Titel: BREV TIL: Eli Fischer-Jørgensen FRA: unsure (1950-09-30)

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Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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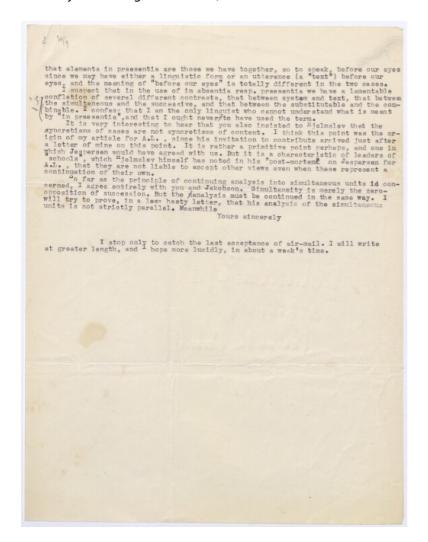
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den længstlevendes dødsår. Husk altid at kreditere ophavsmanden.

Finally courselves the heaty roll.

See Dr. Fischer-Jorgensen, our letter reached me only now, since I was on travel.

Figure of the course of



P.5 I was glad to have your general agreement with the views in Archivum. As for the vagueness of the "definition" of morpheme (if it is fair to call it one), this was intentional. There is I think room for two sorts of definition, very vague ones which serve before the system of a given language has been discovered, and very precise one to describe the structure finally arrived at. It is rather dangerous for a linguist to be quite certain what he is looking for at the beginning of analysis: he is too liable to find it even when it is not there. And it is doubtful if any very precise definition ever would be satisfied in a language for which it had not been devised

ad hoc.

The definition in A.L. (would "union" be any better than "association?) would lead to absurdities if applied a "rule of thumb" from the beginning; and if it were made more precise it would lead to still more absurdities. Definitions should be rather like the rules of a select club, in which the conditions of admission are not made very clear, but neverth eless great care is taken in examining the credentials of each separate candidate for membership; each is considered on his own merits. The good grammarian is like a man who may even have forgotten the rules of the club, but yet can state, when asked, the precise reasons which led him to vote for the ad-

mittance of a disputed member.

And just for this reason I quite agree, of course, with the use of morphological criteria in phonemic analysis (as exemplified by Danish u/v you cite). We do not need to remember whether our definition of the phoneme made any provision permitting or prohibiting their use. Having found out that phonetic and morphological identity go normally together, we are quite entitled to make use of the fact (while remaining prepared to find a language in which it would not be true). Some American scholars object to this on the grounds that we shall then never know whether two units correspond, having taken the one already to help us with the other; but the answer is surely that nothing prevents us from asking afterwards whether the result could have been the correspondence in fact in the result of a correspondence in the result of a corresponden the correspondence, in fact, is the result of a generalisation (but none the worse for this, providing the fact is not denied).

Is true that the more reductions made the less functions differentiated? If Danish p and k are functionally identical, labiality and postpalatality are not.

But I may not have followed you here.

If I understand, you consider the asymmetry of the two planes not to be a matter analysis could be undertaken in both). In this I agree. But by the way, why two systems (ABMACM and BC?)

Pestacriptum: I have just received Kurylowicz! "Le probleme du classement des cas (Krekow Bultn 1949) which reminds me of a point ombited in the discussion of relations. Kurylowicz remarks (F.38) that it would be ainning against good method to use commutation to establish a case-system, since the cases differ in their syntactic positions. So far so good. But then he goes on to say that case-systems such as daobson and Hielmeler construct (with neuter and positive members of a correlation etc.) are therefore a priori imposable; the cases may make up fragments of systems, but not a system. And here the conclusion, though in practice true, entirely fails to follow from the premises.

This is shown by the phonological parallel. The oppositions of prominence (atress and accent generally) can also not be established by commutation. We cannot substitute strong for week stress within the word, but merely strong-wesk by weak-atrong etc. Now the role which is played by the sylicble in phonology is played among the cases by the nominal bases. Latin nom. us and acc. um are not commutable; the opposition is not between -us-/-um but between K-us-/-um/Y-us Kum where X and Y are any nominal bases; of course, with all the reservations as to the series of the