Processing Light Verb

551-578.

towards a typology of

to semantic change: Towards a typology of

polysemy to semantic change: Towards a typology of


The husband gives his wife a kiss.

The verb has a strong influence on the event representation. Fine-grained semantic constraints often influence which verbs and nouns can combine (cf. [1] for Persian, [2] for English).

1. Sensation and perception (subject = perceiving):

   give / take a sniff, sip, look, ...

2. Experience (subject = stimulus; object = experiencer):

   give someone a scare, tickle, lecture, kick, ...

3. Self-oriented action (subject = source and experiencer):

   take a walk, shower, spill, rest

   ...

The thematic structure of the light verb trumps that of the noun in linking to syntactic arguments, giving rise to pairs like he gives her a kiss vs. he receives a kiss (from her).

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Conclusions

- Light Verb Constructions can contribute much to the understanding of verbal argument structure, providing a unique window into:
  - the different components of the mental representation of verbs
  - verb-argument combination mechanisms
  - potential models of the division of labor between syntactic and semantic structure.