

Emergence, expansion and diversification of Modern Linguistics

Lecture 1

© Kushneruk Svetlana
Leonidovna

Doctor of Philology, Professor
of Chelyabinsk State University



1. Three phases of development in 20th century linguistics

- **Linguistics** – the study of human speech including the units, nature, structure, and modification of language.
- **Human language** – a systematic use of speech sounds, signs, and written symbols for communication among people.

Modern Linguistics today encompasses a wide range of component disciplines



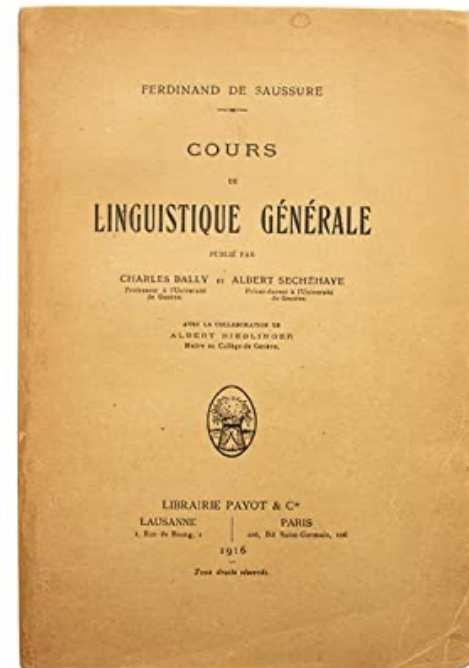
The 19th century is a starting point for modern linguistics.

The roots of serious language study lie deep in the past:

Panini's grammar of Sanskrit
in the first millennium BC.



the 'founding father'
of modern linguistics
Ferdinand de Saussure
(1857– 1913)





- **Cours de linguistique générale:**

a language should not be seen '*as an organism developing in its own accord but...as a product of the collective mind of a linguistic community*' .

Saussure's lectures transformed the 19th century historical and comparative philology into the 20th century discipline of structural linguistics.

20th century Linguistics

```
graph TD; A[20th century Linguistics] --- B[emergence 1910s-1930s]; A --- C[expansion 1930s-1960s]; A --- D[diversification since 1960s]
```

emergence

1910s-1930s

expansion

1930s-1960s

diversification

since 1960s

phases

1.1. The emergence of modern linguistics (1911–1933)

1.1.1. Ferdinand de Saussure

Structuralism is a term used in linguistics referring to a theoretical approach to the analysis of language that describes linguistic items in terms of structures.

The basic claim of structuralism is that *language is a structured system*.

Basic principles behind Saussure's transformation of 'philology' into 'linguistics'



- 1. *Linguistics is the scientific study of language for its own sake.***
- 2. *Linguistics is not prescriptive.***
Linguistics is ***descriptive.***

Prescriptivism is the practice of dictating acceptable standards of language use.

Descriptivism

Linguists do not prescribe how language is to be used, but describe, record and analyze the way language is actually used.

language in all its forms, including its dialects, sociolects, idiolects.

Basic principles behind Saussure's transformation of 'philology' into 'linguistics'



3. *Spoken language is the primary object of study.*

Saussure put emphasis: *'the spoken word alone constitutes the object of study in linguistics'*.

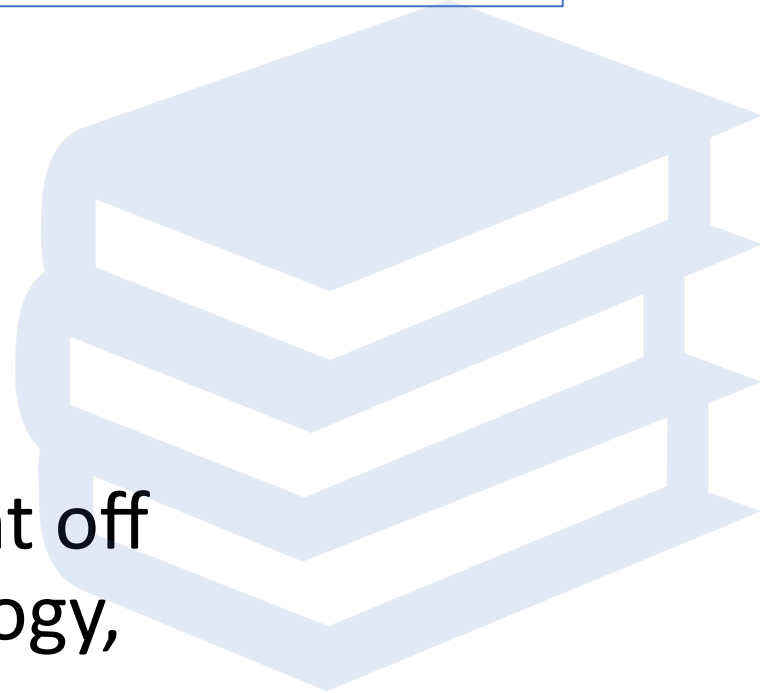
For a long time only written language was studied.

Basic principles behind Saussure's transformation of 'philology' into 'linguistics'



4. *Linguistics is an autonomous discipline.*

Linguistics had to fight off the claims of psychology, philosophy and anthropology .



