At least the following types of situations, as conceptualized in verbs, must be distinguished: process, action, thought, feeling, possession, localization, description, existence, identification, and naming. Each of these types has a unique set of participant roles. In principle, these roles are fundamental and irreducible to each other. However, languages present many cases of their generalization or likening. Since linguistic structures constitute visible reflections of the cognitive representations, these processes of generalization or likening must be taken as signals of the underlying cognitive processes. The fully distinctive strategy is rarely found in languages, as well as the fully neutralizing strategy. Many intermediate strategies are actually found in languages, in particular the minimally distinctive strategy: role coding is performed by a minimal set of generalized hyperroles, which conforms to the principles of economy, distinctiveness, and semantic motivation. Generalization means relying on one type of situation, with its participant role, as the basis, and representing other types of situations as analogical extensions. For instance, the Experiencer of the feeling situation type can be generalized with the Agent of the action situation type. The subject/object systems (in languages that have these categories) are a common example of the minimally distinctive strategy. All hyperroles have a cognitive motivation, and this applies to covert hyperroles, too. For example, in Russian the distributive meaning is compatible only with the Absolutive hyperrole that is not explicitly represented by the coding devices.