

Titel: notes, [Uldall] 008-0010

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Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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SPEECH.

29th October 1929

I have taken "Speech" as the subject for my talk to-night, partly because it is the one thing I know a little about, and partly because, as we all speak several thousand words every day, I thought you might find it worth your while to consider for a moment what speech is.

The activity of speech can be conveniently divided into three parts. (1) The speaker produces sounds. (2) the sounds proceed through the air. (3) the sounds are received by the ear of the hearer.

Before we go further into the nature of speech I would ask you to consider for a moment the important fact that there can be no speech without a hearer. You will see what I mean if we take as an example a similar ~~example~~^{illustration} which is easier to observe. If you have passed the Castle in the morning you will have seen, no doubt, a soldier on the wall waving flags in the air. Now if there was not a soldier on the other side who could see him, his wavings would not be signals in the real sense of the word. If you had no receiving sets this wireless programme would not exist. There would be electric waves floating about in the air, but they would not mean anything to anybody. And so also there is no speech without a hearer. Normally, of course the hearer is supplied automatically in so far as you yourself can always hear what you say. But suppose a deaf and dumb person who has learnt to speak started talking with nobody listening, or suppose you started a gramophone and then left it in a sound proof room. That would not be speech. It would be only potential speech, vibrations in the air which would be converted into speech if a hearer came within earshot.

I will go even further than that: Words that you do not understand, words of a foreign language that you do not know are not, from a psychological point of view, speech to