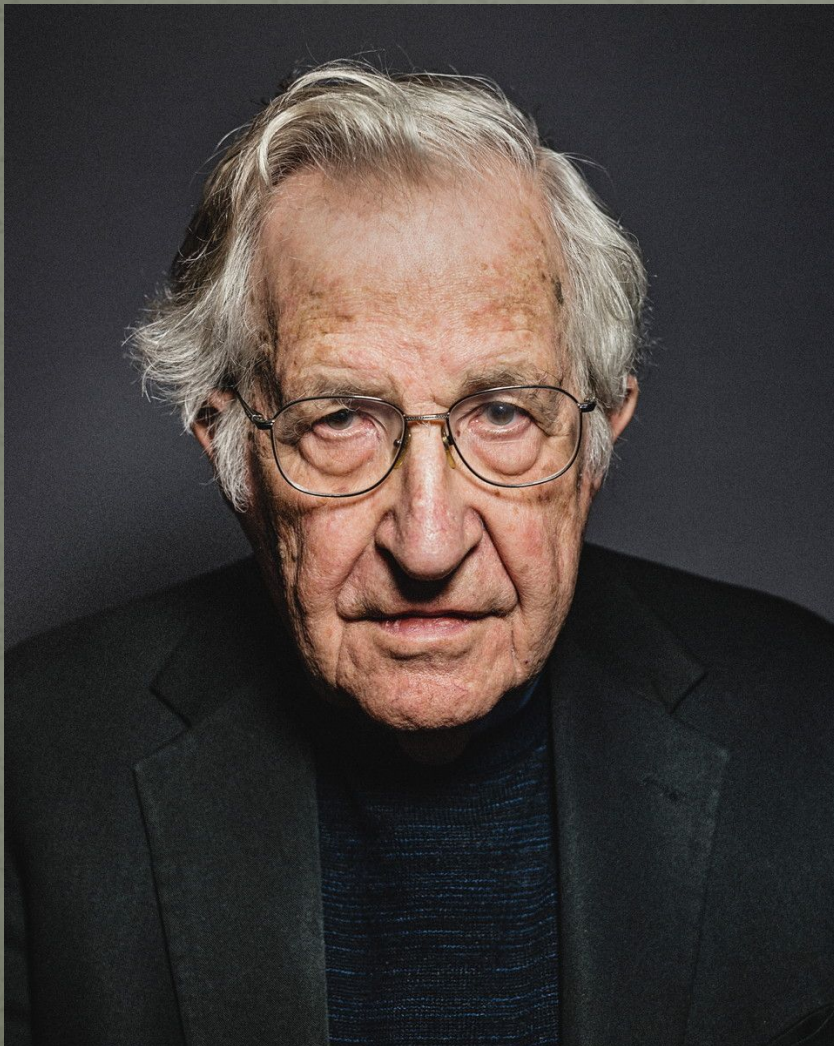# ◎Avram Noam Chomsky

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Sukovach Evgeniya, 2018,
Moscow Pedagogical State University,
Institute of International Education,
Syllabus: pedagogical education (English and economics),
subject: Applied Linguistics,
110 group

Who is Noam Chomsky?

American theoretical linguist whose work from the 1950s revolutionized the field of linguistics by treating language as a uniquely human, biologically based cognitive capacity. Through his contributions to linguistics and related fields, including cognitive psychology and the philosophies of mind and language, Chomsky helped to initiate and sustain what came to be known as the "cognitive revolution." Chomsky also gained a worldwide following as a political dissident for his analyses of the pernicious influence of economic elites on U.S. domestic politics, foreign policy, and intellectual culture.

Hundreds of billions of dollars are spent every year to control the public mind.

~Noam Chomsky

What is linguistics according to Chomsky?

