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:
  - What are nonmanual markers of conditionals in NGT?

**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

- An example of stimuli: stills from a cartoon
- Examples of classifier predicates

**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?

**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.

**Sign Language Acquisition**

- How do deaf mothers and their deaf and hearing children combine spoken and signed language?

This project is part of the project “The SIGN-HUB: preserving, researching and fostering the linguistic, historical and cultural heritage of European Deaf signing communities with an integral resource”, funded by European Commission Horizon2020 grant no. 693349.

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