

Titel: notes, [Uldall] 008-0010

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Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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other things as it increases its field of observation and needs more expressions. At first its speech is clumsy and fumbling and the child tries to imitate the exact sounds of its mother but does not always hit the nail on the head; with practice it gets more distinct, just as we fumble with the unaccustomed sounds of a foreign language when we are in the first stage of learning and later on produce them correctly without being conscious of any effort.

The process of learning, in the child, is quite simple. It picks out, from the speech of the people about it, certain groups of sounds, which it can reproduce by wriggling its tongue in certain ways, and which always recur in connection with certain objects. Mummy is that nice person who gives it food and plays with it. Daddy is that man who sometimes pricks when he kisses it. Door is that differently coloured piece of wall which disappears just before people come in. And so on and so forth, the child learns to coordinate signals with ideas, and all through life it goes on learning new signals as it encounters new ideas.

Sometimes the reverse process takes place and the child invents words for itself either because it does not know the already accepted term or because its own word pleases it more. These inventions fall under three headings (1) Shortnings or other distortions of already existing words, (2) onomatopoeia (3) original inventions. Under the first heading come such distortions as 'bicc' for 'biscuit'. I have heard 'farill' for 'flower', 'lizab' for 'Elizabeth', but any mother will furnish you with scores of examples. Only too pleased to. The second lot are the child's imitation of the sounds produced by the objects it wants to denote, such as 'wow-wow' for a dog, and 'puff-puff' for a train. Under the third heading come such expressions as 'to go by-by', & as I heard a little boy say once when his mother gave him half an aspirin to put him to sleep, 'fairy bug' & 'aptooy' for anything that flies which very likely comes from African 'bpxoi', to throw up.