

## [015]言語科学表紙奥付等

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バージョン：

権利関係：



William Dwight Whitney  
—Father of American Linguistics (2)

Tetsuro Hayashi

III. *Whitney's View on the Characteristics of Language*

In Chapter III of his *Language and the Study of Language* (*LSL*, 1867), Whitney emphasizes that language is a means of mutual understanding for the members of a community and that the existence of language is possible owing to the activity of the speakers and the hearers. Words, he asserts, are individual signs for human thought; thus, language is a body of arbitrary and conventional signs for thought, a notion being embraced by Whitney some fifty years before F. de Saussure's similar concept.

IV. *Whitney's Argument on 'Structure' in LGL (1875)*

In *The Life and Growth of Language* (*LGL*, 1875), Whitney expresses the opinion that although linguistic science is almost similar to geology and chemistry in terms of its methods, linguistics is still a branch of social science, and that it constitutes a part of historical science. The *LGL*, containing XV chapters, may be divided into four distinct sections: (i) introduction (I–III), (ii) growth of language (IV–VIII), (iii) synchronic studies of language (IX–XIII), and (iv) conclusion.

The XIth chapter, being entitled 'Linguistic Structure', is very important in that it has the earliest reference to the notion of 'structurism' in the history of American linguistics. Whitney is probably the first to treat 'structure' as a linguistic term, as is shown in the Index of both the *LSL* (1867) and *LGL* (1875). We are reminded of Sapir's registering two items concerning 'structure' in his Index, i.e. 'structure, linguistic' and 'structure, linguistic, types of', while the Index of Bloomfield's *Language* (1933) has only 'structural order' (4 occurrences) and 'structure' (3 occurrences).

V. *Definition of 'Language' and the Aim of Linguistic Science*

In the opening chapter of the *LGL* (1875), Whitney gives the definition of language: "Language may be defined as the means of expression of human thought." This is followed by another explanation of language, which reads: "Language, then, signifies rather certain instrumentalities whereby men consciously and with intention represent their thought, to the end, chiefly, of making it known to other men: it is expression for the sake of communication." He thus tries to distinguish language as a means of communication from (i) gesture and grimace, (ii) pictorial or written signs, and (iii) uttered or spoken signs.

Concerning the aim of linguistics, he states that the science strives to comprehend language both in its unity as a means of human expression and as distinguished from brute communication. He then proceeds to specify the objectives and methods of linguistic science, the clarification of similarity and difference between languages, and the relation of language with human thought.