

From Birdsong to Human Speech: Analyzing the Evolution of Language

The ability to acquire and produce human language has been regarded as a natural phenomenon for centuries and has intrigued linguists, biologists, and psychologists for centuries. Since Darwin's prominent works, *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871), language has now become known as an instinct that is the result of a miraculous event in evolutionary biology. Human language as a product of evolution has created controversy and debate between linguists and evolutionary biologists. Eminent linguists, such as Noam Chomsky, argue that language is uniquely human; however, evolutionary biologists declare that the capacity of language is manifested in lower species. Most notably, song birds have many distinctive, analogous characteristics with humans in the aspect of language: there are similarities between the language acquisition period of baby song birds and human infants, and each species possesses the capability of producing and perceiving complex strings of sound. In this paper, I will outline the commonalities between human language and birdsong and argue the importance of acknowledging those parallels to allow the advancement of studying and understanding the evolution of language and its role in the world and in nature.

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