

researchers usually argue that one of the distinguishing features of non-human primates' gestures is their high degree of flexibility, which can be considered in different ways: (1) 'means-end dissociation', which refers to the use of a particular gesture in different functional contexts and/or several gestures for one specific context, and (2) gesture sequences which consist of combinations of two or more gestural signals. Both strategies enable non-human primates to adjust their gesture use to their partner's behaviour and to increase the range of potential meanings that can be conveyed by combining the components of a more or less limited gestural repertoire. Because of their flexible use, however, very few gestures have a specific meaning, but their meaning is defined by the context in which they occur. Thus, in contrast to many vocalizations of non-human primates, their gestures are (1) less context-specific and do not represent functionally referential signals and, related to this, (2) gesture sequences do not represent meaningful combinations used for other functions than their single components. Therefore, I will first provide an overview of recent research on the flexible use of gestures in great apes to demonstrate how they create meaning in their interactions with others. I will then discuss how these findings relate to evidence from vocal studies with the aim to identify 'blind spots' and biases that currently constrain a fruitful debate about the origins of human language.

Conformity to Group Specific Tool Use Behaviour among Three Neighbouring Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) Communities in Côte d'Ivoire

Lydia Luncz, Christophe Boesch

Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany

E-Mail: Lydia_Luncz@eva.mpg.de

Key Words: Chimpanzee · Tool use · Conformity · Côte d'Ivoire · Nut cracking

Tool use is a very important part of everyday life in wild chimpanzees and allows them to exploit more diverse food sources. Tool expertise is suggested to be acquired mainly through social learning as young chimpanzees spend a lot of time observing tool handling by their mothers and other fellow group members. Through nut cracking behaviour of three neighbouring chimpanzee communities in the Taï National Park in Côte d'Ivoire, we can examine how group specific tool selection is manifested in three chimpanzee communities. We first investigated tool choice for nut-cracking over the course of 27 years and found that group dependent tool selection persists over time despite changing role models and immigration. We further were able to show that there are no differences in fidelity to group norm behaviour between females and philopatric males, supporting the hypothesis that immigrants tend to adopt the cultural behaviour of their new group, which would lead to persisting behaviour in one community over time. Additionally, we describe a study case where one immigrating female adopted the group behaviour of her new community. Community dependent conformity in tool selection in neighbouring populations suggests a cultural transmission process even in adult group members as an adaptation to group specific behaviour. This is the first time that this level of conformity to a cultural trait over generations can be shown in wild chimpanzees.