

Abstract:

This bachelor's thesis deals with the phenomenon of visual symbolism in Czech Sign Language. Starting with a theoretical introduction focused on the linguistic views on arbitrariness and iconicity in natural languages and their development, the thesis then describes metaphorical and iconic mapping in sign languages and their joint effect: the so-called double mapping. Based on that knowledge, the phenomenon of sound symbolism in spoken languages is described. Using the knowledge of the sound symbolism in spoken languages, as well as of iconicity, metaphors and double mapping, the visual symbolism in sign languages is described. The description is based on the relationship between parameters (phonemes) in the phonological structure and their meaning in sign languages. The empirical part contains an analysis of Czech Sign Language signs articulated in one point of articulation (mouth) whose meanings are related to communication–speech. The signs are then examined in order to pinpoint the phonestemes, i.e. phonemes with their own meaning. The same method is used on signs signed in the neutral signing space but having meaning related to communication–speech and showing similar phonestemes as the signs articulated on the mouth.

