<https://thepolyglotfiles.com/2018/07/27/where-did-language-come-from-the-origins-of-language/>

the dawn of language

How long ago do you think languages originated? Well one has no idea whether the first words were spoken 20000 years or 200000 years. What one does know is that humanity has survived for 100000 generations. To place this, only eight generations separates us from the generation of Jesus. Then suddenly out of nowhere 30000 years ago, a wave of creativity erupts. Which brought with it the cave paintings at Lascaux, light work tools, controlling fire, and so on. It is unlikely that this could have happened without a language system.

Now I am going to explain to you the difference between Neanderthals and Homo sapiens sapiens. Neanderthals walked this earth first. They roamed in Europe, the near east and in particles of north Africa. Their appearance was very different from what we look like today. They were small, stocky, with a small forehead and heavy features. But they did have a bigger brain than us, not necessarily a more efficient brain, but bigger. They were the first of their kind, burying their dead, wearing clothes, forming work tools, participating in small wars. This all pointed to the use of some kind of language. When the Neanderthal spoke, it would have been very nasal-sounding (what talking through your nose means) and imprecise. It was first thought that Neanderthal and Homo sapiens lived during different periods, but recent evidence shows that they lived together for 30000 years without interbreeding. However, Neanderthal was driven out by Homo sapiens and their species disappeared.

Homo sapiens sapiens were already much more like us. They were taller, thinner, more agile and handsomer (in our eyes) than Neanderthal. It was a human race that originated in Africa and spread to the near east and eventually ended up in Europe. They were almost identical to us. What distinguished them from all previous species was that they could choke on food. You might think this is a major drawback, but this is linked to well-articulated speech. This is because the larynx (strottenhoofd) is located deeper in the throat.

I have for you an example situation and how the two species would articulate it. Neanderthal: "I'm hungry, let's go hunting.". Homo sapiens: "Let's kill some red deer today. You take a big stick and drive them out of the forest and we will be ready with our spears to kill them when they walk towards us.".

But how did all the different languages we use today originate? Well here are several theories for this. Let me explain them all briefly. For this, I have also used a second source, namely this video. OK, I will start with the Bow-Wow theory. This theory tells us that humans based themselves on the sounds of animals and so further developed their own language. The next theory is the Pooh-Pooh theory. Here we are told that speech came through a reaction to certain emotions, such as pain, pleasure and surprise. The Ding-Dong theory is the next theory, telling us that everything in the world vibrates and that humans learnt their speech from that. The Yo-He-Ho theory says that speech evolved to communicate for certain actions, such as hunting. The last theory is the Ta-Ta theory, where it is thought that humans based their speech on gestures. So that the tongue imitated hand gestures.

What can be said with certainty is that there is sound imitation, also known as onomatopoeia, in every language. Let me give you a few examples. In English, we have many words starting with the consecutive letters sp linked to wetness: spray, splash, spit, spatter, spill and so on. And this is the same for words with fl letters, but which we link to movement: flap, fly, flicker and so on.

How is it that we all speak different languages. For a long time, we assumed that we were born with a blank sheet and that we just had to learn the languages. Noam Chomsky began to question this. He thinks we are all born with the idea of how language works, in general. For a baby, no language is easier or harder than another. In short children seem to be programmed to learn a language just as they seem to be programmed to learn to walk. From a study, it became clear that children from all kinds of different countries (who are thus brought up in different languages) all babble the same sounds at about the same time. It is only later that they adopt/learn the parents' language. children are very dependent on their educators on flag of vocabulary. In that area, they constantly try to imitate the educators.

Now That's a very easy question with a complicated answer. All the languages used in the world could well be closely related. If we go back to the so-called parent language, this is Indo-European. Lithuanian is the language that descends from this and has changed the least. A language family descended from Indo-European is the Germanic family; which includes English, German and Dutch. The two now "dead" Germanic languages that dominated Europe were Latin and Celtic. I say "dead" languages because they are actually still in use, but not as they used to be. Celtic itself has so many variations that it is different wherever it is still spoken. And Latin has evolved into several languages we speak today, such as French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Romanian. Latin is still used in science and literature, though. If you want to know what Latin sounds like, you should listen to Lugudorese, an Italian dialect spoken in central Sardinia. Many scholars think that Latin was spoken by almost no one, so it was only meant for science and literature.