Language, Culture and Communication[1]

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Abstract

本論は，言語，文化そしてコミュニケーションの相関関係を，英国17世紀と古代ヘブライ，インド，ギリシャから具体的な歴史上の事例を取り上げて考察したものである。英語という言語の歴史をタイム・トラヴェルする際，もっとも頼りになるのは the Oxford English Dictionary（以下，OED）である。その OED によると，communicate, communication, communicative, communicatively, communicativeness といった語が本論で取り扱われる語義で用いられるようになったのは，17世紀になってからのことであり，それは，17世紀のイギリス人が人間のコミュニケーションに相当関心を抱くようになったということを示す。17世紀は，また，社会，政治，文化的に激動の時代であり，近代科学の勃興の時代であり，それにともなって英語という言語の諸研究が確立した時代でもある。17世紀初めには，アングロ・サクソン語が本格的に研究されるようになった。一方，そのような古い英語とか修辞学とかルネッサンス哲学の熱烈な研究への反動として普遍主義が興り，その普遍主義が一種の言語哲学へと発達していった。外国語-英語辞典同様，英英辞典も編纂・出版されるようになり，アカデミーの問題も興った。中世を飛ばして，古代ヘタイムトラヴェルしてみても，人々が言語へ関心を抱いていたことが窺われる。そこでも，言語によるコミュニケーションの問題，言語起源の問題，文化遺産を保存するために言語で記録することの問題，等が取り上げられていたのである。それらの事例は，言語と文化とコミュニケーションが互いに関わりあっていることを示す。

Language communication

It was in 1993, or 9 years ago, that Jean Aitchison accepted the professorship at Oxford University. The full title of her professorship is Rupert Murdoch Professor of Language and Communication. Coincidently, five years later, that is to say, in 1998, a department with a name similar to that of her

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professorship, that is to say, the Department of Language Communication, was founded as one of the two departments of the Faculty of International Communication at Aichi University. And in April of this year seven students from that faculty and three from other universities were received as the first post graduate students of the newly established Department of International Communication, Graduate School of Aichi University.

Professor Aitchison's *Linguistics*

Now we will return to Professor Aitchison. *The Times*, Wednesday, November 17, 1993, includes an account concerning her inaugural lecture, which has the following sentence:

> Her branch of linguistics is concrete and applied, quite removed from the obfuscations of Chomsky's abstract theories.

Professor Aitchison considers that studies in languages are useful for solving problems concerning human beings. From that point of view she wrote *The Articulated Mammal: An Introduction to Psycholinguistics* (1989), *Language Change: Progress or Decay?* (1991), *Words in the Mind: An Introduction of the Mental Lexicon* (1987), *Introducing Language and the Mind* (1992). The most popular work may be *Lingistics* (1992), which has been published for the Japanese students with Japanese notes from Hituzi Syobo, Tokyo, 1994. We have been using the book for two years as a textbook in our classes of the Outline of English Linguistics. In Chapter 3 of the book Professor Aitchison gives a rough description of the history of linguistics. She states that the year 1786 is regarded as the birthday of linguistics, and her description of the history of linguistics begins with the 27th of September, 1786, when an Englishman, Sir William Jones, read a paper to the Royal Asiatic Society in Calcutta, and pointed out that Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Celtic and Germanic languages had striking similarities in structure. Then she gives descriptions of the Indo-European family of languages, historical linguistics in the 19th century, structural linguistics in the early- to mid-20th century, and generative linguistics and the search for universals in the mid- to late-20th century. This does not mean that Professor Aitchison does not give any description of people's interest in languages before 1786. She does, but only five lines for that. She writes;[2]

> Before the 19th century, language in the western world was of interest mainly to philosophers. It is significant that the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle made major contributions to the study of language. Plato, for example, is said to have been the first person to distinguish between nouns and verbs.

