

# Yasamin Motamedi

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Division of Psychology and Language Sciences, UCL

EMPLOYMENT	<b>Experimental Psychology, University College London, UK</b> Research Associate for ESRC-funded project, <i>The role of iconicity in word learning</i> .	<b>2017-present</b>
	<b>Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, the Netherlands</b> Postdoctoral scholar working on independent project assessing methodological approaches to measuring iconicity in gestural systems.	<b>Jan 2017 – June 2017</b>
	<b>University of Edinburgh, UK</b> Research Assistant for pilot project on linguistic regularization and frequency effects lead by Prof Kenny Smith	<b>Nov 2014 – March 2015</b>
EDUCATION	<b>University of Edinburgh, UK</b> PhD Linguistics and English Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Artificial Sign Language Learning: a method for evolutionary linguistics.</i></li><li>• Supervised by Prof Simon Kirby, Prof Kenny Smith and Dr. Marieke Schouwstra</li></ul>	<b>2013 – 2017</b>
	<b>University of Edinburgh, UK</b> MSc with Distinction, Evolution of Language and Cognition	<b>2012 – 2013</b>
	<b>University of Edinburgh, UK</b> MA with Honours (First Class) French and English Language, with ERASMUS exchange at the Université Paris Diderot	<b>2008 – 2012</b>
TEACHING	<b>University College London, UK</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Project supervisor</b> for MRes, MSci and MSci (2) dissertation projects, for MArch (2) theory projects, and for BSc (3) short projects</li><li>• <b>Lecturer</b> for Embodied Cognition section for core module on MSc programme Cognitive and Decision Science</li><li>• <b>Seminar leader</b> for BSc/MSci course Academic Skills</li></ul>	<b>2017 – present</b>
	<b>Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, the Netherlands</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Summer school instructor</b> at 2 day practical summer school for postgraduate students. Lead instructor for sessions on designing experimental trial structure and linear mixed effects models using Python and R.</li></ul>	<b>Sept 2017</b>
	<b>The University of Edinburgh, UK</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Lecturer</b> for Sign Language Acquisition section for Honours module in Sign Language Linguistics.</li></ul>	<b>2014 – 2017</b>

- **Teaching assistant** for pre-honours courses *Cross-linguistic Variation, Linguistic theory and the structure of English, Linguistics and English Language 1* and for Honours/MSc module *Origins and Evolution of Language*

## PUBLICATIONS

Motamedi, Y., Schouwstra, M., Smith, K., Culbertson, J., and Kirby, S. (2019). Evolving artificial sign languages in the lab: from improvised gesture to systematic sign. *Cognition*. 192, 103694.

Motamedi, Y., Little, H., Nielsen, A. and Sulik, J. (2019). The iconicity toolbox: empirical approaches to measuring iconicity. *Language and Cognition*. 11(2), pp. 188-207.

Vigliocco, G., Motamedi, Y., Murgiano, M., Wonnacott, E., Marshall, C. R., Milan Maillo, I., & Perniss, P. (2019). Onomatopoeias, gestures, actions and words in the input to children: How do caregivers use multimodal cues in their communication to children? In A. Goel, C. Seifert and C. Freksa (eds.) *Proceedings of the 41st Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*. Cognitive Science Society, Austin, TX, pp. 1171-1177.

Motamedi, Y., Schouwstra, M., Culbertson, J., Smith, K., and Kirby, S. (2017). The cultural evolution of complex linguistic constructions in artificial sign languages. In G. Gunzelmann et al. (eds.) *Proceedings of the 39th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*. Austin, TX: Cognitive Science Society, pp. 2760 – 2765.

Motamedi, Y., Schouwstra, M. and Kirby, S. (2017). An evolutionary approach to sign language emergence: from *state* to *process*. [Commentary on “Gesture, sign and language: the coming of age of sign language and gesture studies”]. *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*. 40, e65.

Motamedi Y., Schouwstra M., Smith K. and Kirby S. (2016). Linguistic Structure Emerges In The Cultural Evolution Of Artificial Sign Languages. In S.G. Roberts et al. (eds.) *The Evolution of Language: Proceedings of the 11th International Conference*. Available online: <http://evolang.org/neworleans/papers/27.html>

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Motamedi, Y., Wonnacott, E., Marshall, C., Perniss, P. and Vigliocco, G. (2019, May). The role of lexical iconicity in situated and displaced word learning. *Poster presented at the 12th International Symposium on Iconicity in Language and Literature*.

Murgiano, M., Motamedi, Y., Goldin-Meadow, S., Marshall, C., Perniss, P., Wonnacott, E. and Vigliocco, G. (2019, May). Iconicity and indexicality in child-directed language: insights from naturalistic and semi-naturalistic data. *Paper presented at the 12th International Symposium on Iconicity in Language and Literature*.

Motamedi, Y., Perniss, P. and Vigliocco, G (2018, June). The role of iconicity in word learning: insights from child-directed language. *Paper presented at the Child Language Symposium*. Reading, UK.

Motamedi, Y., Schouwstra M., Culbertson, J., Smith K. and Kirby, S. (2017, Sept.) Culturally evolving complex constructions in artificial sign languages. *Paper presented at Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing (AMLaP)*. Lancaster, UK.

Motamedi Y., Schouwstra M., Culbertson, J., Smith K. and Kirby, S. (2017, July). The cultural evolution of complex linguistic constructions in artificial sign languages. *Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*, London, UK.

Motamedi, Y. (2017, April). Building language with the body: iconicity in an evolving system. *Paper presented at the 11th International Symposium on Iconicity in Language and Literature*, Brighton, UK.

Motamedi Y., Schouwstra M., Smith K. and Kirby S. (2016, March). Linguistic Structure Emerges In The Cultural Evolution of Artificial Sign Languages. *Paper presented at the 11th International Conference on the Evolution of Language (Evolang 11)*, New Orleans, USA. **Finalist for Hurford Prize for best paper presentation.**

Motamedi, Y., Smith, K., Schouwstra, M. and Kirby, S. (2015, September). The emergence of structure in artificial gestural communication systems. *Paper presented at Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing (AMLaP)*, Valetta, Malta.

Motamedi, Y., Smith, K., Schouwstra, M. and Kirby, S. (2015, July). The emergence of structure in artificial gestural communication systems. *Paper presented at the International Cognitive Linguistics Conference (ICLC)*, Newcastle, UK.

## PREPRINTS AND PREREGISTRATIONS

Motamedi, Y., Schouwstra, M., Smith, K., Culbertson, J., & Kirby, S. (2018, April 14). The emergence of spatial modulation in artificial sign languages [pre-print]. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/p6zy4>

Motamedi, Y., Wonnacott, E., Fan, J., Marshall, C., Perniss, P., Murgiano, M., & Vigliocco, G. (2019, December 6). Contributions of iconic gesture and prosody to word learning in 2-3 year old children [pre-registration]. Retrieved from <https://osf.io/mz95c>

## GRANTS AND AWARDS

**2015, Grindley travel grant** **Sept 2015**  
Experimental Psychology Society

**Carnegie-Caledonian PhD Scholarship** **2013 – 2016**  
Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland

## INVITED TALKS

Modality effects in language evolution and language learning, Language and Learning group seminar, University of Warwick, January 2020.

Iconicity and argument structure in the cultural evolution of artificial sign languages. Deafness, Cognition and Language Research Centre, University College London, July 2019.

From pantomime to systematic sign: the evolution of linguistic structure in the manual modality. Deafness, Cognition and Language Research Centre, University College London, May 2018.

The body as linguistic articulator. The Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London, October 2017.

The emergence of systematicity in gestural communication systems. University of California, San Diego, Padden Lab, February 2015.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND QUALIFICATIONS

**Associate fellow**, Higher Education Academy

**Reviewer** for Interaction Studies, Cognitive Science and Language and Cognition

**Workshop/symposium organizer:**

- *Redrawing the boundaries of language*, Evolang XIII conference

**April 2020  
(to occur)**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Multimodality in language learning and processing</i>, ESCoP conference</li> </ul>	<b>Sept 2019</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop and summer school <i>Minds, Mechanisms and Interaction in the Evolution of Language</i>, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen.</li> </ul>	<b>Sept 2017</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee chair for the Linguistics and English Language Postgraduate Conference, University of Edinburgh.</li> </ul>	<b>Nov 2014 – June 2015</b>
<b>OUTREACH</b>	<p><b>It's All Academic Festival, University College London, UK</b> Public exhibit with activities and information for adults and children about multimodality in language learning and use.</p> <p><b>UCL Festival of Culture</b> <i>Learning from the voice and from the hands</i>, public talk given as part of UCL's Festival of Culture.</p> <p><b>I'm A Scientist Get Me Out of Here!</b> Online expert for Q&amp;A sessions with schoolchildren, affiliated with the Royal Institution's Christmas Lectures.</p> <p><b>Innovative Learning Week, University of Edinburgh</b> <i>Culture communication and context: an interactive workshop</i></p> <p><b>Exhibit at the Science Museum, London</b> <i>In One Ear and Out the Other</i>, for the Royal Society's Next Big Thing Museum Lates event.</p>	<p><b>Oct 2019</b></p> <p><b>June 2019</b></p> <p><b>Jan 2018</b></p> <p><b>Feb 2016</b></p> <p><b>June 2015</b></p>
<b>PRESS COVERAGE</b>	<p><b>From pantomime to sign language: how sign language evolves</b> featured in <i>Science magazine</i> (<a href="http://tinyurl.com/h8l2roq">http://tinyurl.com/h8l2roq</a>) and on the <i>Science magazine</i> podcast (April 14 2016: <a href="http://tinyurl.com/gqx5cek">http://tinyurl.com/gqx5cek</a>)</p>	
<b>SKILLS</b>	<p><b>Languages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• French, British Sign Language Level 2</li> </ul> <p><b>Data analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experimental design and statistical analysis using Python, R and SPSS</li> <li>• mixed effects models and Bayesian analysis</li> <li>• gesture coding and video analysis using ELAN</li> <li>• audio analysis using Praat.</li> </ul> <p><b>Audiovisual manipulation</b> video and audio editing, video captioning</p>	