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You'll recall that in last week's class I talked about how the sound made by most animals, though sometimes complex, are different from human language.

你们要回想一下在上周的课上我讲过关于大多数动物是如何制造声音的。

Only in humans do these sounds represent objects and events.

只有人类制造的这些声音代表物体和事件。

Keep in mind that most animals can only repeat their limited utterances over and over again, while humans can say things that have never been said before.

记住大多数动物只能一遍又一遍的重复它们有限的表达，而人类能说出以前从未被说出的事物。

Today I want to focus on human language and how it developed.

今天我想集中在人类语言和它的发展上。

I doubt you'll be surprised when I say that the evolution of language was slow and laborious.

我恐怕当我说语言的演变是缓慢而费劲的时候你们会惊讶

There's some reliable evidence that language began with early humans a million and a half years ago.

有一些可靠的证据（表明）语言始于一百五十万年前的早期人类。

Through the study of the size and shape of brain fossils, scientists have determined that early human brains, like modern brains, had a left hemisphere slightly larger than the right hemisphere.

通过对大脑化石的尺寸和形状的研究，科学家已经断定早期人类的大脑，左半球比右半球稍微大些。

We know that in modern humans, the left hemisphere's the seat of language.

我们知道现代的人类，左半球是语言区

We also know that early human brains had a well-developed frontal section, known as Broca's area, which coordinates the muscles of the mouth and throat.

我们也知道早期人类的大脑有一个发达的额部，被称为布洛卡氏区，它协调嘴和喉咙的肌肉。

It's clear, then, that early humans had a speech apparatus.

那么，很明显，早期人类有发音器官。

They could produce any sound that we can.

他们能发出我们能发出的任何声音。

What we don't know is whether early humans used what they had.

我们不知道的是早期人类是否使用他们所拥有的。

Since scholars know virtually nothing about prehistoric speech patterns, all they can do is speculate about how language actually originated.

由于关于史前的语言模式学者们几乎一无所知，他们能做的只是推测语言实际上是如何起源的。

Let me give you a brief summary of some of these theories.

让我来给你其中一些理论的一个小结。