

Loss of Vocal Fold Membranes and the Origin of Language¹

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Nishimura et al. (2022) stated that *H. sapiens* is the only primate among the 43 primate species they examined from which vocal cord membranes are absent. The loss of vocal fold membranes in humans, though not in non-human primates (Nishimura et al. 2022), was preceded by variation. Ancestral humans with less encumbering vocal fold membranes would have been selected for their ability to better adjust their vocal output, thereby facilitating the exchange of complex ideas concerning life and death. Variation precedes selection. Selection of those better able to speak would have led to the loss of vocal fold membranes, not the other way around. Language may have been purposefully invented by individuals – or by a single individual – who first asked others what might be done about death, a hypothesis (Saul 2002, 2019) that is strengthened by the results of Nishimura et al. (2022).

Literature Cited

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