

Titel: II. General Theory, [Uldall] 002-0040

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Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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'dative'. But when "Nacht" occurs in the genitive case as a 'tertiary' (I use this Jespersonian term as a short-hand symbol, to avoid a long explanation irrelevant to our present purpose), it is "des Nachts". "Des -s" is the common expression of 'genitive' and a syncretism of 'masculine' and 'neuter', which is based on an overlapping; so we now have a choice between supposing that 'feminine' has disappeared from "Nacht", replaced by the syncretism 'masc/'neut', and supposing that there is in "des Nachts" a general syncretism of all three genders. Of these alternatives the latter is obviously the most economical, since the mechanism of syncretism has to be established in any case, whereas alternation of gender in a "substantive" under specific conditions would be an isolated exception to the general rule. The condition of the general syncretism is a complex of relations involving the relation between the gender-category and the theme of "Nacht" as well as the relation with 'genitive' and the 'tertiary' relation. The extra equivalence between 'fem' and 'masc/'neut' is homoplane, in respect of the relation with the theme of "Nacht", ~~but not in respect of the relation with 'genitive' and the 'tertiary' relation~~. The orientation, too, is complex: since there is here, as in the two preceding examples, a (partial) replacement, we must diagnose an implication, but 'fem' is not replaced by a single node but by a syncretism of two, and as this syncretism is based on an overlapping, we get the configuration {'masc' x 'neut'} C 'fem', i.e. that which is implied by 'fem' is not necessarily the whole of {'masc' + 'neut'} but could be only that which is common to them. The classes are then: 'masc' A + B, 'neut' B + C, and 'fem' B or possibly A + B + C; this possibility must be left open pending further observations.

↳ as a category of the

↳ 5.24 b

The technique, as illustrated by these examples, is then as follows: any syncretism is interpreted as indicating that the functives involved are classes with at least one member in common. If the syncretism is such that, under the same conditions, both functives are represented by a common form which does not occur outside the syncretism, as in the case of "hit", or if they mutually replace each other, the orientation of the equivalence is taken to be an overlapping; if the syncretism is an irreversible (partial) replacement of one by the other, as in the case of g/f in English, the orientation of the equivalence is taken to be an implication, such that the replaced functive implies the other.

Irreversible replacements are very common: in English i can replace ɛ but not vice versa; in Danish (and in English) ɛ can replace i but, so far as I know, not vice versa. This phenomenon may extend to larger categories, thus among those English consonants which occur in pairs, one voiced and the other voiceless, it would appear that a voiceless consonant can replace its voiced partner but not vice versa; e.g. f replaces v in [ai hæf tə du: it], [ai d læf tʊ] "I have to do it", "I'd love to", ɹ replaces ʒ in [nʒu:spɛpə], [wɒt s ðə mætə] "newspaper", "what's the matter", but there seem to be no examples of v replacing f or ɹ, ʒ. In French, on the other hand, the corresponding replacements are reversible: in [yn epu:s fidɛl] "une épouse fidèle" ɛ replaces ɛ̃ and in [o sɛrviz dɛ] "au service de" ɛ replaces ɛ̃.

1. Cf. Otto Jespersen, Lehrbuch der Phonetik, 11.6.

The interpretation is, accordingly, that in English the voiced consonant of a pair implies the voiceless partner, while in French the two overlap. Incidentally, these examples ~~show~~ that the orientation of correlations is a structural phenomenon, not imposed by or inherent in the substances.