NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY LINGUISTIC THEORISTS
F. de Saussure and Edward Sapir

James Middleton

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is not to introduce and present the theoretical notions, conceptualizations, paradigms and contentions of two of the most noted of the early linguistic theorists to professors of linguistics. Obviously such authorities in the field are knowledgeable of such theorists already. Rather it is the intention of the author of this article, to introduce and present the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Edward Sapir, to those members of the academic community at large, who are not knowledgeable of those late nineteenth and early twentieth century linguistic theorists, who contributed immensely to the ever developing field of linguistics.

Further, it is not the aim of this article to present a point by theoretical point comparison, contrastive analysis of each theorist, juxtaposed one to another. Rather it is the intention of the author to introduce each theorist in his own right. The most germain and noted points of each of the theorists' theoretical stance, conceptualization, paradigms and contentions are presented for the readers own analysis, reflexion and discussion.

The eminent professor Noam Chomsky of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Linguistics and the eminent Professor Bloomfield of the University of Chicago, Department of Linguistics, assessment and commentary on F. de Saussure's well known notions of Lang/ Parole are brought out for discussion. The author of this article presents his own conclusions regarding both Saussure and Sapir as major linguistic theorists.

The author introduces Ferdinand de Saussure to his readers. Included are de Saussures early years in Leipzig and Berlin. The issue of whether or not Saussure was in fact a Neogrammarian is addressed as well. Of course Saussure's seminal

and well know Course in General Linguistics which was first published in 1916, is often referred to. Saussure's well noted main conceptualizations, contentions, and paradigms that are brought out and discussed are as follows:

- Linguistic sign
- Value of linguistic Sign
- Synchronic Linguistics
- Diachronic Linguistics
- Langue and Parole

In the second stage of this article Edward Sapir and his theoretical linguistic stance are introduced to the reader for analysis, reflection and discussion. It is perhaps interesting to note that F. de Saussure was a European (Swiss), who theorized on speech and language in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Edward Sapir can be viewed as second generation to Saussure of the early linguistic theorists. Sapir was born a European (German) but immigrated with his family at a very young age, to the United States. In due course he become a naturalized American. He therefore did his linguistic research and theorizing in the United States, in the early part of the twentieth century.

Sapir's noted theoretical linguistic conceptualizations, contentions, and paradigms which are presented to the reader in this article are as follows:

- Language and culture are separate from each other.
- Important interconnections between language, culture, and psychology exist.
- Language is not inherent, rather it is non instinctive.
- The Real World to a large extent is built upon the language habits of the group.
- Speech is an acquired cultural function.
- Speech is a network of constantly changing adjustments.
- Speech-Language is universal.
- Speech-Language is diverse.

INTRODUCTION to FERDINAND de SAUSSURE

According to Carol Sanders, Professor of French, at the University of Scurry, Ferdinand de Saussure was one of the most influential linguistic theorists of his time, which spanned the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The impact of de Saussure's linguistic theories upon the academic, scientific, community are profound still, as humankind proceeds into the twenty first century.

"Ferdinand de Saussure is widely considered to be the founder of both modern linguistics and structuralism. The first to established the structural study of language, he identified the difference between the system of language (' Lange') and the speech of individuals (' Parole'). Saussure was the first to distinguish between a synchronic study of language (Language at a given time) and a diachronic study of language (Language as it changes through time)" (Sanders, back cover of the Cambridge Companion Saussure)

Scholars of Linguistics are continually looking at de Saussure's seminal and well-known **Course in General Linguistics** which was first published in 1916. Such noted scholars also consider his early and lesser-known work as well as his more recently discovered manuscripts. De Saussure's influence to this day, ranges widely to other academic disciplines such as semiotics, literature, cultural studies, and philosophy, (back cover)

Leipzig and Berlin Years

At age eighteen Saussure was still very young when he arrived in Leipzig to engage in doctoral studies. The time was October 1876 and Saussure could not be considered ignorant of linguistic theory to date. Although he was still in his early teen years, he had become engrossed in the reconstructions of a family friend and neighbor, one Adolphe Pictet. Pictet, it turns out, had authored **Origins Indo-Europeans** in two volumes (1859-63), of which Saussure took great interest. (14) According to Professor Sanders, at the age of fourteen and a half, Saussure had written and given to Pictet a lengthy essay, (Saussure [1872]1978), in which he tried to demonstrate that it was possible to bring back all basic Greek, Latin and German roots to pattern of the type consonant + vowel + consonant where the consonants are defined as either labials or dentals or gutturals. (14) Even though

this essay exhibits a naivete, absurd assumptions, as well as absurd conclusions, what is striking is the tremendous clarity of argumentation and a distinctly professional style in which the article was written.(14)

In 1874 the young Saussure began to teach himself Sanskrit. He used Bops Sanskrit grammar. He simultaneously started to read technical literature, Such literature was the work of Curtis and Bop. In this same time frame he become a member of the Societe de Linguistigue de Paris (founded in 1866). He soon began to submit short articles to the societe. It can be seen that Saussure's productive years in Leipzig had been proceeded by self -teaching to an extensive degree. Even prior to his entry into the Gymnasium in his native country of Switzerland, Professor Sanders informs us that Saussure, had noticed that the contrast between forms, "like Greek tetag methe were arrayed and Greek tetakh-atai they are arrayed if compared to that between lego -metha we say and lego- ntaithey say led to the conclusion that in that position Greek -a - could be a replacement for the -m of earlier Greek or proto - Greek or proto-Greek." (Saussure, [1903]1960;18)(Sanders,15)