Basic principles behind Saussure's transformation of 'philology' into 'linguistics'



5. *Synchronic studies of language take precedence over diachronic studies.*

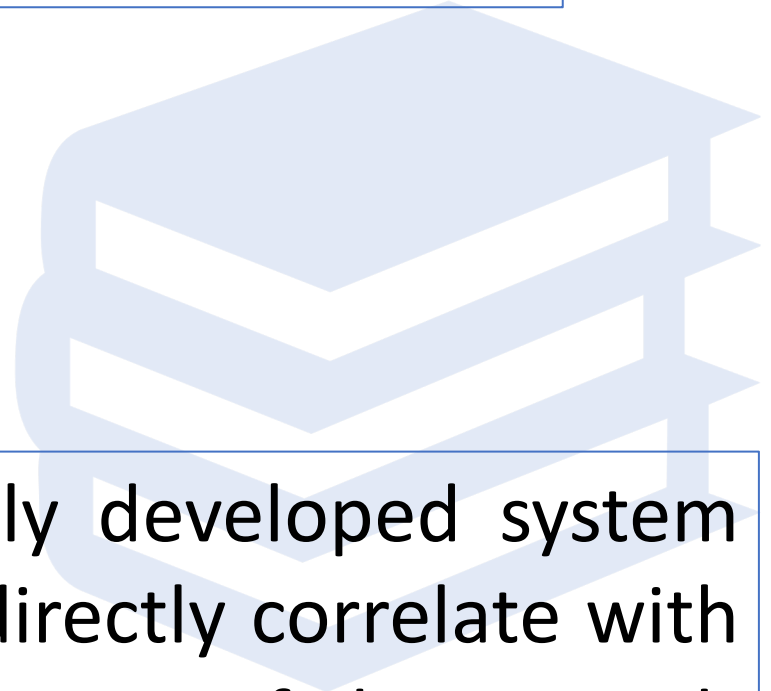
'The linguist must take the study of linguistic structure as his primary concern, and relate all other manifestations of language to it'.

Diachronic linguistics is the study of languages from the viewpoint of their historical development.

Synchronic linguistics studies languages at a single point of time.

Basic principles behind Saussure's transformation of 'philology' into 'linguistics'

6. *All languages are equal.*



Natural language is a highly developed system and its structure does not directly correlate with the stage of social development of that speech community.

Basic principles behind Saussure's transformation of 'philology' into 'linguistics'



7. Paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations of linguistic units.

paradigmatic relations → with the elements of the same level:

a...of milk (glass, jar, mug, bottle)

syntagmatic relations → with the other elements of the same level with which it occurs and which make its context:

a glass of milk

1.1.2. Functionalism: The Prague School

The main claim is that language is a system of functionally related units.

The phonological, grammatical, and semantic structures of a language are determined by the functions that they have to perform.

o

+



Roman Jakobson

Prague Linguistic Circle (1926)

- The main function of language is the *communicative* one.
- Language also has the expressive function – to convey the speaker's feelings and attitudes.



Nikolai Trubetzkoy

The Prague School

- distinction between the phonetic and the phonological analysis of sounds (*phoneme* and *distinctive feature*).
- ***Functional sentence perspective*** (FSP) – analyses utterances in terms of the information they express



theme and rheme

1.1.3. The beginnings of American linguistics

1911

the first part of the official *Handbook of American Indian Languages* was published in Washington.

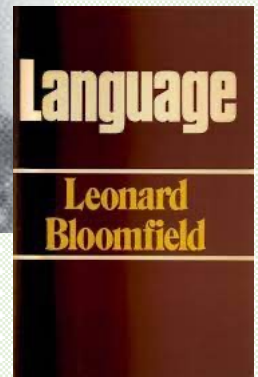
The Introduction by **Franz Boas** came to be seen as a major milestone for linguistics in the United States.

Structuralism in America

Franz Boas
(1858-1942)



Leonard Bloomfield
(1887-1949)



a comprehensive description of
American structural linguistics

European linguists



put emphasis on
theory

American linguists



were firmly
practical

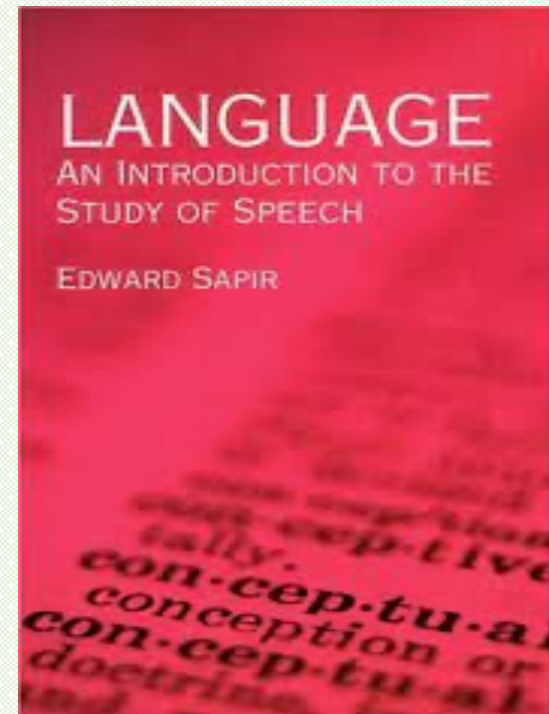
The Amerindian project was a large-scale study designed to cover the whole field before too many of the languages involved became extinct.

Structuralism in America

Edward Sapir
(1884 –1939)



Language
(1921)





1.2. A time of transition (1925–1960)

Saussure's *Cours* had little to say about the practical description of particular languages, and it was partly to fill this gap that the **Linguistic Circle of Prague** was founded in 1926.



Functional interpretation of linguistics in Europe

Function was a central component of the Danish scholar **Louis Hjelmslev's** theory of **glossematics** (1943).

Glossematics, system of linguistic analysis based on the distribution and interrelationship of glossemes, the smallest meaningful units of a language - a word, a stem, a grammatical element, a word order, or an intonation.

A time of transition in Europe

- Bronislaw Malinowski
- John Rupert Firth
- Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday

A time of transition in the USA was more traumatic

Structural-descriptive linguistics was deprived of the leading founder members:

Sapir died in 1939.

Whorf in 1941.

Boas in 1942.

