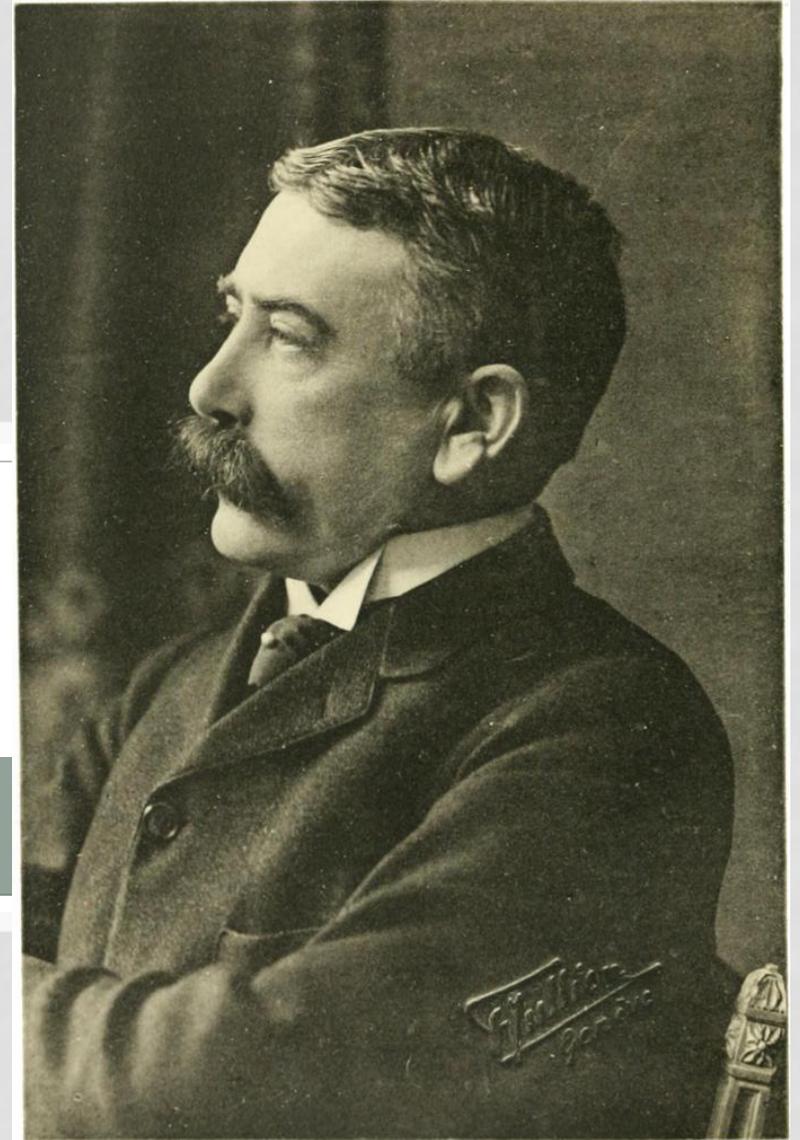


Introduction to Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

Ferdinand de Saussure

/1857-1913/



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FERDINAND DE SAUSSURE

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PERSONALIA PAGE

FERDINAND DE SAUSSURE

- **Ferdinand de Saussure** (/soʊˈsjʊər/; French: [fɛʁdinã də sosyʁ]); 26 November 1857 – 22 February 1913) was a Swiss **linguist** and **semiotician**. His ideas laid a foundation for many significant developments in both linguistics and **semiology** in the 20th century.
- He is widely considered one of the founders of 20th-century linguistics and one of two major founders (together with **Charles Sanders Peirce** (/pɜːrs/ "purse"; 10 September 1839 – 19 April 1914)) of semiotics/ semiology.

