

LINGUISTIC THEORY IN AMERICA

*The First Quarter-Century of
Transformational Generative Grammar*

Frederick J. Newmeyer

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON



ACADEMIC PRESS

A Subsidiary of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers

New York London Toronto Sydney San Francisco

PREFACE

xi

Chapter 1

The State of American Linguistics in the Mid 1950s

1

1.1 A Period of Optimism

1

1.2 Structural Linguistics

3

1.2.1 The Philosophical Underpinnings

3

1.2.2 Structuralist Methodology

6

1.2.3 Language and Psychology in the 1950s

11

1.3 Clouds on the Horizon

13

1.3.1 Crisis in Empiricist Philosophy

13

1.3.2 Unresolved Problems in Structural Linguistics

15

Chapter 2

The Chomskyan Revolution

19

2.1 Overview

19

2.2 *Syntactic Structures*

20

2.2.1 Linguistics Made a Science

20

2.2.2 Simplicity and the Evaluation of Grammars

21

2.2.3 Three Models of Linguistic Description

22

2.2.4 Grammaticality and Acceptability

28

2.2.5 Grammar and Meaning

31

2.3 Noam Chomsky

33

vii

2.4	Generative Grammars	35
2.5	Generative Phonology	37
2.5.1	The Prague School	37
2.5.2	Morris Halle	38
2.5.3	Early Generative Phonology	39
2.6	Language and Psychology after Chomsky	42
2.6.1	The Psychological Implications of the Theory	42
2.6.2	The Psychological Reality of Linguistic Constructs	44
2.7	Winning the Revolution	45
2.7.1	Robert B. Lees	45
2.7.2	The Ascendancy of Transformational Generative Grammar	46
2.8	The Growth of the Field	52

Chapter 3

From *Syntactic Structures* to *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* 61

3.1	Introduction	61
3.2	Revisions in the Syntactic Component: 1957–1965	61
3.2.1	<i>The Grammar of English Nominalizations</i>	61
3.2.2	The “Traffic Rule” Problem	62
3.2.3	The Derived Constituent Structure Problem	64
3.2.4	Underlying Trigger Morphemes	67
3.2.5	The Abandonment of the Notion “Kernel Sentence”	68
3.2.6	Recoverability of Deletion	69
3.2.7	Subcategorization	71
3.3	The Incorporation of Semantics into the Model	73
3.3.1	Katz and Fodor (1963)	73
3.3.2	Levels of Syntactic Structure, Transformations, and Meaning	78
3.4	Some Assumptions Made Explicit	81
3.4.1	Competence and Performance	82
3.4.2	Linguistic Universals	83
3.4.3	Levels of Adequacy	83
3.5	The <i>Aspects</i> Model	85
3.5.1	The Level of Deep Structure	87
3.5.2	The Transformational Component	89
3.5.3	Syntax and Semantics	91

Chapter 4

The Late 1960s 93

4.1	Toward Abstract Syntax	93
4.1.1	Arguments Based on the Katz–Postal Hypothesis	96
4.1.2	Arguments Based on <i>Aspects</i> Hypotheses about Deep Structure	101
4.1.3	Conventional Syntactic Arguments for Abstract Deep Structures	105
4.1.4	Novel or Unusual Argument Types for Abstract Deep Structures	109
4.2	The Birth of Generative Semantics	112

4.3 Chomsky's Response to Abstract Syntax	114
4.3.1 The Arguments for the Lexicalist Hypothesis	115
4.3.2 <i>The Initial Failure of Lexicalism</i>	118
4.4 A Closer Look at the Arguments for Abstract Syntax	120
4.4.1 The Question of Selectional Restrictions	121
4.4.2 Problems with the Katz-Postal Hypothesis	123
4.4.3 The Syntactic Arguments for Abstract Syntax	127
4.5 Case Grammar	128
4.6 Abstract Syntax: A Summary	132

Chapter 5

The Linguistic Wars	133
5.1 Introduction	133
5.2 The 1970 Interpretive Model	134
5.3 Some Problems of Terminology	136
5.4 Early Generative Semantics	138
5.4.1 Against the Level of Deep Structure	140
5.4.2 Rule Government	143
5.4.3 Global Rules	144
5.4.4 Logic and Semantic Representation	148
5.4.5 The Appeal of Generative Semantics	151
5.4.6 The Chicago and Berkeley Linguistic Societies	152
5.5 Late Generative Semantics	155
5.5.1 Beyond Global Rules	156
5.5.2 Fuzzy Grammar	158
5.5.3 The End of Grammatical Theory	160
5.5.4 On the Inevitability of These Developments	161
5.6 The Early Debate	161
5.6.1 A Period of Acrimony	161
5.6.2 The Globality Debate	162
5.6.3 The Deep Structure Debate	164
5.6.4 Other Issues	166
5.7 The Later Debate: The Collapse of Generative Semantics	167
5.7.1 The Generative Semantic Dynamic	167
5.7.2 "The Best Theory"	169
5.7.3 Generative Semantic Style	171
5.7.4 The Generative Semanticists' Organizational Problems	172
5.8 The Legacy of Generative Semantics	173

Chapter 6

Syntax in the 1970s: Constraining the Syntactic Rules	175
6.1 The Crucial Need for Syntactic Constraints	175
6.2 Constraints on Transformations	176
6.2.1 Constraints on Extraction	177
6.2.2 The Structure-Preserving Constraint	180
6.2.3 Constraints on Rules of Anaphora	183

6.3 "Blind Application" and Its Implications	185
6.3.1 Chomsky-Conditions	186
6.3.2 The Trace Theory of Movement Rules	189
6.4 Constraints on Base Rules	192
6.5 Surface Structure Constraints	195
6.6 Rule Interaction and Grammatical Organization	197
6.6.1 Rule Ordering	197
6.6.2 The Cycle	199
6.6.3 Syntax and Semantics	202
6.6.4 Syntax and Phonology	204
6.7 Syntax in the 1970s: Some Sociological Aspects	205
6.7.1 Publications	205
6.7.2 Three Groups of Syntacticians	206

Chapter 7

On the Boundary of Formal Grammar	209
7.1 Introduction	209
7.2 Pragmatics	209
7.2.1 Grammatical Approaches	210
7.2.2 Current Thinking	214
7.3 Perceptual Explanations	219
7.4 Functional Explanations	223

Chapter 8

Recent Developments in Syntax and Semantics	227
8.1 Work in Progress	227
8.2 Developments in Trace Theory	227
8.2.1 Chomsky's Recent Work	227
8.2.2 The Resistance to Chomsky's Model	232
8.3 Toward Nontransformational Grammar	236
8.3.1 The Autonomy Thesis	236
8.3.2 Nontransformational Models	240
8.4 Relational Grammar	241
8.5 Montague Grammar	245
8.6 Some Concluding Remarks	249

REFERENCES	251
NAME INDEX	277
GENERAL INDEX	283
INDEX OF RULES AND CONSTRAINTS	289