基本色彩語——色名の普遍性と進化

文化的人類学者のブレント・ベリーと語種学者のポール・カイは、日本語を含む98の言語について調べ、単一の表現で、発音に特有な名前を含む、特定の色を表す表現を調査した。この調査の結果、日本語を含む100の言語で、基本的な色を表す表現が確認された。日本語における色名は、発音が单音節で、色名が特定の色を表す表現として使用されている。日本語においても、人と環境としてよく使う色の名前を表す表現があると、色の名前が名前の中に含まれている。

Basic Color Terms——Their Universality and Evolution

Brent Berlin, cultural anthropologist, and Paul Kay, linguist, studied 98 languages, including Japanese, and in 1969, presented their survey results, announcing that there are color terms that fulfill the standards of being monosemic, whose signification is not included in that of any other color term, whose application is not restricted to a narrow class of objects and that is psychologically salient for informants, and that these colors can be grouped into eleven categories. Named as basic color terms, they are white, black, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange, gray. Shown at the center is the process in which the basic color terms of white and black develop from brightness and darkness and evolve to that increase the number of color terms. The eleven colors are always mentioned in the surveys conducted in Japan to probe the twenty most commonly memorized and used colors by humans. (Yasuhiro NAGATA)