

Re: Plausibility Check

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Peter T. Daniels wrote:

fact

Fact is you can't say how many words English had in Shakespeare's time.

Back in 1974/75 I defined language as follows:

Language is the means of getting help, support and understanding from those we depend upon in one way or another --- and every means of getting help, support and understanding may be called language, on whatever level of life it occurs.

In the same years 1974/75 I stated a correlation between human made things and words:

The level of life is mirrored in language. What is special about human life? The use of things we made ourselves. These human made things – artificial members and organs beyond the human body – are mirrored in words.

Words denote human made things: cup, table, house ...

Human made things allow us to name natural entities and appearances: ceiling – vault – heaven

A clay figurine of an animal or a human being allows us to name animals and human beings

Life and soul are what is missing in clay figurines, definitions ex negativo, again in correlation with human made objects

A band led to the word and, German binden for to

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bind, substantive Bund for union, und for and

I may add ancient Greek kairoeis for well chained or warped (of a textile), firm, fast, solid, perhaps also Latin foedus for union, fetialis for a contract among nations, et for and.

The more things we use the more words we need. A numerical correlation of the number of things and the size of the vocabulary may be a topic of a doctoral thesis.

D. Jensen should consider these relations when he ponders the language of a future time, somewhere between 2 500 and 12 000 AD – he should have at least a vague idea of the material world in the time his novel plays for coining a matching language.

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