Chomsky's major contribution to studying language was that he made it scientific. He demonstrated that despite the observable variety of the world's languages, there is in reality only one language. All other languages — dead, still spoken, or even future ones — are variations of a single theme. After Chomsky, linguistics is defined as 'the scientific study of language,' 'language' in the singular.
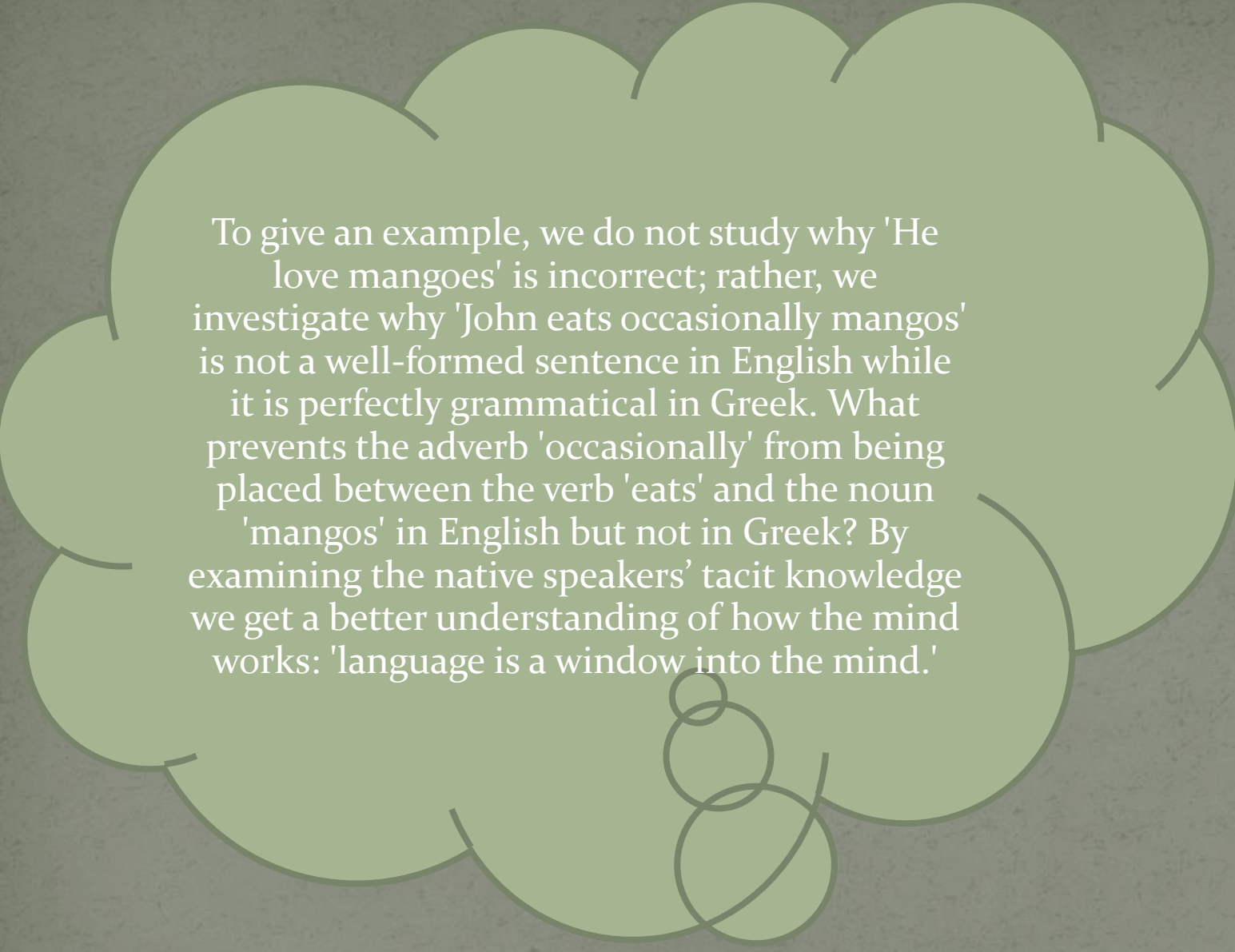
Why does linguistics matter?

Linguistics, much like the other sciences, has the following three characteristics:

1) It provides a general theory that explains why languages are the way they are: there is a universal basis, or faculty, in the mind, innate in every human and dedicated to language, that incorporates the basic principles, and what all of us do while learning our mother tongue at a tender age is setting values to these principles based on the data we get by exposure to an unorganized and random set of utterances via interaction with other people.

2) The theory then generates testable hypotheses, rules, and falsifiable predictions about what occurs in a language and hence in all human languages. The data used to test these hypotheses are native speakers' intuitions on the grammaticality and ungrammaticality of the sentences of their language: what we study is what people tacitly know about their language. We do not study if sentences abide by the rules of grammar, but whether sentences can be explained with the hypotheses we make.

To give an example, we do not study why 'He love mangoes' is incorrect; rather, we investigate why 'John eats occasionally mangos' is not a well-formed sentence in English while it is perfectly grammatical in Greek. What prevents the adverb 'occasionally' from being placed between the verb 'eats' and the noun 'mangos' in English but not in Greek? By examining the native speakers' tacit knowledge we get a better understanding of how the mind works: 'language is a window into the mind.'

3) These hypotheses change, get refined or are even abandoned when they cannot accommodate the data, and that's the way we move on in our search for the truth in language learning.

In linguistics, as in the other sciences, we aim at explaining some data and not everything, making small steps at a time. Many steps have been made since 1957, but we still have a long way to go. However, we have a solid path to follow thanks to Chomsky.

Verification of the learned

1.Who is Noam Chomsky?
2. What is Chomsky's main contribution to language studying?
3. What is linguistics according to Chomsky?
4. What characteristics does linguistics have?
5. What is the main thing in language learning?(in your opinion, based on the previously provided small information and personal experience)

Sources:

https://www.britannica.com/biography/Noam-Chomsky

http://blog.mangolanguages.com/noam-chomsky-his-contribution-to-linguistics/