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)
  - LOVE
  - RELIEVED
  - EAT
- 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

**REPORT LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

- 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\(^\text{FIRE}\) (NGT or NL word order)
    - Words: you walk to campfire
  - Mainly signed, with words produced simultaneously
    - Signs: YOU WALK TO CAMP\(^\text{FIRE}\) (usually NGT word order)
    - Words: fire
  - Mainly spoken, with signs produced simultaneously
    - Signs: WALK CAMP\(^\text{FIRE}\) (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

**BIMODAL BILINGUALISM**

- How do adults who acquire a sign language as a second language learn to use the signing space to express grammatical relations?
  - Case studies (n=2, longitudinal)
  - Elicitation study (n=14, longitudinal) into classifiers and agreement verbs
  - Intervention study (2018) - does explicit instruction help?

---

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 the European Commission Horizon2020 grant no. 693949.

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

#These projects are part of the project “Argument structure in three sign languages: typological and theoretical aspects”, funded by the Dutch Science Foundation (NWO), grant no. 360-70-520.

---

+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 the European Commission Horizon2020 grant no. 693949.

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