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.

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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.

**SIGN LANGUAGE GRAMMAR & TYPOLOGY RESEARCH GROUP**

**GRAMMAR & DESCRIPTION**

Enoch Aboh, Vadim Kimmelman, Ulrika 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.

**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.

**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

**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:

**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?

**SIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Eveline Boers-Visker, Beppie van den Bogaerde

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  - What are nonmanual markers of conditionals in NGT?
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An example of stimuli: stills from a cartoon

Examples of classifier predicates

*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. 693949.

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