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.

**SIGN LANGUAGE GRAMMAR & TYPOLOGY RESEARCH GROUP**

**GRAMMAR & DESCRIPTION**  
Enoch Aboh, Vadim Kimmelman, Ulrika Klop, Vanja De Lint, Marloes Oomen, Roland Pfau

- 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.

**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\(^{\wedge}\)FIRE (NGT or NL word order)
    - words: you walk to campfire
  - Mainly signed, with words produced simultaneously
    - signs: YOU WALK TO CAMP\(^{\wedge}\)FIRE (usually NGT word order)
    - words: fire
  - Mainly spoken, with signs produced simultaneously
    - signs: WALK CAMP\(^{\wedge}\)FIRE (usually NL word order)
    - words: you walk to campfire

**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?

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

**NGT GRAMMAR**

- How does iconicity (form-meaning relation) affect sign language structure?

  **Result:** only first person subject (‘I’) can be dropped due to iconic associations:

  - 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.

**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:

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Eveline Boers-Visker, Beppie Van den Bogaerde

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