

Titel: BREV TIL: Eli Fischer-Jørgensen FRA: Charles Ernest Bazell (1950-04-29)

Citation: "BREV TIL: Eli Fischer-Jørgensen FRA: Charles Ernest Bazell (1950-04-29)", i *Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds*, s. 1. Onlineudgave fra Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds: https://tekster.kb.dk/text/lh-texts-kapsel_004-shoot-workidacc-2005_0099_004_EFJ-Bazell_0520.pdf (tilgået 20. juli 2024)

Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds,

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Dear Dr. Fischer-Jorgensen,

I have still to thank you for communicating my only too I was delighted with the Fest-

frequent changes of address to the relevant quarters, schrift, although I see that I made the mistake of trying partially to follow gloss-

ematic terminology, unlike the other foreign contributors, and hence have probably made myself intelligible neither to the glossematists nor to anybody else. On the other hand there were some things which seemed easiest to explain in glossematic terms, particularly the idea that relations may merely belong to the substance. I have the impression that glossematians automatically tend to refer relations to the system (term:relation= parole/langue), not explicitly of course but the notion lies behind some of their pronouncements, tends to encourage this. I read your own article with special interest and agreement. There is only one point that I might dispute with you. You say (and here I entirely agree) that taxemic variations like hau:ha:ve should be used for the identification of phonemes, and you add that mere alternations (like public/publivity) are naturally irrelevant. Of course they are; but a member of the schools you attack will say that there is a vicious circle here: how can one know that the alternation k/s in English is not a phonetic alternation before one knows that k and s are different phonemes? It is no very good to say "because the alternation of implosive k and explosive k is universal", since the example of publicity proves precisely that it is not universal.

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An ambiguity in the notion of relation

There is no disagreement between us here: I am simply pointing out the difficulties which our

American colleagues have: we see the interconnections between all the facts, but they strongly believe that an answer should be given to one question first,

and that we

have the right to proceed to the other only when this first question has been decided. We should attack them at the root of their misunderstanding! Yours sincerely

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* This may seem absurd, since relations in a text are obviously referred to the substance, while glossematics like any other theory operates primarily with terms in the system. But this is merely to say that glossematics avoids obvious errors. It remains true that like the American theory it takes for granted that s, l, a succeed one another in the group $\{l, a\}$, whether this succession has relevance or not. Ceteris paribus, the tendency '1 refer to holds good.

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