

SBC AGM 2026 Research Update

1. University of Birmingham – Dr. Emmanouela Terlektsi, PhD, FHEA

1.1 Commissioned Research Work

1.1.1 NDCS Project: Evaluating the Impact of Peripatetic Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People on Deaf Children's Outcomes

Last year, in collaboration with the Sandwell Local Authority Sensory Support Team, we explored whether and how the impact of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf (ToDs) on deaf children's outcomes could be measured using a mixed-methods approach.

A final report was delivered to the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) in July 2025. The findings were also presented to approximately 180 colleagues during a BATOD webinar on 17 September 2025, which prompted an engaging Q&A session.

Parents, deaf young people, and professionals all spoke positively about the support provided by peripatetic ToDs and expressed a need for increased support. The research concluded that a "whole-child approach" is essential for measuring impact effectively. This includes considering progress records alongside the perspectives of parents, teachers, and other professionals.

Key recommendations included:

- Using multiple data sources to reflect individual children's needs
- Maintaining clear and consistent records
- Applying SMART targets alongside monitoring tools, such as Success from the Start, to track progress and support collaboration

The full report [is available on the NDCS website](#).

1.2 Identifying Educational Strategies to Support Deaf Autistic Children

We are pleased to announce that we are in the final stages of our British Academy-funded project exploring educational strategies to support deaf autistic children.

This study aimed to identify and characterise effective practices that support the inclusion of deaf children with autism. Building on the methodology developed by Powers et al. (1999, 2001), the project comprised two phases.

Phase 1 involved a two-part online questionnaire, developed following stakeholder focus groups and a pilot study. This phase identified settings demonstrating excellent practice and explored the rationale behind stakeholder recommendations. In Phase 2, six educational settings were selected based on Phase 1 nominations. Data were collected through interviews, document analysis, and observations.

Preliminary findings from both phases highlight the complexity of effective practice. Inclusion was strongly supported across both mainstream and specialist settings, with a clear emphasis on promoting:

- Language development
- Social and emotional skills
- Self-esteem and independence
- Positive identity and social competence

The findings also emphasise the importance of strong partnerships between schools, services, and families, underlining the value of collaborative approaches in supporting deaf autistic children.

1.3 Foundations for Literacy – Pilot Study

We are continuing a small pilot study funded by the Leverhulme Trust to explore the feasibility of adapting the Foundations for Literacy intervention for UK educational settings. Foundations for Literacy is an evidence-based intervention specifically designed for pre-school children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

1.4 Research Work

1.5 Exploring the Use of AI to Support Deaf Children in the Early Years

In collaboration with colleagues from Australian Catholic University and the Department of Philosophy at the University of Birmingham, we are currently exploring the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as a tool to support deaf children in the early years. The study adopts a scenario-based case study approach, and the publication is currently in preparation.

1.6 International Training and Collaboration

On 6 February 2026, Emmanouela had the privilege of delivering an in-person presentation at the long-standing all-day in-service seminar for Teachers of the Deaf, hosted by the School for the Deaf in Cyprus. She delivered a training session focused on evaluation and assessment methods to support Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students in both inclusive and specialist educational settings.

The seminar brought together a dedicated group of professionals, including:

- Teachers of Deaf children and young people from across Cyprus
 - Coordinators for deaf students in secondary education
 - Inspectors of Special and General Education from the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth
- Participating in this event reinforced the importance of international collaboration in advancing Deaf Education and Inclusion. It was inspiring to engage with such committed educators, and plans are already underway to build on this partnership through future training and development initiatives.

For further information on any of these projects, please contact Emmanouela directly at: m.e.terlektsi@bham.ac.uk

2. University of Edinburgh – Rachel O'Neill, Dr. Audrey Cameron and Gabrielle Hodge Sign Bilingual consortium report

Research round-up from University of Edinburgh for period June 2025 – May 2026

2.1 Negation in BSL

Hodge, G., Winter, B., Schembri, A. & K. Cormier. (2025). BSL signers combine different semiotic strategies to negate clauses. *Open Linguistics*, 11(1): 20250063. DOI: 10.1515/opli-2025-0063

This publication may be interesting for deaf and hearing people on BSL courses and Deaf BSL tutors. The BSL corpus informed this work, which looked at how 40 Deaf signers from four regions used different semiotic strategies to negate clauses, e.g., headshakes, English mouthing, mouth gestures, lexical signs, etc. The authors found that signers tended to use between two and three strategies to negate clauses, typically including one or more manual negating signs. Headshakes most commonly occurred with manual negating signs, mouthings of English negating forms, and/or conventionalised mouth gestures. Headshake-only clause negation was rare. This suggests that BSL signers prefer to combine manual and non-manual strategies when signalling clause negation, especially headshakes and mouthings of English negating forms. They are not just relying on one strategy, such as headshakes or lexical signs, for example. The exact manifestation depends on both discourse-pragmatic factors and socio-demographic factors such as region, age group, and BSL teaching experience.

2.2 Touching the Future Working Progress Report

Touching the Future aimed to kickstart the Protactile movement in Scotland. It is funded by the University of Edinburgh and Creative Scotland, with support from Arika, a Scottish political arts organisation striving to support connections between artistic production and social change. Touching the Future came about due to a fortuitous meeting between Isabelle McGrath, a Scottish DeafBlind teacher, leader and activist, and the main promotor of Protactile in Scotland, and Dr Gabrielle Hodge, a sighted Deaf linguist at the University of Edinburgh in late 2024. We worked with DeafBlind Protactile experts John Lee Clark (USA), Dr Soline Vennetier (France) and Lisa van der Mark (The Netherlands). Jordan Goldman, a Canadian Co-Navigator, and Kyle Bettley, a Scottish Co-Navigator, supported us in this endeavour. This project pivoted around four Protactile training events in Glasgow during April 2026: 1) PT House, a one-week immersion for two DB people, 2) PT Taster for four DB people, 3) PT Gather for an additional

eighteen DB people, and 4) PT Celebrate, an open night for PT curious people, including Deaf, Blind and sighted hearing people. All events were hosted in central Glasgow. The Touching the Future team are now in the process of evaluating impacts, writing a blog post, and planning how we can continue to support the movement of Protactile across the UK. We will share outputs you can engage with in future updates.

2.3 Professional responsibility and relationality

Friedner, M., O'Neill, R., & Snoddon, K. 2026. Professional responsibility and relationality in deaf education. Taylor and Francis. (Reprint of special issue as a book)

I reported last year on my contribution to an article in this special issue of Deafness and Education International. The issue was reprinted as a book. The editorial from the special issue is the first chapter, cowritten with Michele Friedner, Kristin Snoddon and myself. This provides an overview to the volume, considering some recent miscarriages of justice internationally in relation to deaf children's language development. While professionalism can support families and deaf children, professionals do not always include all viewpoints in their decision making. We asked readers to expand their sometimes narrow professional viewpoint to consider structural inequalities and intersectional oppression affecting deaf children and their families. We put forward the view that a political and relational framework is needed to ensure deaf children have access to all the linguistic and educational resources available to live successfully in an ableist world. The book is rather expensive, but the editorial is free and [open access here](#).