SAUSSURE'S SYSTEM OF SCIENCES

General Psychology

Social Psychology

Semiology

Linguistics

External

Internal

Synchronic

Diachronic

SEMIOLOGY

- Beginning with the Greek word *sēméion* meaning "sign", Saussure proposes a new science of "**Semiology**":
"a science that studies the life of signs within society"

SYNTAGMATIC AND PARADIGMATIC RELATIONS

- **Syntagmatic** means one element selects the other element either to precede it or to follow it. For example, the definitive article "the" *selects* a noun and not a verb. “

SAUSSUREAN TRICHOTOMY [tri'kɒtəmi] OF LANGUAGE

- **Le Langage** is most easily understood and indeed explained as a rule-abiding game. It is a universal system which has an underlying, fundamental, structure so that linguistic communication can work.
- **La langue** is the actual language spoken, for instance; French, German or English. The language of the speaker.
- **La parole** is the individual speech act. Romantic and humanistic readings influence one's parole.

READ MORE ON THIS TOPIC [LINK](#)

SYNTAGMATIC AND PARADIGMATIC RELATIONS

- **Paradigmatic** analysis is the analysis of paradigms embedded in the text rather than of the surface structure (syntax) of the text which is termed syntagmatic analysis.

SYNTAGMATIC AND PARADIGMATIC RELATIONS

- In semiotics, the **commutation test** is used to analyze a signifying system. The test identifies signifiers as well as their **signifieds**, **value** and **significance**.

'STONE WALL PROBLEM'

- According to Daniel Chandler, the **commutation test** may involve any of four basic transformations which, to a greater or lesser extent, involve modification of the syntagm ['sɪntəm] :
- **Paradigmatic transformations**
 - a) substitution;
 - b) transposition
- **Syntagmatic transformations**
 - a) addition;
 - b) deletion.

THE SIGN (LE SIGNE)

- The focus of Saussure's investigation is the *linguistic unit* or *sign*.

The sign (*le signe*) is described as a "double entity", made up of *the signifier*, or sound pattern (referred to by Saussure as a 'signal'), and *the signified*, or concept (referred to by Saussure as 'signification').

THE SIGN (LE SIGNE)

- The **sound pattern** is **a psychological**, not a material concept, belonging to the system.

THE SIGN (LE SIGNE)

- The sign (signe) is described as a "double entity", made up of the signifier /**S**/ and the signified /**s**/.
- Both components of the linguistic sign are inseparable. One way to appreciate this is to think of them as being like either side of a piece of paper – one side simply cannot exist without the other.

ARBITRARINESS* OF SIGNS (LES SIGNES)

- The signifier /**S**/ and the signified /**s**/ relationship is arbitrary and based on convention.
- For Saussure, there is no essential or natural reason why a particular signifier should be attached to a particular signified. Saussure calls this the "*arbitrariness of the sign*" (l'*arbitraire du signe*')*.
- [**'a:bitr(ə)ri:nəs**]

ARBITRARINESS OF SIGNS (LES SIGNES)

- * This may not fit well Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) approach.
E.G. English 'snowdrop',
German 'Das Schneeglöckchen'.
Danish 'vintergæk'.
French 'perce-neige'
Italian 'Bucaneve'
Polish 'przebiśnieg' , 'śnieżyczka'.

SEMIOLOGY

- Beginning with the Greek word *sēméion* meaning "sign", Saussure proposes a new science of "semiology":
"a science that studies the life of signs within society"

THE LANGUAGE (FR. LANGAGE)

- According to Saussure, language is not a nomenclature [nəu'menklətʃə].
- Indeed, the basic insight of Saussure's thought is that denotation, the reference to objects in some universe of discourse, is mediated by system-internal relations of difference.

THE VALUE OF A SIGN (LE SIGNE)

- The value of a sign is determined by all the other signs in the language (French 'la langue').

