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.

**SIGN LANGUAGE GRAMMAR & TYPOLOGY RESEARCH GROUP**

**GRAMMAR & DESCRIPTION**

Enoch Aboh, Vadim Kimmelman, Ulrika Klop, 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.

**BODY-ANCHORED VERBS**

- How does iconicity (form-meaning relation) affect sign language structure?
  - **Body-anchored verbs:** (examples from NGT)
    
    | Love          | Relieved   | Eat        |
    |---------------|------------|------------|
    | ![Love Image] | ![Relieved Image] | ![Eat 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

**SIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Eveline Boers-Visker, Beppie Van den Bogaerde

- 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.

**BIMODAL 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?

**SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

- How do adults who acquire a sign language as a second language 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.:
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