

## **Abstract RRG conference 2023**

### **Revisiting the RRG binary lexical categories distinction: evidence from South America**

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Category labels such as "noun" and "verb" have traditionally been employed to denote words sharing morpholexical and morphosyntactic traits. While these labels serve practical purposes, they lack a definition within RRG. True theoretical concepts should emerge from cross-linguistic comparisons, rather than relying on language-specific descriptions (Haspelmath 2018, 2021). Based on Greenberg (1969), Croft (1996, 2001, 2022) offers a more comprehensive understanding of "noun," "verb," and "adjective," grounding them in a synthesis of semantic categories and speech-act functions. This approach offers a typologically grounded definition of these categories, crucial for accurate linguistic descriptions.

In the context of grammatical descriptions within the Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) framework, the incorporation of a typologically sound definition is paramount. While these definitions enhance language-specific accounts, they do not constitute an obligatory component of the RRG system. Utilizing evidence from two South American language families, Tupían and Bororoan. It shows that Van Valin's proposal that the universality of lexical categories stems from language's fundamental functions—reference and predication—is a coherent explanation for the cross-linguistic diversity of lexical roots. Notably, the framework dispenses with the need for a separate category of 'adjectives,' streamlining linguistic analysis.

Furthermore the evidence illuminates the key tenet of Van Valin's proposal from 2008, which asserts that within the framework of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG), the inclusion of lexical categories is dispensable. Instead, the focus is redirected towards the essential components of linguistic expression that are

captured by the Nuclei of RPs (potentially referential expressions) and Nuclei of Cores (predicating elements).

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