Research group Sign Language Grammar & Typology

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Citation for published version (APA):
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.

**GRAMMAR & DESCRIPTION**

- **ENOCHE ABOH, VADIM KIMMELMAN, ULRIKA KLOMP, VANJA DE LINT, MARLOES OOMEN, ROLAND PFAU**

  - **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.

  ![Graph showing percentages of manual and nonmanual markers](image)

  **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:
    - I love him
    - He loves 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
    - An example of stimuli: stills from a cartoon
    - Examples of classifier predicates

**SIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

- **EVELINE BOERS-VISKER, BEPPIE VAN DEN BOGAERDE**

  - **SIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**
    - 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.

**BIMODAL BILINGUALISM**

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**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 Diagram](image)

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Examples of classifier predicates

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