

## 10.00 – 10.30

### **Josefina Kalousová:** *Handshapes in Handling Classifier Constructions in Czech Sign Language*

Handling classifier constructions depict a way an object is handled or touched by using a specific handshape which categorizes the object into a more general class. According to the most basic way of dividing classifier constructions, the second group of classifiers represents whole objects (Shepard-Kegl, 1985 and Zwitserlood, 2003). Classifier constructions in sign languages are usually considered a part of the productive lexicon (Brennan, 1992), that is highly variable and weakly lexicalised.

The verbs EAT and DRINK in Czech Sign Language have frozen lexicalised forms, but the use of those verbs is still very variable. The verbs make use of handling classifier handshapes to incorporate information about the object being eaten, the utensil being used or the container from which a drink is being drunk.

The goal of this study was to document the many handshapes used incorporated in these verbs, collecting as many of them as possible by means of interviews with native signers. The elicited material was then compared with gestures used by hearing non-signers when describing eating or drinking to explore the similarities and differences between sign and gestures, especially observer viewpoint gestures and character viewpoint gestures (McNeill 1992).

The results of this study can contribute to reflection on iconicity in sign languages and the relationship between signs and gestures.

### **Literature**

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Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014

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