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.

### GRAMMAR & DESCRIPTION

**ENOC ABOH, VADIM KIMMELMAN, ULR电动 KLOMP, VANJA DE LINT, MARLOES OOMEN, ROLAND PFAU**

- 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.

### SIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

**EVELINE BOERS-VisKer, BEPPIE VAN DEN BOGAERDE**

### 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 signs: *YOU WALK TO CAMP FIRE* (NGT or NL word order) words: *you walk to campfire*
    2. Mainly signed, with words produced simultaneously signs: *YOU WALK TO CAMP FIRE* (usually NGT word order) words: *fire*
    3. 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.

### BODY-ANCHORED VERBS

- How does *iconicity* (form-meaning relation) affect sign language structure?

  ![Example of body-anchored verbs](image)

- **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)

  ![Example of stimuli](image)

  ![Example of classifier predicates](image)

  2. Elicitation study (n=14, longitudinal) into classifiers and agreement verbs

  ![Example of stimuli](image)

  ![Example of classifier predicates](image)

  3. Intervention study (2018) - does explicit instruction help?

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