Leipzig- Neogrammarians

After a little less than two years in Leipzig, Saussure moved for a short while to Berlin. "During this period and in the previous year he wrote a number of things, including four articles on Indo-European, Greek and Latin matters, all published in the Memoires de la Societe de Linguistique de Paris (vol.3, 1977), and a lengthy account of Picter's work for the Journal de Geneve 1878. "(Saussure, 1922: 391-402). "In December 1878 his masterpiece appeared, the 300 -page monograph entitled Memoire sur le systeme primitive des voyelees dans les langues indo-europeennes (published by Teubner and dated Leipsick [sic] 1879).[4] One of the greatest French linguists, Antoine Meillet, later on called it the most beautiful book of comparative grammar ever written (Meillet,[1913-14] 1938: 183); the judgement is still valid. It remained the only full book that Saussure ever published. Louis Havet, professor of Latin in Paris, who had agreed to write a brief review, ended taking a full page of the Tribune de Geneve and explained in a letter to the author that once he had and understood the book he was bowled over by its novelty and its importance (cf. Redard, 1978a: 30). The review ended by stating that the book was likely to lead to a renewal of part of the discipline and that much could be expect-

ed of its author who was still only twenty -one years of age." "(See Havet [25/2/1879]in Redard,1978b.) " (15)

The University of Leipzig was justifiably famous in a number of fields. It was- clearly in the forefront in comparative linguistics. "George Curtius had more or less single -handedly persuaded the classicists that they had much to learn from serious historical studies of both Greek and Latin; a group of young scholars had congregat- ed round him and his courses were attended by more than 200 students. In the mid 1870s, however, things were changing and there was excitement all round. The Slavist August Leskien, much younger than Curtius, had persuaded a number of advanced students, young assistants and privat- Dozenten that a new methodology was needed; the title of Junggrammatiker given to this group (partly in jest) stuck as also did the mistranslation 'neogrammarians' , which missed the point of the joke. They argued - vociferously - that the Indo -Europeanists had to learn from those working on more modern languages and that the study of language change took priority over that of language comparison. They adopted a dualistic approach to language change: phonetic change happened unconsciously, independently of the will of the speakers, and according to regular ' laws' which admitted of no excep- tions; morphological change was heavily influenced by ' analogy' : the speakers reintroduced regularity in the grammar, remodeling forms on each other. These two types of change applied to all periods and not, as previously supposed, only to the period of linguistic decay which followed the perfection of the reconstructed parent language. In other words the linguist had to adopt a uniformitarian approach and study the motivation of change on the basis of modern data in order to reconstruct what had happened in the past." (15/16)

Saussure was not counted as one of the neogrammarians because he was too young. It is thought that he kept himself separated due to same degree of latent hostility he felt to the movement. However according to Professor Sanders there is a high probability that the substance of this significant intellectual shift if not its actual form would have met with Saussure's approval.(16)

HIGHLIGHTS of SAUSSURE'S LINGUISTIC THEORIES

Saussure's **Cours de Linguistic Generale(Course in General Linguistics)** is

felt by many to occupy a unique place in regards to the importance of the history of western thinking as to the place of man in society. Roy Harris contends that; "It is a key text not only within the development of linguistics but also in the formation of that broader intellectual movement of the twentieth century known as structuralism. With the sole exception of Wittgenstein no thinker has had as profound an influence on the modern view of homo loquens as Saussure. " "(Harris,1X) Roy Harris in his translated and annotated publication of F. de Saussure **Course in General Linguistics.**"

It is felt by many academics that Saussure ushered in a revolution of thought that can most accurately be described as Copernican; In his **Cours de Linguistic** Saussure turns conventional linguistic theory such as it was at the time, right around. "For instead of men's words being seen as peripheral to men's understanding of reality men's reality came to be seen as revolving about their social use of verbal signs." (1X) It was the first time that such a new and different, approach to linguistic theory had ever been clearly articulated. According to Saussure's contention, words (human speech) should no longer be viewed as vocal labels which somehow come to be attached to things and qualities which have already been given in advance by nature, or perhaps to ideas which have already been understood independently by the human mind. (1X)

It was Saussure's contention that quite the opposite occurs, that is, that languages which are themselves the products of social interaction, provide the essential conceptual frameworks " humankinds' analysis of reality, and " simultaneously the verbal equipment for their description of it. The concepts we use are creations of the language we speak." (1X)

Harris tells us that Saussure's status as the founder of linguistics in the modern age has infact gone unchallenged for more than half a century after his death in 1913. Harris basis his statement on what he claims are two facts. The first is that although there were a number of distinguished linguistics of his time, Saussure was the first to voice the view, -that a particular range of theoretical questions needed to be addressed and answered before the budding field of linguistics would ever be able to really take its place among the sciences.

According to Harris the second fact is that "Saussure himself proposed answers to those questions which have remained either the basis or the point of departure for all subsequent linguistic theory within the academic discipline which

thereafter claimed the designation linguistics." (1X)

Saussure is largely seen to be the founder of modern linguistics. Saussure at that same point in time, made another significant contribution to the sciences by founding semilogy, that is to say the general science of signs, thus the newly established field of linguistic was to become one special branch within semilogy. It is thought that in so doing, Saussure opened up a new approach to the study of humanity as based upon patterns of behavior. (1X) " The implications of Saussure's technique for dealing with linguistic analysis entered far beyond the boundaries of language in ways which make the **Cours de Linguistic Generale** without doubt one of the most far - reaching works concerning the study of human cultural activities to have been published at any time since the renaissance." (X)