Is that all for the 2,108 years between 322 B.C. (the date of Aristotle's death) and 1786? It is true that Greek philosophers were interested in language, but was there no one else to be interested in language? Hadn't the English people been interested in their language, or hadn't anyone of them given careful

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2) Aitchison (1994), p. 22.

study to their language? It may not be useless to travel back to the past before the 18th century, and to make a survey of people's interest in languages, mainly in the English language, which had reflected culture and had been indispensable for human communication.

The terms *communicate, communication* and *communicative*

It seems that the *Oxford English Dictionary* is the most useful guide for the time travel in the history of the English language. If we look up the key words, *language, culture* and *communication* in the *OED*, we will find that they began to be employed in the usual current sense in the 13th century, the 19th century and the 17th century, respectively. We will further take up the terms *communicate, communication* and *communicative*. The verb *communicate* appeared in the English vocabulary in the first half of the 16th century, and by the end of the 16th century it had already developed the current sense "to hold intercourse or converse; (now always) to impart, transmit, or exchange thought or information (by speech, writing, or signs); to make a communication". The earliest quotation of that sense is from a document of 1598. However, the quotation from *The Nicholas Papers*, dated 1652, would be more suitable for the illustration of the sense:

Sir Alexander Hume and I have very much conversation together … and, if you advise him to communicate freely with me, etc.

The noun *communication* was borrowed via Old French from Latin at the end of the fourteenth century; it appeared in English vocabulary much earlier than the verb *communicate*. However, the earliest quotation of the current sense "the imparting, conveying, or exchange of ideas, knowledge, information, etc. (whether by speech, writing, or signs)" is from John Locke, *An essay concerning human understanding* (1690), which reads:

To make Words serviceable to the end of Communication.

The adjective *communicative* came into use as early as the noun *communication*, that is to say, at the end of the fourteenth century. Its usual current sense "Ready to communicate information, etc.; free in conversation, open, talkative" dates back to 1654, quoted from Oliver Cromwell, *Letters and speeches*:

They became communicative. They told me, etc.

From the adjectival form are developed the adverb *communicatively* and the noun *communicativeness*, and both of them came into use in the seventeenth century. In a word, the words *communicate, communication, communicative, communicatively*, and *communicativeness* came into use in the sense relevant to our discussion in the seventeenth century. In other words, employment of these words in the sense relevant to our discussion reflects considerable interest of the 17th-century English people in human communication. Now it may be interesting to travel to the seventeenth century and observe political, social or cultural conditions of that period.

The *Re-* incidents in the 17th century

The seventeenth century of England may be called the century of convulsions. Several of the famous incidents in the British history broke out in this century; their names include the words beginning with the *Re-*, such as Renaissance, Reformation, Revolution and Restoration. The period from 1500 to 1650 is, more or less, that of the Renaissance in England, which came to mark the waning of the middle ages and the rise of the modern world. It was also the period of the Reformation, which may be defined as a religious movement that sprang from the ideas of the Renaissance Humanists, who emphasized human concerns and critical thought rather than the importance of belief in God. The movement resulted in the establishment of Protestant Churches. The next *Re-* incident was the Puritan Revolution, or the Civil War (1642–49). This was the conflict between Charles I and the Parliamentarians resulting from disputes over their respective prerogatives; Parliament gained decisive victories at Marston Moor (1644) and Naseby (1645), and in 1649 King Charles I was executed and Oliver Cromwell became the ruler, or Protector, of the country. In the year 1660, however, Charles's son returned from exile and became King Charles II (1660–85). This was the Restoration. Three years later, another *Re-* incident followed; the Glorious Revolution (1688–89), or the Bloodless Revolution, which resulted in the ousting of James II and the establishment of William III and Mary II as joint monarchs. As symbolized by various discoveries of Isaac Newton (1642–1727), who formulated the law of gravitation and was the author of *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687), modern science arose in the seventeenth century. The rise of natural science is sometimes called the Scientific Revolution; ancient and medieval science collapsed because of the Scientific Revolution. It led in the next century to the Industrial Revolution, which occurred in England from the 1760's to the 1830's.

