

Re: Both SAT and AAT have failed

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.anthropology.paleo/2008-08/msg00254.html>

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- *From:* nickname <alas\_my\_loves@xxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Sun, 17 Aug 2008 10:15:46 -0700 (PDT)
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On Aug 17, 9:11 am, Claudius Denk <claudiusd...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Aug 17, 8:32 am, Marc Verhaegen <m\_verhae...@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

netloon:

Why don't you tell us how  
water was involved with the selection of language.

don't you know??  
what do you kow, my boy?  
ever heard of Elaine Morgan?

Yes. It's hard for me to express how completely unimpressed I've been  
with everything she's stated.

Possible Preadaptations to Speech – a Preliminary Comparative Approach  
M Verhaegen & S Munro 2004 Hum.Evol.19:53-70

Human language is a unique phenomenon

Uh huh.

and its evolutionary origins are

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uncertain. In this paper we attempt to explore some of the preadaptations that might have contributed to the origin of human speech.

The comparative approach we use is based on the assumption that all features of a species are functional, and that all features can be compared with those of other animals and correlated with certain lifestyles. Using this method we attempt to reconstruct the different evolutionary pathways of humans & chimpanzees after they split from a common ancestor ...

This paper presents comparative data suggesting the various human speech skills may have had their origins at different times and may originally have had different functions. Possible preadaptations to speech include, eg,

- musical skills present in a variety of primate species (sound production);
- airway closure and breath–hold diving for collecting seafood (voluntary breath control);
- suction feeding adaptations for the consumption of fruit juice or certain seafoods (fine control of oropharyngeal movements).

The different evolutionary pathways of chimpanzees & humans might explain

why chimpanzees lack language skills and why human language is a relatively recent phenomenon.

Vague nonsense.

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In short: human speech is composed of different elements:

- musicality (gibbons, bonobos...),
- voluntary breathing (uniquely human),
- mouth closure at different places = labial, dental, palatal, velar etc. consonants (only humans),
- symbolic meanings (apes & other mammals).

More in detail:

- Darwin already described the musical abilities of gibbons (song, dialog, duet, rhythm, tone... = "vowels" produced by glottis) cf. hoots of chimps etc.: probably predates the ape LCA c 18 Ma. Possibly related to monogamy (birds, gibbons, indris, tarsiers...).
- Elaine Morgan described how voluntary breath–hold for diving & pre–dive hyper–ventilation were preadaptations to voluntary breathing control for speech.
- The different airway closing mechanisms in humans (probably after the

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Homo/Pan split c 5 Ma: ext.nose, nasal cycle, velum, lips, tongue, glottis...) are typical of (parttime) diving mammals. Consonants & breathing control.

- Roger Crinion noticed the resemblances in human oral anatomy with different spp of suction-feeders (for fruit juice, slippery foods, seafoods etc.): parabolic closed tooth row (incl.incisiform canines), smooth palate (few ridges only dentally), vaulted palate & globular tongue, descended tongue & hyoid etc. = voluntary production of consonants (esp.clicks etc.).
- Subsequent brain enlargements since H.erectus (facilitated by abundant brain-specific fatty acids: DHA etc.from seafood) suggest further integrations of these voluntary sound productions with other brain centers during the Pleistocene. Integrations of symbolic sounds. Progressively more complex grammar, see work of Martin Nowak: at first 1 sound = 1 word = 1 meaning; then combinations of phonemes=sounds into morphemes=words; then combinations of words into sentences (word order, grammar etc.).

Comparative vagueness.

I can't help but notice that you make not the slightest attempt to flesh out any of this into a scenario from which you might precipitate–out some testable details.

Biological evolution is based on evolutionary theory the central concept of which is natural selection. If you are not willing, even eager, to discuss the how and why of any such proposed selective scenario then you aren't doing science. You are doing little more than playing word games.

According to your logic (or lack of logic), dolphins are communal species, and their aquatic evolutionary adaptation is merely incidental and irrelevant, since all life depends on water anyway. Not much explanatory power there, almost as weak as savanna/creationist mythology. Not disagreeing with your remarks on the importance of the monsoonal effects though, but you seem to lack a causative agent for the monsoonal shift. Why did the monsoons start? I think it was due to the Panama closure changing global ocean currents, and also both the Bering Strait and Antarctic–South American damming.  
DDeden