LINGUISTIC SIGN

Saussure's proposals to established linguistics as an independent science were based upon the notion of setting up a unified discipline which would be based on a clearly defined single concept ; "that of the linguistic sign" (X) The most noted aspect of linguistic sign as conceptualized by Saussure, is that it is arbitrarily intrinsic, that is, that the sign can only be identified by contrast with coexisting signs of the same nature which together constitute a structured system. By taking this position Saussure places modern linguistics in the vanguard of twentieth - century structuralism. (1X)

In taking the above mentioned theoretical position Saussure committed himself to creating a radical distinction between diachronic (or evolutionary) linguistics and synchronic (or static) linguistics. The very nature of synchronic linguistics mandated it be given priority. (X) In other words, according to Saussure's analysis and contention, sounds, words and constructions which are connected only by historical development processes over the centuries cannot conceivably stand in structural relations with one another, any more than Caesar's Rome and Napoleon's France " Can be structurally united under one and the same political system" X). Saussure was clearly swimming against the stream of prevailing academic thought of his time. Late nineteenth century philology was just as staunchly evolutionary in out look as Darwinian biology. Nobody before Saussure had ever dared to challenge the prevailing notion that a historical study of languages could supply a satisfactory

foundation for a science of linguistics.(X)

Saussure adamantly insisted that linguistic signs, do not exist independently of the complex system of contrasts implicitly recognized in the day-to-day vocal inter-actions of a given community of speakers. (X) Saussure's contention is that linguistic signs are not like bricks to be put together to form something, but rather that they are self -contained units), Except as parts of the total structure they do not exist any more than the circumference or the radii of a circle exist without the circle. (X)

SYNCHRONIC LINGUISTICS

Saussure, among the early linguistics, is known for his derivation of the new science of linguistics into two distinct branches. They are Synchronic Linguistics and Diachronic Linguistics. Synchronic linguistics is the concern at this point.

It was Saussure contention, according to Roy Harris, that Synchronic Linguistics will be concerned with logical and psychological connections between coexisting items constituting a system as perceived by the same collective con-sciousness.(Roy Harris 98) In the edition of F. de Saussure's **COURSE IN GENERAL LINGUISTICS** as translated and annotated by Roy Harris, Saussure's clearly states that, "The aim of general Synchronic Linguistics is to establish the fundamental principles of any idio synchronic system, the facts which constitute a linguistic state. The general properties of the linguistics sign may be considered an integral part of synchronic studies" (99)

Saussure contends that the various relations of grammar may only be estab-lished linguistic states, and thus what is known as general grammar belongs to Synchrony. (99) Saussure further claims that linguistics which are concerned with coexisting terms and values are part and parcel of states of static linguistics. That is to say, that Synchronic Linguistics are much more difficult than evolutionary facts which are more concrete and which more readily stir the imagination.(99)

"In practice, a linguistic state occupies not a point in time, but a period of time of varying length, during which the sum total of changes occurring is minimal. It may be ten years, a generation, a century, or even longer. A language may hard-ly change at all for a long period only to undergo considerable changes in the next

few years. Of two contemporary languages, one may evolve considerably and the other hardly at all over the same period. In the latter case, any study will necessarily be synchronic, but in the former case diachronic. An absolute state is defined by lack of change. But since language is always changing, however minimally, studying a linguistic state amounts in practice to ignoring unimportant changes. Mathematicians do likewise when they ignore very small fractions for certain purposes, such as logarithmic calculation." (99,100)

As can be seen from the above, according to Saussure, time demarcation is one big problem which is encountered when attempting to define a linguistic state. Unfortunately there is another problem as well. That is, that the same exact problem presents itself in regards to demarcation in space. (100) " the notion of a linguistic state can only be an approximation. In static linguistics, as in most sciences, no demonstration is possible without conventional simplification of the data," (100)

Diachronic Linguistics

Diachronic Linguistics studies terms which take place successively and which are over a period of time substituted one for another. It can therefore be seen that this is very different indeed from Synchronic Linguistic with its focus on the relations between the coexisting terms of a given Linguistic state.(139)

Saussure states, " Absolute stability in a language is never found (cf.p.[110]ff.). All parts of the language are subject to change, and any period of time will see evolution of greater or smaller extent. It may very in rapidity or intensity. But the principle admits no exceptions. The linguistic river never stops flowing. Whether its course is smooth or uneven is a consideration of secondary importance." (139)

It is true that this uninterrupted evolution is often hidden from us by the attention paid to the corresponding literary language. A literary language (cf. p. [267] ff.) is superimposed upon the vernacular which is the natural form a language takes, and it is subject to different conditions of existence. Once a literary language is established, it usually remains fairly stable, and tends to perpetuate itself unaltered. Its dependence on writing gives it special guarantees of conservation. Hence this is not the place to look if we wish to see how variable natural languages are when free from literary regimentation." (139)

Saussure contends that the entirety of historical phonetics is the first point of Diachronic Linguistics study. The notion of a linguistic state (static) and sound change are incompatible. Therefore a comparison of sounds or groups of sounds to the way they were in an earlier period necessitates that a diachronic succession be established. The so called earlier period, could be recent or it could be remote. However, just as soon as there is a merging of two linguistics periods, then it must be said that what is being delt with, is no longer historical phonetics. Rather at such a point of merger, what is being delt with are the sounds of a lone or linguistic state as seen as single. At that point what has emerged can be said to be descriptive phonetics.(139,140)

According to Saussure, Diachronic Linguistics describes what is known as historical phonetics, which is in turn in total conformity with Saussure's own stated principle "that nothing in historical phonetics is significant or grammatical, in the broad sense of the term" (cf,p[36])2(140) Saussure goes on to tell his readers that the establishment of the history of a word's pronunciation, or the word's meaning is not at all germane." (140) He states that a consideration of only" the material envelope of the words, is important.(140) Saussure further states that a word may be segmented into phonetic parts with no investigation as to the meaning of these parts having taken place at all. For the sake of clarity Saussure is here directly quoted. "If the evolution of a language were nothing more than the evolution of its sounds, the contrast between what belongs to the two branches of linguistics would be immediately conspicuous. One would see clearly that diachronic is to be equated with non-grammatical and synchronic with grammatical." (140)

In terms of his own (above mentioned views on character, diachronically speaking of historical phonetics), Saussure proceeds to poise the question as to what other than sounds do change over time? He then answer his own rhetorical question in the following manner.

