## Did our ancestors' development of complex tools spur the growth of language?

[A] new body of research [is] arguing that if not for our hominin ancestors' hard-earned ability to produce complex tools, language as we know it might not have evolved at all. The research is occurring at the cutting-edge intersections of evolutionary biology, experimental archaeology, neuroscience, and linguistics, but much of it is driven by a very old question: Where did language come from?

In a <u>recent paper</u> in the journal Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B, [biologist Oren] Kolodny argues that early humans—while teaching their kin how to make complex tools—hijacked the capacity for language from themselves.

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[Anthropologist Dietrich] Stout found that his students' white matter—or the neural connectivity in their brains—increased as they gained competence in flintknapping. His research suggests that producing complex tools spurred an increase in brain size and other aspects of hominin evolution, including—perhaps—the emergence of language.

Rudimentary language, which evolved in the context of toolmaking and teaching, was ultimately able to break away from its immediate contexts—this is the hijacking part—eventually employing those original cognitive pathways for its own unique purposes. The result, as Monty Python viewers have <u>appreciated</u> for decades, was our modern, turbo-driven faculty for language.

Read full, original post: A Sneaky Theory of Where Language Came From