

Idiomatic Creativity

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Appendix A:
Subtypes of idiomatic
activation-sets

On the basis of Geeraerts' prismatic model of idiom semantics, this appendix provides illustrations for the different subtypes of idiom activation-sets that are portrayed in Chapter 4 of the book. The following conventions for depiction are employed:


A, B: Idiomatic constituents

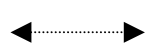
α, β : correspondents of A and B in the idiomatic meaning

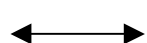
C: Literal scene/literal meaning; $C = A \cap B$

γ : Idiomatic scene/idiomatic meaning; $\gamma = \alpha \cap \beta$

L: link = metaphorical grounds or metonymic contiguity relationship

 : Dimension of schematicity

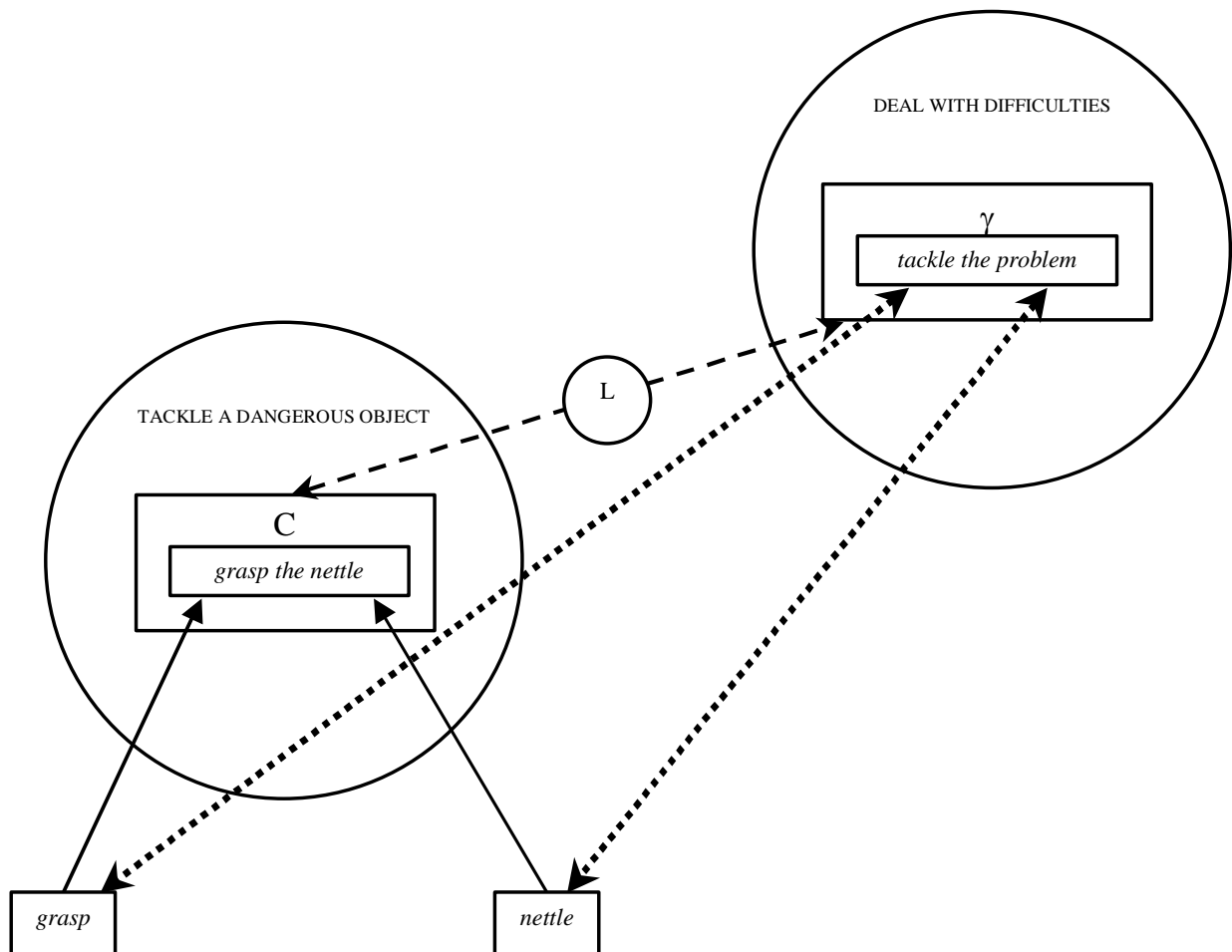
 : categorisation by extension, bottom-up and top-down perspective