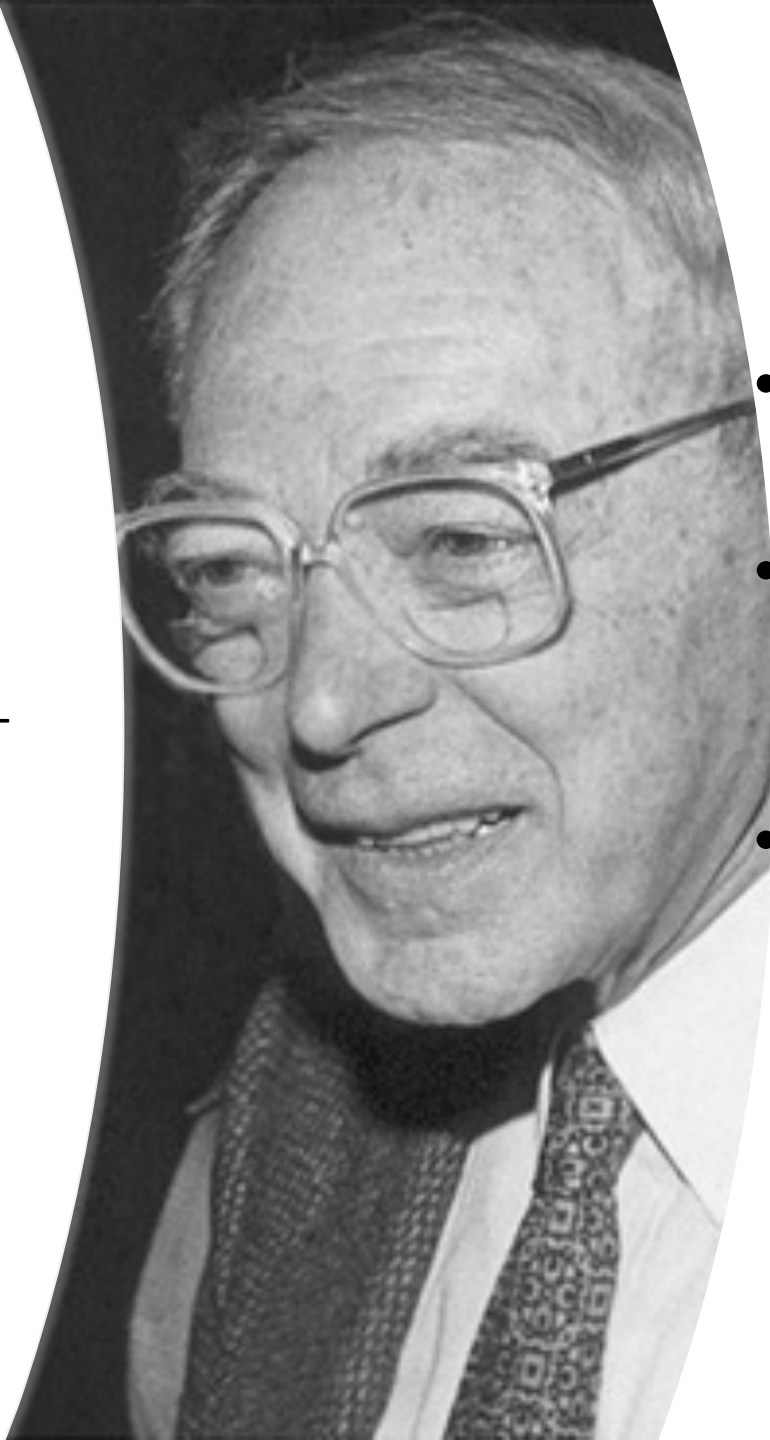
Bloomfield in 1949.

- New initiatives were bound to come from the edges rather than the mainstream.

The linguists left
behind in 1950 -
‘post-
Bloomfieldians’

- carried on with the work Bloomfield had initiated
- **Bernard Bloch**
- **George L. Trager**
- **Charles F. Hockett**
- **Zellig S. Harris: brought this transitional interlude to an end → *transformational grammar***

Zellig S.
Harris (1909-
1992)



- Russian-born American scholar
- Chomsky's supervisor at Pennsylvania
- the central focus of his Ph.D. (1955) was *'Transformational Analysis'*

1.3. The expansion and diversification of linguistics (since 1960)

Linguistics in Europe & the USA began to benefit from the expansion of higher education following the postwar economic recovery.

The theme of structuralism evaporated in the early 1960s.

Two approaches descended from the branches of the structuralist 'family tree':

Chomskyan generativism was fathered by American structuralism.

Functionalism went back to Saussure.

Generativism

- idealizes the data
- a powerful theory of language acquisition and its role in understanding the human mind
- no interest in the 'real world'
- language is the realm of cognition

Functionalism

- refuses to idealize language
- is located in a world of real events affecting the lives of people

