

Generative phonology distinguishes *three levels of adequacy* of phonological analysis.

1. OBSERVATIONALLY ADEQUATE ANALYSIS: Accurately accounts for the data.

e.g. , If a description of English phonology states that there are words such as *play* and *clay* but no word *\*nlay* exists.



Observationally adequate: correctly states that certain forms exist while others don't.

2. DESCRIPTIVELY ADEQUATE ANALYSIS: There is a correspondence between the analysis and the linguistic intuition of the native speaker.

e.g., *\*nlay* not only is not observed, but it could not be a possible word in English; the native speaker intuitively knows that it is not possible to have a *nl*-cluster at the beginning of the word in English.

Descriptively adequate: refers to the *knowledge* of the native speaker.

3. EXPLANATORY ADEQUACY:
  - A higher level of adequacy that considers a set of universal conditions which all grammars of possible human languages must obey;
  - It motivates the choice of the best grammar from all the descriptively adequate grammars;

Chomsky assumes that the child possesses an innate mechanism for *deducing* the full structure of the language he/she has to learn from the data presented to him/her. IT IS ASSUMED THAT LINGUISTIC ANALYSES ARE TRUE TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY APPROXIMATE THIS MECHANISM.

CLASSICAL PHONEMICS: *Observationally adequate* analysis

GENERATIVE PHONOLOGIES: Aim to provide analyses of *descriptive and explanatory adequacy*.