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GENERATIVE GRAMMAR AS ONE OF THE MAIN DIRECTIONS OF MODERN LINGUISTICS

Generative grammar is one of the main directions of modern linguistics. It originated in the United States in the second half of the 1950s and still enjoys great authority and is actively developing not only in North America, but also in many European countries, Japan, and India. Another name under which this direction is known is Chomskyan linguistics, or Chomskyism, after the American linguist Noam Chomsky, one of the largest figures in the intellectual life of the 20th century. His ideas about the structure of language transformed the field of linguistics. Reviled by some and admired by others, Chomsky's ideas have laid the groundwork for the discipline of linguistics and have been very influential in computer science and philosophy.

The theory of generative grammar has come a long and difficult path of development. Real extensive empirical research in the field of generative grammar began in the 1980s. Over fifteen years of scientific research, several universal principles and parameters have been established that explain not only the existence of most linguistic phenomena but also the absence of those phenomena that are not observed in natural languages. Thus, generative grammar has no competitors in linguistics: it deals with restrictions on the form of human languages and puts forward a scientifically grounded concept of the acquisition of a native language by children. Generative grammar claims to be a theory of cognitive psychology, so it's reasonable to ask whether formal rules really exist in the brain/minds of speakers. After all, a brain is a mass of neurons firing away, so how can formal mathematical

rules exist up there? This question confuses two disciplines: psychology and neurology. Psychology is concerned with the mind, which represents the output and the abstract organization of the brain. Neurology is concerned with the actual firing of the neurons and the physiology of the brain. Generative grammar does not try to be a theory of neurology. Instead, it is a model of language psychology (Strunk, 1999, 12).

Generative grammar is fundamentally different from all, without exception, linguistic directions that existed before it, primarily in its task. While analyzing linguistic data, generative grammar does not consider their collection, description, and even generalization as an end in itself. The result of research conducted within the framework of generative grammar, according to the plan of its founder, should be an answer to the question of how a person learns a language. Therefore, we can say that generative grammar is not a theory of language, but a theory of language acquisition.

The ability of a person to speak a language was considered by Chomsky as one of the features of the human brain that distinguishes a person as a biological species. To understand how a person learns a language meant, according to Chomsky, to shed light on one of the aspects of the structure of human consciousness.

The research program formulated by Chomsky, aimed at explaining the human ability to acquire language, had the following observations as a starting point:

- the set of grammatically correct sentences in any natural language is infinite, therefore language acquisition cannot be reduced to simple memorization of all correct sentences in this language (just as the grammar of a language cannot be a description of all the attested sentences in this language – no matter how great they are, it will certainly not include all sentences allowed in this language);

- the child quickly masters the grammar of the native language, i.e. becomes able to distinguish a grammatically correct sentence in this language from an incorrect one (Horrocks, 1987, 24-25).

There is an obvious contradiction between these two observations, which Chomsky sought to explain. A child who has mastered the grammar of his native language (in most cases this process is completed by the age of five), correctly determines which sentences in this language are grammatically correct, even though he has not heard most of these sentences before: even with a rich experience of verbal communication, the set of all sentences ever heard by a child in the speech of adults is finite – in contrast to the number of grammatically correct sentences in the language. It is also impossible to assume that all the sentences, the incorrectness of which are correctly recorded by the child, were previously uttered by him or other children in his presence and corrected by adults: there are infinitely many incorrect sentences that can be composed of words of any language, meanwhile incorrect sentences, ever corrected by adults in a child's speech, form a finite, closed set.

Generative grammar is distinct from other grammars such as prescriptive grammar, which attempts to establish standardized language rules that deem certain usages 'right' or 'wrong,' and descriptive grammar, which attempts to describe language as it is used (including the study of pidgins and dialects). Instead, generative grammar attempts to get at something deeper – the foundational principles that make language possible across all of humanity (Parker, 2009, 17).

For example, a prescriptive grammarian may study how parts of speech are ordered in English sentences, to lay out rules (nouns precede verbs in simple sentences, for example). A linguist studying generative grammar, however, is more likely to be interested in issues such as how nouns are distinguished from verbs across multiple languages.

In the last decade, several new ideas of a methodological nature have appeared in generative grammar. However, the general attitude towards the study of a person's linguistic competence, observed through the universal restrictions on the grammars of the languages of the world, remained unchanged.

СПИСОК ЛІТЕРАТУРИ

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