We study aspects of the grammar of natural sign languages, their acquisition and diachronic change, and in how far sign languages differ from each other in various grammatical domains.

**NGT Grammar**

- **Project:** Descriptive grammar of Sign Language of the Netherlands (NGT). Implementing previous research & conducting original research, e.g. on conditional clauses.
- **Results:**
  1. Raised eyebrows seem optional (unlike in other sign languages);
  2. Head movement and/or tilt seems obligatory;
  3. When a manual marker is present, nonmanual markers are used less frequently.

**Body-Anchored Verbs**

- **How does iconicity (form-meaning relation) affect sign language structure?**
- **Body-anchored verbs:**
  (examples from NGT)
  - **Love**
  - **Relieved**
  - **Eat**

- **Result:** only first person subject (‘I’) can be dropped due to iconic associations:

**Classifier Predicates**

- **Classifier predicates:** verbs of movement/location; the handshape **classifies an argument**
- **Research on ASL:** systematic connection between argument structure and classifier type
- **Results:** classifier predicates in Russian Sign Language & 4 other sign languages have complex event/argument structures

**Sign Language Acquisition**

**Bimodal Bilingualism**

- **How do deaf mothers and their deaf and hearing children combine spoken and signed language?**
- **Results:** utterances can consist of following combinations:
  - **Fully signed and fully spoken**
    - **Signs:** YOU WALK TO CAMP\(^{*}\)FIRE (NGT or NL word order)
    - **Words:** you walk to campfire
  - **Mainly signed, with words produced simultaneously**
    - **Signs:** YOU WALK TO CAMP\(^{*}\)FIRE (usually NGT word order)
    - **Words:** fire
  - **Mainly spoken, with signs produced simultaneously**
    - **Signs:** WALK CAMP\(^{*}\)FIRE (usually NL word order)
    - **Words:** you walk to campfire

- **Mixed signs and words are produced simultaneously, but content differs, e.g.**
  - **Signs:** HUGGING………. 
  - **Words:** you sweet rabbit
  Both signs and words are necessary for complete message.

**Second Language Acquisition**

- **How do adults who acquire a sign language as a second language learn to use the signing space to express grammatical relations?**
  1. **Case studies** (n=2, longitudinal)
  2. **Elicitation study** (n=14, longitudinal) into classifiers and agreement verbs
  3. **Intervention study** (2018) - does explicit instruction help?