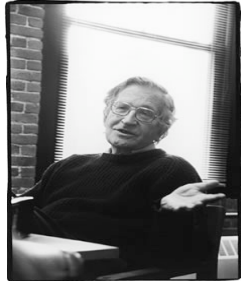


Noam Chomsky



Biography

- Born in Philadelphia in 1928
- MIT professor from 1955-present
- One of the godfathers of cognitive science
- Outspoken opponent of Vietnam War and U.S. foreign policy
- Numerous awards for contributions to both science and politics
- One of the most cited authors of the 20th century

Significant Works

Linguistics

- *Syntactic Structures* (1957)
- *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory* (1964)
- *Language and Mind* (1972)
- *Knowledge of Language* (1986)

Politics

- *Peace in the Middle East?* (1974)
- *Profit over People* (1998)
- *Rogue States* (2000)

Universal Grammar

- Human language is an innate trait and a product of evolution
- All languages have a common structural basis
- Language acquisition is too complex to be explained by behaviorism
- Normal children acquire language rapidly and in characteristic stages
- Children also acquire language without explicit guidance of native speakers

Deep Structure

- “Colorless green ideas sleep furiously” lacks meaning on a pragmatic level, but sounds more “correct” to English speakers than “Furiously green sleep ideas colorless.”
- This demonstrates that a deep syntactic structure governs what types of words can appear in what order, i.e., in English, adjectives before nouns, adverbs before verbs, etc.

Transformational Syntax

- Deep structure allows for speakers to change the grammatical structure of a sentence without changing its essential meaning
- “John threw the ball” vs. “The ball was thrown by John”
- Children make these changes without having to be taught, implying that the syntactic rules are already in place