

CLICKS, AND THEIR ROLE IN THE EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE

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Gestures as well as their abbreviations in form of incomplete clicks (i.e. clicks alone without any back element, which in clickblocks is an essential part of the compound) cannot constitute any consistent and hierarchically organised system. Here the role of clickblocks as that of synthetizers and classifiers of the experienced situation appears to be essential. They can be considered as the direct predecessors of our labial, dental and lateral ranges of phonemes as they already have - though sometimes only roughly outlined - the linguistically so important features of a determined place and mode of formation: When a clickblock is transformed into an expiratory (or a clicklike, i.e. ejective, injective or disjunctive) phoneme, then the front part of the clickblock, e.g. /k' determines the place of articulation and the back part of it determines the mode - or the way - of the articulation. The clickblocks perform the 3 functions of language, the vowel with its suprasegmental features being the exponent of the expressive, the consonantal back element of a clickblock constituting the indicator of the communicative function, and the click itself, while integrating these elements and appreciating the whole of the situation as to its value for man's organism, symbolises the situation and opposes its sign to all the other clicking signs of experience.

This role of clicks in creating a certain system of symbols which reflect man's references to the interesting elements of his experiences leads to considering their place among all linguistic symbols, and especially, among all the sounds of human speech.

A survey of different click types in various languages will be given.