An I-LANGUAGE (I-L) is a system represented in the mind/brain, ultimately by physical mechanisms, and in this sense internalized; it is a particular characterization of a function that takes physical events and things and assigns status to them. These are real things and it is these that we should focus on in language study—language study becomes empirical science.

I. For Chomsky, the term ‘language’, ‘grammar’, and ‘universal grammar’ have the following meanings:

- **language**: an I-L.
- **grammar**: a theory of an I-L.
- **universal grammar** (UG): a system of principles that specifies what it is to be an I-L.

II. Linguistic Theory

A. It contains within it subtheories, such as *binding theory*, which concerns the connections between noun phrases that concern semantic properties such as reference (e.g., a pronoun and its antecedent), *government theory*, which concerns the structural relationship between phrases and sub-phrases in sentences, *case theory*, and others. Chomsky’s brand of linguistic theory is known as *Government-Binding Theory*.

B. We can begin with the lexical categories: *nouns* (N), *verbs* (V), *adjectives* (A), and *adpositions* (P). Each of these is projected onto a phrase by UG: *noun phrases* (NP), *verb phrases* (VP), *adjective phrases* (AP), and *adpositional phrases* (PP). The items from the categories N, V, A, and P are the heads of each of these phrases, and the remainder is the *complement*. The heads of these phrases and their complements conform to the following principle:

\[ XP = X-YP \]

Principle (1) can be parametrized in two ways: *head first* or *head last*, according to the arrangements of heads and complements.

C. Sentences are constructed out of phrases in conformity with principles as well. For example, a Subject-Verb-Object sentence has the following structure:

\[ [C \ NP [VP V NP] ] \]
This can be regarded as a principle governing that type of linguistic representation. It’s important to note that these sentences exhibit *subject-object asymmetry*, which is an example of the structure dependence of natural language. Natural language is not linear and it’s not logical, in the sense that its structure does not correspond to the structures of logical languages. (E.g., the rule of question formation.)

D. A fundamental principle of this UG is the *Projection Principle*: the lexical properties of each lexical item must be preserved at every level of representation. There is evidence, for example, that the level of interrogative representation is arrived at by moving through the level of declarative representation. In moving from level to level, the properties of each item must be preserved.

E. *Miscellany:* in Chs. 3 and 4 of Chomsky’s book, *Language and Problems of Knowledge*, you are exposed to subtle linguistic details designed to reinforce the fact that language is too complex to learn with the minimal data we encounter. Among the various linguistic items used to reinforce this point are the null subject parameter (p. 64), *empty categories*, such as traces (p. 81) and pro/PRO (p. 122), pronouns (pp. 18, 49, 51), anaphora (p. 77), quantifiers (p. 87), finite and infinitival forms, case (p. 101), chains (p. 116), etc. Several principles of UG are also introduced:

(3) An anaphor must be bound within the minimal domain of a subject (p. 77).

(4) A pronoun must be free within the minimal domain of a subject (p. 78).

(5) If a NP appears in the position of subject of an infinitival clause, it must be assigned case in some manner (104).

F. Not every option is fully used, or even used at all, in every language.