

Constantine 1 University

2nd year Linguistics

European Structuralism-Ferdinand de Saussure-

Structuralism

(As it is defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002) it is "an approach to linguistics which stresses the importance of language as a system (p519). Therefore, language is no longer seen as separate units (such as sounds, words, sentence) but as a structured system.

EU system SRT opposed to the other system

Ferdinand de Saussure

Ferdinand de Saussure is a Swiss scholar and often known as the father of modern linguistics. He is also known for his book "Cours de Linguistique Generale" which is a collection of his lectures since he died without having written any major work on general linguistics. But thanks to his students and colleagues who have collected his lecture notes after his death to be that famous book (1916) which had a great influence on linguistics especially in Europe. He is also famous for the dichotomies he made as:

- Langue and parole
- Diachrony vs synchrony
- Signifier vs signified
- paradigmatic vs syntagmatic

It was de Saussure's main contribution
there is a distinction between
According to him, any language can be
in 2 ways

His crucial contribution is that all language items are essentially interlinked and that language is carefully built structure of interwoven elements. Therefore, linguists since de Saussure were structural, as structural means the recognition that language is a patterned system composed of interdependent elements, rather than a collection of unconnected individual elements.

suggested that language is a game of signs. Signs are linked by their
to other signs. He said that signs are not separate from each other.

1. Synchrony vs diachrony

Synchronic (syn=alike, chronos=time) means to study language as it is (or was) at any particular point in time i.e, it is the analysis of a language at a single point of time without giving any attention to the other historical events.

Diachronic (dia=through, chronos=time) It is to 'look at the way in which a language develops or changes over time' (Buer,2007,p43)

2. Langue vs parole

Langue= is the abstract system (social code). Crystal (2007) defines it as "the sum of word-images stored in the minds of individuals" (p411).

language is a system of signs
of signs before you make a
It is a system of signs

similarly we don't have a word in our mind
however. It is like a picture in our mind