

Schools of linguistics

Chomsky (American school)

The criteria of describing the school of linguistics

- 1- The intellectual climate (Historical Background)
- 2- Names of the school.
- 3- The founder(s) and the pioneer(s).
- 4- The aim(s) of the theory.
- 5- Concepts & Terms.
- 6- Principles.
- 7- Contributions.

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The intellectual climate.

- 1- Bloomfield school.
- 2- Bloomfieldian.
- 3- American linguistics.
- 4- American structuralism.

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The name(s) of the school:

- 1- Generative linguistics.
- 2- Generative grammar.
- 3- Transformational grammar.
- 4- Transformational generative grammar. (TGG)

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The founder(s) and pioneers of the school

1- Chomsky.

CA

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The aim(s):

- 1- The main task of linguistics is to describe the internalized system which produces these utterances. .1
- 2- One of the aims according to Chomsky is to discover universal grammar.

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Contribution:

1- A grammar which consists of a set of statements or rules which specify which sequences of language possible, and which impossible, is a generative grammar. Chomsky, therefore, initiated the era of generative linguistics. In his words, a grammar will be 'a device which generates all the grammatical sequences of a language and none of the ungrammatical ones'. Such a grammar is perfectly explicit, in that nothing is left to the imagination. The rules must be precisely formulated in such a way that anyone would be able to separate the well-formed sentences from the ill-formed ones, even if they did not know a word of the language concerned. The particular type of generative grammar proposed by Chomsky was a so-called characteristics of an transformational The basic one. transformational-generative grammar (TGG)

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2- Chomsky not only initiated the era of generative grammars. He also redirected attention towards language universals. He pointed out that as all humans are rather similar, their internalized language mechanisms are likely to have important common properties

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Concepts and terms

- 1- competence performance.
- 2- surface structure.
- 3- Deep and surface structure.
- 4- Language acquisition device.(LAD)
- 5- universal grammar.

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Principles

- 1- language structure is universal (that means there are certain similarities in the structure of the languages in the world.
- 2- creativity (one of the language features which distinguishes human from other species.
- 3- In the structure of the sentence there are always two levels deep structural and surface structural.

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Chomsky has in the opinion of many transformed linguistics from a relatively obscure discipline of interest mainly to PhD students and future missionaries into a major Social science of direct relevance to psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers and others.

Chomsky has shifted attention away from detailed descriptions of actual utterances, and started asking questions about the nature of the system which produces the output.

According to Chomsky, Bloomfieldian linguistics was both far too ambitious and far too limited in scope. It was too ambitious in that it was unrealistic to expect to be able to lay down foolproof rules for extracting a perfect description of a language from a mass of data. It was too limited because it concentrated on describing sets of utterances which happened to have been spoken.

linguistics also became very narrow. Trivial problems of analysis became major controversial issues, and no one who was not a linguist could understand the issues involved. By around 1950 linguistics had lost touch with other disciplines and become an abstruse subject of little interest to anyone outside.

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