



# OBSTACLES FOR BILINGUAL DEAF EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

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Conference Unesco and the Research  
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## HISTORY & MILESTONES

- 1979: Parents went to a conference in Copenhagen: introduction of signs in parent guidance programme
- 1982: Start research into (the lexicon of) Sign Language of the Netherlands (NGT)
- 1985: Introduction of a national parent guidance programme
- 1996: Introduction of bilingual (NGT/NL) language policy in deaf education



- 1996: Foundation of the national Dutch Sign Centre: the development of national course materials NGT and signed Dutch for different target groups.
- 1997: Foundation of the national interpreter training and teacher NGT education (Hogeschool Utrecht)
- 2004: Dutch Sign Language Centre > Lexicographic Institute for NGT funded by the Dept. of Education
- 2007: National curriculum for NGT for special education



# LANGUAGE POLICY AND NGT LEXICON

## **1982-1999**

Start research into regional variation and production of dictionaries containing variants

## **1999- 2002**

Standardisation of basic and educational lexicon

Implementation of standard lexicon in all NGT modules and teaching materials

## **Since 2000**

National sign lexicon database (18.000 signs)

Development of new sign vocabulary ( by Deaf signers)

Since 2011: addition of regional variants to online (standard) sign dictionary



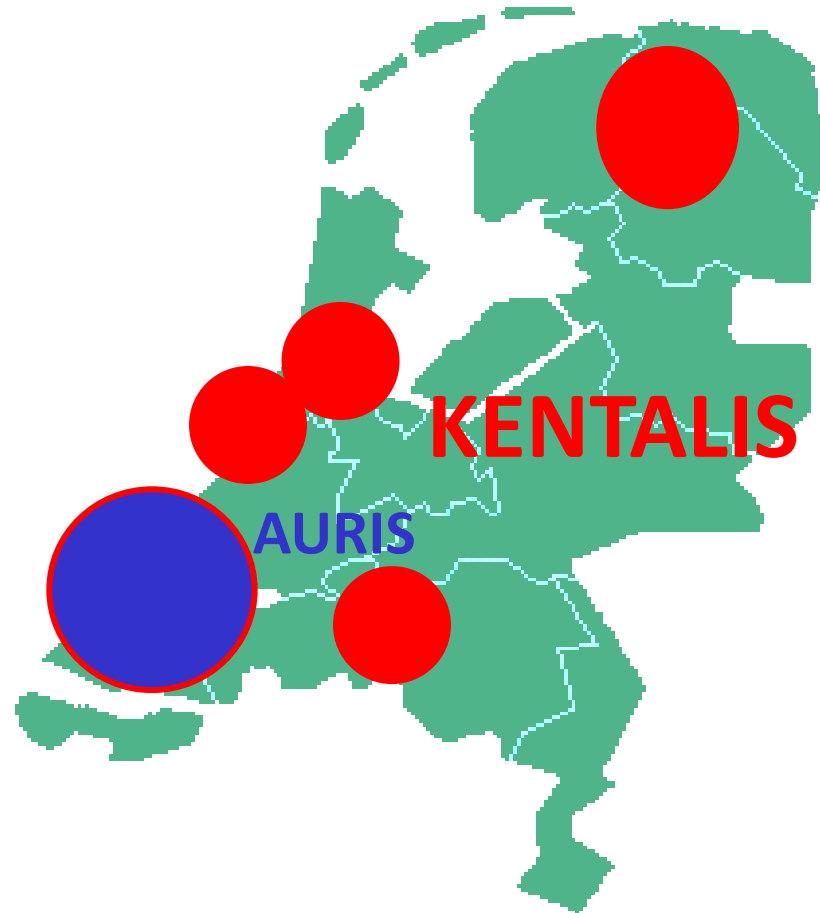
# BILINGUAL DEAF EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS



## THE SCHOOLS

1791-2002  
Five schools for  
the Deaf

Since 2009  
Kentalis  
Auris





## THE CONTEXT IN UPBRINGING AND EDUCATION

1996 expectation: most Deaf children would grow up bilingually in NGT and Dutch

Since 2000:

