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文化を映し出すことば：日英比較から文化を言語学する

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Language as a Mirror of Culture: A Contrastive Study of Japanese and English

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This article observes that a lot of differences between Japanese and English expressions derive from certain cultural differences of the relevant language communities, and confirms that human thinking and language use are, without doubt, affected by culture. It is crucial which cultural type a particular language community belongs to: the high-context culture or the low-context one. Japanese culture can be classified as the former, and the cultures of English-speaking countries, especially of USA, can be classified as the latter. Some key words for Japanese culture are social verticality, ethnic homogeneity, social interdependence, and holistic way of thinking. Those for the cultures of English-speaking countries are social horizontality, ethnic heterogeneity, social independence, and analytic way of thinking. It is argued that those sociocultural characteristics are reflected on the meaning and the usage of linguistic expressions of the relevant languages.