

Workshop

Language-based vs. language-free components of cognition: A comparative perspective on how language shapes thinking.

June 24, 2026

Organizers: Karin Bausenhardt, David Dignath, Barbara Kaup

Location: Villa Köstlin; Rümelinstr. 27; 72070 Tübingen

In this informal workshop, we will explore perspectives on the interplay between linguistic and non-linguistic cognition in the mind. A central question is whether certain cognitive functions may include both language-bound and language-independent components. Here, we adopt a comparative perspective, focusing on animal cognition and developmental changes in human cognition. Our aim is to create an open and friendly atmosphere that encourages discussion and idea sharing. Rather than showcasing completed research programs, the workshop will feature talks that present novel or developing ideas. Through this exchange, we hope to identify useful starting points for a meaningful distinction between linguistic and non-linguistic cognition.

10.15 – 10.30 Welcome

10.30 - 12.30 Talks & Discussion I

Andreas Nieder (Tübingen): *Abstract Thought Without Language: Insights from Number Cognition*

Frederick Verbruggen (Ghent): tba

Lena Veit (Tübingen) *Syllable sequencing in birdsong: complex linguistic structures without complex cognition?*

12.30 - 13.30 Lunch break

13.30 – 14.50 Talks & Discussion II

Hannes Rakoczy (Göttingen): *Language as motor of cognitive development and medium of thought?*

Krisztina Orbán and Hong Yu Wong (Tübingen): *Pointing: the Missing Step In-between Linguistic and Non-linguistic Communication*

14.50 - 15.20 Coffee break

15.20 - 16.40 Talks & Discussion III

Günther Knoblich (Wien): *Action Coordination and Teaching in Great Apes.*

Barbara Kaup & Carolin Dudschig (Tübingen): *Negation understanding in non-human animals: An overview*

16.40 - 17.30 Final Discussion