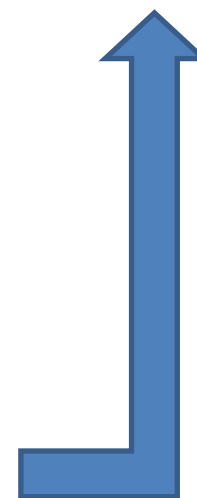
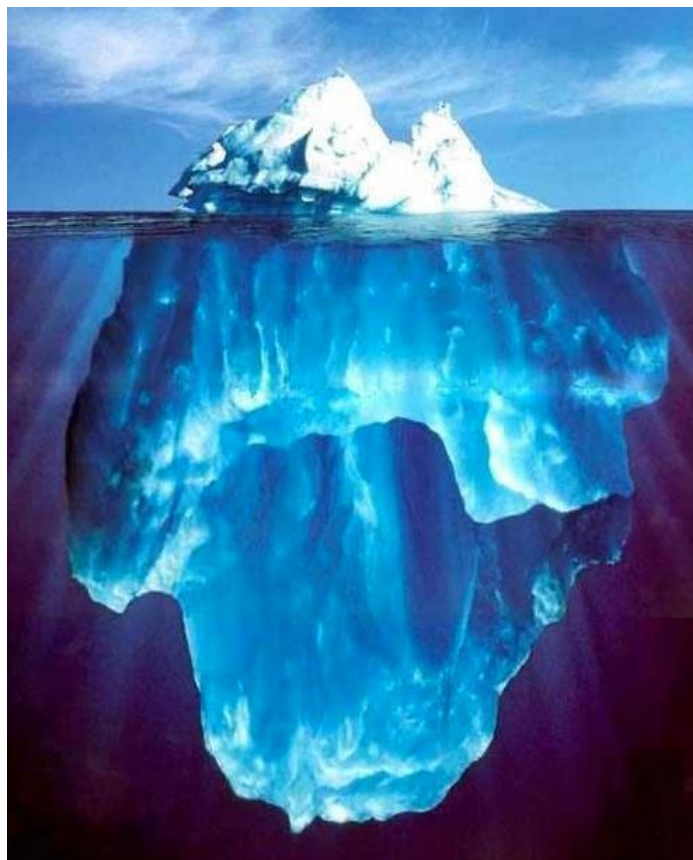
Introduction of Neonatal screening: intervention takes place < 3 months

CI implementation around first year for 90-100% of the children

2013

Change in mainstream educational policy

## THEORY OF BILINGUAL DEAF EDUCATION



Transfer of L1 to L2





## CONDITIONS

- Adequate sign language input
- Adequate spoken /written language input
- Teachers with adequate signing skills
- Parents with adequate signing skills
- Motivation
- Bilingual curriculum and teaching materials
- Bicultural schoolenvironment



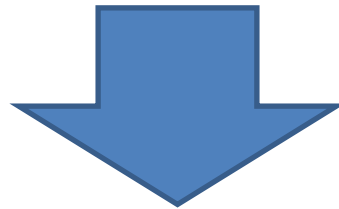
## RESEARCH

- 2007: Hermans, Knoors and Verhoeven:
  - Sign language competency of hearing parents and teachers is not adequate
  - Deaf children of hearing parents lack sufficient signing skills
  - 31,5% of all families with a deaf child uses a combination of NGT, Signed Dutch and spoken Dutch
- 2008 Hermans, Knoors, Ormel & Verhoeven
  - Sign language helps to improve the lexicon to enable deaf children to become better readers
- 2011 Giezen
  - Deaf children with CI profit from bimodal input