THE VALUE OF A SIGN (LE SIGNE)

- Thus he argued that the sign is ultimately determined by the other signs in the system, which delimit its **meaning** and **possible range of use**, rather than its internal sound-pattern and concept.
- *Sheep*, for example, has the same meaning as the French word *mouton*, but not the same **value**, for *mouton* can also be used to mean the *meal lamb*, whereas *sheep* cannot, because it has been delimited by *mutton*.

THE VALUE OF A SIGN (LE SIGNE)

- The **set of synonyms** redouter ("to dread"), craindre ("to fear"), and avoir peur ("to be afraid"), for instance, have their particular meaning so long as they exist in contrast to one another.
- But if two of the terms disappeared, then the remaining sign would take on *their roles*, become vaguer, less articulate, and lose its "extra something", its extra meaning, because it would have nothing to distinguish it from.

SYNCHRONICAL VS DIACHRONICAL L.

- To consider a language **synchronically** is to study it "as a complete system at a given point in time," a perspective he calls the AB axis.

SYNCHRONICAL VS DIACHRONICAL L.

- By contrast, a diachronic analysis considers the language "in its historical development" (the CD axis).

SYNCHRONICAL VS DIACHRONICAL L.

- Saussure argues that we should be concerned not only with the CD axis, which was the focus of attention in his day, but also with the AB axis because, he says, **language** is "**a system of pure values** which are determined by nothing except the momentary arrangements of its terms".

SYNTAGMATIC AND PARADIGMATIC RELATIONS

- Language works through relations of difference, then, which place signs in **opposition** to one another.
- Saussure asserted that there are only two types of relations: **syntagmatic** and **paradigmatic**.

LANGUAGES REFLECT SHARED EXPERIENCE

- Languages reflect shared experience in complicated ways and can paint very different pictures of the world from one another. To explain this, Saussure uses the word *bœuf* as an example. In English, he says, we have different words for the animal and the meat product: *Ox* and *beef*. In French, *bœuf* is used to refer to both concepts.

SYNTAGMATIC AND PARADIGMATIC RELATIONS

- To illustrate this, Saussure uses a **chess metaphor**. We could study the game **diachronically** (how the rules change through time) or **synchronically** (the actual rules).
- Saussure notes that a person joining the audience of a game already in progress requires no more information than the present layout of pieces on the board and who the next player is. There **would be no additional benefit** in knowing how the pieces had come to be arranged in this way.

WORDS ARE NOT JUST NATURAL SIGNS

onomatopoeia [ˌɒnəˌmætəˈpiːə]

- Saussure recognised that his opponents could argue that with onomatopoeia there is a *direct link between word and meaning, signifier and signified*. However, Saussure argues that, on closer etymological investigation, onomatopoeic words **can**, in fact, **be unmotivated** (not sharing a likeness), in part evolving from non-onomatopoeic origins. The example he uses is the French and English onomatopoeic words for a dog's bark, that is *ouaoua* and **Bow Wow**.

SOME AMAZING FACTS ABOUT F. DE SAUSSURE

- Ferdinand de Saussure was a comparative ([diachronic](#) [[,dʌɪə'krɒnɪk](#)]) linguist and contributed to development of **Laryngeal** [[,læɪn'dʒi:əl](#), [lə'rɪndʒɪəl](#)] (**hypothesis**) theory .
- Ferdinand de Saussure's made a discovery of **Hittite** [[,hɪ'taɪt](#)] – an **Indo-European-language** that was spoken by the *Hittites*, a people of Bronze Age Anatolia who created an empire, centered on Hattusa. The language, long extinct now, is attested in [cuneiform](#), in records dating from the 16th (Anitta text) to the 13th century BC.

SOME AMAZING FACTS ABOUT F. DE SAUSSURE

- While studying the phonology of Indo-European languages, **Jerzy Kuryłowicz** (Polish: ['jɛzɨ kɨrɨ'wɔvɨt͡ɕ]; 26 August 1895 – 28 January 1978) pointed at the existence of the Hittite consonant *ḫ* in his **1927** paper "ə indo-européen et ḫ hittite". This discovery supported **Ferdinand de Saussure's 1879** proposal of the existence of "**coefficients sonantiques**", elements de Saussure reconstructed to account for vowel length alternations in Indo-European. This led to the so-called **Laryngeal Theory**, a major step forward in Indo-European linguistics and a confirmation of de Saussure's theory.

