1 Idioms

Consider the following taxonomy of idioms, discussed in Chapter 25:

(i) encoding and decoding idioms
(ii) grammatical versus extragrammatical idioms
(iii) substantive versus formal idioms
(iv) idioms with versus idioms without pragmatic point

a. In your own words, provide definitions of these terms.
b. Now provide four examples of your own to illustrate each type of idiom.

Now consider the following examples of idiomatic expressions:

(1) break a leg
(2) fast asleep/sound asleep
(3) bite the dust
(4) full of yourself
(5) pull a fast one
(6) top of the morning
(7) under the weather

c. Classify the examples in (1) to (7) inclusive, based on the definitions you have devised.

2 Let alone

In the text, *let alone* was described as a negative polarity item. However, it is possible to find the *let alone* construction in contexts such as the following:
(1) A: Was Susan surprised that John remembered her birthday?
   B: Susan was flabbergasted, let alone surprised!

(2) A: I doubt John has enough champagne for all the guests.
   B: He’s got enough for a small army, let alone the guests!

Can the characterisation of *let alone* as a negative polarity item be maintained, given these examples?

3 Let alone again

Now consider the order in which the prosodically focused elements are conjoined in examples such as those given in the previous question. It seems that when *let alone* occurs in a construction with an overt negative expression, it organises the scale it sets up in a different way from when it occurs without an overt negative expression.

a. Explain how the scale is organised differently.

b. Can you account for this observation?

Now consider the following expressions:

(1) never mind
(2) much less

c. Consider the extent to which these two expressions pattern in the same way when they occur in the related construction types that were illustrated in example (5) in Chapter 25.

4 Comparing Construction Grammar with Cognitive Grammar

a. Compare and contrast Kay and Fillmore’s approach as presented in Chapter 25 with Langacker’s theory of Cognitive Grammar. Summarise your comparison in the form of an annotated table.

b. In what ways are the approaches, assumptions and claims of these two models similar?

c. In what ways do they diverge?