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.

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**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:

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**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

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**SIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

**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^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.

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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?