

Kinship Terminology in Czech Sign Language (CzSL)



RELATIVE(S)

Kin terms of CzSL

I. Kin terms for individual members of the family from synchronic point of view:

- formal makeup single signs
- origin and motivation single signs

II. Kin terms from diachronic point of view (changes of signs for relatives in course of time)

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- We contributed to the Sign Language Typology Semantic Fields project (Keiko Saghara, Ulrike Zeshan, iSLanDS Institute, University of Central Lancashire)

Source of data

I/ source of data for currently used signs:

- controlled elicitation (five native users of CzSL)
- supplement to broaden the spectrum of variants: data published in Vojtechovský's thesis (2012) including data elicited from deaf people or seriously hearing-impaired second-generations users
- all gathered data have been validated:
 - by two native deaf users of CzSL (with deaf parents)
 - comparison with signs used in spontaneous and semi-spontaneous communication (multimedia DVD *Multimediální cvičebnice pro předmět Český znakový jazyk* [Multimedia exercises for the course of Czech Sign Language], Macurová and Nováková et al. 2011)

Source of data

II/ source of data for older signs:

- *Slovník znakové řeči (A Dictionary of the Sign Speech)*,

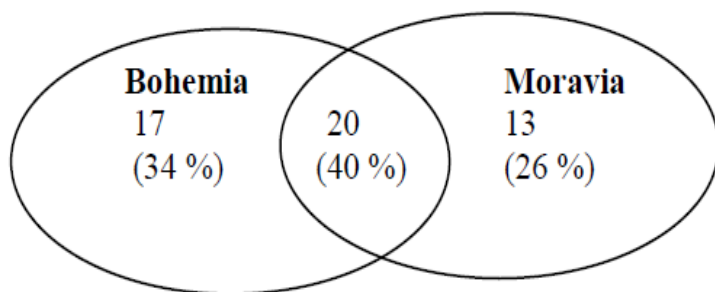
D. Gabrielová, J. Paur and J. Zeman, 1988

- first dictionary of CzSL
 - according to authors: listing about 2,700 Czech glosses with their corresponding signs (“Prague variants”)
 - most signs being illustrated by black-and-white photographs with occasional simple Czech descriptions of the signs’ formations
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- several historical film recordings of CzSL found recently (the oldest from 1928, some more from the 1950s, most of them from the 1960s onwards); currently technically processed

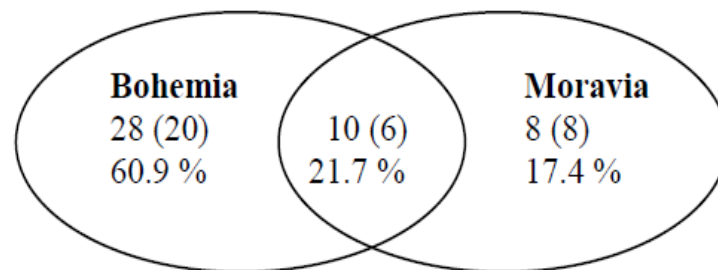
Geographic stratification of CzSL

- two main regional varieties of CzSL:
Bohemian dialect (Bohemian signs > SONb)
Moravian dialect (Moravian signs > SONm, FATHERb, m1, m2)
- Dialects formed/influenced by
 - regional schools for Deafs
 - historical division of the Czech lands into Bohemia (the western part) and Moravia (the eastern part).

distribution of single kin terms



distribution of compound kin terms



I/ Repertoire of currently used kin terms

- differences in forms:
 - signs with different manual parts
 - borrowings (sign^single manual letter compounds)
 - signs with identical manual parts, only distinguished through mouthings of corresponding Czech words or their parts

- **signs with different manual parts:**



FATHERb



MOTHERb

- FATHERm1, m2, MOTHERm, SON, DAUGHTER, CHILD, GRANDMOTHERb, m, NIECEb, GRANDFOTHERb, m, UNCLEb, m, BROTHERb1–b5,...
- borrowings

SHARED FEATURES

- Kin terms in CzSL referring to some relatives usually share similar or identical formal features
- as documented in many sign languages (e.g. Fernald and Napoli 2001, Brennan 1990), semantically related signs are frequently represented by identical phonological features
- two specific semantic domains found to be significant in CzSL kinship terms:
 - **gender-specific** naming of paired family members
 - **generation-specific** naming of family members (from Ego's point of view)

same HS	same locations	same MOV	CzSL signs	GEN
F	chest point of contact centre of chest		SON DAUGHTER GRANDSON/GRAND- DAUGHTER/GRAND- CHILD NIECE _b NEPHEW (<u>SON</u> ^{^C})	<i>following</i>
X	head final contact on chin		FATHER _b MOTHER _b GRANDFATHER _b GRANDMOTHER _b	
5>sA	head initial contact on fore- head + final contact on chin	✓	FATHER _b GRANDFATHER _b	
	head initial contact near ear + final contact on chin		MOTHER _b GRANDMOTHER _b	<i>previous</i>
G	head		FATHER _{m1} MOTHER _m FATHER _{m2}	
	head repeated contact on chin		GRANDFATHER _m GRANDMOTHER _m	

same HS	same locations	same MOV	CzSL signs	GEN
F	chest point of contact centre of chest		SON DAUGHTER GRANDSON/GRAND- DAUGHTER/GRAND- CHILD NIECE _b NEPHEW (<u>SON</u> ^C)	<i>following</i>

X		FATHER _b	
	head	MOTHER _b	
5>sA	final contact on chin	GRANDFATHER _b	
		GRANDMOTHER _b	
	head	FATHER _b	
	initial contact on forehead + final contact on chin	GRANDFATHER _b	
			✓
	head	MOTHER _b	
	initial contact near ear + final contact on chin	GRANDMOTHER _b	
G		FATHER _{m1}	
	head	MOTHER _m	
		FATHER _{m2}	
	head	GRANDFATHER _m	
	repeated contact on chin	GRANDMOTHER _m	

previous

sign^single manual letter compounds

SON^C- (NEPHEW): *synovec* 'nephew' (*syn* 'son')

MALE-COUSIN, FEMALE-COUSIN

structure compounds tend to vary in:

(1) relation of the signs to their Czech equivalents

1A: the signs reflect the first parts (roots) of their Czech equivalents:

BROTHER^C- (MALE-COUSIN): *bratranec* (*bratr* 'brother'),

SISTER^C- (FEMALE-COUSIN): *sestřenice* (*sestra* 'sister')

1B: signs have more general meanings than their Czech equivalents:

BOY^C- (MALE-COUSIN), *GIRL^C-

sign^single manual letter compounds

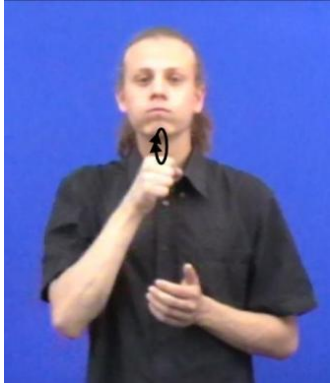
(2) the position of the letter in the Czech equivalent:

2A) SON^-C- (NEPHEW) *synovec*, BROTHER^-C-, BOY^-C- (MALE-COUSIN) *bratranec*

2B) SISTER^-C- (FEMALE-COUSIN) *sestřenice*

Examples from CzSL correspond to findings e.g. in Sutton-Spence (1994) or in Cormier, Schembri and Tyrone (2008: 14): the pattern single manual letter^sign “occurs in two-handed systems but has not been documented in one-handed systems”

motivations



GRANDMOTHERm



GRANDFATHERm



SON



GRANDSON

case of a spatial metaphor in all CzSL kinship terms: the location in relation to the point of reference (the signer's body) is a metaphorical expression of semantic distance: the sign for a closer kin referent (SON/'descendant') is placed closer to the body



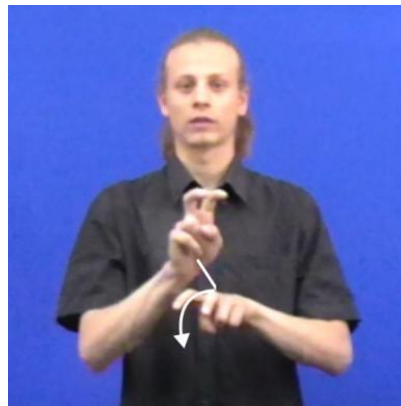
SAME



BROTHERb1



SISTER 1



MALE-COUSINm



FEMALE-COUSINm

2) signs with identical manual parts:

- (A) RELATIVES, AUNT, NIECE_m, PARENTS, BROTHER-IN-LAW_b, SISTER-IN-LAW_b
- B. GRANDSON, GRANDDAUGHTER and GRANDCHILD;
- C. BROTHER_m and SISTER_{m/b1};
- D. BROTHER-IN-LAW_b, SISTER-IN-LAW_b
- E. HUSBAND, WIFE, SPOUSE, MARRIED-COUPLE

II. Kin terms CzSL from diachronic view

Two diachronic changes have been identified as the most important:

(a) increasing repertoire of kin terms

- new signs created for 'nephew', 'niece', 'brother-in-law', 'sister-in-law'
- older forms specified (e.g. the use of older SON for 'son', 'daughter', 'grandson', 'granddaughter' replaced by use of four specific forms)

(b) gender-specific compounds, e.g.: gender-specific sign (FEMALE-GENDER or MALE-GENDER)^ kin term, have been replaced by single signs.