SOME AMAZING FACTS ABOUT F. DE SAUSSURE

- I. Ferdinand de Saussure's (1857-1913) "Course of General Linguistics" was first published in 1916.
- II. Ferdinand de Saussure did not write his world famous "Course of General Linguistics"!

LANGUE, LANGAGE, and PAROLE

- Saussure distinguishes between "language (**langue**)" and "**speech** (parole)".

"language (langue)"	"a system of signs that express ideas".
le langage	Discourse ???
"speech (parole)"	"individual speaking (parole)"

TRANSLATION ISSUES

DE	FR
Die Sprache	la langue «язык» + langage «речевая деятельность»;
Die Rede	la parole «речь»;

TRANSLATION ISSUES

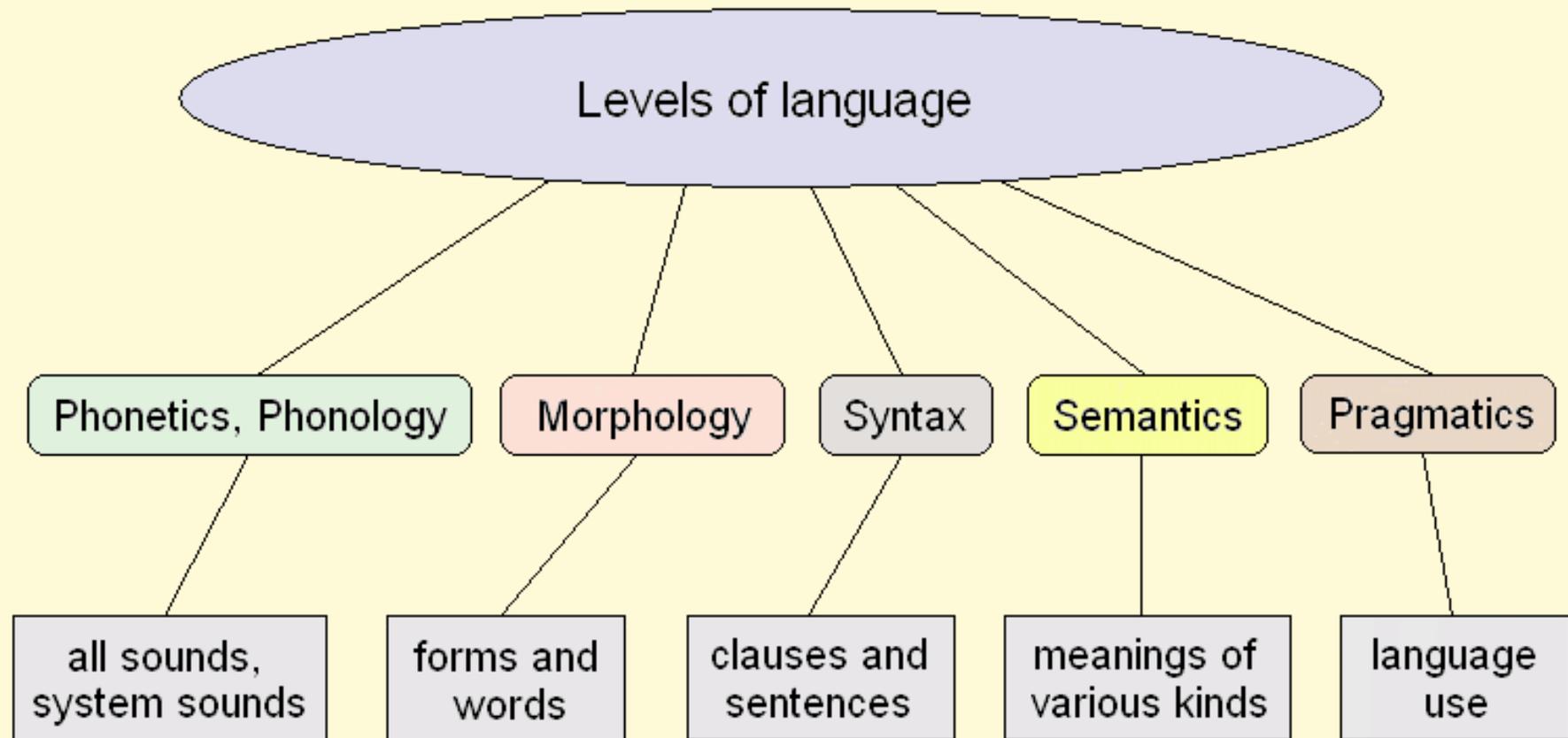
LATIN	FRENCH
lingua	langue «язык»
sermo	parole «речь»; + langage «речевая деятельность»;

