

MODULE 1: CHOMSKY'S UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR

- Unit 1: Aspects of the Knowledge of Language
 Unit 2: Aspects of Parametric Variations
 Unit 3: Rules and Notational Conventions
 Unit 4: English Phrase Structure Rules

UNIT 1: ASPECTS OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE

Chomsky's Universal Grammar is concerned with the condition that must be satisfied by the grammar of all languages. This condition is made up of two parts: the Aspect of the Knowledge of Language (which is the core), and the Parametric Variations (which is the periphery).

In this unit, we shall consider some aspects of the knowledge of language. The unit is arranged as follows:

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The capacity for acquiring and using a language is a property that distinguishes human beings from all other species. The task of the linguist is to explain what it is about human beings that renders them capable of performing this feat, and what it is about human languages that renders them capable of being learned and used by human beings.

In this unit, we shall attempt to clarify the relation between knowledge and language from two different directions. First, we would want to distinguish between two types of knowledge, linguistic and non-linguistic (and hence between two types of rules, linguistic and non-linguistic); second, we want to distinguish between knowledge of rules and the exercise of that knowledge (and hence, between knowing language and speaking or understanding it). Our main