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.
- **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?
- **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

**Body-anchored verbs**

**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?