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Chapter 1

The Dawn of Language

言語の夜明け



1 Prereading

右の文章を読む前に、下の質問に答えてみてください。

1. How long do you think humans (or pre-humans) have used language?
2. What reasons can you think of for why our ancient ancestors would need language?
3. What are some ways ancient humans probably communicated?

2 Reading

CD
1

人間の言語の発達に関する、以下の英文を読んでください。(342 words)

The world today is made up of many, many languages. Researchers at the Summer Institute of Linguistics¹ (SIL) collect information about languages throughout the world. In their latest edition of their findings, called *the Ethnologue*, they have collected information on roughly² 6,000 different
5 languages. But there are researchers who believe that all of these 6,000 languages can be traced back³ to a single mother language which is sometimes called Proto-World.⁴

Linguists have known for a long time that languages are related to each other. For example, English is in the family of languages called Germanic,⁵
10 because researchers can show that English and German were once the same language. Similarly, French, Spanish and Italian are called Romance languages⁶ and developed directly from Latin. Yet, if we go further into history all of these languages are connected. In 1786, Sir William Jones, while
15 working in India noticed that Greek, Latin and Sanskrit were remarkably similar. He believed it was possible to create a much larger language family called Indo-European.⁷ Indo-European languages range from Sanskrit in India to Icelandic in Iceland. Yet, Indo-European is just one language family that has been discovered by linguists. Japanese, Korean, and Ainu belong to another family known as Altaic.⁸

But, how long have humans had language? This is a tricky⁹ question for not only linguists,¹⁰ but also for archaeologists¹¹ and anthropologists.¹²
20 The earliest written forms of language appear around 3,000 B.C. in Egypt, but a recent archaeological finding of writing on a piece of broken pottery at Harappa, Pakistan may be as old as 5,500 B.C. Many linguists believe,
25 however, that spoken language must have existed for thousands of years before writing developed. Some estimates,¹³ such as those by The Tower of Babel Project in Russia, suggest that Proto-World may have existed at some point around 20,000–50,000 B.C.

Why language developed is controversial as well. Communication
30 between our pre-human¹⁴ ancestors was certainly important, and so was warning against possible danger. The development of an extended vocal tract¹⁵ may also have contributed to the evolution of language as well.

Vocabulary **1. linguistics:** the scientific study of language, **2. roughly:** approximately, **3. can be traced back:** can be followed back through history, **4. Proto-World:** the original first language in humans, **5. Germanic:** a branch of the Indo-European language family that includes English, **6. Romance languages:** languages such as French which developed from Latin, **7. Indo-European:** a language family that includes most languages in Europe and western Asia, **8. Altaic:** a language family that includes Japanese and Korean, **9. tricky:** difficult; problematic, **10. linguists:** researchers who study language, **11. archaeologists:** researchers who study the remains of a culture or people, **12. anthropologists:** researchers who study humans and human cultures, **13. estimates:** guesses about the number of something, **14. pre-human:** the period in evolution between ape and human, **15. vocal tract:** the parts of the mouth and throat responsible for producing sound and speech

3 Sentence Building

文章の中にある次の単語を使って、文を作ってください。

1. linguist: _____.
2. roughly: _____.
3. vocal tract: _____.

4 T-F

各英文が本文の内容に合っていれば T、合っていなければ F を○で囲んでください。

1. There are roughly 600 languages in the world today. (T / F)
2. French and Italian are examples of Germanic languages. (T / F)
3. The original first language is called Proto-World. (T / F)

5 Questions

次の質問に答えてください。

1. What did Sir William Jones discover?
2. Japanese and Korean belong to which language family?
3. The discovery of writing at Harappa is estimated to be how old?
4. Some researchers believe human language started how long ago?

6 Speaking

次の指示に従って、英語で話してください。

Some people believe that solving problems in history (such as the mystery of Proto-World) is less important than solving today's problems (like poverty and war). Do you think studying history is important? Why or why not? Can studying history help to solve today's problems?

7 Linguistic Analysis: Comparing Languages

Look at the following sets of words and try to find a rule or rules to explain the differences between Samoan and Hawaiian.

<u>Samoan</u>	<u>Hawaiian</u>	<u>English</u>
mata	maka	eye
nofo	noho	sit
toto	koko	blood
tapu	kapu	forbidden
tani	kani	cry
talofa	aloha	greeting