

Orangutan squeaks reveal language evolution, says study

科学家称红毛猩猩叫声揭示人类早期语言进化过程

- 請注意：中文文字内容只提供簡體版

科学家们用数年时间仔细聆听了我们的类人猿近亲——红毛猩猩与同伴交流时发出的尖叫声，该研究为解释人类语言的形成过程提供了线索。英国杜伦大学的阿德里亚诺·拉梅哈（Adriano Reis e Lameira）博士录制并分析了这些动物发出的近5000段“吻叫”，它们双唇紧闭的嘴型很像人类语言中辅音的发声方式。他还发现红毛猩猩会通过组合音节向同伴传达不同的信息。请听 Victoria Gill 的报道。

The researchers spent thousands of hours listening to these communicative ‘kiss **squeaks**’, analysing almost 5,000 squeaks from 48 individual **orangutans**.

They **homed in on** these sounds in particular because they’re formed in a similar way to our **consonants**. Just like our /t/ and /p/ sounds, kiss squeaks are made using the lips and tongue to control **air flow** rather than using the voice in calling out.

With this **painstaking** listening exercise and observing the animals as they communicated, the team revealed that orangutans combine multiple kiss squeaks in different orders, apparently conveying different messages. The scientists say that’s an early **glimpse** of how our ancestors began to combine consonants and **vowels**, and that these could be the **purse-lipped building blocks** of our very earliest **multi-syllable** words.

词汇表

squeaks	短促的尖叫
orangutans	红毛猩猩
homed in on	重点关注了
consonants	辅音
air flow	气流
painstaking	煞费苦心的，费尽心思的
glimpse	短暂的感受或理解
vowels	元音
purse-lipped	双唇紧闭的
building blocks	主要构造，基本要素
multi-syllable	多音节的

测验

请听报道并回答下列问题。

1. How many individual orangutans were involved in the study?
2. Why did the researchers put focus on the 'kiss squeaks' in particular?
3. True or false? *Kiss squeaks are made using the voice.*
4. Which word in the text means 'the early forms of species from which others have evolved'?

答案

1. How many individual orangutans were involved in the study?

There were 48 individual orangutans involved in the study.

2. Why did the researchers put focus on the 'kiss squeaks' in particular?

The researchers put focus on the 'kiss squeaks' in particular because they're formed in a similar way to our consonants.

3. True or false? *Kiss squeaks are made using the voice.*

False. Just like our /t/ and /p/ sounds, kiss squeaks are made using the lips and tongue to control air flow rather than using the voice in calling out.

4. Which word in the text means 'the early forms of species from which others have evolved'?

Ancestors.