



American structuralism

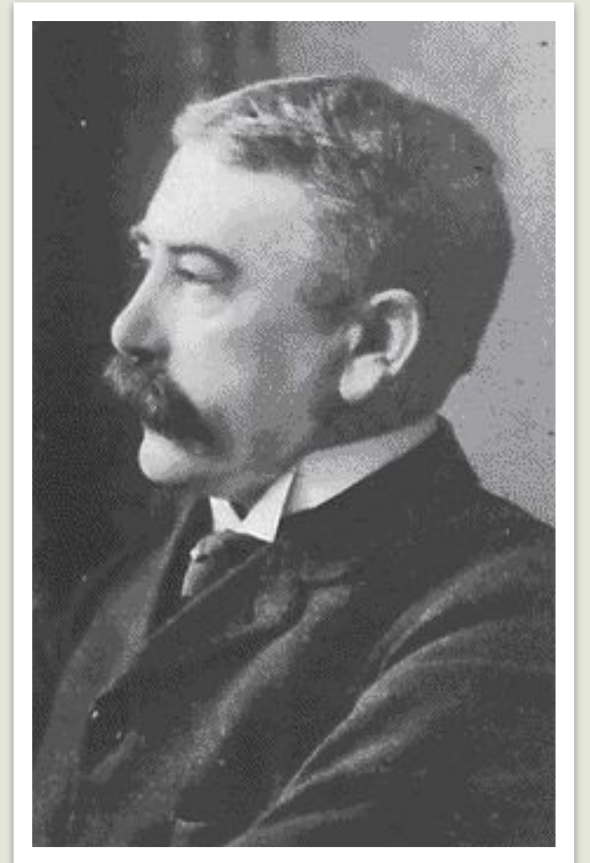
By Anastasia Nikiforova

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



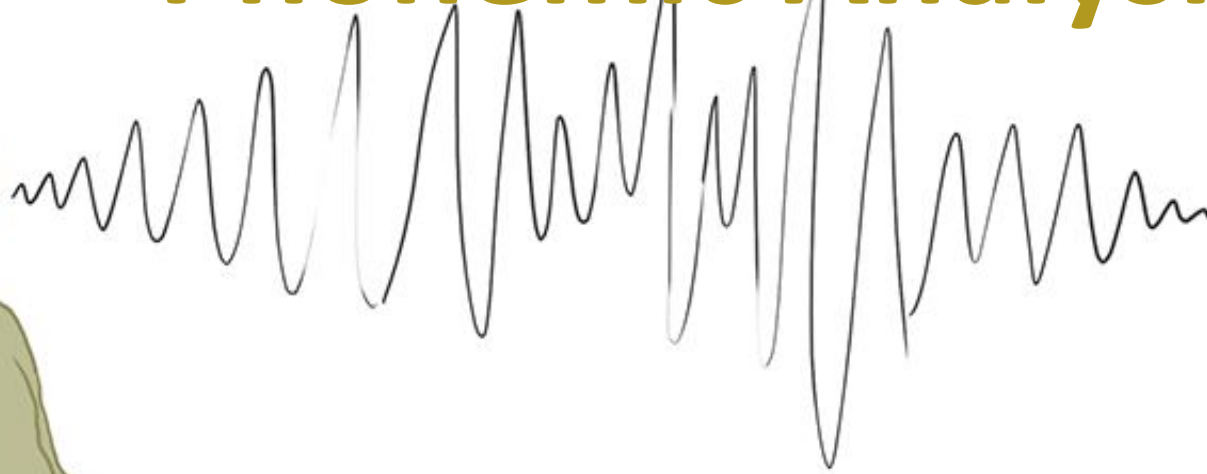
Major Pioneer

- *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

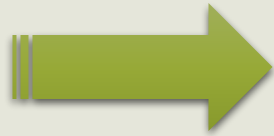


Canoe **in**
noun

- 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