

During the 1920s and 1930s, a significant group of linguists and literary theorists known as the Prague School of Linguistics worked in Prague and merged structuralism and functionalism to study language. Vilém Mathesius, Nikolay Trubetskoy, and Roman Jakobson were important individuals. They introduced ideas like markedness and distinguishing traits, created theories of phonology and grammar, and used structuralist techniques to analyze literature. Even after the original circle was formally dissolved in 1952, the school's work continued to have a significant influence on semiotics and linguistics.

### *Key characteristics and contributions*

#### *Combination of structuralism and functionalism:*

The Prague School examined how language functions to fulfill particular roles in communication (functionalism) and saw language as a system of interconnected pieces (structuralism).  
Emphasis on function: They stressed that a language's structure is determined by the purposes it fulfills, such as conveying information, expressing the speaker's attitude, or influencing the listener.

#### *Phonology and sound systems:*

The analysis of sound systems was a significant contribution. To explain how sounds are made up of a variety of opposing acoustic and articulatory aspects, they created the idea of distinguishing features. Their work in phonology also introduced the idea of markedness.

Structural literary analysis: The school created techniques for evaluating literature according to its functional and structural characteristics.

Influence: Linguistics, semiotics, and structuralist literary theory were all greatly impacted by their work, and other disciplines like linguistic anthropology embraced their concepts.

### *Key figures*

Vilém Mathesius: Founder and key figure in the school's early days.

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*Nikolay Trubetzkoy: Developed key theories in phonology, including the concept of opposition and markedness.*

*Roman Jakobson: A pivotal figure who was influential in both linguistics and the adaptation of structural analysis to other fields like literary theory.*