

Bonobos' clue to speech evolution 倭黑猩猩的叫声为语言进化提供线索

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英国和瑞士的心理学家最新研究的结果显示，野生倭黑猩猩在遇到某些情况时会使用一种高声调的叫声。这个原本被认为只有人类才能掌握的技能显示出倭黑猩猩在交流时的灵活和应变性。以下是 Jonathan Webb 的报道。

It used to be thought that apes could only make noises that were tied to their emotions such as **barks** of alarm or **hoots** of excitement. But this strange peeping sound recorded from wild bonobos appears to have more in common with the calls of human babies.

At just three or four months of age, we humans let out **growls** or **squeals** that sound the same whether we are happy or **distressed**. It's up to our parents to **figure out** what we mean from the **context**.

The researchers say it's the same with these bonobos peeps. An identical sound is made in happy or in neutral contexts. So instead of being unique to humans, these flexible calls apparently date back at least six million years to our **common ancestor** with bonobos and chimpanzees. Dr Zanna Clay from the University of Birmingham said her key observation was that the bonobos separated the sound they were making from how they were feeling.

It seems that the flexibility of our own **squawks** and **grunts** joins the growing list of abilities that we humans can no longer count as uniquely ours.

测验

请听报道并回答下列问题。

1. How do parents understand the meaning of their baby's growls and squeals?
2. True or false? *Bonobos make particular sounds when they are happy.*
3. What was the main thing Dr Clay noticed about the sounds bonobos make?
4. Which word means 'something original, not seen in any other individual'?

词汇表

barks	吼叫
hoots	叫喊
growls	低声的吼叫
squeals	长而尖的叫声
distressed	烦恼的，痛苦的
figure out	弄明白
context	环境，背景
common ancestor	共同的祖先
squawks	(人) 大声抱怨、喊叫
grunts	(人因为不满或烦恼发出的) 嘟哝，哼声

答案

1. How do parents understand the meaning of their baby's growls and squeals?
Answer: They have to consider the context and figure out if their baby is happy or distressed.
2. True or false? *Bonobos make particular sounds when they are happy.*
Answer: False. Bonobos make identical sounds in happy and in neutral contexts.
3. What was the main thing Dr Clay noticed about the sounds bonobos make?
Answer: The researcher noticed that the bonobos separated the sound they were making from how they were feeling.
4. Which word means 'something original, not seen in any other individual'?
Answer: Unique.