

Titel: BREV TIL: Charles Ernest Bazell FRA: unsure (1953-05-05)

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Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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Dear Professor Hjelmslev, I have now read your passage in the review of *Language* again, and it is perfectly clear that there are different functions as seen in 'light' and 'dark' and I nevertheless prefer this formulation to saying that there is no commutation, for the point is, that there is a function between expression and content which is the same content, and as the difference is not either, but synonymy. In the same way 'heavy' and 'dark' are different content-units as seen in the only present units) with different expression, but in light-dark these two different content-units enter without different expression; syncretism conditioned by the negative element as I proposed in one of my letters. ~~xxxxxxx~~ is one way of describing the phenomenon, -- homonymy - parallel to the interpretation of split/spid is another possibility. The question is whether it can be ascertained that there is syncretism conditioned by 'un-' in the expression where we have many examples of d and t in combination with l and only a few show the lack of difference in content (and on the other hand Danish 'dt' where all cases show the same content) - the decision is clear. But in the content we do not have many examples or even two examples with heavy and dark combined with a negative. And can we be founded on one example? - 'foggy' would make a parallel between l+ t in different words and un+ heavy in different occurrences (if of the same sign). - I doubt whether this parallel is valid - but perhaps a further analysis of the content would show other instances of the combinations of un- with heavy (perhaps + ~~xxxx~~ still other elements). - That which makes the difficulty for the parallels between content and expression is that the content has not yet been (and perhaps cannot be) reduced to a small number of elements, occurring in a great number of combinations and with each combination occurring in many different signs. - A further difficulty is that content substance is something very vague and impenetrable difficult to handle ex-

from Hjelmslev's review of Language

syncretism

cept through the expression, and that is why contents
and signs are so often conformed (e.g. often by Roze-
by).

This question is closely connected with your dis-
cussion of neutralisation (AL V, p. 140). four exam-
ple of syncretism in the vocative or def./indef. would
correspond to the implication of final ~~xxxx-xxxx~~
d in t in German, in that the expression is the same.
mak but would it not be possible to consider what you
call simple ~~neutralisation~~ of formatives (e.g. nom.
acc. immediate in fem. or det. sgl. sg. m.) as con-
tent neutralisations corresponding to e.g. Det. final
and it is possible to say either and the expression
is either one or other in the concrete case, like
the content being either nom. or spec. in the concrete
case, but the content is not changed (as the expres-
sion is not changed in templum) - This is an attempt
to rescue Hjelmslev's case-neutralisations as
content phenomena. But it is of course also possi-
ble to consider them as homonyms or homotives, and
that it speaks in favour of the above interpretation
that both in the case -d, -f in Danish, and nom. acc.
in Latin the syncretism is conditional in the same plane
(expression resp. content). In the latter position
and comb. with neuter respectively - if the lat. phe-
nomenon is parallelled with syncretism of circles like
spaid/spilt, there is the difference that the latter
has no conditions in expression, as the former has
as you say sincerely.