2. Trends in modern linguistics

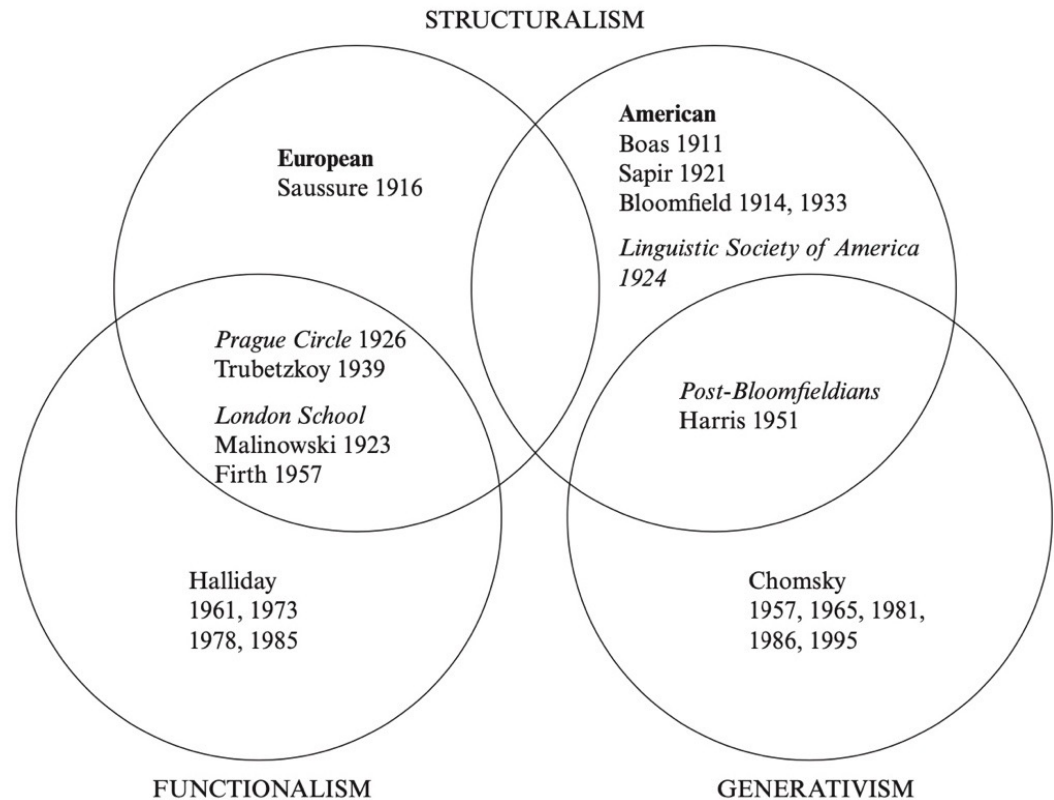


Figure 2 Trends in modern linguistics: a 'map of the world'

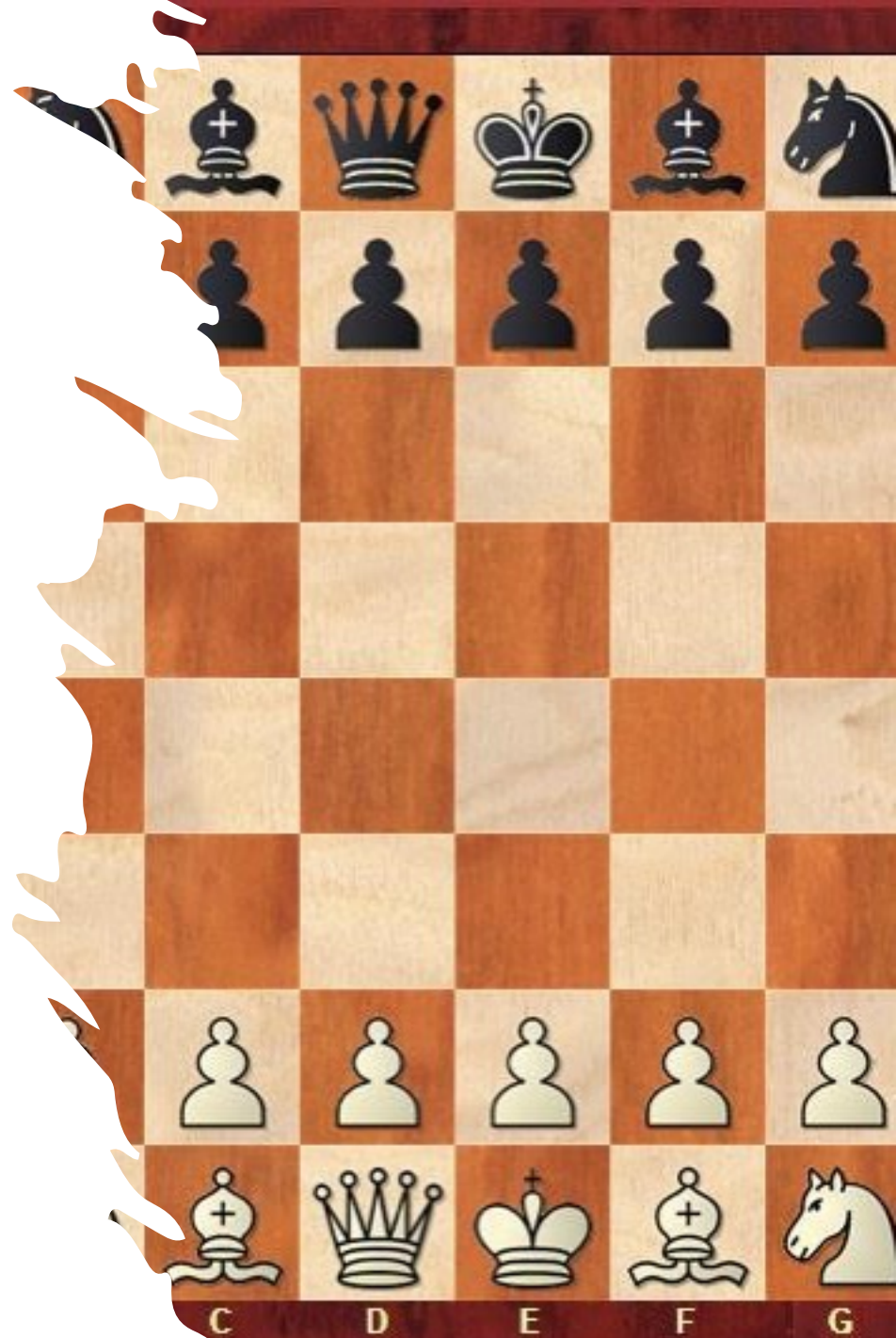
2.1. Structuralism

The Saussurean model

compared language to chess

the design of the pieces and their names are structurally irrelevant

analogy demonstrates the distinction between the surface phenomenon of 'a game' and the underlying system of categories and the rules for their deployment which together constitute 'chess'.

