1 English verb forms

As we saw in section 1. (Table 24.1) in Chapter 24, the form of an English verb rarely reveals much about its person and number features, not even its tense in some cases. In light of this, consider the following example sentences:

(1) Susan let John’s friend borrow her bike.
(2) John’s parents let him eat too may sweets when he was a boy.
(3) Susan lets John polish her shoes on Sundays.

a. For each sentence, describe tense, person and number features of the verb forms and explain how you reached your conclusions.
b. What role does the clausal context play in determining the interpretation of these features?

2 PERF

In Cognitive Grammar, as we saw in section 3. of Chapter 24, the morphology PERF is analysed in terms of a network of related forms (PERF1 to PERF4). Consider the unit broken in each of the following examples:

(1) John has broken her heart.
(2) Her heart was broken by John.
(3) How can she mend her broken heart?
(4) Her heart was broken for years.

a. In each case, state which variant of PERF plays a role in the example and explain how you reached your conclusions.
b. Which properties do these variants share, and how do they differ?
3 Be

As we also saw in Chapter 24, Langacker’s analysis unites the lexical and auxiliary functions of the verb *be*. According to this analysis, there are two variants of *be*. In light of this, consider the following examples:

(1) Monica was exhausted.
(2) Tommy was being silly.
(3) Jimmy felt he was being persecuted.

a. For each example, state which variant(s) of *be* you have identified and explain how you reached your conclusions.
b. Why do you think Langacker proposes two variants of *be* instead of a single verb?

4 The non-present present

Langacker suggests that the ‘historical present’ and the use of the simple present to refer to the immediate future may both be related to a shift in perspective.

a. Explain how an analysis along these lines might work, basing your discussion on the epistemic model (Figure 24.1).
b. Illustrate your discussion with examples of your own.

5 Deontic and epistemic mood

Consider the following examples:

(1) Monica said her husband could call her at the office.
(2) Monica said her husband could cook.
(3) Monica’s husband must be the luckiest man alive.
(4) He should be more careful.
(5) Her husband should be home by now.
(6) Monica’s husband may have a bath later.

a. For each of the examples, state whether the modal verb gives rise to an epistemic or a deontic reading. Are any of these examples ambiguous?
b. Explain what role context (linguistic or otherwise) plays in the interpretation. How might your findings be explained in force-dynamics terms?

6 Perfective and imperfective processes

In section 5. of Chapter 24, we saw that the Cognitive Grammar account of situation types rests on a broad distinction between perfective and imperfective processes, which in turn is related to the count/mass noun distinction, particularly in relation to bounding. We also observed that verbs cannot always
be classified in terms of one particular situation type aspect, because other parts of the clause contribute to its aspectual properties. Now consider the following examples:

(1) John winked (at beautiful women) all night long.
(2) Susan discovered the truth about John.
(3) John is very handsome.
(4) Susan’s heart sank.

a. For each of these examples, state which situation type you have identified and explain how you reached your conclusions. You may find it helpful to consult Figure 24.3.

Now consider the following examples (recall that an asterisk indicates the sentence is ungrammatical):

(1) *John winked in an hour.
(2) *Susan discovered the truth about John for an hour.
(3) *John is being very handsome.
(4) *Susan’s heart sank in an hour.

b. Now explain why these examples are not well-formed.