 : composition, bottom-up and top-down perspective

1. Core types: idioms with an inconspicuous, fully compositional literal meaning

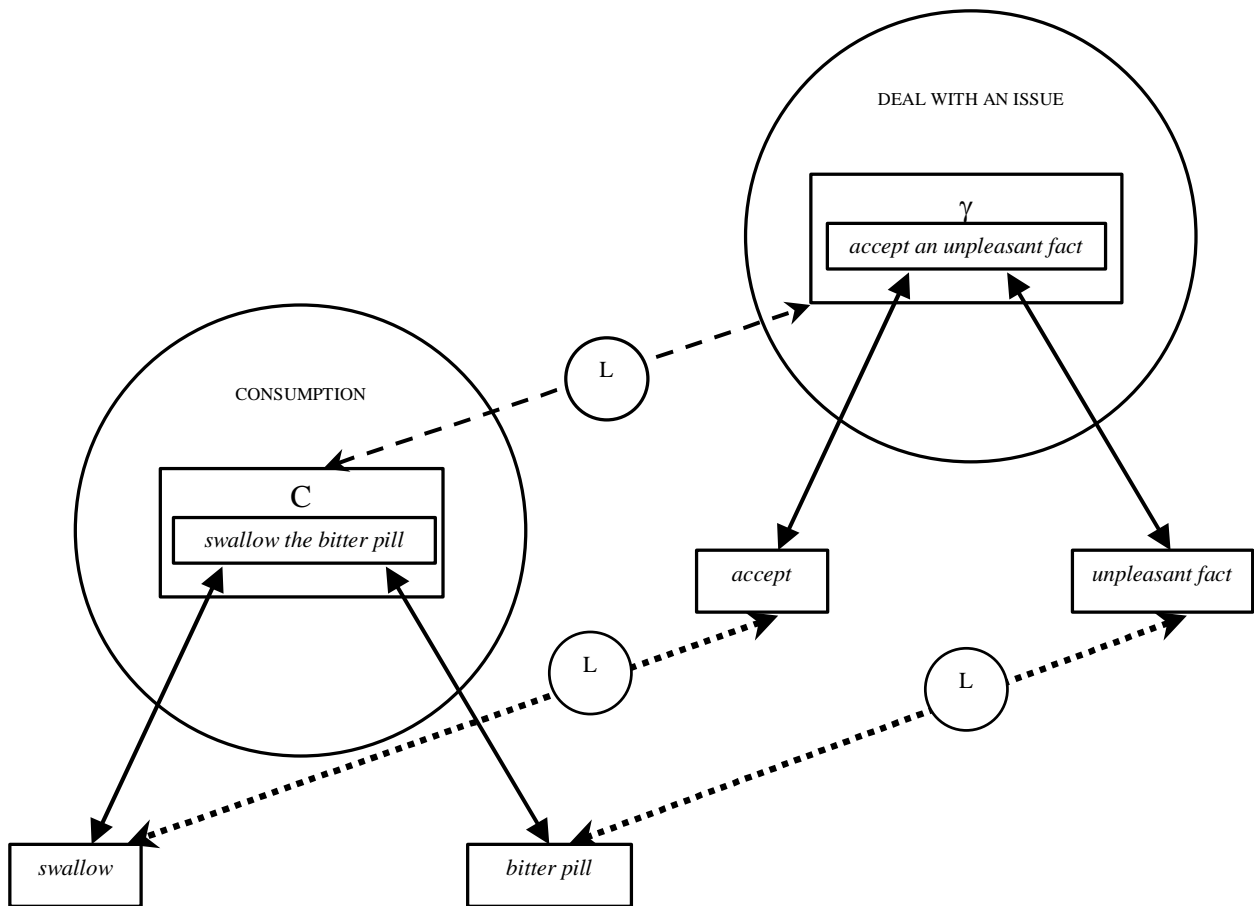
- a. Idioms with literal compositionality, (global) motivation and figurative-literal isomorphism, e.g.: *grasp the nettle*, *take the bull by the horns*, *spill the beans*, *burst/prick the bubble*, *upset the applecart*, etc.