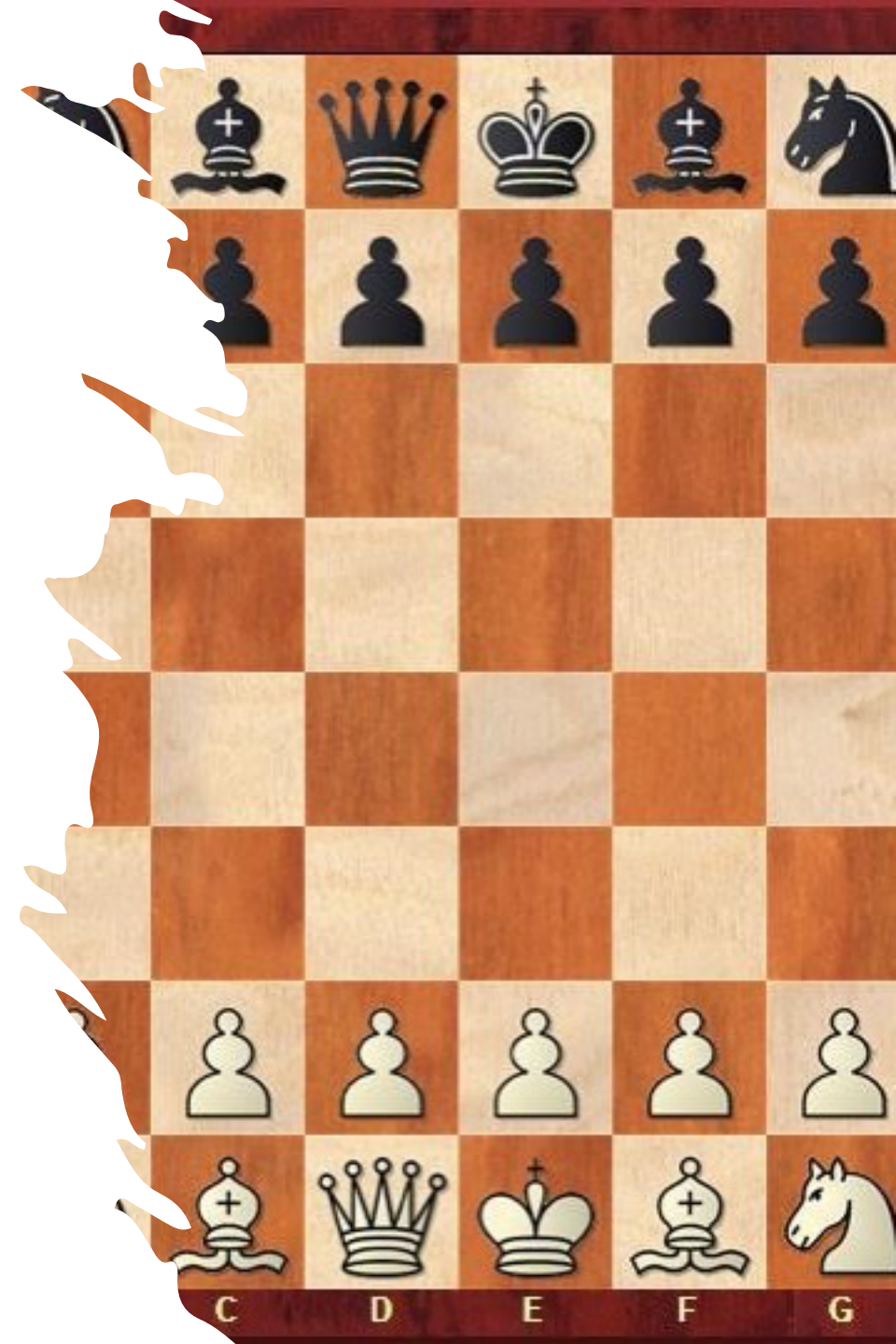


2.1. Structuralism

The Saussurean model

the most important point

each component of the system is defined by reference to its distinctive place in the system: change one element and the entire system is affected.



Saussure distinguishes between language in use (**parole**) and the underlying language system (**langue**).

Linguistic structure lies at the heart of **langue** and is the primary concern of linguistics.

langue as a '*social fact*', that is a socially sanctioned system of signs each of which represents a conventionalized ('arbitrary') fusion of sound (the **signifier**) and meaning (the **signified**)

American structuralism

- Bloomfield acknowledged that Saussure had 'given us the theoretical basis for a science of human speech'.
- He differed from Saussure → based his analysis on the sentence rather than on the word.
- This was a major point of difference between Saussurean and American linguistics.

In writing his
Introduction to the
*Handbook of American
Indian Languages*
Franz Boas worked out
the following
principles:

**The phoneme
principle**

**All languages are
different**

**Give each language its
proper place**

**The sentence is the
basic unit of language**



Sapir's *Language* (1921)

- introduced the concept of *formal patterning*
- emphasized the independence of form and function:
- *'we cannot but conclude that linguistic form may and should be studied as types of patterning, apart from the associated functions'*.



'Sapir–Whorf Hypothesis' associated with *Linguistic Determinism*



Figure 1. Edward Sapir (left; 1884–1939) and Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897–1941)

- the human mind could not escape from the cognitive constraints of specific linguistic systems
- **Strong Version:** Linguistic Determinism holds that language entirely determines our cognitive processes.
- **Weak Version:** Linguistic Influence holds that language influences our range of cognitive processes, but is not deterministic.

1933


detailed account of the whole field of linguistics
Of primary importance is his approach to **meaning**.
Bloomfield accepted the arguments of **behaviourism**:

- the scientific enquiry required overt, observable evidence
- **linguistic behaviour** was the result of repeated experiences of stimulus co-occurrences.