Lexical discussion on the *re-* words and the word *physics*

Now, we will return to discussion of language and observe how English vocabulary reflects those incidents. The word *reformation* appears in English vocabulary in the first half of the 15th century, and in the sense relevant to our discussion, that is to say, in the sense "The great religious movement of the 16th century, having for its object the reform of the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome, and ending in the establishment of the various Reformed or Protestant Churches of central and north-western Europe", its earliest quotation is dated to 1563. The use of the word *revolution* goes back to the end of the 14th century. It, however, is in the 17th century that the word began to be used in the sense "a complete overthrow of the established government in any country of state by those who were previously subject to it; a forcible substitution of a new ruler or form of government" (the earliest quotation in the *OED* is 1600). The appearance of the word *restoration* is much more interesting. Its earliest quotation is cited from a document dated to 1660, which is the very year of the re-establishment of monarchy with the return of Charles II, and the quotation reads, "The happy Restoration of his Majesty to his People and Kingdoms". It may be interesting in a way that the word *Renaissance* appears in English vocabulary as late as the middle of the 19th century.

Concerning the field of science, the word *physics* will suffice to illustrate the influence of social or cultural conditions of the 17th century upon English vocabulary or the sense development of a word. The

word *physics* came into use in English near the end of the sixteenth century (1589). Its sense was "natural science in general", and the word was employed in that sense all through the 17th century. For example, the *OED* records a sentence quoted from Thomas Hobbes, *Elements of Philosophy* tr. (1656), which reads, "I have given to this part the title of *Physics*, or the *Phenomena of Nature*". As a result of the Scientific Revolution in the 17th century, human knowledge was to be divided and sub-divided, and the application of the term has tended continually to be narrowed. Thus early in the 18th century, the word developed the usual current sense, "the science, or group of sciences, treating of the properties of matter and energy, or of the action of the different forms of energy on matter in general". The earliest illustration of the sense is dated to 1715.

Language studies and socio-cultural background in the 17th c.

It seems that with such social, political, and cultural convulsions, and with the rise of modern science, studies in English established themselves in the course of the 17th century. At the beginning of the 17th century Anglo-Saxon, or Old English study, started in earnest, whereas universalism arose as reaction against deep interest in the studies of older English, rhetoric and Renaissance philosophy, and the universalism led to development of a kind of language philosophy. English- English dictionaries, as well as foreign language-English dictionaries, were compiled and published, and there arose an issue of the Academy.

Grammatical studies in the 17th c.

Concerning the grammatical studies, a number of 'English Grammar' books appeared all through the 17th century, and publications of what may be called language philosophy rather than grammar especially featured the latter half of the 17th century. It seems that until the first half of the 16th century the English language had been regarded as rough and poor in comparison with the classical languages and the Continental languages, and the English people had an inferiority complex about their language, which resulted in their endeavour to enrich the English language. Thus in the latter half of the 15th century the English people became conscious of enrichment of their language, and they thought that, owing to want of English grammar, English was underestimated as a barbarous language by foreigners. This was the motive for the compilations of English grammar in the 16th century. In the first half of the 17th century the same situation motivated even John Wallis to write *Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae* (1653). Its model was Latin grammar, but he was one of the first grammarians that were aware that they should get out of prescriptiveness of Latin grammar.

Phonetic studies in the 17th century

The term *phonetics* does not occur in English vocabulary until the middle of the 19th century, but phonetic studies started in earnest already in the 17th century. Philosophically speaking, the 17th century was the age of enlightenment; in other words, it was the age of rationalism. We may connect the birth of phonetics in England with such 17th- century current of thought. Rationalism put emphasis on general

principles rather than individual cases. It can certainly be regarded as a manifestation of the 17th-century current of thought that the 16th-century discussion on the spelling reform developed into the discussion on phonetics with theoretical examination and systematization.