## CONCLUSIONS

- Lack of motivation
- Lack of sufficient sign language skills



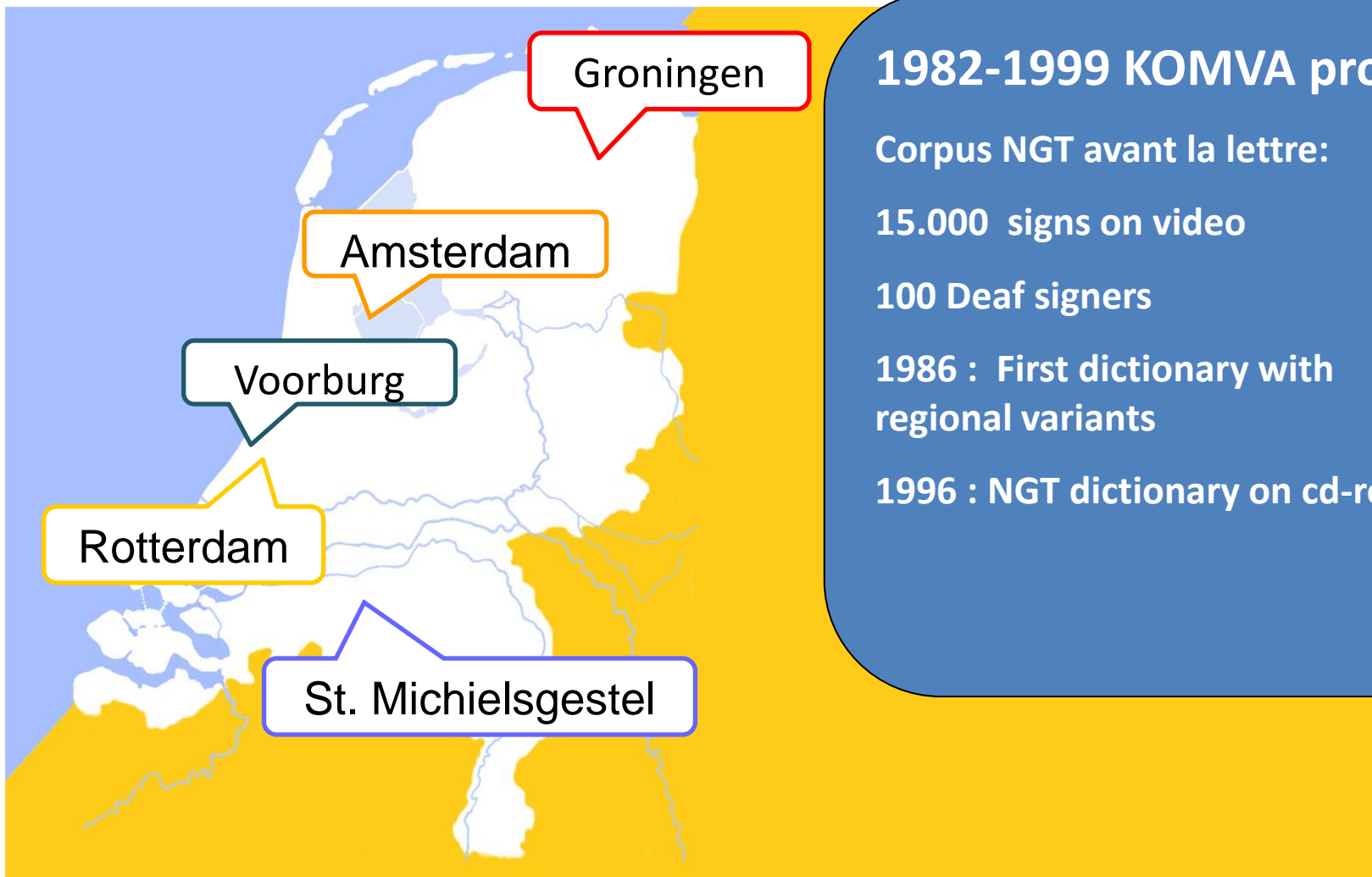
Changes in language policy (Knoors, 2011): more variable