AND NOW SOME EXTRA COMMENTS

FERDINAND DE SAUSSURE'S WORKS

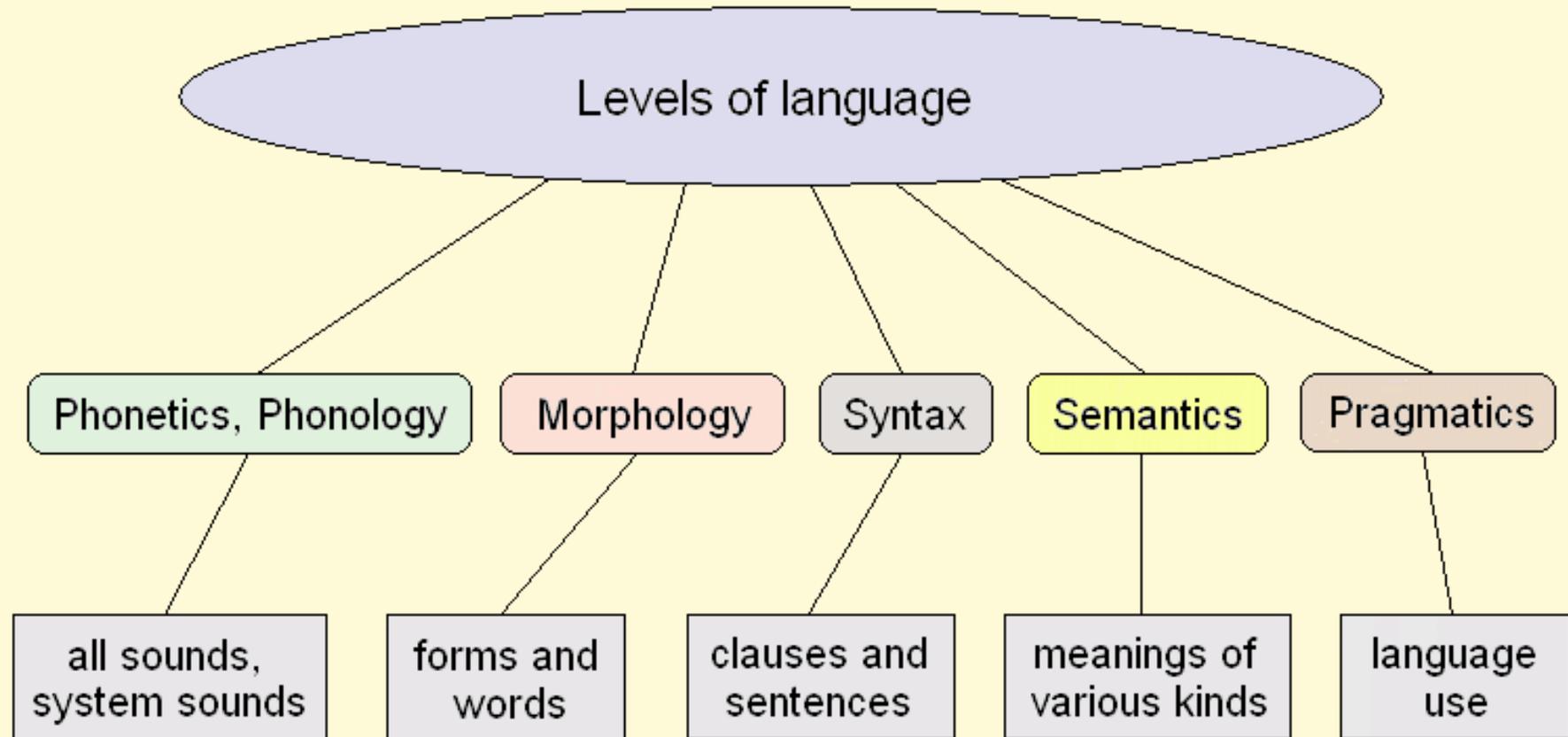
- (1878) *Mémoire sur le système primitif des voyelles dans les langues indo-européennes* (Memoir on the Primitive System of Vowels in Indo-European Languages), Leipzig: Teubner.
- (1881) *De l'emploi du génitif absolu en Sanscrit: Thèse pour le doctorat présentée à la Faculté de Philosophie de l'Université de Leipzig*, (On the Use of the Genitive Absolute in Sanskrit: Doctoral dissertation presented to the Faculty of Philosophy of the Leipzig University) Geneva: Jules-Guillamaume Fick.
- (1916) '**Cours de linguistique générale**', ed. C. Bally and A. Sechehaye, with the collaboration of A. Riedlinger, Lausanne and Paris: Payot; trans. W. Baskin, *Course in General Linguistics*, Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977.