2.4 Contribution to school curriculum review

Wilks, R., & O'Neill, R. 2025. Integrating British Sign Language into deaf education. *The Language Learning Journal (LLJ)*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2025.2554235>

- 2.5 The aim of this discussion paper was to contribute to a national review of English curriculum and assessment arrangements and particularly to focus on the place of language teaching and learning. The article is in a special issue edited by Pachler, Hua, Ayres-Bennett and Forsdick, 2025, to contribute views of language policy scholars to UK curriculum reform discussion. The English government held a rapid review during 2024-25 with evidence coming from parents, professional associations, charities and academics. Our objectives were to examine the way deaf children are seen by Health and Education in England today largely as hearing children who need to be mainstreamed; to raise issues about the dual categorisation of deaf children as both deaf and disabled, i.e. to ensure they were seen also as potential members of a linguistic minority; to challenge the medicalisation of deaf children from birth; and to review how BSL could be brought into the National Curriculum not just as a GCSE subject but throughout the school system, focusing particularly on deaf children in schools for deaf children and resource bases.

2.6 Exploring relationships with parents

O'Neill, R. (2026) Success from the start? Exploring early relationships between the families of deaf children and professionals. *REACH Journal of Inclusive Education in Ireland*. 39(1). [Free online article](#).

This article was first a talk given at Dublin City University to teachers of deaf children in the Republic of Ireland. I examined tools which ToDs often use such as Success from the Start (NDCS), used with preschool deaf children. The article draws on my earlier research [Telling It Like It Is \(2019\)](#) about the views of families living on a low income with deaf children. The experience of seeing many late diagnosed deaf children in Scotland, many from low income and multilingual families, also made me reflect on how professionals approach families with different backgrounds from their own. I discuss the intercultural encounters in parents' homes and how these could be sites of conflict or communication difficulties. I ask how should ToDs prepare for these encounters.

2.7 Deaf teachers' experiences in Scotland

Cameron, A & O'Neill, R 2026, *Deaf teachers' experiences in Scotland*. University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh., Edinburgh. [Deaf Teachers experiences in Scotland - 25.05.26.pdf](#)

This report presents findings from a survey of qualified deaf teachers working in Scotland, conducted in April–May 2026. It is the first study to compare the experiences of deaf teachers cross three distinct communication groups: BSL signers, bilingual/bimodal communicators (those who use both sign and speech, referred to here as Mixed), and deaf teachers who use speech as primary mode of communication. Despite the protections offered by the Equality Act 2010 and the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015, deaf teachers across all three groups report persistent discrimination, inadequate support, and significant barriers at every stage of their careers — from initial teacher education through to ongoing employment and career progression.

2.8 STEM education and sign language

2.9 STEM in Sign Language Handbook

Cameron, A. (2025) 'From Scientific Concepts to Signs: Leveraging STEM Glossaries in Deaf Education'. In Unterhitzeneberger, G., Nordheimer, S., Peters, C., Schmidt, F., Schueler, L., Bunmman, S. and Rathmann, C. (eds), STEMSiL Handbook – Research in STEM Teaching and Learning in Sign Languages. P4-27. (In English and IS)

https://stemsil.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/STEMSiL_Handbook_full_chapters_EN.pdf

[https://stemsil.eu/wp-](https://stemsil.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/STEMSiL_Handbook_Summary_of_chapters_EN.pdf)

[content/uploads/2025/06/STEMSiL_Handbook_Summary_of_chapters_EN.pdf](https://stemsil.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/STEMSiL_Handbook_Summary_of_chapters_EN.pdf) (short version)

This STEM handbook presents the key research findings and educational experiences from the [STEMSiL project](#), exploring how sign languages can be effectively used to teach STEM subjects to deaf and hard-of-hearing learners. Developed in collaboration with Deaf educators, researchers, and linguists, it provides deep insights into bilingual STEM education, DeafDidaktik, and inclusive teaching strategies.

Audrey Cameron's chapter explains how we can use Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) sign glossaries to support teaching and learning. It is written in English and has videos in International Sign. Audrey argues that STEM sign glossaries can serve as crucial educational tools to bridge the gap between scientific concepts and accessible visual communication for deaf learners. She makes the case that systematically developed sign vocabularies for STEM can significantly enhance both teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes in deaf education.

2.9 Student created videos

Rodger D., and Cameron, A. (2025) Chemistry on camera: Deaf A-level students take the lead. BATOD Magazine, December 2025, p6-7.

