

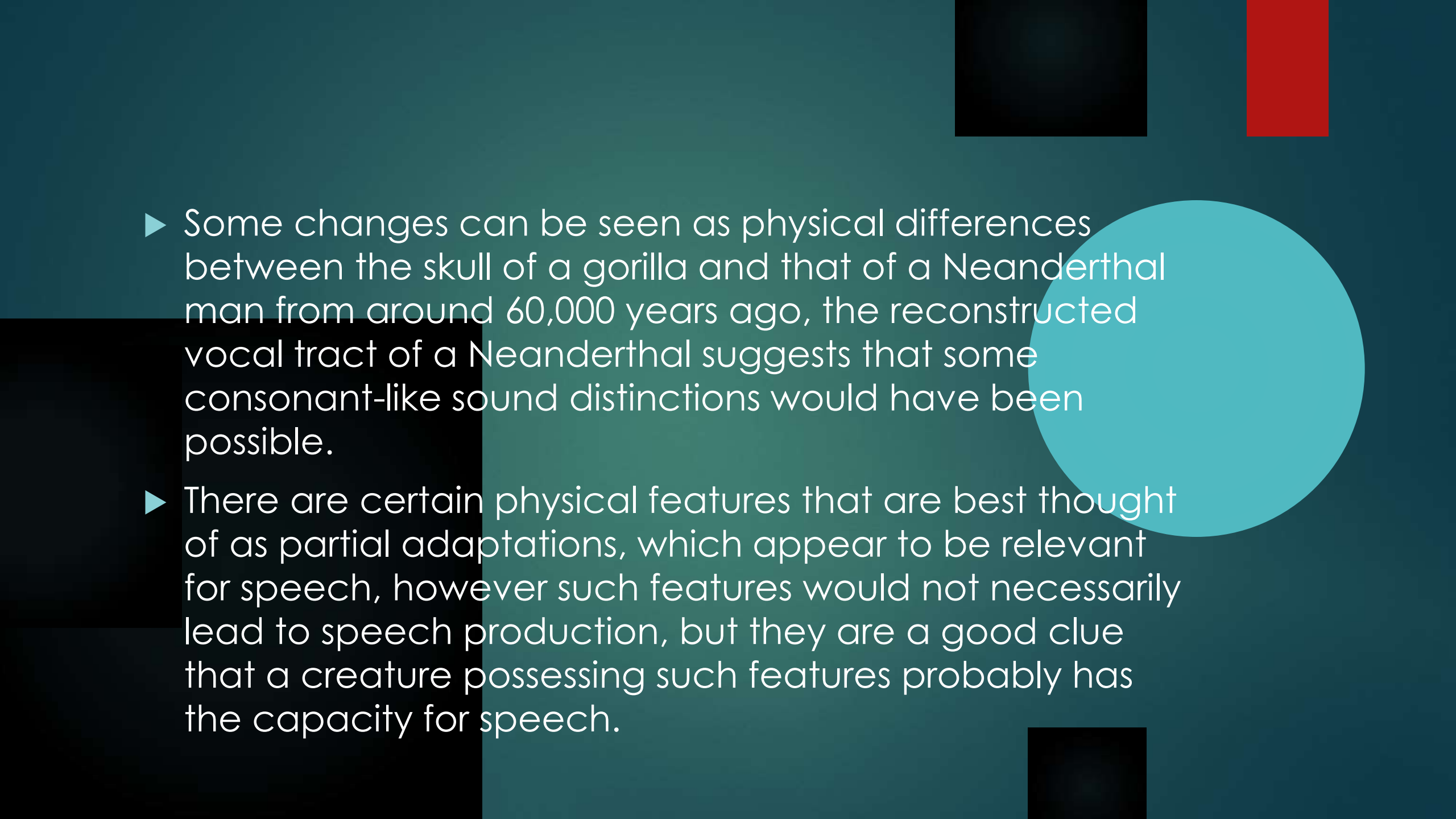
▶ ***The Origin of Language***
Part.2

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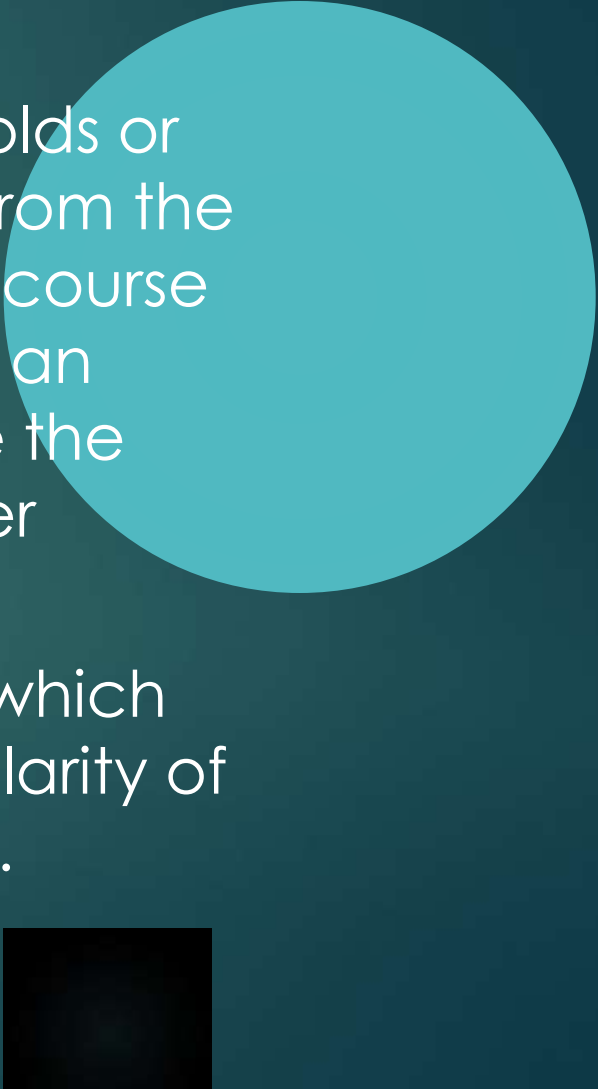
The Physical Adaptation Source:

- ▶ Instead of looking at the types of sounds as the source of human speech, we can look at the type of physical features humans possess especially those that are distinct from other creatures which may have been able to support speech production.
- ▶ Human ancestors made a very significant transition to an upright posture, with bipedal (on two feet) locomotion, and a revised role for the front limbs.

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- ▶ Some changes can be seen as physical differences between the skull of a gorilla and that of a Neanderthal man from around 60,000 years ago, the reconstructed vocal tract of a Neanderthal suggests that some consonant-like sound distinctions would have been possible.
 - ▶ There are certain physical features that are best thought of as partial adaptations, which appear to be relevant for speech, however such features would not necessarily lead to speech production, but they are a good clue that a creature possessing such features probably has the capacity for speech.

