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.

Citation for published version (APA):
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

**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?

**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.

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