<https://heathlands.herts.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Chemistry-on-camera-Deaf-A-level-students-take-the-lead.pdf>

This article explains the work science teacher Derek Rodger and Audrey Cameron did with A level students at Heathlands to create BSL chemistry videos covering key concepts and practical skills. Students took the lead as presenters and camera operators, with deaf editor Fifi Garfield ensuring the quality of the final films. The project boosted students' confidence and understanding of chemistry concepts.

2.10 Deaf Chemistry Students' Experience of Further and Higher Education

Cameron, A. (2026) 'Deaf Chemistry Students' Experience of Further and Higher Education'. In Essex, J. (Ed.) Inclusive and Accessible Chemistry for Further and Higher Education. (with BSL videos embedded). Royal Society of Chemistry. P67-103. (In English and BSL)

<https://doi.org/10.1039/9781837678600>

Abstract of book: Chemistry, and science more broadly, should be welcoming and accessible to everyone with an interest. However, stigma and discrimination often colour the experiences of students with disabilities. With improved awareness and understanding of the functional needs of students with different types of disability we can make chemistry in higher education accessible to all. Drawing on research evidence on approaches to inclusion and describing examples of the inclusion of chemistry students with differing types of disability, this book sets out what we know about successful inclusion. Wide ranging accounts provide a discussion of barriers faced, helpful strategies and recommendations for improving accessibility and inclusivity in higher education.

2.11 Update on SSC STEM in BSL Glossary from Dr Audrey Cameron

The British Sign Language Glossaries of curriculum terms has continued to grow over the 2025-2026 academic year. <https://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/BSL/>

2.12 Marine Species – MUFFIN project

A cross-country collaboration with deaf scientists, linguist and teachers from Malta, Spain, Italy and Croatia has led to the MUFFIN project, The Marine, Underwater and Fish For Inclusion group, funded by Erasmus+.

<https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/en/publications/british-sign-language-glossaries-of-curriculum-terms-marine-speci/>

2.13 Dissemination events for deaf communities - 2025-2026.

1. Oysters biosecurity event with WWF Scotland, Marine Conservation Society and Heriot-Watt University (October 2025) <https://www.instagram.com/p/DV8H27NilAK/>
2. Citizen science training – Oysters survey (April 2026) - https://www.instagram.com/p/DYouOAJHIZQ/?img_index=1
3. European Cetacean Society Conference (April 2026)
4. Two Deaf Science Days at Dynamic Earth, Scotland – 1. Deaf school children and 2. deaf community (March 2026) <https://www.rsc.org/news/deaf-science-day-2026>
5. The Deep, Hull – Deaf Marine Weekend 5-8 June 2026 <https://www.thedeep.co.uk/events/deaf-marine-weekend>
6. Plymouth Sound National Marine Park – Marine Deaf Day Conference – 8 June 2026 <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/plymouthcitycouncil1/2024179>
7. Snorkelling for All – 28 June 2026 - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/snorkelling-for-all-celebration-tickets-1987383021115?aff=oddttdcreator>

2.14 AI – Artificial Intelligence

The new AI in BSL glossary will be launched in Autumn in collaboration with The Royal Society.

2.15 Collective Climate Repair – a project funded by the National Lottery in collaboration with the Sensory Trust, Trees for Cities and the National Wildlife Centre - producing 12 BSL educational films about climate change and what we can do. The films will be disseminated over the year and feedback collected from the deaf community.

Plants - Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh – ongoing project signs for plants in their Palm houses.

Science in BSL box project – trial period, schools are trying out a resource for primary science with 20 experiments and bilingual instructions.

Research Impact Prize

Exciting news! The SSC BSL glossary development team received the University of Edinburgh Research Impact Prize – Responsible Engagement and Innovation on 28 May 2028.