" Words change their meaning. Grammatical categories change. Some of the latter disappear along with the forms which served to express them (e.g. the dual in Latin). But if all the various associative and syntagmatic facts have their histories, how can any absolute distinction between diachrony and synchrony be maintained ? It becomes very difficult once one goes beyond pure historical phonetics." (page140)

LANGUE and PAROLE

W. Terrence Gordon in the **cambridge companion** to Saussure edited by Carol Sanders, tells his readers, in regards to Saussure's notion of Langue and Parole that as one progresses "Throughout The Cours de Linguistic General linter alia 24,25,56,119,121,129) the reader finds the terms **opposition and dualities. opposition is** used in its general sense in the passage cited above but occurs elsewhere (167EE,) in a specific sense which bring it within the compass of one of the paired terms (difference/ opposition) which shape the entire Course de Linguistique Generale (henceforth Cours, CLG or CGL in English) a sign's constituents it's form and its concept, being different from those of other signs for Saussure, but the sign as a whole being in opposition to other signs." (Sanders, 76)

Many of the authors tie in their various commentaries on Saussure's very well known and most influential work Cours de Linguistique Generale - CLG, state that the paired terms (**difference /opposition**) are also referred to as **oppsitions or dualities,** Gordon tells us that whereas opposition is an apposite descriptor of the terms in each pair as they stand in relationship to each other (76) That is to say that the distinctiveness of the linguistic sign in regards to other linguistic sign is a characterization. Gordon contends, that seen this way the notion **of opposition is** at least "Potentially in its more general meaning, that which can overshadow the Saussure sense of distinctiveness by a suggestion of contrast or even of incompatibility" (76)

Gordon proceeds to claim that **duality** does not encompass the same problem. Furthermore, according to Gordon, **duality** does not correspond to the Saussrian usage of dualite as used by Saussure to denote an inherent division within , "the subject matter of linguistics itself (Hjlmslevsobjetetudie) rather than in the analytical apparatus of the discipline" (see Gordon,1996)(76)

It is Gordon's contention that the use of the term, complementarily, is preferable to the use of opposition and duality. He further states that the cognate compl' ementarite is very much," in the spirit of passages from the Cours which reveal that, by its own-shape and derivation Saussure's terminology deliberately and explicitly embodied the principle it describes and expresses through difference

/opposition," (76)"

According to Gordon, Saussure in his Cours reminds his readers again and again that " **Langue** constitutes the sole autonomous element of linguistic analysis" :

"En effet, parmi tant de dualite's, la langue seule parait etre susceptible d' une definition autonome et fournit un point d' appui satisfaisant pour l' esprit. (CLG;25) (Actually, among so many dualities, language alone seems to lend itself to independent definition and provide a fulcrum that satisfies the mind.CGL-B:9)

[La langue] est un objet bien defini dans I' ensemble heteroclite des faits de langage.(CLG:31)
(Language is a well-defined object in the heterogeneous mass of speech facts. CGL-B:14)" (page.77)

Gordon further states, langue has an autonomy inherent to it as subject matter and further that it provides a framework that is analytic in such a way that the issue of a starting point that is arbitrarily defined and its arbitrary organization of linguistic data can be solved.

" La langue ...est un tout en soi et un principe de classification. Des que nous lui donnons la premiere place parmi les faits de langage. nous introduisons un ordre naturel dans un ensemble qui ne se prete a une aucune autre classification.CLG;25) (The linguistic system ... constitutes a whole in itself as well as a principle of classification. As soon as we accord it the prime place among language phenomena, we introduce a natural order into a mass that does not lend itself to any other classification)" (page78)

Gordon goes on to contend that Saussure's notions **of Langue/ Parole** as defined in relation to each other and as well as to the all encompassing term language, points out how the Saussure complementarities are by definition self -transcendent, that is to say that if each of the terms **Langue/ Parole** comprises elements of a analytical and convenient shorthand for linguists, in other words if the two elements were to be taken together, then the function of language would be constituted interactively as a system, that could be viewed as existing in a linguistic state. Furthermore that language as samples of a linguistic system exists for the purpose of generating communication. (78)

Gordon continues to explain, that Saussure's Cours de Linguistique Generale is in effect a procedure which mirrors the complementarily of significance/values. Furthermore, it is Gordons contention that Saussure's Cours does not present any one unitary single, definition of langue. According to Gorden's perspective the Cours does instead offer a kind of montage from which the reader can learn that which Langue is not. The reader can also learn how **Langue** stands in relation to both language and Parole. (78) There for :

"(1) Mais qu'est -ce que la langue? Pour nous elle ne se confond pas avee le language; elle n'en est qu' une partie de'termine'e, essentielle, il est vrai. C' est a' la fois up produit social de la faculte du language et un ensemble de conventions necesaires, adoptees parle corps social pour permettre I' exercice de cette faculte chez les individus.(CLG:25)(But what is language(langue)? It is not to be confused with human speech (language), of which it is only a definite part though certainly an essential one. It is both a social product of the faculty of speech and collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty .(CGL-B:9)

(2) .....ce n'est pas le langage parle' qui est natural a' I'homme. mais la faculte' de constituer une langue, c'est -a -dire un systeme de signes distincts correspondent a' des ide'es distinctes. (CLG:26)

(...it is not spoken language that is natural to the human person. but the faculty of creating a language, that is, a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas.)

