

Preface

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Scrambling and the Survive Principle

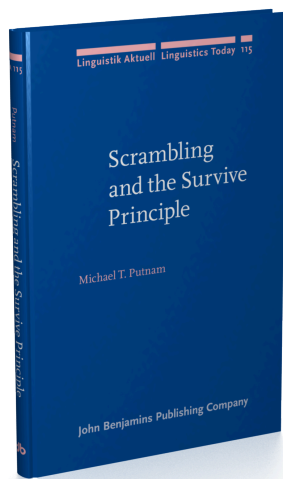
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PREFACE

Languages with free word orders pose daunting challenges to linguistic theory because they raise questions about the nature of grammatical strings. Ross, who coined the term *Scrambling* to refer to the relatively ‘free’ word orders found in Germanic languages (among others) notes that “... the problems involved in specifying exactly the subset of the strings which will be generated ... are far too complicated for me to even mention here, let alone come to grips with” (1967: 52). Over the past four decades, generative linguists have attempted to resolve Ross’s dilemma. Recent treatments of *Scrambling* (i.e., in Government and Binding-theory (GB) and in the Minimalist Program (MP)) have proposed to align *Scrambling* with either A- or A’-movement, analyzing *Scrambling* as some form of XP-adjunction (cf. Chomsky 1986, Webelhuth 1989, among others); or to attribute a language’s ability to license *Scrambling* to the head-complement parameter of the verb phrase (see Haider 1993, Haider and Rosengren 2003, among others). What remains unclear in the vast majority of these analyses is the division of labor assigned to subdivisions of the human language faculty in generating and evaluating scrambled strings. The purpose of this book is to investigate the syntactic properties of middle field *Scrambling* in synchronic West Germanic languages, and to explore, to what possible extent we can classify *Scrambling* as a ‘syntactic phenomenon’ within minimalist desiderata.

This book offers a radical re-analysis of middle field *Scrambling*. It argues that *Scrambling* is a concatenation effect, as described in Stroik’s (2007) *Survive* analysis of minimalist syntax, driven by an interpretable referentiality feature [Ref] to the middle field, where syntactically encoded features for temporality and other world indices are checked. The results of this analysis are far-reaching: First, we no longer need to concern ourselves with the archaic notions of A/A’-movement characteristics. These constructs established to label movement legacies are no longer necessary; displacement behaviors can be traced to patterns exhibited by individual features. Second, the debate as to whether or not *Scrambling* involves substitution (i.e., movement to a specifier) or adjunction is no longer relevant in minimalist analyses: The ‘survival’ of the [Ref] feature into the middle field respects the concatenate integrity of the functional head bearing this feature as well as the lexical item that merge in a local Spec-Head relation. Third, the analysis championed here delivers a framework which serves as an optimal tool in understanding the division of labor present at the syntax-phonology interface with regard to the licensing of permuted word order strings produced via *Scrambling*. Lastly, the present text investigates whether a revised notion of

Grohmann's (2000a, 2003) *Prolific Domains* can be applied to *Survive*-minimalism. By appealing to the *Survive Principle* and a reformed version of *Prolific Domains*, the analyses and arguments put forward in this book provide a novel sketch of minimalist syntactic theory that issues a clearer understanding of the responsibility of the syntax in licensing *Scrambling* as well as a more elaborate mapping system of syntactic structure to the external performance systems.