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3. Heriot-Watt University – Dr. Annelies Kusters

Completed projects (2025)

3.2 Sign LOUD (2025): Perspectives on domestic abuse and communication issues and the impact on deaf families. This project explored the perspectives of deaf mothers and practitioners such as police and domestic abuse services on domestic abuse and communication barriers in deaf families. Recognising that deaf women are two to three times more likely to experience domestic abuse, the project used interviews and practitioner workshops to produce recommendations for improving how services respond to the whole family. A full report, executive summary and a BSL version are available. <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/co-victims/>

3.3 SA-UK network for enhancing sign language interpreting in statutory health and social care (2025) Building on the INforMHAA study, this research network focused on the estimated 400,000 deaf users of South African Sign Language who access health and social work services through interpreters in highly complex, high-stakes situations. Bringing together practitioners, deaf people, interpreter trainers and academics, it mapped the field in practice and produced policy-relevant evidence briefings and resources to improve professional practice and lay the groundwork for a larger future project. <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/sa-uknetwork/>

3.4 Experiences of deaf women navigating work in universities and their menstrual health (2025) Part of the EDICa project, this study examined how five deaf women who use British Sign Language navigate the university workplace alongside their menstrual health. Drawing on Jones' (2013) framework of health and risk communication, it explores how discourse, modality and institutional structures shape deaf women's access to menstrual health support and information at work. <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/mens/>

3.5 Sign-presented or sign-interpreted TV: What do deaf people want? (2025) This project gathered independent evidence on whether deaf audiences prefer sign-presented programmes (led by deaf presenters and actors) or sign-interpreted programmes (where an interpreter is added to existing content), and for which genres. Commissioned by LumoTV, it surveyed deaf people at festivals and events across the UK to inform discussions with broadcasters, Ofcom and policymakers — especially relevant given the Media Act 2024 and emerging AI/avatar technologies. <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/pres-inter/>

3.6 Completed PhD Dissertations 2025:

3.7 Gary Quinn: Using non-manual features (NMF) to check alignment in BSL pragmatics : <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/nmf/>

3.8 Karolien Gebruers: International Sign conference interpreting and gender: An intersectional exploration of interpreters' and deaf professionals' experiences <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/gender-interpreting/>

3.9 Projects we got involved over the last year:

3.10 Cross-signing in Japan and the UK (2022–2026) A joint project with the National Institute of Informatics in Japan investigating how video conferencing during the Covid-19 pandemic affected the way deaf people sign. Focusing on British Sign Language and Japanese Sign Language, it surveys language attitudes and records online conversations — including between UK and Japanese deaf participants — using conversation analysis to study cross-signing and how signers accommodate one another. The recorded data also forms a corpus for future machine-learning work. <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/cross/>

3.11 EDI Caucus (EDICa) (2023–2026) An initiative strengthening equality, diversity and inclusion across the UK research and innovation field. It generates and shares evidence on practices that improve outcomes for researchers who face structural barriers, including deaf, disabled and neurodiverse researchers. <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/edi-caucus-edica/>

3.12 Family sign language policy in mixed deaf-hearing families revisited (2026) A follow-up to our 2018–2019 study of how mixed deaf-hearing families make decisions about the spoken and signed languages they use. Eight years on, we are returning to the same families — now interviewing the children themselves, who are old enough to reflect on their own language choices — to trace how signing and speaking practices change over time. <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/flp2/>

3.13 Understanding Multilingual Communication Spaces (UMCS) (ongoing 2026–2031) A five-year UK–Japan collaboration (funded by UKRI/EP SRC and JST) developing real-time AI translation between British Sign Language, Japanese Sign Language, English and Japanese, delivered through augmented-reality glasses. The project will record natural signed

conversations and produce open datasets, AI models, educational tools and AR frameworks freely available to researchers and educators. <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/umcs/>

