Chomsky's linguistics

The paper " Chomsky’s Linguistics, Popperian Way of Doing Science, and Kuhn’s Ideas of the Paradigm Change" is an excellent example of a term paper on humanitarian. Noam Chomsky is one of the brightest linguists, who have breached the gaps between philosophy, biology, linguistics and political science. He combined all of these sciences in his remarkable works through the power of linguistics. He broadened the understanding of linguistics in everyday life and raised some core concepts that are applicable to discourse and content analysis.

I would definitely agree with his statement that in any major science “ especially social science any major question is open.” This quote brings a key understanding of how science works. Linguistics like any other science is built on the same shared principles. In this regard, I would like to address the work of Karl Popper who highlighted a similar approach to science.

In his book Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge (Popper, 1974), Karl Popper precisely highlighted issues related to the process of scientific research. According to Popper a researcher should always be aware of his limitations and accept criticism of his research accordingly.

At the same time, I agree with Godfrey-Smith, saying that “ the more tests a theory passes, the more confidence we can have in its truth. The idea that we can gradually increase our confidence that a theory is true is an idea that Popper rejected”(Godfrey-Smith, 2003, p70).

The Popperian way of doing science can be enriched by ideas of Thomas Kuhn, who suggested a different approach towards the structure of science (Kuhn, 1970). Kuhn’s scientific revolutions happen when scientists encounter a critical mass of anomalies that cannot be explained by the widely accepted

paradigm. At the moment when the critical level is reached, the final formation of paradigm occurs. Boundaries of paradigms widen, thus leading to a shift. The same process can be repeated as many times as it is necessary. So basically, quantitative changes (the normal science) in sciences are followed by qualitative changes (the scientific revolution). Kuhn’s ideas of the paradigm change can be observed in many spheres of science, and linguistics is not an exception. Sometimes an experiment could refute a theory completely and could lead to the revision of old patterns or even its rejection. Chomsky’s views on linguistics were revolutionary in many ways and have changed the way the field of linguistics operates.

Chomsky questions how the languages appear and the fact that there is more than one language. Obviously, there are many ideas and theories of how languages emerged but none of them provide a full understanding of the matter. Chomsky’s conclusion is that we are preprogrammed to learn the language and this habit appeared on the evolutionary level. His claim that “ all human languages must have in common one basic structure that corresponds to this pre-programming” seems plausible. Following his logic, there should be a particular mechanism for learning foreign languages as humans are already pre-programmed for that (Searle, 1972).

In his works, Chomsky tried to address the issues of linguistics from various angles and never took the familiar knowledge for granted. Clearly, it is impossible to observe the changes in someone’s personal use of language, but it is possible to compare other people experiences, yet there are certain limitations to it.

Chomsky’s approach has gained wide recognition not only in the field of linguistics but also in other social sciences. Media researchers and political

scientists apply Chomsky’s understanding of the language and create an analysis of the impact and language perception on masses. Academics study the political discourse and are able to highlight the cases of mass manipulation or disinformation by means of the language.

People have different understandings of what perfect research should look like, its criteria, and its requirements. Chomsky has created his own sets of criteria and methods that went beyond the field of linguistics thus combining different areas of science. However, even his popular approach can be refuted later on. A researcher is unable to take into consideration all possible opinions, due to the large scope of criteria. However, his work might be enriched with additional research and information later on. I assume that only trial and error method (conjecture-refutation) could be applied for knowledge and any kind of development.