The Universality of Language and Its Limitations: Perspectives from Toshihiko Izutsu

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The Universality of **Language** and Its Limitations: Perspectives from Toshihiko Izutsu

Who Toshihiko Izutsu is and his perspective of language

Do different languages result in different thoughts?

The Possibility of having one universal language
Toshihiko Izutsu
Language of Genius

4 May 1914 --- 7 January 1993
From Tokyo Japan

Scholar, specialized in Islamic studies
Mastered 30 languages
Different Languages, Different Perspectives

1) There is an apple on the table.

2) There are apples on the table.

1) テーブルの上にりんごがあります。

2) テーブルの上にりんごがあります。
English Speakers

One? Two? Some?

Japanese Speakers

doesn’t matter
must mention how many...

Notion of number

English Speakers

Japanese Speakers
don’t have to mention how many...
I did it. (past)
I do it. (present)
I will do it. (future)

した。 (complete)
します。 (incomplete)
します。 (incomplete)

Notion of tense

English Speakers

Japanese Speakers
Possibility of Universal Language
How language is made
Conclusion:

Languages: Diverse
Thoughts: Universal

One Global Language:
Challenging even with AI

Linguistic diversity:
Beauty
References


• NHK, hosted by Sahel Rosa イスラムに愛された日本人 知の巨人・井筒俊彦 YouTube, uploaded by shichokaku_shitsu, 27 Nov. 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUTw0H4IVbo&t=383s


• Koyasan University 第15回高野山大学フジキン小川修平記念講座講演会 高木先生公演「存在とコトバの神秘学—井筒俊彦の空海論—」YouTube, uploaded by the official website of Koyasan University, 13 Jan. 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVJmIWWfELQ&t=498s