Language

Leonard
Bloomfield



- Bloomfield's approach to meaning proved very influential in foreign language pedagogy.
 - Bloomfield would have modified his 'mechanistic' views on meaning if he had not died prematurely in 1949.
 - Bloomfield's teachings stressed the importance of formal features and mechanical ('objective') techniques.
- 

Noam Chomsky

SYNTACTIC STRUCTURES

2.2. Generativism

1957

linguistic competence is part of his knowledge of the native language system which enables him to make an infinite number of sentences.

performance is linguistic behavior which is determined both by the speaker's linguistic competence and non-linguistic factors, such as social conventions, emotional attitudes, etc.



- human language is innate: a child is born with a biological predisposition to learn a language.
- children intuitively know the basic rules of sentence formation.
- ***Universal Grammar hypothesis:***
- a grammatical blueprint is prewired into children's brains.
- Innate is the deep structure, which incorporates the universal grammatical features of all languages.
- children are endowed with a *language acquisition device* (LAD), which becomes activated when children are exposed to language stimuli.
- emphasized the role of language as a basic means to investigate the human mind.

2.3. Functionalism

Generativism reformulated structuralism without changing fundamentals such as the centrality of the sentence.

Functionalism transformed it by restoring an aspect of linguistic organization that had been set on one side by the emphasis on form.



Functionalism: 'godparents'

- **Linguistic Circle of Prague (1926–39)**
- Vilém Mathesius (1882–1945)
- Roman Jakobson (1896–1982)
- Nikolai S. Trubetzkoy (1890–1938)
- **London School**
- begins with Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942) in 1923

2.3.1. The Linguistic Circle of Prague (1926–39)

- The principal aim was to explore Saussurean structuralism and make proposals for its extension.
- Their best-known work is Trubetzkoy's *Principles of Phonology* (1939).

Trubetzkoy was the first to distinguish between **phonetics** and **phonology**.

He placed the distinction in a functional context: '*phonology* of necessity is concerned with the linguistic function of the *sounds of language*, while phonetics deals with their *phenomenalistic aspect* without regard to function'.

Functional approach to text introduced by Karl Bühler

distinguished between a central '**representational**' **function** concerned with the content of the text

'**expressive**' function relating to the speaker/writer;

'**conative**' function relating to the listener/reader



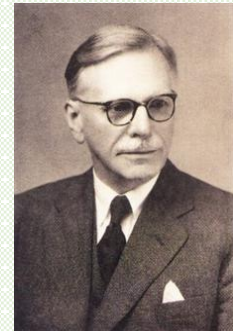
2.3.2. Functional linguistics in Britain

Bronislaw Malinowski
(1884-1942)



an anthropologist with an
interest in language from
the London School of
Economics

John Rupert Firth
(1890–1960)



the first Professor of
General Linguistics in the
UK

Malinowski's theoretical contribution

- the notion of the **context of situation**
- without knowledge no coherent account of the meaning of spoken utterances was possible
- context of situation imposes a meaning on the text that in isolation it does not possess
- interdependence between contextual meaning and linguistic form is crucial



Firth expanded the notion of 'context of situation' into a schematic construct

- context-dependent nature of meaning
- the importance of language variation in context
- popularity of his ideas among contemporaries gave rise to the '*London School*' of linguistics
- Firth's student was ***Michael Halliday***



Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday (1925-2018)

In contrast to Chomsky, who advocated an inherent universal human grammar, developed a theory of language based on a system of choices.

- models of **systemic functional grammar** and **systemic functional linguistics**

Halliday's contribution to the 20th century linguistics

- language must be studied in an integrated manner without the intervention of a **langue/parole distinction**
- the linguist must make statements on the **choices** people make within the linguistic systems at their disposal

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL)

- approach to linguistics that considers language as a social semiotic system
- three strata make up the linguistic system: meaning (semantics), sound (phonology), and wording or lexicogrammar (syntax, morphology, and lexis)
- SFL treats grammar as a meaning-making resource and insists on the interrelation of form and meaning.

3. Core Areas of Modern Linguistics

Two macro-themes

distinction between linguistic systems & language-in-use:

Saussure's **langue/parole distinction**

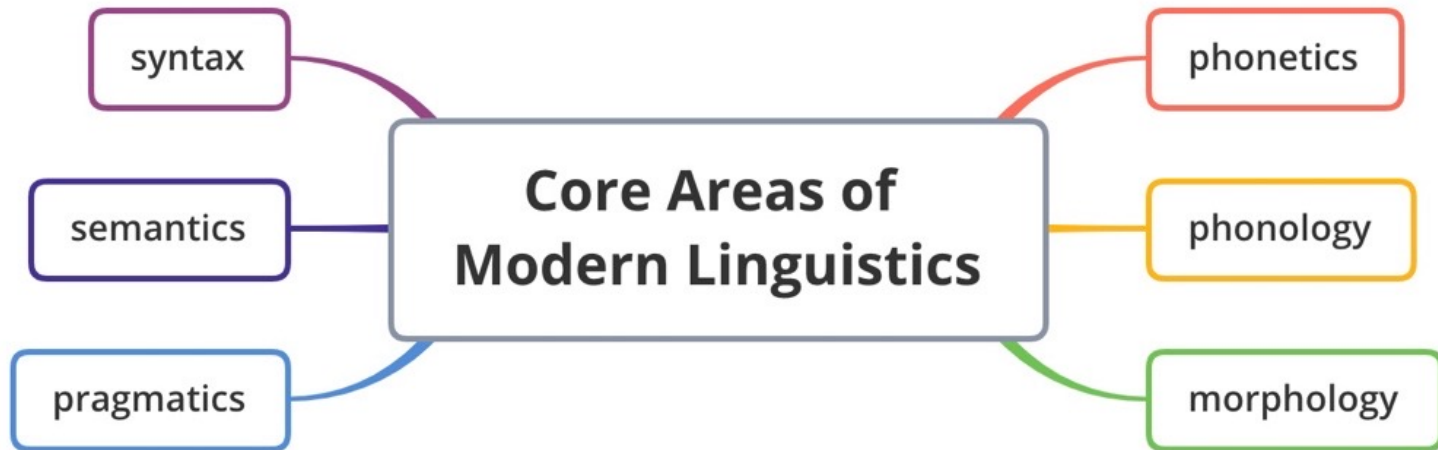
Chomsky's **competence/performance contrast**

