

# Preface

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**Minimal Ideas: Syntactic studies in the minimalist framework**

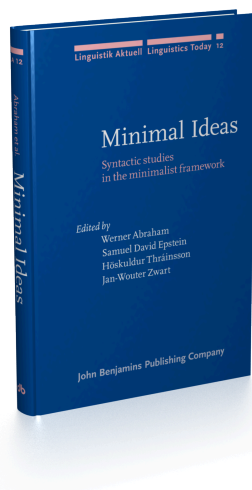
**Edited by Werner Abraham, Samuel David Epstein,  
Höskuldur Thráinsson and Jan-Wouter Zwart**

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## Preface

The papers in this volume come from two sources. Earlier versions of the papers by Den Dikken, Haegeman, Solà, Vanden Wyngaerd, and Zwart were published in *Groninger Arbeiten zu germanistischen Linguistik* (GAGL) and the authors are all affiliated with European universities (see List of Contributors, and the Bibliographical Information at the end of the Table of Contents). The remaining papers, those by Ferguson, Groat & O'Neil, Jonas, Kitahara, Poole, and Thráinsson, were originally written while their authors were affiliated with the Department of Linguistics at Harvard University and earlier versions of the papers by Kitahara and Ferguson were published in *Harvard Working Papers in Linguistics* (HWPL) (see Bibliographical Information).

All these papers are inspired by the Minimalist Program first outlined in Noam Chomsky's MIT Fall term class lectures of 1991 and in his seminal paper "A Minimalist Program for Linguistic Theory" (Chomsky 1993).

The editors of the present book were involved in editing the working paper volumes mentioned above (Abraham and Zwart for *GAGL*, and Epstein and Thráinsson for *HWPL*) or had worked closely with the authors of the papers. It became clear to us that the papers under discussion were highly similar in spirit. They all sought to develop further some key idea of the Minimalist Program, sometimes in ways deviating from the course taken by Chomsky, but always explicating or exploring the (cross-linguistic) empirical adequacy of the relevant "minimal ideas". For this reason it seemed to us that they should be published in a single volume which could, with a proper introduction, serve as a useful introduction to the Minimalist Program, and, more generally, as excellent text material for a course on modern syntactic theory. We discussed this idea with

the publisher, John Benjamins, who agreed with us. All of the papers have been thoroughly revised and we have added a detailed introduction (written by Epstein, Thráinsson and Zwart) relating the Minimalist Program to earlier versions of generative syntactic theory and putting the present articles into perspective. We hope that the reader agrees that this transatlantic cooperation has been very fruitful.

As the reader will note, most of the articles in this volume are concerned with issues first raised in Chomsky's paper on the economy of derivation and representation (1991) and his first two minimalist papers, namely "A Minimalist Program for Linguistic Theory" (1993, first distributed in 1992) and "Bare Phrase Structure" (1995a, first distributed in 1994). Consequently, each article begins with a quote from one of these papers, which serves to highlight the particular grammatical or theoretical issue that is primarily discussed in the relevant article.

Several articles also address the basic ideas in Richard Kayne's book, *The Antisymmetry of Syntax* (1994, distributed in part in manuscript form in 1993). In many respects, therefore, these articles develop alternatives to ideas proposed in chapter 4, "Categories and Transformations" (Chomsky 1995b) of Chomsky's most recent book, *The Minimalist Program*, without basing their discussion directly on that "version" of the Minimalist Program. Some of the articles contain references to chapter 4 of Chomsky 1995b, however, and comments on similarities and differences between ideas developed in these articles and in chapter 4 of Chomsky 1995b can also be found in the Introduction.

Finally, we would like to thank Kees Vaes of John Benjamins for his interest in this project and his help seeing it through, René Mulder for assistance in preparing the manuscripts, and all the authors for their patient cooperation.

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