

Generative paradigm in the general linguistics

Generative linguistics is a school of thought within linguistics that makes use of the concept of a generative grammar. The term "generative grammar" is used in different ways by different people, and the term "generative linguistics" therefore has a range of different, though overlapping, meanings.

Formally, a generative grammar is defined as one that is fully explicit. It is a finite set of rules which are based on a subconscious set of procedures that can be applied to generate all those and only those sentences (often, but not necessarily, infinite in number) that are grammatical in a given language. This is the definition that is offered by Noam Chomsky, who invented the term, and by most dictionaries of linguistics. Generate is being used as a technical term with a particular sense. To say that a grammar generates a sentence means that the grammar "assigns a structural description" to the sentence.

The term generative grammar is also used to label the approach to linguistics taken by Chomsky and his followers. Chomsky's approach is characterised by the use of transformational grammar – a theory that has changed greatly since it was first promulgated by Chomsky in his 1957 book *Syntactic Structures* – and by the assertion of a strong linguistic nativism (and therefore an assertion that some set of fundamental characteristics of all human languages must be the same). The term "ge(ne)rative linguistics" is often applied to the earliest version of Chomsky's transformational grammar, which was associated with a distinction between the "deep structure" and "surface structure" of sentences.