LEVELS OF LANGUAGE SYSTEM MODEL



LEVELS OF LANGUAGE SYSTEM MODEL

What way can this model be criticized?



BUT MAYBE NOT QUITE SO... E.G.

Discourse	Language in action	Text constructing and text processing
Syntax	Sentence structure	More general approach. Not only sentence structure!
Lexis and lexicology [,leksɪ'kɒlədʒɪ]	The study of the form, meaning, and use of words.	Esp. for special purposes in Applied Linguistics!
Morphology, Morphology, Morphemics	The so called Parts of Speech (or classes of words) and different formants	
Phonology and Phonetics	Phonemic / phono-logical description of a language system	But there are syllable-based language systems!

LEV SHCHERBA (RUSSIA)

- Lev Shcherba (1880 – 1944, Russian linguist and lexicographer specializing in phonetics and phonology) proposed another trichotomy [tri'kɔtəmi] model of Language viewed as **dynamic trinity**.
- In contrast to Ferdinand de Saussure, he recognized three rather than two objects of study: **speech activity**, **language systems**, and **language material**. He placed emphasis on the question of the capacity of the speaker to produce sentences never previously heard, a question which would become important to the linguistics of the later twentieth century



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- Щерба рассматривает языковую систему, речевую деятельность и речь (как языковой материал) в качестве составляющих языка как динамического целого (ср.: Щерба 1974: 24-38).
- Щерба Л.В. Языковая система и речевая деятельность. Л.: Наука, 1974. 428с.

Lev Shcherba' classification of aspects of linguistic science

The Dynamic Whole of the Language

Speech
Activity

Language Systems

Language Material

SYNTAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF COLLIGATIONS



Do you know	where it is?
Is there a canteen	near here?
Which is the shortest way	the exit?
What is	situated?
Where is the theatre	to the railroad station?
Is it far	from the bus stop?
Is this	the right way to the library?
Do you know how	how to get there?
Where is	the name of the street?

THANKS FOR ATTENTION!