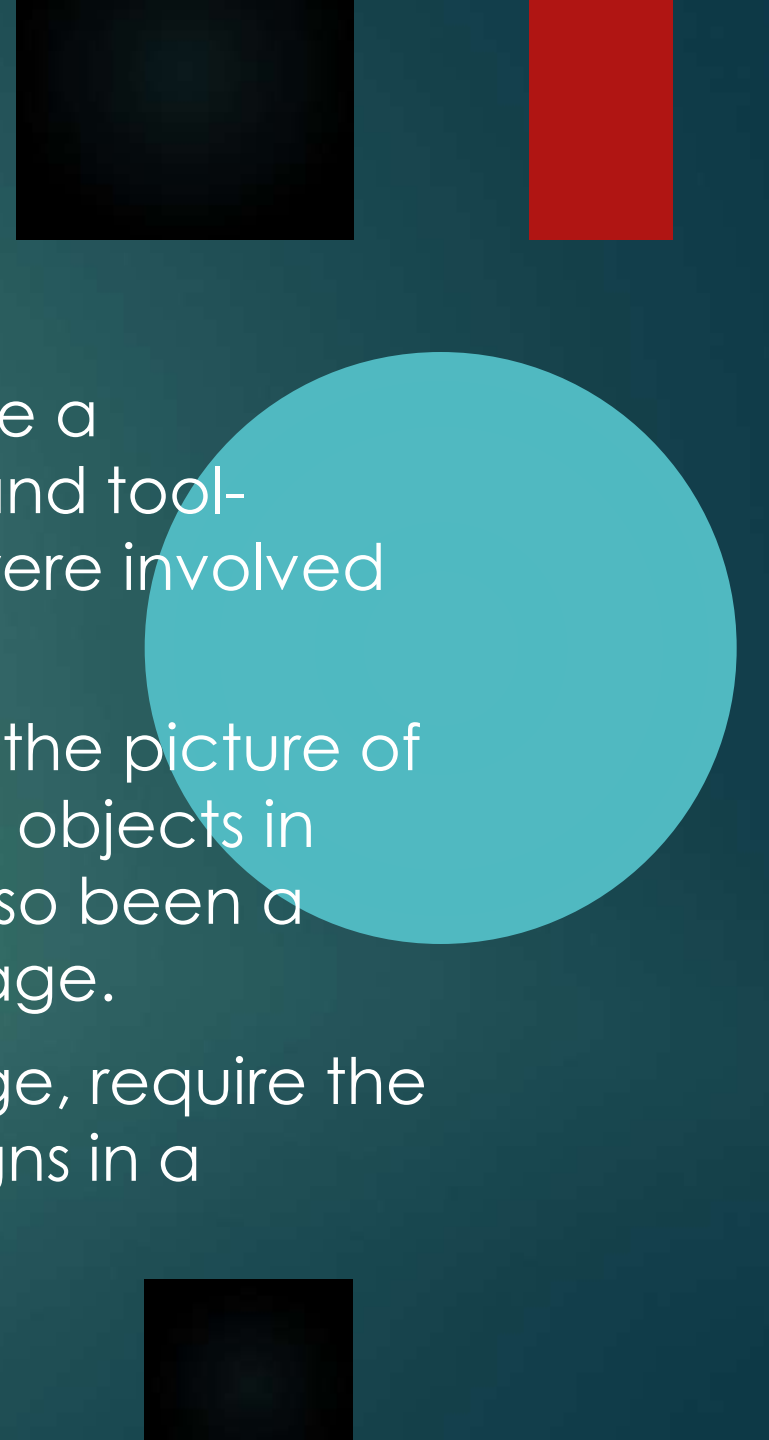
Teeth, Lips, Mouth, Larynx and Pharynx:

- ▶ 1- Teeth: Human teeth are Upright, not slanting outwards like those of apes and they are roughly even in Height.
- ▶ 2- Lips: Human lips have a much more intricate muscle interlacing than is found in other primates and their resulting flexibility certainly helps in making sounds like /P/, /B/
- ▶ 3- Mouth: The Human Mouth is relatively small compared to other primates, it can be opened and closed rapidly, and contains a smaller, thicker and more muscular tongue which can be used to shape a wide variety of sounds inside the oral cavity.

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- ▶ 4- Larynx or “voice box” : it contains the vocal folds or vocal cords and differs in positions significantly from the larynx in other primates such as monkeys, in the course of human development, the assumption that of an upright posture moved the head directly above the spinal column and the larynx dropped to a lower position.
 - ▶ 5- Pharynx: it is a cavity above the vocal folds, which acts as the resonator for increased range and clarity of sounds produced via the larynx and vocal tract.

The Tool-making Source:

- ▶ Some people believe that Manual gestures may have been the precursor of language.
- ▶ The Human brain is not only large relative to human body size, it is also Lateralized, that is, it has specialized functions in each of the Two Hemispheres. These functions control motor movement involved in complex vocalization(speaking) and object manipulation (making or using tools) are very close to each other in the left hemisphere in the brain.

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- ▶ From this we can deduce that there may be a connection between the language-using and tool-making abilities of humans and that both were involved in the development of the speaking brain.
 - ▶ The Origin of speech seem to be based on the picture of humans producing single noises to indicate objects in their environment. This activity may have also been a crucial stage in the development of language.
 - ▶ Finally, all language, including sign language, require the organization and combining of sound or signs in a specific arrangement.

The Genetic Source:

- ▶ At birth, the baby's brain is only a quarter of its eventual weight and the larynx is much higher in the throat, in a relatively short period of time the larynx descends, the brain develops, the child assumes upright posture and starts walking and talking.
- ▶ Even children who are born deaf become fluent sign language users given appropriate circumstances, very early in life. This seems to indicate that human offspring's are born with a social capacity for language. It is innate, no other creature seems to have it, and it isn't tied to a specific variety of language.
- ▶ This innateness Hypothesis seems to point to something in human genetics, possibly a crucial mutation as the source.

REFERENCES

John Lyons / THE STUDY OF
LANGUAGE

