



Seewiesen Colloquia

Speaker invited by: Humboldt Research Group "Comparative Gestural Signalling"

Tuesday, 25. February 2014, 13:00 h, in House 4, Lecture Room

The development and sequential organization of gestural communication in great apes

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In recent years, a number of theorists (e.g., Corballis, 1999, Rizzolatti & Arbib, 1999, Tomasello, 2008) have argued that we can use ape gestures to model the evolutionary origins of human language, because of their flexible and intentional use, contrary to most primate vocalizations. Yet to evaluate the gestural origins of language hypothesis, the similarities and differences between the mechanisms that support the gestural communication of great apes and humans language must be better understood. In this talk, I address three issues related to this debate: 1. Is great apes' gestural repertoire innate or learned (and if so, how)? 2. Is the structure of human social interaction fundamentally different from great apes social encounters? 3. What does language change in terms of communicative possibilities? I'll address these questions by presenting some recent studies on bonobos, orangutans and human infants.

Who is Frederico Rossano?

2004 MA Communication Studies and Semiotics, University of Bologna, Italy

2012 PhD Radboud University and Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

2012- Postdoctoral researcher in Developmental and Comparative Psychology, MPI EVA, Leipzig, Germany

Selected publications:

- Rossano, F.**, Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (2009). Gaze, questioning and culture. In J. Sidnell (Ed.), *Conversation analysis: Comparative perspectives* (pp. 187-249). Cambridge University Press.
- Stivers, T., Enfield, N. J., Brown, P., Englert, C., Hayashi, M., Heinemann, T., Hoymann, G., **Rossano, F.**, De Ruiter, J. P., Yoon, K.-E., & Levinson, S. C. (2009). Universals and cultural variation in turn-taking in conversation. *PNAS*, 106 (26), 10587-10592.
- Stivers, T., & **Rossano, F.** (2010). Mobilizing response. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 43, 3-31.
- Rossano, F.**, Rakoczy, H., & Tomasello, M. (2011). Young children's understanding of violations of property rights. *Cognition*, 121, 219-227.
- Rossano, F.**, Carpenter, M., & Tomasello, M. (2012). One-year-old infants follow others' voice direction. *Psychological Science*, 23 (11), 1298-1302.
- Rossano, F.** (2013). Sequence organization and timing of bonobo mother-infant interactions. *Interaction Studies*, 14 (2), 160-189.
- Halina, M., **Rossano, F.** & Tomasello, M. (2013). The ontogenetic ritualization of bonobo gestures. *Animal Cognition*, 16 (4), 653-666.
- Rossano, F.**, Liebal, K. (in press) "Requests" and "offers" in great apes. In Drew, P. and Couper-Kuhlen, E. (Eds.) *Requesting in Social Interaction*. John Benjamins