overall, this project takes a multidisciplinary approach to the study of sign language grammar across usage-based linguistics and related disciplines, taking advantage of new methods and technologies. Since little is known about how sign languages are structured and used, this project will enable us to study what is possible and impossible in BSL grammar (which is suggested via elicited production and judgement data, on a much larger scale from previous research) and importantly, what is probable and improbable in BSL (which is directly shown via spontaneous corpus data). The use of both types of data, using a broad range of usage-based approaches, is the best way to discover facts about (sign) language structure and use. This will put researchers in a position to make appropriate comparisons between signed and spoken languages, and thus understand language diversity and linguistic universals, a key area of interest within linguistics and cognitive science more generally.

For more information, see <http://www.bsllcorpusproject.org/projects/bsl-syntax-project/>.

Vacancy - Sign Language Linguistics Research Associate

The BSL Syntax Project is a new 3-year project based at the Deafness, Cognition and Language (DCAL) Centre (www.dcal.ucl.ac.uk), funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), that aims to conduct the first ever large-scale, detailed investigation of the grammatical system of British Sign Language (BSL), combining the use of converging evidence from both experimental data and spontaneous conversation data with corpus-based, cognitive/functional and sociolinguistic approaches. The focus will be on basic clause structure and the syntax of questions and negation in BSL. (<http://www.bsllcorpusproject.org>).

Duties include annotation and analysis of BSL Corpus data and collection, annotation and analysis of supplementary elicitation and judgement data, as part of the BSL Syntax Project.

For further information please see - <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dcal/dcal-vacancies/research-associate-sign-linguistics>



Online Deaf Awareness course

New DCAL online course: Deaf Awareness: Working and Communicating Well with Deaf People

Who this course is for?

The course is for anyone who comes in contact with Deaf people, or people with a hearing loss. It has been designed for any professional who interacts with deaf people, or people with hearing loss, as part of their job. The course will contribute to the ongoing professional development of audiologists, nurses, social workers, doctors, therapists, care staff, HR professionals, receptionists, dentists, university staff, people working in the transport and hospitality industry, contact centre staff, police, ambulance staff and many others.

Why this course?

- See real people talking about their life experiences so you can understand the different approaches to communication.
- Understand the complexities and challenges of deafness through interactive exercises and the personal experiences of real people with hearing loss.
- Get a unique holistic view of deaf awareness which covers the cultural, societal and medical contexts.
- Learn at your own pace.

Benefits

If you work with someone who is deaf or has a hearing loss, or you provide services or products to the general population ***Deaf Awareness: Working and Communicating Well with Deaf People*** will

- **Help you meet the needs of deaf people and people with a hearing loss** – *this will improve customer and staff satisfaction and enable you better tap into huge potential market*
- **Reduce costs** – *your staff will be better equipped to deal with Deaf people or people with hearing loss reducing inefficiency and improving outcomes*
- **Help you meet your statutory equality duties** – *many organisations have a statutory duty to ensure equal access for deaf people*

The cost of the course is £119 per person with discounts for larger groups. For more information please visit <http://bit.ly/2dmFszu>