Bloomfieldian structuralism operated a **system/use distinction** in the search for 'patterns'

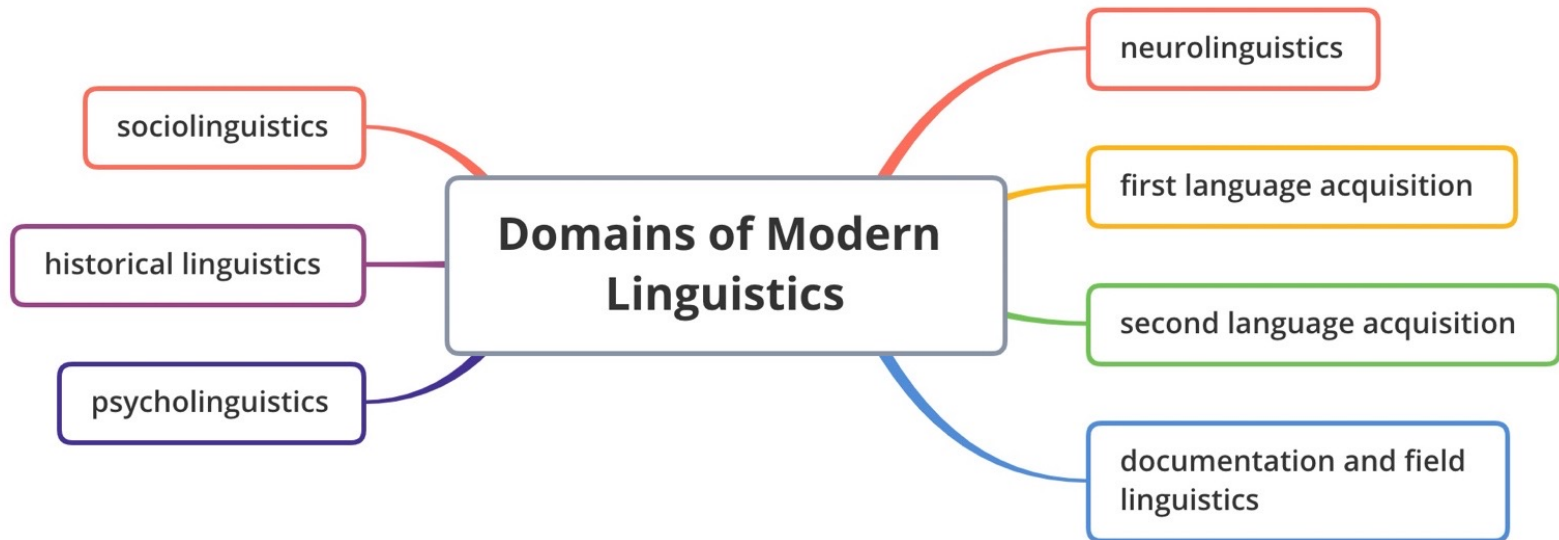
the contrast between **diversity** and **universality**.

This was recognized by Sapir in 1921.

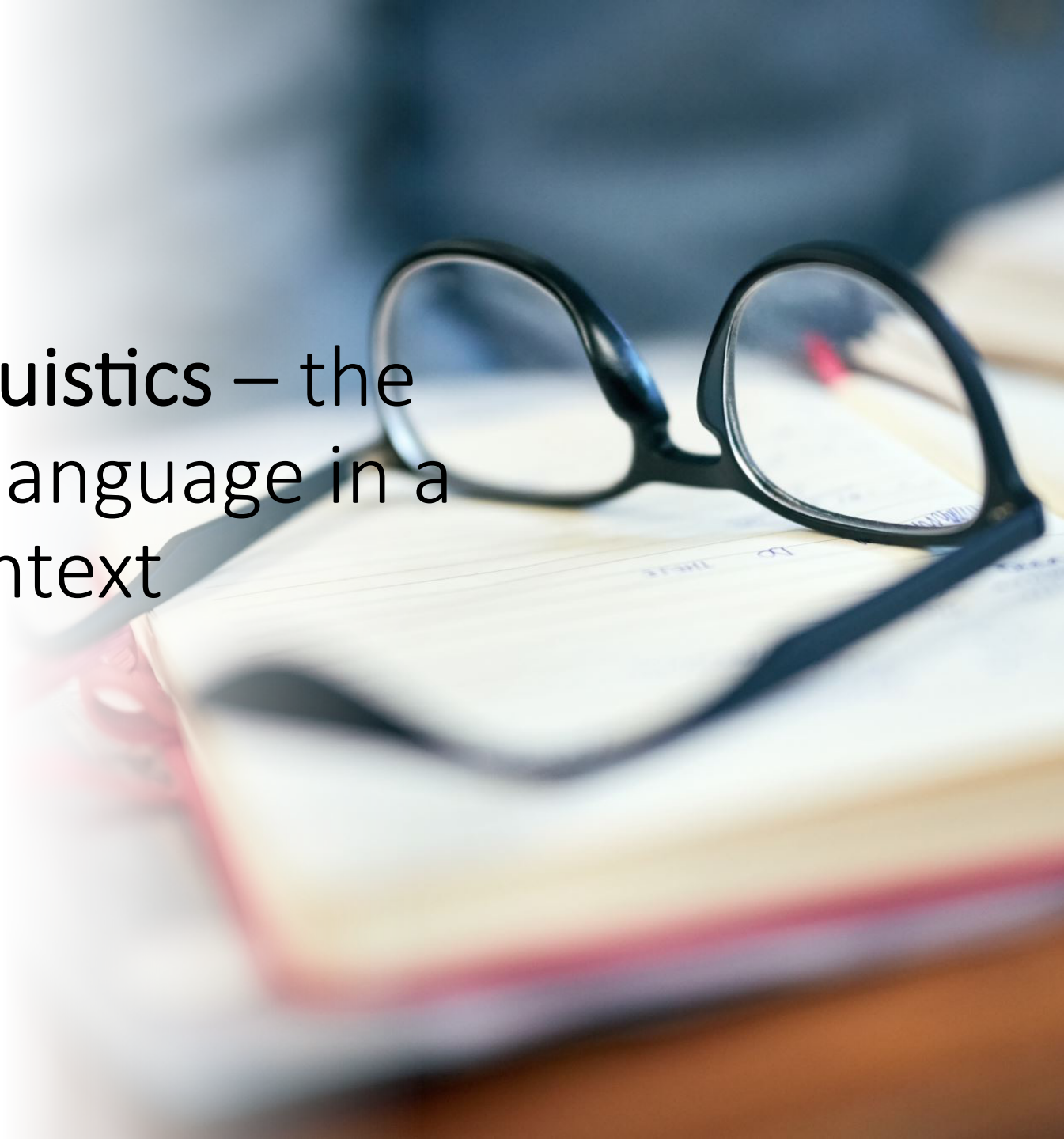
Core theoretical areas to the study of language




