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Research group Sign Language Grammar & Typology

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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)
  - **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

**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:
    - words: you walk to campfire
  - Mainly signed, with words produced simultaneously
    - signs: you walk to campfire
    - words: fire
  - Mainly spoken, with signs produced simultaneously
    - signs: WALK CAMP FIRE
    - words: you walk to campfire
- Mixed signs and words are produced simultaneously, but content differs, e.g.
  - signs: HUGGING........
  - words: you sweet rabbit

**Class Bisual 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?

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**Second 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:
    - words: you walk to campfire
  - Mainly signed, with words produced simultaneously
    - signs: you walk to campfire
    - words: fire
  - Mainly spoken, with signs produced simultaneously
    - signs: WALK CAMP FIRE
    - 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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**Sign Language Acquisition**

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**Notes:**
- 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 integrated resource”, funded by European Commission Horizon2020 grant no. 693349.
- 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.
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