(3) La langue n' est pas une fonction du sujet parlant, elle est le produit que I' individu enregistre passivement ...

La parole est au contraire un acte individual de volonte' et d'intelligence , dans lequel il convient de distinguer: I°les combinaisons par lesquelles le sujet parlant utlise le code de la langue en vue d' exprimer sa pensee personnelle; 2° le me'canisme psycho-physique qui lui permet d' exterioriser ces combinaisons.(CLG:30-1)

(Language (Langue) is not a function of the speaker; it is a product that is passively assimilated by the individual ...

Speaking, on the contrary, is an individual act. It is willful and intellectual. Within the act, we should distinguish between:(1) the combinations by which the speaker uses the language code for expressing his own thought; and (2) the psy-

chophysical mechanism that allows him to exteriorise those combinations.CGL-B:14)

(4) La langue n'est pas moins que la parole un object de nature concre' te...(CLG:32)

(Language is concrete, no less so than speaking...CGL-B:15)

(5) ...la langue est un syste' me de pures valeurs que rien ne determine en dehors de I' e'tat momentane de ses terms.(CLG:116)

(...language is a system of pure values which are determined by nothing except the momentary arrangement of its terms. CGL-B:80)

(6)...la langue n' est pas un me'canisme cre'e' et agence' en vue des concepts a' exprimer.(CLG:122)

(...language is not a mechanism created and arranged with a view to the concepts to be expressed. CGL-B:85)"   (page78,79)

The eminent and exceedingly well know linguistic theorist of the early twentieth century, Bloomfield, in his review of the Cours wrote about the famous langue/ parole distinction in the following manner; (110-111)

"In his review of the Cours, Bloomfield introduced the famous langue/ parole distinction as follows:

This rigid system, the subject-matter of 'descriptive linguistics' , as we should say, is la langue, the language. But le language, human speech, includes something more, for the individuals who make up the community do not succeed in following the system with perfect uniformity, Actual speech -utterance, la parole, varies not only as to matters not fixed by the system...but also as to the system itself ...(Bloomfield, 1924:318-19)

Bloomfield took up the distinction again in 1927 where he reduced Saussre's system of signs to the physically observable elements of actual object and speech utterance, casting aside what he considered 'the purely mental terms' of 'concept' and acoustic image' (Bloomfield, 1970[1927]:177).The resulting reconceptualisation of langue and parole was tantamount to a rejection of the Saussurean distinction, and indeed after 1927 Bloomfield made no use of these terms. It can be argued, however, that in both his theoretical work and his descriptive analyses, Bloomfield actually took the speech -utterances of parole as 'the subject-matter of linguistics' with the abstraction by analysis from the speech utterances yielding 'a description of langue ' (Levin,1965:87) Of course, the same might be argued for any linguist who works from samples of the language to a generalized description that goes beyond the corpus." (page.110,111)

Chomsky's Disussion of Saussure

The eminent and extremely well noted linguistic theorist, Professor Noam Chomsky of the Massachusetts Institute of technology, at the first meeting of the International Congress of Linguists held in the United States, in Cambridge, Massachusetts presented a paper on Saussure's early work.

In the aboved mentioned paper and in a number of supporting articles which Chomsky published around this time, he presented and discussed his views on Saussure's langue and his own concept of linguistic competence.The following has been extracted from the Cambridge companion to Saussure edited by Carol Sanders (119-120)

"One point of agreement was that langue, or competence, was theoretically prior to parole, or actual performance (Chomsky, 1964a:52). However, Chomsky did not fully accept langue, seeing it 'as essentially a storehouse of signs (e.g. words, fixed phrases), their grammatical properties, and perhaps, certain "phrase types"''' (1963:328), not the 'generative process based on recursive rules'of Chomsky's generative grammar (ibid.). Further, Chomsky did not accept what he believed was Saussure's relegation of sentence formation to 'a matter of parole rather than langue ...(or perhaps, in some obscure way, as on the border between langue and parole)' (1964a:59-60). It is important to note that Chomsky's discussions of Saussure were never as consistently positive as his references to two other European linguists, Wilhelm von Humboldt and Otto Jespersen (see, e,g., Chomsky, 1963 and 1966, on Humboldt, Chomsky, 1975 and 1986, on Jespersen)." (119,120)

The editor, in the Editor's Introduction to Noam Chomsky's **On Nature and Language,** tells the readers that people are continually encountering expressions of language which they have never before encountered in their previous linguistic experience. Surprisingly enough these same people can produce and understand these expressions with little or no effort. The editor goes on to contend that normal linguistic aptitudes range over domains. That is to say, that all normal language speakers can comprehend and produce an unlimited number of linguistic expression within normal language usage.(2)

This amazing capacity referred to just above is thought to be a most critical component of creativity of daily language usage. The editor states that at least since the cognitive revolution has this linguistic capacity been viewed as a "Crucial

component of human nature." (2) The editor further states that this creativity "language wise remained essentially unexplained by the traditional -classical linguistic theorists." (2)

