

## IERs Open Lecture

# **My Other (Sign) Language: The Multilingual Signer's Contribution to the Theory of Multilingualism**

**Speaker: Dr. Elena Koulidobrova  
(Central Connecticut State University, US)**

All are welcome

Lecture in English

***Thursday, May 17th, 2018  
10:10 ~ 11:20 (2<sup>nd</sup> period)  
H (Honkan) 203***

When both researchers and the general public discuss multilingualism, they tend to limit their attention to hearing individuals learning spoken languages ('unimodal speech bilingualism'). Such a framework, prevalent in the fields both simultaneous and sequential acquisition of multiple languages (2L1 and L2, respectively), creates a particular norm: it entails deaf individuals' reduced access to such learning. However, if nothing in the definition of language is in principle contingent on modality, then such theorizing is necessarily incomplete until another type of data has been examined: that of learning a sign language (as 2L1 and L2). In particular, to complete the paradigm, what is needed are studies that challenge the skewed norm. In this talk, I address this issue directly. I present data from several experiments examining acquisition of a sign language as 2L1 (both unimodal sign and bimodal sign-speech) and L2 (unimodal sign) and compare it to research on spoken languages. As predicted, the findings fill in the gap in the research, but the normativity of hearing no longer need be assumed.