

# Abnormal Types of Speech in Nootka

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An interesting linguistic and cultural problem is the use in speech of various devices implying something in regard to the status, sex, age, or other characteristics of the speaker, person addressed, or person spoken of, without any direct statement as to such characteristics. When we say "big dog make bow-wow" instead of "the dog barks," it is a fair inference that we are talking to a baby, not to a serious-minded man of experience. Further, when we hear one use "thee" where most would say "you," we suspect that we are listening to an orthodox Quaker. In neither of these cases is there an explicit reference to a baby as person addressed or to a Quaker as person speaking. Such implications are common in all languages and are most often effected by means of the use of special words or specific locutions. Thus, in Nootka there are special words used in speaking of obscene matters to or in the presence of women; a number of "baby-words" also exist. Generally it is the speaker or person addressed that is thus signaled, but it is quite possible, though less frequent, to thus imply something also in regard to the third person. A more specialized type of these person-implications is comprised by all cases in which the reference is brought about not by the use of special words or locutions, that is, by lexical, stylistic, or syntactic means, but by the employment of special grammatical elements, consonant or vocalic changes, or addition of meaningless sounds, that is, by morphologic or phonetic means.