Research group Sign Language Grammar & Typology

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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)
  - **Examples:**
    - 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

**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 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

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Both signs and words are necessary for complete message.

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**SIGN LANGUAGE GRAMMAR & TYPOLOGY RESEARCH GROUP**

**Grammar & Description**

- **Enoch Aboh, Vadim Kimmelman, Ulrika Klop, Vanja de Lint, Marloes Oomen, Roland Pfau**

**Sign Language Acquisition**

- **Eveline Boers-Visker, Beppie Van Den Bogaerde**

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**Text and Figures:**

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**Additional Notes:**

- **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 Horizon 2020 grant no. 881949.**
- **This project is carried out in collaboration with the Deaf Studies research group at the HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht.**