

WHERE IS MAINSTREAM GENERATIVE GRAMMAR GOING?

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Generative grammar, an approach to grammar which emphasizes precision and explicitness, has been with us since 1957. Until the 1970s the only form of generative grammar was transformational grammar, whose central assumption is that grammar involves movement processes, but since the late 1970s transformational grammar has been challenged by other forms of generative grammar which reject this assumption. In spite of these challenges, what Culicover and Jackendoff call Mainstream Generative Grammar (MGG), the most influential form of generative grammar, remains a version of transformational grammar. However, the Minimalist version of MGG, introduced by Chomsky in the early 1990s, has not enjoyed the success of the 1980s Government-Binding framework. I will consider why this is. I will conclude that the future looks very uncertain for MGG. In other words, it is not clear that MGG is going anywhere.