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Sommario/riassunto

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). This book offers a radical re-analysis of middle field Scrambling. It argues that Scrambling is a concatenation effect, as described in Stroik's (1999, 2000, 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 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 Survive-minimalist desiderata.