Research group Sign Language Grammar & Typology
Aboh, E.O.; Boers-Visker, E.M.; van den Bogaerde, E.M.; Kimmelman, V.; Klomp, U.; de Lint, V.; Oomen, M.; Pfau, R.

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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 of body-anchored verbs in NGT]

  - Result: only first person subject ('I') can be dropped due to iconic associations:

  ![Example of a body-anchored verb in NGT]

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

SIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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BIMODAL BILINGUALISM

- How do deaf mothers and their deaf and hearing children combine spoken and signed language?
  - Results: utterances can consist of following combinations:
    1. Fully signed and fully spoken
    2. Mainly signed, with words produced simultaneously
    3. Mainly spoken, with signs produced simultaneously

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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