



Chomskian revolution:

Language is not just “verbal behavior” –

- Stimulus-response and associations cannot explain complexity of language use and acquisition
- (6) Colorless green ideas sleep furiously
- (7) The teacher holded the baby rabbits, and we patted them

Chomsky's thesis (1957):

- Natural languages can be described as *formal languages*
- like programming languages or logic, they can be captured by means of **generative grammars**.

- Linguists look for patterns they can describe by systems of rules
 - Competence vs. performance



Richard Montague's thesis (1960s and early 1970s)

- Natural languages can be described as *interpreted formal languages*
- Like logic, they have a semantics
 - which assigns to expressions in the language **meanings** that have to do with statements being true or false

What do we mean by meaning?

- **PROSTITUTES APPEAL TO POPE**
- **KIDS MAKE NUTRITIOUS SNACKS**
- **JUVENILE COURT TO TRY SHOOTING DEFENDANT**
- **IRAQI HEAD SEEKS ARMS**
- **MAN EATING PIRANHA MISTAKENLY SOLD AS PET FISH**
- **STOLEN PAINTING FOUND BY TREE**
- **ENRAGED COW INJURES FARMER WITH AX**
- **SQUAD HELPS DOG BITE VICTIM**

What does this mean?

- **I saw her duck.**