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?**

**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: 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

**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?