

Noam Chomsky

1. Who is Noam Chomsky?

R/. Avram Noam Chomsky (born December 7, 1928) is an American linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist, political activist, author, and lecturer. He is an Institute Professor emeritus and professor emeritus of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Chomsky is well known in the academic and scientific community as the father of modern linguistics. Since the 1960s, he has become known more widely as a political dissident, an anarchist, and a libertarian socialist intellectual.

In the 1950s, Chomsky began developing his theory of generative grammar, which has undergone numerous revisions and has had a profound influence on linguistics. Within that field, he has been described as "a hero of Homeric proportions, belonging solidly in the pantheon of our country's finest minds, with all the powers and qualities thereof. First, foremost, and initially he is staggeringly smart. The speed, scope, and synthetic abilities of his intellect are legendary. He is, too, a born leader, able to marshal support, fierce and uncompromising support, for positions he develops or adopts. Often, it seems, he shapes linguistics by sheer force of will." He also established the Chomsky hierarchy, a classification of formal languages in terms of their generative power. His 1959 review of B. F. Skinner's Verbal Behavior challenged the behaviorist approaches to studies of behavior and language dominant at the time and contributed to the cognitive revolution in psychology. His naturalistic approach to the study of language has affected the philosophy of language and mind.

Beginning with his opposition to the Vietnam War Chomsky established himself as a prominent critic of US foreign and domestic policy. He is a self-declared adherent of libertarian socialism which he regards as "the proper and natural extension of classical liberalism into the era of advanced industrial society."

2. What is generative or transformational grammar?

R/. In linguistics, a transformational grammar, or transformational-generative grammar (TGG), is a generative grammar, especially of a natural language, that has been developed in a Chomskyan tradition. Additionally, transformational grammar is the Chomskyan tradition that gives rise to specific transformational grammars. Much current research in transformational grammar is inspired by Chomsky's Minimalist Program.

3. How does it differ from traditional grammar?

R/. Traditional grammar is the Latin-based system of parts of speech, conjugations, declensions, tense, etc. This type of grammar doesn't let you write like you talk. It doesn't, among other things, let you end a sentence with a preposition or start a sentence with the word "and" Traditional grammar attempts, usually within a single language, to analyse and elucidate the constituents of any given well-formed sentence. The focus of attention is on surface structure, not meaning. The main benefit of "traditional grammar" is that it gives learners a basic understanding of the building blocks of language, which can help in improving their writing skills but generative grammar was conceived originally as a way of describing language structures so that computers might one day communicate using human language, is a system of language

analysis that recognizes the relationship among the various elements of a sentence and among the possible sentences of a language and uses processes or rules (some of which are called transformations) to express these relationships. This type of grammar assigns a “deep structure” and a “surface structure” to show the relationship of such sentences. The use of transformational grammar in language analysis assumes a certain number of formal and substantive universals.