Domains of Modern Linguistics



Sociolinguistics – the
study of language in a
social context





Historical linguistics – the study of how language changes over time


Psycholinguistics – the
study of how the mind
processes language

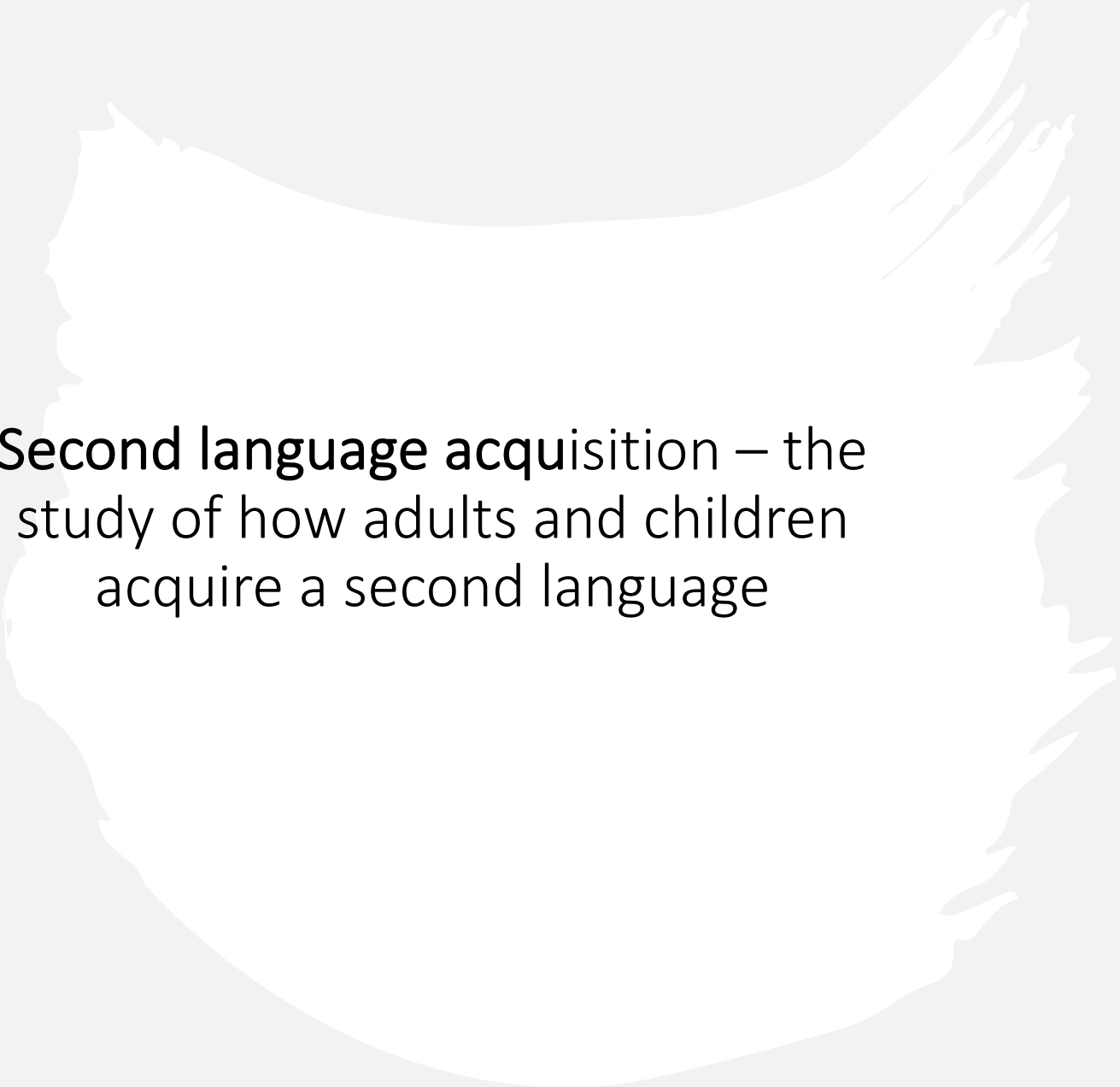


Neurolinguistics – the
study of how the brain
processes language



First language
acquisition – the
study of how
language is
acquired by a
child from birth





Second language acquisition – the study of how adults and children acquire a second language

Documentation and field linguistics – the study of how to record and document endangered languages.