" For instance, we find revealing oscillation in Ferdinand de Saussure's Cours on this topic. On the one hand ,the Cours bluntly states that "la phrase, "le type par excellence de syntagme ...appartient a' la parole, non a' la langue " (172) [the sentence, the type of phrase par excellence, belongs to parole, not to langue],and immediately after this passage, the text refers back to the definition of **parole** as "un acte individuel de volonte' et d' intelligence...[which includes] les combinaisons par lesquelles le sujet parlant utilise le code de la langue envue d'exprimer sa pense'e perspnnelle ... "(p g.31) [an individual act of will and intelligence...which includes the combinations by which the speaking subject utilizes the code of **langue** in view of expressing his personal thought].The freedom of the combinations of elements which characterizes a sentence is "le propre de la parole." On the other hand, "il faut attribuer a' la langue, non a' la parole, tous les types de syntagmes construits sur des formes regulie'res...,des groupes de mots construits sur des patrons reguliers, des combinations [which]re'pondent a' des types ge'ne'raux" [it is necessary to attribute to **langue**,not to **parole**, all the types of phrases built on regular forms...,groups of words built on regular patterns, combinations which correspond to general types](pg173) The **Cour's** conclusion then seems to be that syntax is half way in between **langue** and **parole**: "Mais il faut reconnaître que dans le domain du syntagame il n 'y a pas de limite tranche'e entre le fait de langue, marque' de I'usage collectif, et le fait de parole, qui de'pend de la liberte' individuelle" (pg173)[but it is necessary to recognize that in the domain of the phrase there is no sharp limit between the facts of **langue**, marked by collective usage, and the facts of **parole**, which depend on individual freedom].The source of the oscillation is clear: on the one hand, the regular character of syntax is evident; on the other hand, the theoretical linguist at the beginning of the twentieth century does not have at his disposal a precise device to express the astonishing variety of "regular patterns" that natural language syntax allows." pg 3(154,155)

It is hoped that the following quoted material from Professor Middleton's article, entitled Noam Chomsky as a Predominate Linguistic Theorist, Academic Scholar and Intellectual of the Twentieth, Twenty First Centuries, will shed some light on Professor Chomsky's reaction and theoretical stance in regards to Saussure's con-

ceptualization of langue.

Professor Noam Chomsky tells his readers in his book **On Nature and Language**, the following: "Dominant linguistic paradigms in the first half of the twentieth century had centered their attention on Saussurean langue, a social object of which individual speakers have only partial mastery. Ever since the 1950's generative grammar shifted the focus of linguistic research onto the language faculty." The species specific capacity to master and use a natural language [Chomsky1959] Chomsky further states that seen from this perspective, that language may be viewed as a natural object that is as a component of the human mind. It is therefore physically represented in the brain and it is to be seen as part of the species biological endowment. When such is considered as guidelines, then linguistics is indeed part of individual psychology and of the cognitive sciences as well. Therefore the ultimate objective of linguistics is to characterize a central component of human nature defined in a biological setting." (150)

No doubt the reader has been able to conclude that Ferdinand de Saussure contributed enormously to the establishment of modern linguistics. Indeed by many of the formost linguistics theorists, he is considered to be the father of modern linguistics. There can be no question that Saussure was in large measure responsible for a significant portion of the seminal theories that laid the foundations for linguistics as the field has developed to date. Professor Chomsky and others, for over fifty years now, have contributed immensely to the forwarding of the scientific field of linguistics. Certainly those linguistic theorists such as Worf, Sapir, Bloomfield and others as well, have contributed greatly to the establishment of the field of linguistics. These very significant contributions have made it possible for Chomsky, his followers and the most recent generation of linguistic theorists, to have advanced the science of linguistics to the very astounding degree that they have.

It can not be said that Ferdinand de Saussure's main points of theoretical conceptualization have not been, and are not even now, controversial. There are few that have not found profound thought provoking stimuli and merit in Saussure's conceptualization and paradigms of linguistic sign, value, Synchronic linguistics, Diachronic linguistics, **langue and parole**. There are few who would disregard the other of Saussure's theoretical points that are too numerous to bring out. There are few courses in general linguistics which are being taught at the graduate level even now, that do not utilize Saussure's famous COURSE IN GENERAL LINGUISTICS.

EDWARD SAPIR

Introduction

Edward Sapir was born in Germany in the state of Pomeranian in 1884. He went to the United States. when he was five years of age. Language — An Introduction to the Study of Speech. Edward Sapir, title page. He made his reputation as an expert in the growing field of linguistics as theorist and researcher on native American Languages. Sapir taught at both the University of Chicago and at Yale. He was one of the first early linguistic theorist to explore the relationship between anthropology and language studies. He died in 1939. (Title Page)

Edward Sapir's primary contention is that language and culture are separate from each other. At the time this was a contention that was contrary to the prevailing, conventional belief, that language is an expression of national temperament, or of racial or geographic influencies, and is an inherited skill.

Sapir clearly saw important inter-connections between language, culture, and psychology. These inter connections are succinctly expressed in the following quotation.

"Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjust to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world " is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group.... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation." (Whorf, 134)

Language as defined by Edward Sapir.

It is Sapir's contention that what mankind normally considers to be the naturalness of human speech is in reality nothing more than an illusory feeling (Sapir- 3) Sapir compares the human process of learning to walk with the process of acquir-

ing human speech. According to Sapir, acquisition of speech is "an utterly different sort of process from learning to walk, (Sapir -3) In other words, according to Sapir, walking is a biologically inherent function of humankind, while speech is not.

