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)
  
  - **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.

**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:
  1. Fully signed and fully spoken signs: YOU WALK TO CAMP\(^\text{FIRE}\) (NGT or NL word order)
     - words: you walk to campfire
  2. Mainly signed, with words produced simultaneously signs: YOU WALK TO CAMP\(^\text{FIRE}\) (usually NGT word order)
     - words: fire
  3. Mainly spoken, with signs produced simultaneously signs: WALK CAMP\(^\text{FIRE}\) (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**

- **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?

**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?

*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 the European Commission Horizon2020 grant no. 693349.

#This project is carried out in collaboration with the Deaf Studies research group at the HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht.

#These projects are part of the project “Argument structure in three sign languages: syntactical and theoretical aspects”, funded by the Dutch Science Foundation (NWO), grant no. 360-70-920.