

Titel: notes, [Uldall] 008-0010

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Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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Other distortions occur when the child substitutes sounds which it finds easier to pronounce for the correct ones. In this way we get fun for thumb, foke for smoke, weady for ready and things of that sort. Or they get the sounds mixed up as in ickle for little. Very often fond parents and others drum it into the children that this is char-ming, to such an extent that the kids dont want to give it up but talk baby-talk for years and years, much to the disgust of strangers who do not remember the time when the big overfed girl was a little bowlegged darling with dimples in her knees.

We have seen, then, what the primary functions of language are and along what lines the young human proceeds to learn to speak it. The next great problem to be solved is where did it all come from? How did it originate? What was the first language like? Those questions I do not propose to tackle tonight. It is in the nature of things that we do not and cannot know anything of the origin of language and any attempt on our part to solve the problem must therefore necessarily be pure hypothesis, for although the development of language in historic times gives us a certain clue as to what may have happened, so many different influences are at work at the formation of a language that it is impossible to come to any definite conclusions as to the nature of the first language. There are about as many theories about it as there are people who have tackled the question, if not more.

But we are on firmer ground if we inquire a little into the ways in which the different languages overcome the difficulties. Do they tackle the same problems in the same way? Do they express identical things in identical terms? Which brings us on to a further question: Do the people of one nation ever want to express the same ideas as the people of another? Do they entertain the same ideas at all?

People who know only one language often think that translation is a very easy thing to do. You have only got to put the English equivalent, word for word, instead of the