

Titel: BREV TIL: Louis Hjelmslev FRA: Francis James Whitfield (1952-04-13)

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Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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40 Ordruphøjvej, Charlottenlund, Denmark

9/40, 48

April 13, 1952

Via Air Mail

Professor Francis J. Whitfield  
University of California  
Department of Slavic Languages  
Berkeley 4, California, U.S.A.

Dear Professor Whitfield,

I have now acquainted myself with your translation of 'Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse', and I have gone very thoroughly through certain parts of it. I admire very much your good knowledge of Danish, but I am afraid that I have to tell you that I cannot accept the translation as definitive. You will appreciate that, in a translation of such a closely reasoned argument, it is necessary to insist on a very high degree of accuracy and fidelity, as the author would otherwise speedily find himself involved in the futilities of endless debate arising out of avoidable misunderstandings. The translation as it stands seems to me quite intelligible, but I should not like to be judged by it before the tribunal of American linguistic opinion.

As, however, it would be extremely useful to be able to refer to the book during my lectures in the Linguistic Institute this coming summer, and as time is now too short for a thorough revision, I suggest that the translation be made available to members in its present mimeographed form, on the clear understanding that it has not been authorized by me for general circulation.

I have informed Professor Voegelin about this. I hope the funds he is disposing of for printing will still be available at a later date, when a thorough revision has taken place. Seeing that a considerable amount of preparatory work has already been done by you in presenting the translation in its present form, I should very much like to have the second draught printed some time.

In your letter of March 5 you told me that a dozen copies have been prepared; I guess that this would not be sufficient for the members of the Linguistic Institute attending my course on Structural Analysis of Language. But I presume that, if the stencils still exist, it would be easy to increase the number of copies.

I wonder whether there would be any possibility of our meeting and doing the rest of the work together. It is so much easier to do that kind of work through personal collaboration than through correspondence. It would, I think, only require some days of concentrated work, once I have been through Bloomington and been taking notes of everything. I wonder whether you would be in Berkeley at the time, and whether I could afford going there. Do you think there would be any funds available for a visit to Berkeley after Bloomington? The translation, of course, would not be my only reason for wishing to go there. -- I shall have to go back to Europe some time in September. -- Please inform me, as soon as possible, of your whereabouts this summer. I am supposed to leave from Copenhagen by boat on May 3, and shall have to go to Columbia, Washington Yale, Harvard, Chicago, and Minneapolis before Bloomington.

P.T.O.

./ I am enclosing a few samples of the objections and suggestions which occurred to me in reading your translation. This is just to give you a slight general idea of my uncertainties. It should not, of course, be taken as a sufficient basis of discussion.

Thanking you once again for the work you have been doing and for the considerable interest you are taking in my book, I remain

Yours sincerely,

Louis Hjelmslev

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