

The background is a dark, textured surface with faint, light-colored sketches of various scientific and mathematical concepts. These include a globe in the upper left, a large letter 'V' in the top left, a telescope-like structure on the left, a stack of books at the bottom left, a cross-like geometric shape, an open book with handwritten text at the bottom center, and a large percentage sign and other symbols on the bottom right.

# American structuralism

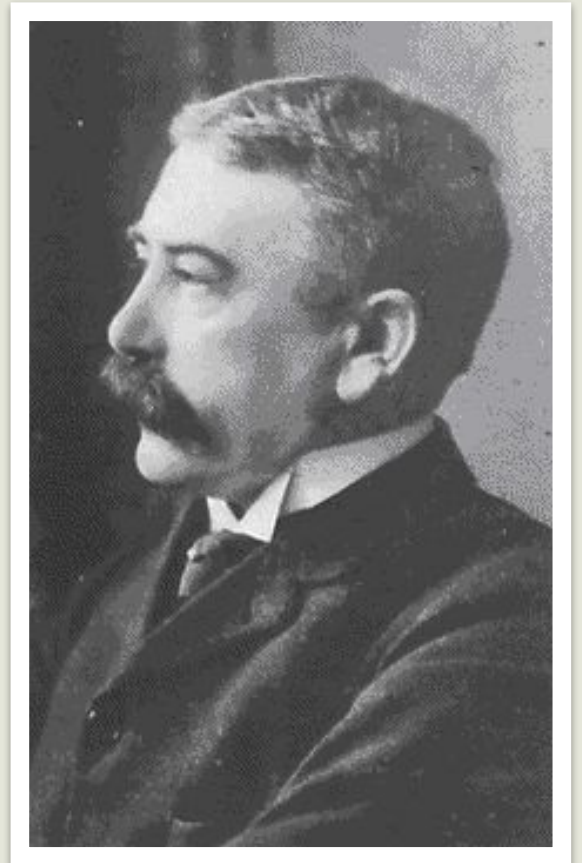
By Anastasia Nikiforova

# The Background

- Structural linguistics begin with Ferdinand de Saussure's Course in General Linguistics (1916)

**Structuralism** - collective term for a number of linguistic approaches in the first half of the twentieth century, all based on the work of F. de Saussure, but **strongly divergent from one another**.

Concentrate on **synchronic analysis** rather than diachronic, in order to expose the universal structures at work under the surface of social relations



# Major Pioneer

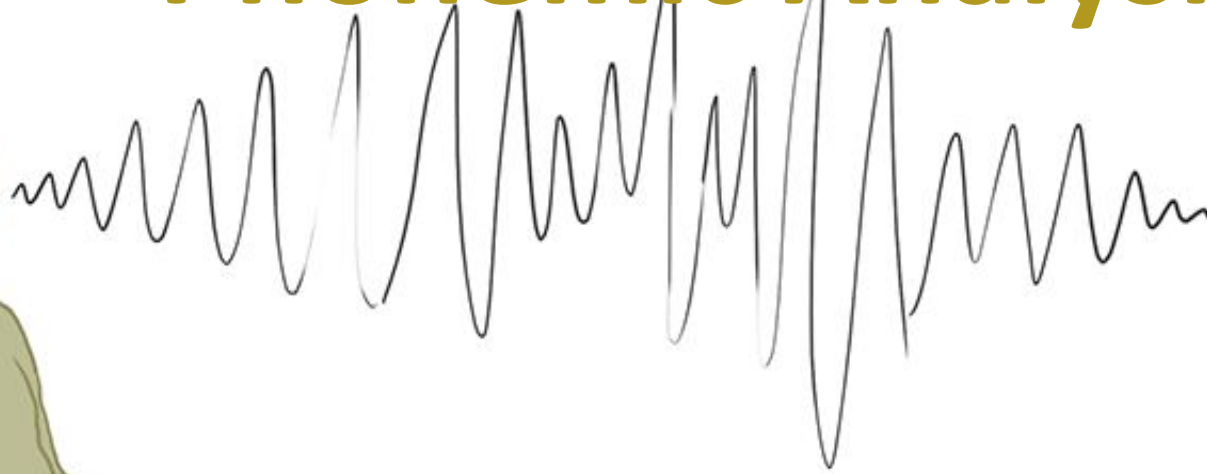
- *Language, 1933*
- **Viewpoints:**
  - language study must always be centered on the **spoken language**
  - definitions should be based on the **forms of the language**
  - the history of a form **does not** explain its actual meaning



Leonard Bloomfield (1887 - 1949)



# Phonemic Analysis



- Identifying which sounds in a language were **phonemic** and which were **allophonic**; which allophones belonged to which phonemes
- The method is still used today!

# Bloomfieldian era

- More than **20 years!**
  - Focus on writing **descriptive grammars of unwritten languages**
    - Collecting sets of utterances from native speakers
    - Analyzing the corpus of collected data: **phonological** and **syntactic** patterns
- NB!** NO reference to meaning



# Ultimate Goal of linguistics

**Discovery procedures** - procedures that could be **mechanically** applied to texts and could be guaranteed to yield an appropriate phonological and grammatical description of the language of the texts

“Languages with normal SOV order are postpositional”



Man  
subject



Dog  
object



Put  
verb



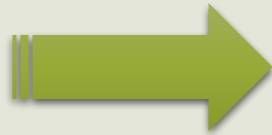
Canoe **in**  
noun

- Adposition **after** noun (= postposition)
- Genitive **before** noun: Krongo: níimò má-Kùkku [mother *gen*-Kukku]



# Downside

Linguistics  
become  
**narrow**



Are you a  
**Linguist?**

YES

NOPE



Sorry! You **won't**  
understand much

**YOUR ATTENTION**

**THANK YOU FOR**