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

**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:
    1. Fully signed and fully spoken
      - signs: YOU WALK TO CAMP^FIRE (NGT or NL word order)
      - words: you walk to campfire
    2. Mainly signed, with words produced simultaneously
      - signs: YOU WALK TO CAMP^FIRE (usually NGT word order)
      - words: fire
    3. 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?