

Theories of Language Development

Noam Chomsky

Unit - 1

By Sohini Bhattacharyya




Noam Chomsky

**Born - 1928 in
Philadelphia**

**He was an eminent
linguist and
political activist.**



- Chomsky's theory of language and mind has been influential on scholars in many different fields - cognitive, Psychology, Philosophy some branches of mathematics.
- He gave some revolutionary proposals both on language and on grammar.

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- Professor Zellig S. Harris first oversaw the blooming interest of Chomsky over linguistics.
 - Chomsky first did the analytical work over Hebrew Language.
(Dispersal of Phonetic forms of Hebrew)
 - In his view, to truly study language is to study a part of human nature, manifested in the human mind.



Revolutionary Proposals of Chomsky :-

- Gave the idea of Generative Grammar / Transformational Grammar.
- He related the universality of structure which finally paved the path of Universal Grammar.
- Associated the idea of language with mind and thinking
- First brought the idea of Integration in linguistics
- Believed that modern grammar should be established as scientific branch of learning.




Universal Generative Grammar :-

- Human beings are born with a basic template for language that any specific language can fit into.
- The infants, mostly dissociated from the outer world, developing in a protective home environment, learn to use language in a variety of ways.
- This proves that human beings do not need specific grammatical lessons for language development.
- They are capable of using language meaningfully and in different ways by dint of their innate and inborn capabilities.



Internalised Language / I - Language :-

- Language is seen as the product of human mind and brain.
 - I- language also studies what type knowledge the language user going to construct.
 - It also points out the intuition of native speaker on grammatical and ungrammatical order.
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Mentalism / Mentalist Theory :-

- Every human being possess a mind, which bear a level of consciousness.
- The consciousness is always going to affect the behaviour of the body.
- Language is an independent human faculty.
- Language Acquisition Device is inherited, changes with age.



Innateness of Hypothesis :-

A language are built into our brains at birth, as part of our genetic endowment, and hence we are born already knowing what a human language can be like.



Language Acquisition Device :-

- A hypothetical mental organ hypothesized by Chomsky to refer to children's innate ability to learn their native languages.
- Main components for the LAC are the healthy brain of child and its exposure to linguistic input.
- Chomsky got the Idea from Broca and Wernicke's areas.
- Of late Chomsky himself rejected the idea of LAD

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Competence and Performance :-

- Competence is the system of rules, a set of principles.
- Competence is one such ability with one can differentiate between grammatical and non grammatical concept.
- Performance is an act of encoding and decoding.

≡ Generative Grammar :-

- A grammar of a particular language which is capable of defining all and only the grammatical sentences of that language.
- Two Types :-
 1. Phrase Structure Grammar
 2. Transformational Grammar
- TG is kind of Generative Grammar.
- Apart from structure, some rules come in the process.
- These rules are known as transformation.
- Transformational Grammar also talks about another structure which is known as surface structure and the underlying one is known as deep structure.



Navitism :-

- Navitism indicates that concept, mental capabilities and mental structures are innate rather than acquired by learning.
- All human beings are born with an innate capability and Language system.



Government Binding Theory :-


- A system of innate principles and constraints which govern all languages and a set of parameters that define the syntax of particular language.

Grammatically and Acceptability :-

- Grammatically implies the grammatically correctness of a sentence.
- Acceptability refers to the fact if the sentence is comprehensible according to the normal human judgement.

Ex- A cow is flying

- A sentence can be grammatically well-constructed but it may not be acceptable to the normal human discretion.



So , we can say that, according to Chomsky, the capacity for organizing words into relationship with each other is inherent and the ordinary use of language is creative, innovative and more than merely a response to a stimulus.



Thank you!

A handwritten note on aged, yellowish paper. The words "Thank you!" are written in a cursive, black ink. Above the word "you" is a simple smiley face drawn with a circle and two dots for eyes and a curved line for a mouth. A horizontal line is drawn under the entire phrase "Thank you!".