Theorist Noam Chomsky (1928–, educator and linguist, b. Philadelphia) revolutionized the scientific study of language. Chomsky, who has taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology since 1955, is most famous for his grammar that revolutionized the scientific study of language. He first set out his abstract analysis of sentence structure in 1957 and then developed an influential theory of grammar that was widely adopted by generations of students, including linguists trained at MIT, who created the so-called MIT School of Transformational Grammar. In the late 1960s and 1970s, Chomsky adapted his theory to account for a variety of linguistic phenomena, including those from non-Western languages. In the 1980s, Chomsky began to apply his theory to disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, and computer science.

Chomsky's work on transformational grammar was a 1960s fad that had spread across the U.S. at a time when the federal government had invested heavily in new technology and computer science. In a broader sense, Chomsky's rise to fame was orchestrated by Bernard Bloch, editor of Language, the leading journal of the time. According to Koerner, Chomsky's rise to fame was orchestrated by Bernard Bloch, editor of Language, the leading journal of the time. (1978) Towards a Historiography of Linguistics: Selected Essays. John Benjamins. pp. 21–54.

Chomsky himself has been criticized for his theories of language, which were once considered to be the most important contribution to linguistic theory. However, his theory has been criticized for being too abstract and too focused on syntax, which is the study of the structure of sentences. Chomsky's theory has also been criticized for being too narrow and not taking into account the role of meaning in language. Chomsky's theory has also been criticized for being too rigid and not allowing for the possibility of new grammatical structures.

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