It was Francis Bacon who for the first time gave phonetics a position in the whole system of learning, and showed the study in vocal physiology to the posterity as desideratum. Bacon made a clear distinction between letters and sounds. He declared that articulation was the origin of each letter, and that it belonged not to grammar but to "doctrina de sonis" (science of sounds, that is to say, phonetics). [3] It seems that Bacon made this distinction between grammar and phonetics for the first time in the West. Incidentally, in the ancient and medieval times sound studies had been dealt with as a part of grammar.

John Wallis read Bacon's books well, and also made a clear distinction between sounds and letters. A comparison of terminology of vowels will suffice to illustrate the distinction between Wallis and an orthoepist, Alexander Gill, for example:[4]

Wallis: "Vocalium Characteres sunt a, e, i, o, u"
Gill: "Vocales sunt quinque a, e, i, o, u"

Both of them state that there are "five vowels", but the difference is that while Gill calls the letters 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o', and 'u' *the vowels*, Wallis regards them as *the characters* representing vowels. Here Wallis does away with traditional way of viewing the sound from the angle of spelling, and introduces vocal-physiological point of view. Wallis is also famous for achieving some epoch-making results in the education of deaf and dumb persons.

Sir Isaac Newton, the great mathematician and physicist, was interested in human speech also and wrote a six-page article on phonetics.[5] He attempted so strict and perfect systematization that his theory hindered actual observation. This was a feature of the 17th century. It is interesting that Newton's strong interest in phonetics was related to the current of the age, and that phonetics came to be regarded as natural science.

Time travel to the ancient times

Now we will travel farther, passing through the medieval times, to the ancient times — to the time of the ancient Hebrews, the Indians and the Greeks, and see how they were interested in language. This, however, does not mean that the medieval people were not interested in language. There were Anglo-Latin authors, such as Aldhelm, Bede and Alcuin, Anglo-Saxon authors, such as Caedmon, Cynewulf, King Alfred, and Alfric, and medieval schools, such as that of Sigebert, king of East Anglia, where the pupils were taught grammar. These will be discussed on some other occasions.

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3) Watanabe (1975), p. 114.
4) Watanabe (1975), p. 123.
5) *Ibid.*, p. 129.

Nature of human speech

Mario Pei (1901–1978) is renowned as a linguist.[6] From his work, *All about Language*, was compiled a textbook for the Japanese university students, and it was published from Seibido in Tokyo. The textbook contains 92 pages only, but the information in it is of fundamental and important nature. It seems that the following passage quoted from the textbook is well worth opening the discussion of the ancients' interest in language:

> Did human beings always possess the power of speech? If not, when and how did they acquire it? Are human beings the only ones to have it? These are questions that have long troubled the people who work in the field of language and try to find out all about it. You have no sure answer, and neither they have. All they can tell you is that human beings seem to have had the power of speech as far back as history can trace them; that animals, while they can make certain limited sounds and at times give them certain limited meanings, cannot be said to possess it. Animals, furthermore, have been producing the selfsame sounds as far back as man's memory can reach, while the speech of human beings is forever changing.
>
> (M. Pei, *All about Launguage*, pp. 10–11)

The ancient Hebrews

How could we manage to communicate with each other without the help of language? Could we on earth get along without language? Even if there is no language, we can do lots of things by ourselves. We can do some simple things even with others. The situation, however, is different when we want to do complicated things, especially with cooperation from others.

People have shown a deep interest in that aspect of language as a means of communication since ancient times. The following quotation from the Bible, Genesis Chapter 11 Verses 1–9, reflects the ancient Hebrews' interest in what would happen if people come to use languages they cannot understand at all.

> And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.
> And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.
> And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for morter.
> And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of whole earth.
> And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.
> And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin

6) Mario Pei, born in Rome in 1901, moved with his family to New York in 1908, obtained Ph. D. from Columbia University in 1932, taught there Romance languages and comparative linguistics from 1937 till 1970.

to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they let off to build the city.

Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

This is the story of the Tower of Babel. The ancient Hebrews believed that the tower left unfinished because the Lord confounded the speech of the builders, they could not communicate with each other, and they could not work together. Incidentally, another attention must be paid to what is stated at the first half of Verse 9. The etymological explanation of the place-name Babel is offered; the Bible says that "confusion" was its original meaning.[7] The city, however, is Babylon, the capital of Babylonia, and modern scholars agree that its original meaning was 'the gate of god', *bāb* 'gate'+ *ilu* 'god'.[8]

The Old Testament contains some verses which are relevant to the ancient Hebrews' interest in another aspect of the origin of language, that is to say, naming of creatures and things. According to Genesis Chapter 1 Verses 1–10, Day, Night, Heaven and Earth, which are the very fundamental elements of the division of time and that of space, are called so by God. Genesis also contains the verses relating to naming of every living creatures; it is Adam, the first man, who in turn gives names to them (Genesis Chapter 2, Verses 19–20). His naming them shows his God-given mastery over the animals.[9] Genesis Chapter 2 Verse 23 describes Adam's giving his mate the name 'Woman':

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

The Hebrew word corresponding to 'Woman' is *'iššă*, while 'Man' is *'iš*. St Jerome, when he rendered the verse into Latin in his Vulgate edition, reproduced the pun by employing *virago* 'woman' and *viro* "man". This tradition is reflected in English 'wo*man*' and '*man*'.[10] In Genesis Chapter 3 Verse 20, Adam gives another name to his wife: 'And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living'. There is no established theory about the etymology of the word 'Eve'. According to the folk etymology, however, Eve is connected with Hebrew *Hawwā*ʰ 'a living being';[11] the etymological account may have been influenced by the concept of Eve's being the first woman.

The ancient Indians

Language study in India originates from preservation and study of Vedic Sanskrit. The purity of the

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7) McKenzie (1965), *s.v.* 'Babel'.

8) Klein (1971), *s.v.* 'Babel'

9) Brown, *et al* (1991), p. 12.

10) Brown, *et al* (1991), p. 12.

11) McKenzie (1965), p. 254; Klein (1971), p. 262.

language of the ancient religion began to be corrupted in the course of time, and about 400 B.C. it was in danger of eternal extinction unless the language of the sacred writings was phonetically and grammatically recorded and preserved. This led to Panini's compilation of grammar, the oldest research of Sanskrit. The grammar, which includes phonetic description also, was an influential material which stimulated the Europeans to make researches into Sanskrit; it was also influential in proposing the methodology for establishment of comparative linguistics. Its influence further extends even to modern American linguists.

Two distinctive features will suffice to explain Panini's grammar. Concerning phonetic description, whereas European phonetic researches have been based on acoustic aspect, articulation is valued in Panini's grammar. Phonetic analysis is made first in the sentence, then in phrases or words, and then in the root of the word. Panini's grammar is distinctive also in the analysis of words. Subordinate elements of words such as prefixes and suffixes are analyzed away, and the roots of the words are taken out.[12] This analysis based on the root of the word is quite useful for the languages which are structurally similar to Sanskrit and Hebrew. On the contrary, one of the chief aims of Greek and Latin grammars, since Thrax and Appolonius, has been analysis into the parts of speech, and for that purpose morphological analysis has been valued, inflection has been discussed, and paradigms of the inflectional endings have been made.

The ancient Greeks

The Greeks called the foreign people βαρβαρος 'non-Greek, foreign', which was used not only of people but also of language. When employed in the grammatical situation, it even signified 'of bad Greek' or 'in bad style'.[13] The Greek word had developed the sense 'brutal, rude' already in ancient Greek. Some scholars admit 'stammering' as its original sense.[14] While the Hebrew description of the origin of the language was, as we have seen, religious and mysterious, that of the Greeks was rational and sometimes with philosophical demonstration.