Sapir goes on to state that human language acquisition is quite the opposite from the biologically inherent function of learning to walk. That is to say that language is not an inherent biological function. Sapir contends that a normal human being in a sense, is predestined to walk, and that in a certain sense the individual is predestined to talk, but that it is due entirely to the circumstance that he is born not merely in nature, but in the lap of society, that is reasonably certain to lead him to its traditions. Eliminate society, and there is every reason to believe that he will learn to walk, if indeed he survives at all, but it is just as certain that he will never learn to talk, that is to communicate ideas according to the traditional system of a particular society." (-4) Sapir concludes, that walking is an organic, an instinctive, function (not, of course, itself an instinct). while speech is a non-instinctive, acquired "Cultural" function." (4)

The reader has just seen that Sapir states, clearly that, "speech is a non-instinctive, acquired, cultural function," (4) This contention is most certainly of the utmost importance as a foundation of Edward Sapir's linguistic theoretical stance. Sapir himself states. " The way is now cleared for a serviceable definition of language. Language is a purely human and non instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols. These symbols are, in the first instance , auditory and they are produced by the so-called "organs of speech." There is no discernible instinctive basis in human speech as such, however much instinctive expressions and the natural environment may serve as a stimulus for the development of certain elements of speech, however much instinctive tendencies, motor and other, may give a predetermined range or mold to linguistic expression Such human or animal communication , if "communication" it may be called, as is brought about by involuntary instinctive cries is not, in our sense, language at all." (page. 8)

Sapir, explains in regards to his reference to the organs of speech, in the following manner. He states that the reader should in no way be misled by the term into thinking that in fact he does mean that speech is a biologically instinctual predetermined activity. He goes on to contend that organs of speech do not in fact exist. There are body organs that are, " incidentally usefull to the production of

speech sound. The lungs, the larynx, the palate, the nose, the tongue, the teeth, and the lips are all so utilized. but they are no more to be thought of as primary organs of speech than are the fingers to be considered as essential organs of piano - playing " (9)

According to Sapir speech is most certainly not a simple activity which is conducted by a few organs of the human body. On the contrary human speech is complex in the extreme. It is a network of constantly changing adjustments that takes place in the brain, in the nervous system and in the auditory and articulating organs which all together tend toward the desirable objective of communication between two or more human beings. (9)

As part of the process of making his own theoretical definition of speech very clear, Sapir states. "it must be clearly understood that this introduction to the study of speech is not concerned with those aspects of physiology and of physiological physiology that underlie speech. Our study of language is not to be one of the genesis and operation of a concrete mechanism; it is, rather, to be an inquiry into the function and form of the arbitrary systems of symbolism that we term languages." (11)

Sapir has pointed out that language essentially is comprised of assignments of conventionally voluntarily articulated, sounds or their equivalents to the diverse elements of experience. The word "house " is not a linguistic fact if by it is meant merely the ear by its constituent consonants and vowels, pronounced in a certain order." (11)

Sapir continues his contention in this regard as follows; "It is only when associated experiences are automatically associated with a particular image, such as a house that the associated experiences in question begin to take on the "nature of a symbol, a word, an element of language" (12) However, he goes onto state that merely, the fact of such an association is not enough to constitute a linguistic utterance.

"The association must be a purely symbolic one; in other words, the word must denote, tag off, the image, must have no other significance than to serve as a counter to refer to it whenever it is necessary or convenient to do so. Such an association, voluntary and, in a sense arbitrary as it is, demands a considerable exercise of self -conscious attention." (page. 12)

It is clearly Sapir's contention that the world of human experience must be simplified and generalized immensely before it becomes possible to create a symbolic inventory of all of one's experience of relations and things, that the creation of such an inventory is imperative. One's ideas can be communicated to another human being who shares the same linguistic code, that is who is also a member of the same cultural and language community. (12) According to Sapir, the elements of language can be viewed as symbols, "that ticket off experience" "(12) and therefore it is imperative that such elements stand in association with whole groups, that is classes that are delimited, of whole experience rather than with solely single experiences. (12)" Only so is communication possible for the single experience lodges in an individual consciousness and is strictly speaking incommunicable. To be communicated it needs to be referred to a class which is tacitly accepted by the community as an identity.(12,13)

In regards to Sapir's notion of symbol and concept as human speech, he contends as follows: " In other words the speech element " house" is the symbol first and formost not of a single perception nor even of the notion of a particular object but of a concept, "(13) " If the single significant elements of speech are the symbol of concepts the actual flow of speech may be interpreted as a record of the setting of these concepts into mutual relations." (13)

Sapir address the question of whether or not thought is possible with an absence of speech. Further if thought and speech may not but be two facets of one and the same psychic process? (13) Sapir's response to this question is as follows; "Language may be looked upon as an instrument capable of running a gamut of psychic uses. Its flow not only parallels that of the inner content of consciousness, but parallels it on different levels, ranging from the state of mind that is dominated by particular images to that in which abstract concepts and their relations are alone at the focus of attention and which is ordinarily termed reasoning." (14)

"From the point of view of language, thought may be defined as the highest latent or potential content of speech, the content that is obtained by interpreting each of the elements in the flow of language as possessed of its very fullest conceptual value. From this it follows at once that language and thought are not strictly coterminous." (14, 15)

Sapir is most emphatic in stating his view that for people to believe that they can think or even reason without language is nothing but an illusion. He goes on to

state that one reason such an illusion seems to exist is "the failure to distinguish between imagery and thought. (15) He continues as follows. "Thought may be a natural domain apart from the artificial one of speech but speech would seem to be the only road we know of that leads to it." (15,16)

Sapir further states that " As to the relation between language and thought the point of view that we have developed does not by any means preclude the possibility of the growth of speech in a high degree dependent on the development of thought. (16, 17)

Sapir concludes that communication of a voluntary nature of ideas, other than that of nomal speech is either a direct or indirect transfer from symbolism of language that is typical as heard or spoken or which at the least involves the intermediary of truly linguistic symbolism " (21) He states that this fact is of the utmost importance. It is Sapir's contention that the historic fountain head of all speech and of all thinking "(21) are "auditory imagery and the correlated motor imagery leading to articulation." (21)