Bimodal rather than Bilingual input

Changes re Deaf community and position of NGT



Nederlands  
Gebarencentrum



## 1982-1999 KOMVA project

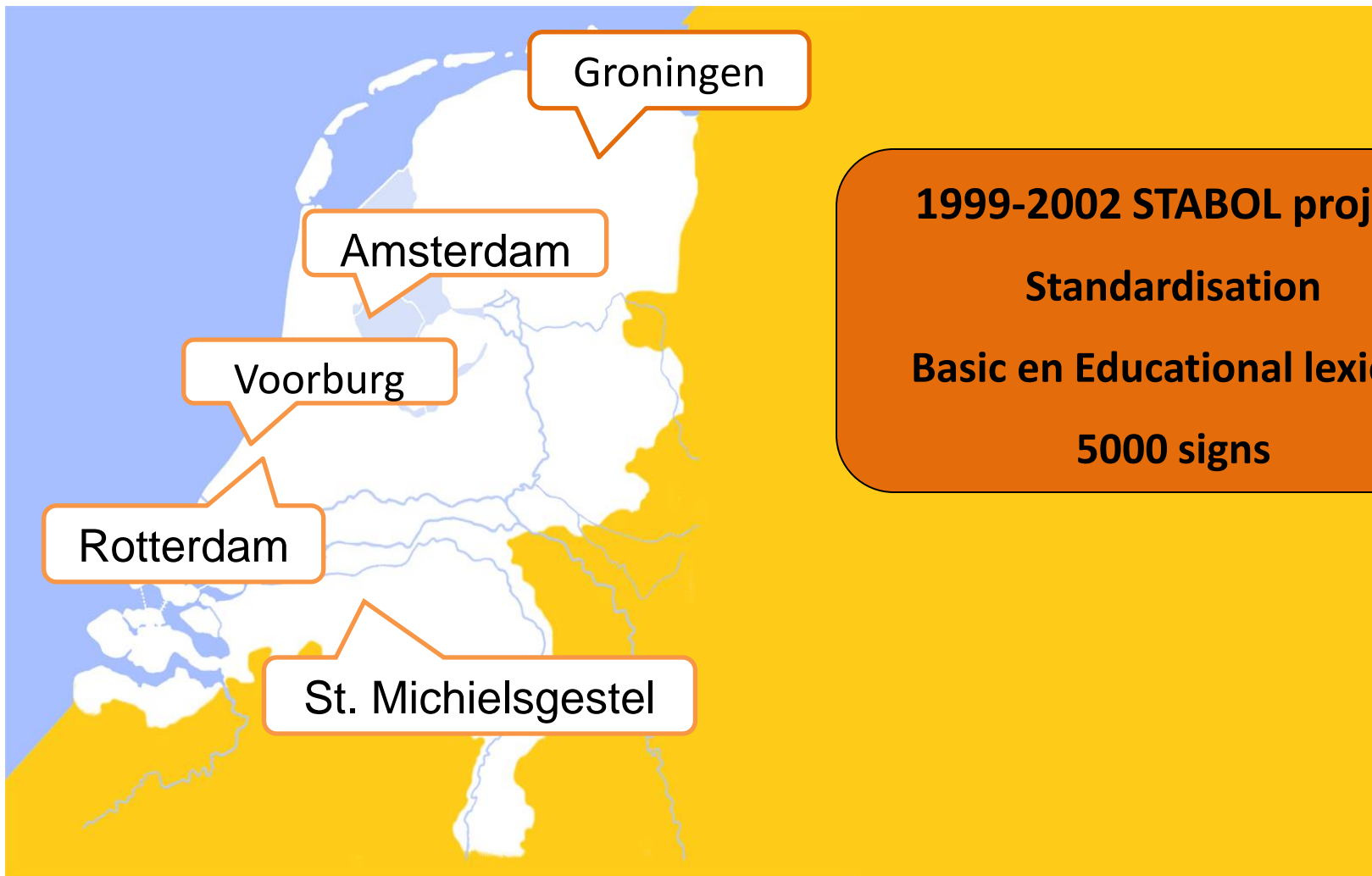
Corpus NGT avant la lettre:

15.000 signs on video

100 Deaf signers

1986 : First dictionary with regional variants

1996 : NGT dictionary on cd-rom



**1999-2002 STABOL project**

**Standardisation**

**Basic en Educational lexicon**

**5000 signs**