

Structural linguistics in Europe is generally said to have begun in 1916 with the posthumous publication of the *Cours de Linguistique Generale* (Course in General Linguistics) of Ferdinand de Saussure. "Structuralism," in the European sense then, refers to the view that there is an abstract relational structure that underlies and is to be distinguished from actual utterances—a system underlying actual behaviour—and that this is the primary object of study for the linguist. Much of what is now considered as Saussurean can be seen, though less clearly, in the earlier work of Humboldt, and the general structural principles that Saussure was to develop with respect to synchronic linguistics in the *Cours* had been applied almost 40 years before (1879) by Saussure himself in a reconstruction of the Indo-European vowel system. Saussure's structuralism can be summed up in two dichotomies (which jointly cover what Humboldt referred to in terms of his own distinction of inner and outer form): (1) *langue* versus *parole* and (2) form versus substance. By *langue*, best translated in its technical Saussurean sense as language system, is meant the totality of regularities and patterns of formation that underlie the utterances of a language; by *parole*, which can be translated as language behaviour, is meant the actual utterances themselves. Just as two performances of a piece of music given by different orchestras on different occasions will differ in a variety of details and yet be identifiable as performances of the same piece, so two utterances may differ in various ways and yet be recognized as instances, in some sense, of the same utterance. The full significance of the work was not appreciated at the time.