An account in Herodotus' *History* is sometimes quoted to illustrate experimental and demonstrative attitude of the Greek author on the question of the origin of language. Herodotus relates (Book II, Chapter 2) that the Egyptians had thought that they were the oldest nation on the earth, but Psammetichus, king of Egypt, desiring to learn what nation was the oldest, gave two newborn babies to a shepherd to be brought up among his flocks of goats, with no human speech heard in the meantime, and that after two years, when they saw the shepherd for the first time, the first word they uttered was 'bekos'. Herodotus further states that the king ordered the word to be examined, found that it was a Phrygian word signifying 'bread', and acknowledged that Phrygian was the oldest language.[15] This legend written by Herodus may be regarded as the origin of the demonstration of theory through hypothesis and experiment in the modern linguistics.

12) For example, English *ungentlemanly* is divided into *un-gentle-man-ly*, and the word is derivatively classified *man* as the central element.

13) Liddell and Scott (1985), *s.v. βαρβαρος.*

14) Klein (1971), *s.v. barbaric.*

15) Phrygian was the language spoken in the kingdom of Phrygia in Asia Minor *c.* 2000 B.C.

The more philosophical attitude toward language studies can be observed in *Cratylus*, one of the *Dialogues* of Plato (427–347 B.C.). The book describes dialogical arguments about language between Socrates (*c.* 470–399 B.C.) and his disciples Hermogenes and Cratylus. The dialogue begins with the argument about the naming, which includes the following utterance of Socrates:[16]

> *Soc.* Then, Hermogenes, not every man is able to give a name, but only a maker of names; and this is the legislator, who of all skilled artisans in the world is the rarest.
>
> *Her.* True.
>
> *Soc.* And how does the legislator make names? ...

The discussion reaches the following conclusive utterance:

> *Soc.* Then, as to names: ought not our legislator also to know how to put the true natural names of each thing into sounds and syllables, and to make and give all names with a view to the ideal names, if he is to be a namer in any true sense? And we must remember that different legislators will not use the same syllables. For neither does every smith, although he may be making the same instrument for the same purpose, make them all of the same iron. The form must be the same, but the material may vary, and still the instrument may be equally good of whatever iron made, whether in Hellas or in a foreign country;— there is no difference.
>
> *Her.* Very true.
>
> *Soc.* And the legislator, whether he be Hellene or barbarian, is not therefore to be deemed by you a worse legislator, provided he gives the true and proper form of the name in whatever syllables; this or that country makes no matter.
>
> *Her.* Quite true.

The dialogue may be summarized as follows: the real name is the natural embodiment of an ideal, or a model, and there exists natural relation already between names and things. This is the ground of nature theory, or *physis* 'nature' theory, about the origin of language in ancient Greece. Contrary to the nature theory is the convention theory, or *thesis* 'convention' theory which was supported by Aristotle. The nature theory inspired etymology to develop in Greece; it is said that Aristotle was not interested in etymology so much. Later in the 14th century, Geoffrey Chaucer, an English poet, refers to Plato's view of language in the famous *Canterbury Tales*:

> The wise Plato seith, as ye may rede,
> The word moot need accorde with the dede.
> If men shal telle proprely a thyng,
> The word moot cosyn be to werkyng.
> [The wise Plato says, as you may read,
> the word and act must needs accord;

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16) Jowett, Benjamin (1952), p. 88.

If a man shall tell a thing as it is,

the word must be cousin to the action.]

(*The Canterbury Tales*, The Manciple's Tale, 207–210)

Conclusion

Now we will conclude our discussion with the following scheme, which shows the interrelationship among language, culture and communication:

LANGUAGE ⇌ CULTURE
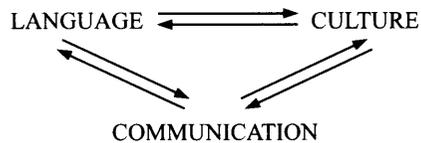
COMMUNICATION

As we have discussed, language reflects culture, while culture owes much to language; culture has mostly been evolved by human communication, while human ability of communication largely depends on the standard of culture; communication has enriched language, while language is a most effective means of communication.

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