

## Exploring the Syntax–Semantics Interface

Language is a system of communication in which grammatical structures function to express meaning in context. While all languages can achieve the same basic communicative ends, they each use different means to achieve them, particularly in the divergent ways that syntax, semantics and pragmatics interact across languages. This book looks in detail at how structure, meaning and communicative function interact in human languages. Working within the framework of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG), Van Valin proposes a set of rules, called the ‘linking algorithm’, which relates syntactic and semantic representations to each other, with discourse-pragmatics playing a role in the linking. Using this model, he discusses the full range of grammatical phenomena, including the structures of simple and complex sentences, verb and argument structure, voice, reflexivization and extraction restrictions. Clearly written and comprehensive, this book will be welcomed by all those working on the interface between syntax, semantics and pragmatics.

ROBERT D. VAN VALIN JR. is Professor of Linguistics at the University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, and is the primary developer of the framework of Role and Reference Grammar. He is co-author of *Functional Syntax and Universal Grammar* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), editor of *Advances in Role and Reference Grammar* (1993), primary author of *Syntax: Structure and Function* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), and author of *An Introduction to Syntax* (Cambridge University Press, 2001). He has published many articles on syntax, universal grammar, language typology, language acquisition and neurolinguistics.

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*University at Buffalo,  
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Meinem Freund Hartmut Czepluch  
in bleibender Erinnerung gewidmet

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## Preface

This book is an introduction to Role and Reference Grammar, which updates the presentation of the theory presented in *Syntax: structure, meaning and function*. It includes the major developments in the theory since the publication of *Syntax* in 1997. It can be used as a textbook for teaching Role and Reference Grammar, and while it does not contain any exercises, the exercises from *Syntax* can be used with this book as well. The following table relates the exercises from the earlier book to the chapter topics in this one.

Exercises in <i>Syntax</i>	Chapter in this book
Chapter 2	Chapter 1
Chapters 3, 4	Chapter 2
Chapter 5	Chapter 3
Chapter 6	Chapter 4
Chapter 7	Chapter 5
Chapter 8	Chapter 6
Chapter 9	Chapter 7

These exercises (with password-protected solutions) are available online [www.cambridge.org/052101056X](http://www.cambridge.org/052101056X).

This book has benefited greatly from comments and suggestions from many people over the course of its long gestation. I would especially like to thank the many participants in courses on Role and Reference Grammar, both at the University at Buffalo and at universities around the world, for their indispensable insights, comments and suggestions, especially Jeruen Dery, Klaus Michael Geyer, Anja Latrouite, Heike Lehnert, Mark Miller, John Roberts and Janick Wrona. I would also like to thank Delia Bentley, Balthasar Bickel, Daniel Everett, Rolf Kailuweit, Craig Kopris, Kwee Tjoe Liong, Beth Levin, Laura Michaelis, Toshio Ohori, Mitsuaki Shimojo, Richard Weist and David Wilkins for their valuable input.

## Abbreviations

A, ACT	actor
A <sub>T</sub>	actor of transitive verb
ABS	absolute
ACC	accusative
ACS	accessible
ACV	activated
ADV	adverb
AFD	actual focus domain
ANTI	antipassive
AOR	aoist
APPL	applicative
ART	article
ASP	aspect
ATV	active voice
AUG	stem augment
AUH	actor–undergoer hierarchy
AUX	auxiliary
BNU	brand new – unanchored
CAUS	causative
CL	classifier
CLM	clause-linkage marker
CONT	continuative
COP	copula
DAT	dative
DCA	direct core argument
DCT	direct
DEC	declarative
DEF	definite
DEIC	deictic
DEM	demonstrative
DEP	dependent
DET	determiner
DIR	directional
dl	dual
DOBJ	direct object

d-S	derived intransitive subject
DS	different subject
DSTR	distributive
DT	different topic
DTR	detransitivizer
ERG	ergative
EVID	evidential
EVQ	event quantification
F	feminine
FOC	focus
FPAST	far past
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
HON	honorific
HPSG	Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar
HS	hearsay
IF	illocutionary force
IMP	imperative
IMPER	impersonal
IMPF	imperfective
IN	inchoative
INA	inactive
INAN	inanimate
INCL	inclusive
IND	indicative
INF	infinitive
INFER	inferential
INGR	ingressive
INST	instrumental
INT	interrogative
INTR	intransitive
IRR	irrealis
ITER	iterative
IU	information unit
LDP	left detached position
LFG	Lexical-Functional Grammar
LNK	linker
LOC	locative
LS	logical structure
LSC	layered structure of the clause
LSNP	layered structure of the noun phrase
M	masculine
MOD	modality
MR	macrorole



xx	List of abbreviations
N	neuter
NASP	nominal aspect
NEG	negative
NEGPAST	negative past
NM	noun marker
NMR	non-macrorole
NOM	nominative
NONSIM	non-simultaneous
NP	noun phrase
NFPF	NP-final position
NPIP	NP-initial position
NPP	non-past progressive
ns	non-singular
NUC	nucleus
NUM	number
OBJ	object
OBL	oblique
OBLG	obligation
P	preposition/postposition
PART	participle
PASS	passive
PAST	past tense
PER	periphery
PERF	perfect
PFD	potential focus domain
pl	plural
PM	proper noun marker
PoCS	postcore slot
POL	politeness marker
PP	prepositional/postpositional phrase
PrCS	precore slot
PRDM	predicate marker
PRED	predicate
PRES	present
PRESUM	presumptive evidential
PRFV	perfective
PRO	pronoun
PROC	process
PROG	progressive
PROP	proper
PROX	proximate
PRT	particle
PSA	privileged syntactic argument
PSBL	possible

---

PSTP	past participle
Q	question marker
QLT	quality
QNT	quantifier
RDP	right-detached position
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative
REMPST	remote past
RES	result
RRG	Role and Reference Grammar
S	intransitive subject
SEML	semelfactive
SEQ	sequential
sg	singular
SH	subject honorific
SIM	simultaneous
SP	same privileged syntactic argument
SPEC	specific
SS	same subject
STA	status
SUBJ	subject
SUFF	suffix
TM	terminal marker
TNS	tense
TOP	topic
TPAST	today's past
TR	transitive
U, UND	undergoer
U <sub>T</sub>	undergoer of transitive verb
V	verb
VBLZ	verbalizer
VIS	visual evidence evidential
VP	verb phrase
XP	phrase of category X
YPAST	yesterday's past