The Event Structure of Perception Verbs (Oxford Linguistics)

By Nikolas Gisborne

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This book makes an original contribution to the understanding of perception verbs and the treatment of argument structure, and offers new insights on lexical causation, evidentiality, and processes of cognition. Perception verbs - such as look, see, taste, hear, feel, sound, and listen - present unresolved problems for theories of lexical semantics. This book examines the relations between their semantics and syntactic behaviour, the different kinds of polysemy they exhibit, and the role of evidentiality in verbs like seem and sound. In unravelling their complexity Nikolas Gisborne looks closely at their meanings, modality, semantic relatedness, and irregularity. He frames his exposition in Word Grammar, and draws extensively on work in cognitive linguistics and construction grammar.

After an opening chapter explaining the nature of the issues, Dr Gisborne presents a concise introduction to Word Grammar. He then considers the implications of his approach for a general theory of event structure. He looks at how the framework may be applied to causation, argument linking, and the modelling of polysemy. He examines the semantic similarities and differences between listen- and hear-class verbs, and analyses the cognate patterns of sound-class verbs. He concludes by drawing together his findings and exploring their implications for linguistic theory.

Clearly and readably written, with each point of the argument illustrated with well-chosen examples, this book will appeal to linguists of all theoretical persuasions at graduate level and above.

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Review

"The fact that Gisborne commits himself to English does not undermine the book's usefulness to other languages. It will be a valuable reference work for linguists interested in areas of lexical semantics including causation, argument-linking, and polysemy. It is clearly written and well argued... This book is rich in argumentation and presents interesting data that provides more comprehensive understanding of English perception verbs." --*SIL Electronic Book Reviews*

About the Author

Nikolas Gisborne is Senior Lecturer in Linguistics and English Language at the University of Edinburgh. He is the editor, with Graeme Trousdale, of *Constructional Approaches to English Grammar*.

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