

The Biolinguistic Perspective by Noam Chomsky

The biolinguistic perspective views a person's language in all of its aspects – sound, meaning, structure – as a state of some component of the mind. From the array of phenomena that one might loosely consider language-related, the biolinguistic approach focuses attention on a component of human biology that enters into the use and acquisition of language. One of the basic questions to be asked from the biological point of view," is the extent to which apparent principles of language, including some that had only recently come to light, are unique to this cognitive system." An even more basic question from the biological point of view is how much of language can be given a principled explanation, whether or not homologous elements can be found in other domains or organisms. The effort to sharpen these questions and to investigate them for language has come to be called "the minimalist program" in recent years, but the questions arise for any biological system, and are independent of theoretical persuasion, in linguistics and other domains. Answers to these questions are not only fundamental to understanding of the nature and functioning of organisms and their subsystems, but also to investigation of their growth and evolution.