- 3.14 Immerse, Interact, Impact through ethnographic film (ongoing, 2026)** This project develops a practical toolkit to help trainers and educators use ethnographic films in classrooms and workshops to explore topics such as communication across difference, diversity, migration and discrimination. It will offer facilitation guides, advice on handling sensitive content, and walkthrough videos in BSL and International Sign — all freely available. <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/iii/>
- 3.15 Deaf Studies pedagogies across generations in the UK (ongoing 2026–2028)** A deaf-led project documenting how Deaf Studies has been taught in UK universities from the 1980s to today, bringing together past and present lecturers through three interactive workshops. It explores how teaching can reflect the diversity of deaf communities and will establish a UK-based, deaf-led pedagogical network, alongside an open-access report, a webinar and shared teaching resources. <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/deaf-studies-pedagogies-across-generations-in-the-uk-2026-2028/>
- 3.16 CEDARS: Collaborative Exploration of Domestic Abuse Research in Signing Deaf Communities (ongoing 2026–2028)** This project brings together researchers, practitioners, stakeholders and deaf survivors to explore how domestic abuse affecting deaf BSL users can be better understood and addressed, given that mainstream services are often inaccessible. It will produce a roadmap for a new research agenda, a collaborative work plan, a dissemination symposium and a journal special issue. <https://signs.hw.ac.uk/projects/cedars-collaborative-exploration-of-domestic-abuse-research-in-signing-deaf-communities-2026-2028/>

4. Deafness, Cognition and Language Research Centre (DCAL) at University College London (UCL) – Dr. Fiona Kyle, Dr. Katie Mason, Dr. Kate Rowley & Prof. Mairéad MacSweeney

Presentation at the AGM

5. University of Leeds – Prof. Ruth Swanwick



Join, support and benefit from our community around a new research project

Reframing Multilingualism: Examining the multilingual experiences and repertoires of DHH children growing up in migrant contexts of Germany and the UK

In a joint research project, researchers at the University of Leeds, University College London and the University of Cologne are investigating the multilingual experiences of deaf and hard-of-hearing children at primary school age (5-11 years) who grow up in migrant families.

The project broadly focuses on two questions:

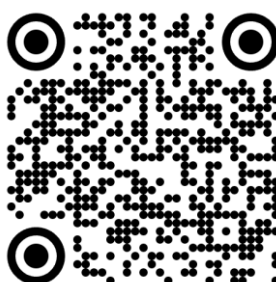
- 1) How do young deaf and hard-of-hearing migrant children experience and use language to make meaning in their everyday lives?
- 2) How do contextual factors in different geographical and social spaces influence their language use and practices?

To answer these questions, the research team will examine ways of capturing individual multilingual repertoires and communication practices that are sensitive to the influences of the observed social contexts. Methods will include observation of classroom and parent-child interactions as well as conversations with participating children and families. The conversations will be supported by a variety of visual resources that

provide different opportunities for the conversational partners to share their lived experiences, for example, through language portraits, narratives, walking interviews or go-alongs.

By gaining a greater understanding of children's language and communication profiles and the daily experiences that shape their language development, the project aims to develop support for multilingual migrant families and their deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Tailored support is especially important for these families since they often form a minority group that faces additional obstacles when it comes to receiving accessible early intervention.

Do you work with deaf and hard-of-hearing children and multilingual migrant families? Are you interested in learning more about the research and methodologies? Do you have experiences and knowledge to share? Are you looking for support with your own work? And do you want to be part of a bigger interdisciplinary community? Then please feel free to sign up to our mailing list, *Multi-DHH*, for regular updates about the project and opportunities to get involved. To subscribe, simply scan the QR code or visit:



<https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/MULTI-DHH>

For any questions or to get in touch, please contact the UK research team, consisting of Prof Ruth Swanwick, Dr Nathalie Czeke (both at the University of Leeds), and Dr Kate Rowley (University College London). Feel free to email: N.Czeke@leeds.ac.uk

www.signbilingual.co.uk

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