It is further stated by Sapir that there is yet another point which is of still greater importance. "One other point is of still greater importance. The case with which speech symbolism can be transferred from one sense to another, from technique, itself indicates that the mere sounds of speech are not the essential fact of language, which lies rather in the classification, in the formal patterning, and in the relating of concepts. Once more, language as a structure, is on its inner face the mold of thought. It is this abstracted language, rather more than the physical facts of speech, that is to concern us in our inquiry." (21, 22)

Sapir's states that "There is no more striking general fact about language than its universality ." (22) According to him it is arguable whether a specific tribal group will engage in activities that could truly be considered religious activity or that of art. However there are no known people who do not possess a fully developed language. Even the lowest south African bushman speaks in the forms of a rich symbolic system that is in essence perfectly comparable to the speech of the cultivated Frenchman. (22)

Here are expressed Sapir's views on the essential foundation and building blocks of language. "The fundamental groundwork of language, the development of a clear-cut phonetic system, the specific association of speech elements with concepts, and the delicate provision for the formal expression of all manner of relations-all

this meets us rigidly perfected and systematized in every language known to us. Many primitive languages have a formal richness, a latent luxuriance of expression, that eclipses anything known to the language of modern civilization. Even in the mere matter of the inventory of speech the layman must be prepared for strange surprises. Popular statements as to the extreme poverty of expression to which primitive language are doomed are simply myths. Scarcely less impressive than the universality of speech is its almost incredible diversity." (page, 22, 23)

Sapir concludes his views on the universality and the diversity of speech in the following manner. Linguistic theorists and lay people alike really have no alternative but to believe that human language is a most incredibly ancient heritage of the human race. It is not know whether or not all forms of speech are "the historical outgrowth of a single pristine form." (23) It is in fact highly questionable whether or not there is any other cultural asset of mankind be it that of chipping stone points making fire by way of a fire drill, or another that maybe said to be more essential and influential upon the historical progress of humanity, than language. Finally Sapir expresses his own views on the universality and diversity of speech thusly; "I am inclined to believe that it (language, speech) antedated even the lowliest developments of material culture that these developments in fact were not strictly possible until language the tool of significant expression had itself taken shape." (23)

Conclusions an Edward Sapir

Edward Sapir was a member of the second or succeeding generation to Saussure and his contemporaries. It was Sapir, as a formally trained academician and researcher in the rapidly expanding field of linguistics and his contemporary and sometime associate, Benjamin Lee Whorf (Who was entirely self trained) who contributed new, unconventional and radically different notions of language, thought and speech and interconnections between language and culture. Sapir became one of the preeminent linguistic theorists, (as did Whorf) of the early twentieth century.

Both Sapir and Whorf did extensive research among the native Americans of the southwestern United States. As the reader knows, the focus of this article is on Sapir. It is hoped by this author, that a future academic article will deal extensively with the linguistic theories of Benjamin Lee Whorf.

It can arguably be said, that Sapir presented his new -linguistic theories to the academic community in the shadow of Saussure. Be that as it may, it was not so long after his initial publications that the community of linguistic theorists and academics at large, took note of his emerging new unconventional and even radically contrary notions and contentions regarding the nature of important inter-connections between language, culture and psychology.

The reader, upon close inspection of Sapir's definition of language found on page 15 of this article, no doubt has noted, his notion of just exactly what it is that constitutes language, can see that his views were unconventional and must have been controversial at the time. There can be no doubt that at least in the beginning, Edward Sapir was swimming against the stream of prevailing linguistic theoretical thought. Further, it is clear that linguistic theory in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was in the main, to a significant degree established by Saussure and Sapir.

In his book, Language -An Introduction To The Study Of Speech, initially published in 1921, Professor Edward Sapir contends that language and culture are separate from each other "(back cover) This was a shocking and unconventional contention to the community of linguistic theorists, for it flew in the face of the conventional wisdom. The conventional wisdom of the time held (as expressed earlier in this article) that language was an expression of "National temperament" and of racial or geographic influences and was an inherited skill. (Back cover) Sapir's new contentions stood in direct opposition to every one of these points of the prevailing, accepted thought as to linguistic theory of the time.

It can be stated with accuracy, that every theoretical linguistic point of Sapir's brought out on pages 14, 15, 16. 17, 18, and 19 of this article, were at the time of Professor Sapir's theorizing and publishing, radically new, ground breaking and unconventional in regards to linguistic theory, as it had been proposed to, that time, ie by Saussure, and those theorists who had gone before them. It was seminal work and it was indeed controvensial. Professor Edward Sapir, who it will be remembered, taught linguistic theory at both the University of Chicago and Yale, in the early part of the twentieth century, when the field of linguistics was still considered to be relatively new, is viewed by many in the field of linguistics, and in the greater academic community, to have been a major player, that is a significant contributor of linguistic knowledge and theory. Furthermore, it was Sapir along with

others such as Saussure, Worf, Bloomfield, Chomsky and others, who have made the field of linguistics with all of its many and varied branches, into the interesting, and sophisticated academic-scientific field, that it is today.

The reader clearly, in all fairness, and with accuracy, can conclude that Saussure theorizing, writing, and publishing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and Sapir doing likewise in the early twentieth century, have contributed an immense amount of knowledge and thought provoking, stimulating linguistic theory, to the total body of linguistic thought. It is these two well noted and highly respected linguistic theorists then, that those who are involved in the field of linguistics today, have to thank for contributing to the development of linguistics into a major, important and significant, academic-scientific field of study and human endeavor.

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