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:

  - \( \text{I love}_A \text{him} \)
  - \( \text{He loves}_A \text{me} \)

**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

**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)

    - M E T H O D
      - He let me know that he missed me / "He let me know: I miss you"

  2. **Elicitation study** (n=14, longitudinal) into classifiers and agreement verbs

  3. **Intervention study** (2018) - does explicit instruction help?

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*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 integrated resource”, funded by European Commission Horizon2020 grant no. 693349.

**These projects are part of the project “Argument structure in three sign languages: typological and theoretical aspects”; funded by the Dutch Science Foundation (NWO), grant no. 360-70-520.

**This project is carried out in collaboration with the Deaf Studies research group at the HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht.