

Ferdinand de Saussure

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Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913, born in Geneva), who is generally considered as the 'father of modern linguistics', studied Sanskrit and comparative linguistics in Geneva, Paris and Leipzig. In 1878, at the age of 21, Ferdinand de Saussure published a long and bright article "**Note on the Primitive System of the Indo-European Vowels**" which established his credential as a young scholar. Saussure's influence on linguistics was far-reaching, first through his direct influence on his students at the university of Geneva, who practically worshipped him, and then through his ideas as collected and disseminated after his death by two of his students, Charles Bally and Albert Sechaye. These students, who became well known linguistic researchers in their own right, put together course notes from their and another student's notebook to produce the ***Cours de Linguistique Generale (Course in General Linguistics)***.

This composite work, shaped and interpreted by Bally and Sechaye, was prepared in the years immediately following Saussure's death as a tribute and as a way of making his brilliant ideas accessible beyond Geneva and posterity. The work, the *Cours de Linguistique Generale* was widely read in French by scholars all over Europe and in 1959 was translated into English by Wade Baskin mainly for American students, who were less likely to have learned to read French than their European counterparts. A new translation of the *Cours de Linguistique Generale* by Roy Harris appeared in 1986.

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