



Locality in Minimalist Syntax (Linguistic Inquiry Monographs)

By Thomas S. Stroik

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In this highly original reanalysis of minimalist syntax, Thomas Stroik considers the optimal design properties for human language. Taking as his starting point Chomsky's minimalist assumption that the syntactic component of a language generates representations for sentences that are interpreted at perceptual and conceptual interfaces, Stroik investigates how these representations can be generated most parsimoniously. Countering the prevailing analyses of minimalist syntax, he argues that the computational properties of human language consist only of strictly local Merge operations that lack both look-back and look-forward properties. All grammatical operations reduce to a single sort of locally defined feature-checking operation, and all grammatical properties are the cumulative effects of local grammatical operations. As Stroik demonstrates, reducing syntactic operations to local operations with a single property--merging lexical material into syntactic derivations--not only radically increases the computational efficiency of the syntactic component, but it also optimally simplifies the design of the computational system. Locality in Minimalist Syntax explains a range of syntactic phenomena that have long resisted previous generative theories, including that-trace effects, superiority effects, and the interpretations available for multiple-wh constructions. It also introduces the Survive Principle, an important new concept for syntactic analysis, and provides something considered impossible in minimalist syntax: a locality account of displacement phenomena.

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Editorial Review

Review

"After a good fifteen years of intense research and theorizing on the design of the language faculty, Tom Stroik manages to take the minimalist enterprise to yet another level and offer new insights on the 'optimal' design of human language." --Kleanthes K. Grohmann, Department of English Studies, University of Cypress

About the Author

Thomas S. Stroik is Professor of English and Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He is the author of *Syntactic Controversies; Minimalism, Scope, and VP Structure; Path Theory and Argument Structure*; and *The Pragmatics of Metaphor*.

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