Gender of relative:

- integral part of newly created signs (e.g. SON vs. DAUGHTER; BROTHER_{b1-b5} vs. SISTER_{b1, 2}; UNCLE_{b, m} vs. AUNT)
- implied by the context or, less often, by mouthings. The newly created single gender-specific signs also become bases for lexicalised superordinate compounds (BROTHER_{b1-b5}^SISTER_{b1, 2} 'sib-lings', AUNT^UNCLE_{b, m} 'parents' siblings');

Kin terms in the dictionary:

- (1) signs **corresponding** with a contemporary variant (allowing for the different order of parts in compounds)
- (2) signs **differing** from contemporary variants
- (3) signs **missing** from the dictionary, i.e. headwords for some kinship terms are missing but the signs are attested in contemporary CzSL
- * (4) signs for some relatives are absent in contemporary usage but are found in the dictionary.

Comparison of older and current kin terms CzSL (1): identical forms

- 9 signs: FATHER, GRANDMOTHER , SON (BOY^SON/DESCENDANT), DAUGHTER (GIRL^DESCENDANT), BROTHER (BOY^SAME), SISTER (SAME^GIRL), HUSBAND (MAN^SPOUSE), WIFE (WOMAN^SPOUSE), FAMILY
- only three of the dictionary single signs have a high frequency of use in contemporary communication:

Dictionary signs

FATHER

GRANDMOTHER

FAMILY

Equivalent present variants

FATHER_b

GRANDMOTHER_b

CzSL variant of FAMILY 1

Comparison of older and current kin terms CzSL (1): identical forms

The remaining signs, all becoming obsolete, indicate a strong tendency to use single signs to the detriment of compounds distinguishing gender-paired terms:

SON: MALE-GENDER^SON

*comment under the headword male
gender: "is usually signed as BOY"*

SON: BOY^SON/DESCENDANT

*a rather rare present CzSL variant
a compound with reverse order of the
parts also exists at present*

WIFE:

HUSBAND^FEMALE-GENDER

WIFE: WOMAN^SPOUSE

a rather rare present CzSL variant

Comparison of older and current kin terms CzSL: (2) different forms of dictionary signs

Single signs:

MOTHER, GRANDFATHER, CHILD, RELATIVE

- Some changes seem to be related to the tendency to systematicity or to correlation between meaning and formational elements, called *generalization of meaningful parameter values* by Frishberg (1979: 81–82)
- The initial C handshape in the sign GRANDFATHER has changed to 5 handshape with thumb extended (a component of the sign GRADMOTHERb)

Comparison of older and current kin terms CzSL:

(3) the concepts missing from the dictionary

NEPHEW, NIECE, BROTHER-IN-LAW, SISTER-IN-LAW,
GRANDCHILD and SIBLINGS (BROTHER^SISTER),
GRANDPARENTS (GRANDMOTHER^GRANDFATHER) and
PARENTS-SIBLING'S (AUNT^UNCLE)

- general terms, typically compounds, are lexicalized in CzSL later than terms for single individuals
- new signs (lexical innovations) for individual distant relatives tend to be affected by spoken Czech:
 - sign^single manual letter compound SON^C- 'nephew'
 - the significant role of mouthings distinguishing signs NIECE_m vs. RELATIVE; BROTHER-IN-LAW_b and SISTER-IN-LAW_b vs. RELATIVE or NIECE vs. DAUGHTER.

diachronic perspective can help to illuminate motivations of signs:



UNCLE_b



RELATIVE
UNCLE(RELATIVE[^]MALE-GENDER)

NEW SIGN LANGUAGE TYPOLOGY PROJECT:

GOALS:

- to document and compare one part of the lexicons of sign languages: the semantic field of
TIME UNITS
(signs like 'year', 'month', 'January', 'Friday' etc.)
- to map
the ways sign languages express different stretches of time,
the linguistic characteristics of the signs (e.g. their modifications
and motivations).

CISL 2014: c. 140 participants
from 21 countries



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Thank you for your attention!