**Project overview**

**The WORD (WOrd Retrieval and Development) project is a joint research project between three institutions: University College London, Birkbeck University and Institute of Education. The aim of the project is to investigate lexical retrieval, or word-finding in children and to research possible intervention strategies for children who have problems with retrieving words. The project is funded by ESRC.**

We all experience difficulties in retrieving words occasionally. Children with difficulties learning language (around 7% of the population) can experience considerable problems in retrieving words in their vocabulary. This difficulty can influence children's relationships, self-esteem and education.

The study has three strands. The first involves collecting data from children with typically developing language (TDL) and others with word-finding difficulties (WFD). Accuracy and speed of naming, and related skills involving processing word meaning and sounds will be compared for children at different stages of development.

The second strand entails neurocomputational modelling of the processes involved in word retrieval. Constraints within the model can be varied to reflect the patterns shown by children TDL and with WFD. The model will then be used to predict optimal intervention approaches for children with different underlying difficulties.

The final strand is an experimentally controlled intervention in which children with WFD take part in one form of therapy most appropriate to their difficulty and one building on their strengths to determine which approach is more effective. Results on testing and on wider outcome measures will inform practice.

By combining approaches from different disciplines, the research will inform understanding of typical and atypical language development and intervention.

**Research team:**

* [Dr. Wendy Best](http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/shaps/person.php?id=106) (UCL): principal investigator
* [Prof. Michael Thomas](http://www.psyc.bbk.ac.uk/research/DNL/personalpages/michael.html) (BBK): co-investigator
* [Prof. Jackie Masterson](http://www.ioe.ac.uk/study/PHDT_45.html) (IoE): co-investigator
* [Lucy Hughes](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/psychlangsci/staff/research-associates/l_hughes) (UCL): speech and language therapist/research associate
* [Dr. Anna Fedor](http://www.psyc.bbk.ac.uk/research/DNL/personalpages/AnnaFedor.html) (BBK): postdoctoral researcher
* Silvia Roncoli (IoE): MPhil/PhD student
* Anna K. Kapikian (IoE): research assistant

Ex-colleagues:

* Jo Piper (IoE): Research Assistant
* Donna-Lynn Shepherd (IoE): research officer
* [Dr. Liory Fern-Pollak](http://www.brunel.ac.uk/sss/psychology/staff-profiles/liory-fern-pollak) (IoE): research officer