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<N> Mutual Genital Touch in the Mahale M-Group Chimpanzees

AUTHOR(S):
Nishie, Hitonaru

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Mutual Genital Touch in the Mahale M-Group Chimpanzees
Hitonaru Nishie1,2

1 JSPS Research Fellow
2 Graduate School of Science, Kyoto University, Japan (E-mail: nishie.hitonaru@gmail.com)

INTRODUCTION

Mutual genital touch (MGT) is a type of greeting behavior, which was first documented in the chimpanzees of Bossou, Guinea (Nakamura & Nishida 2006). MGT occurs when two female chimpanzees meet after some time apart, they approach and closely pass by each other, pause with one’s face close to the other’s hip, and then they simultaneously and gently touch each other’s genital area from underneath with the outer hand (ibid.; Figure 1). Nakamura and Nishida (2006) suggested that MGT is a type of greeting behavior between females as its context is similar to some other greeting behaviors, such as peer-into-the-face, kissing, or extending a hand. They also stated that MGT had never been observed at Mahale. In addition, this behavior has not been reported from other

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DISCUSSION

However, during 2015, I observed two instances of MGT in the M-group chimpanzees at Mahale, Tanzania, as reported here in detail (See Nakamura et al. (2015) for the details of the Mahale M-group chimpanzees).

OBSERVATIONS

Case 1 on December 9, 2015

At approximately 12:50 h, a large party of the M-group chimpanzees ranged northward along a trail. Some individuals wandered into nearby bush, whereas others exited from the bush and entered the trail. I followed the alpha male walking along the trail. After some time, the alpha male overtook some adult females walking in a line and disappeared from view, following which I slowly followed after the females. At 13:24 h, an adolescent female, GN, exited the bush, entered the trail, and approached an adult female, EF, walking at the end of the line, thereby coming directly in front of me. EF stamped on her right foot once, following which GN came close to EF from her right side, brought her face toward EF’s hip, and touched EF’s genital area with her left hand. EF also simultaneously touched GN’s genital area with her left hand. Both EF and GN showed no genital swelling. Subsequently, EF and GN left together along the trail.

Case 2 on December 9, 2015

The party described in Case 1 ranged further north and encountered another party, including some adult females and their offspring, at 14:30 h. I continued following EF. When EF encountered the other party, a lactating female, ZL, showing no genital swelling, approached EF, and they simultaneously touched each other’s genital area with their left hands. The infant of ZL, two years old at that time, was out of my sight at the moment. They soon left together without any subsequent interactions.

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<NOTE>
An Infant Bonobo Mimicked a Handicapped Motor Action of a Disabled Individual at Wamba in the Luo Scientific Reserve, Democratic Republic of Congo

Kazuya Toda, Heungjin Ryu, Misato Hayashi & Takeshi Furuichi
Primate Research Institute, Kyoto University, Japan
(E-mail: toda.kazuya.78x@st.kyoto-u.ac.jp)

INTRODUCTION
Imitative abilities to copy the behaviors of others are important for humans to acquire novel skills (Tomasello et al. 1993). Scientific research has focused on whether non-human primates have these abilities, and experimental imitation studies in our nearest primates have been carried out (reviewed by Whiten 2015). Based on cognitive experiments of captive great apes, their learning processes were classified as “emulation” to reproduce desirable results of the actions of others, rather than “imitations” to reproduce the behavior itself (Whiten et al. 2004). Another experimental evidence indicated that chimpanzees imitate others’ actions, whereas they are less sensitive to body movements than to manipulated objects involved in the demonstrated actions (Myowa-Yamakoshi & Matsuzawa 1999). However, it remained unclear whether great apes can learn to reproduce novel motor actions by bodily matching.

“Do-as-I-do” experiments of chimpanzees provided positive evidence that they can copy the form of human actions through a battery of training actions (Custance et al. 1995). Moreover, Fuhrmann et al. (2014) provided the first quantitative evidence for motor copying with synchrony between the movements of the observers and models in chimpanzees and orangutans. This learning behavior was referred to as “mimicking” rather than imitation in that copying motor actions did not have a physical goal to reproduce desirable results of the models’ actions.

Nevertheless, these experiments showed that great apes have the capacity to learn novel and simple motor actions by bodily matching.

Observations of social learning in great apes under natural conditions are valuable, because experience of cognitive experiments in captivity can affect and enhance the enculturated skills of these apes (Hirata et al. 2009). At Bossou in Guinea, infant chimpanzees acquired stonenu manipulation through close observations of skilled manipulation by adult individuals (Inoue-Nakamura & Matsuzawa 1997). Hobaiter and Byrne (2010) reported that young chimpanzees copied a motor procedure with a liana-scratch technique from a disabled chimpanzee at the Budongo Forest Reserve in Uganda. However, no reports exist of motor mimicking based on visual information of the body movements of others in wild conditions. We observed an instance of an infant bonobo (Pan paniscus) mimicking a handicapped motor action spontaneously from a disabled individual at Wamba. This report could be the first evidence of motor mimicking in wild infant bonobos.

STUDY SITE & BACKGROUND
Observational study of bonobo behaviors was carried out at Wamba in the Luo Scientific Reserve, Democratic Republic of Congo. One main study group of bonobos (EI) was habituated fully and the all members were identified. At the time of the present observation, the EI group consisted of 34 individuals: 8 adult males, 8 adult females, 4 adolescents, 6 juveniles, and 6 infants. Researchers and field assistants followed the largest party daily as far as possible from bed to bed (around 06:00 to 17:00 h), and recorded ad libitum behaviors of bonobos.

Snare injuries to wild chimpanzees are serious problems at some study sites (Quiatt et al. 2002). Although the use of traditional techniques is allowed at Wamba in the Luo Scientific Reserve, the use of metallic snares is prohibited to protect primates (Furuichi et al. 2012). However, Wamba bonobos are sometimes caught and injured by metallic snares.

An adolescent female (PF) immigrated into the EI group from the western adjacent group in October 15,