

# New Research From Psychological Science

December 02, 2016

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## [Instantaneous Conventions: The Emergence of Flexible Communicative Signals](#)

*Jennifer Misyak, Takao Noguchi, and Nick Chater*

Humans are often able to communicate even when they don't share the same language. How is this possible? Participants played a partner-based computer game in which bananas and scorpions were hidden in boxes. The goal of the game was to collect as many bananas as possible, but only one player could see inside the boxes and the other player was the only one who could "choose" the boxes. Players communicated nonverbally using a limited number of white tiles. Researchers manipulated the amount of shared information available to both players (e.g., how many bananas and scorpions were on the field of play). The researchers found that the players created a communication style that altered in response to the shared environment (e.g., the amount of information available to both players) and task constraints (e.g., the number of tiles available for communication). These findings provide evidence for joint inference, a phenomena whereby people spontaneously infer the most sensible communication convention in light of shared information available.

## [Emotion-Cognition Interaction in Nonhuman Primates: Cognitive Avoidance of Negative Stimuli in Baboons \(\*Papio papio\*\)](#)

*Isabelle Blanchette, Yousri Marzouki, Nicolas Claidière, Julie Gullstrand, and Joël Fagot*

Research has shown a connection between emotion and cognition in humans, but it is still not well understood whether such a connection exists in nonhuman primates. To test this, primates who had been trained to have a negative association with the color "green" were shown an initial display containing two target squares of the same color (blue, pink, or green) and a distractor square of a different color (blue, pink, or green). The primates were then shown a blank screen followed by a screen with four white blocks. The purpose of the task was to choose the white blocks that corresponded to the location of the two target squares. The primates were found to be slower and less accurate at identifying the location of target squares when they were green. This result suggests that the primates were displaying cognitive avoidance of the negatively associated stimuli, providing evidence that emotional values alter cognitive processing.