[C] <---> [γ] is motivated by L
 [C] = [A] ∩ [B]
 [γ] = [[A] <---> [α]] ∩ [[B] <---> [β]]
but [[A] <---> [α]] and [[B] <---> [β]] only existing in [C] <---> [γ]



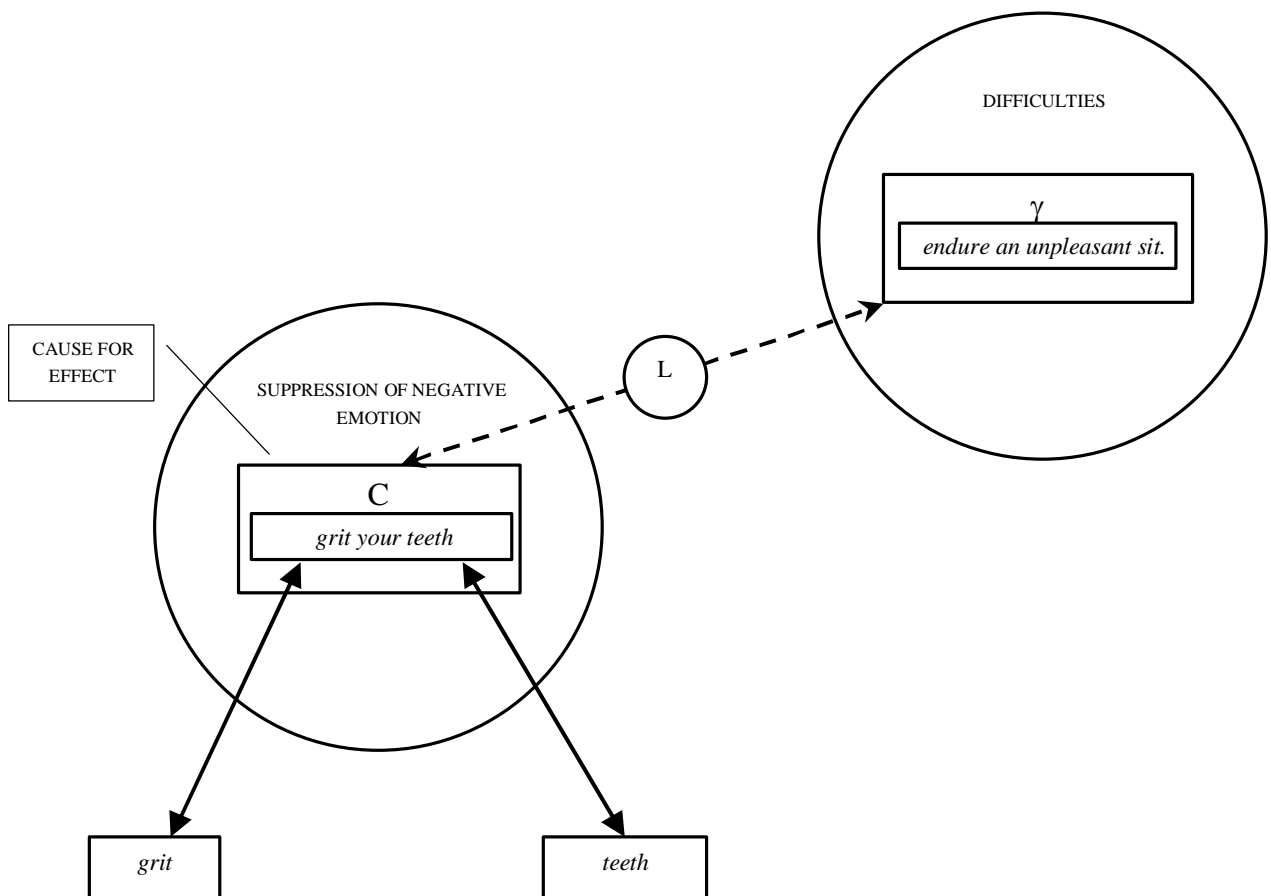
- b. Idioms with literal compositionality, global motivation, constituational motivation, and figurative-literal isomorphism, e.g.: *swallow the bitter pill*, *jump on the bandwagon*, *make headway*, etc.

$[C] \leftarrow \rightarrow [\gamma]$ is motivated by L
 $[[A] \leftarrow \rightarrow [\alpha]]$ and/or $[[B] \leftarrow \rightarrow [\beta]]$, both lexicalized and potentially motivated by L
 $[C] = [A] \cap [B]$
 $[\gamma] = [[A] \leftarrow \rightarrow [\alpha]] \cap [[B] \leftarrow \rightarrow [\beta]]$



- c. Idioms with literal compositionality and global motivation, e.g.: *grit's one teeth*, *spin one's wheels*, *turn the page*, *go round in circles*, etc.

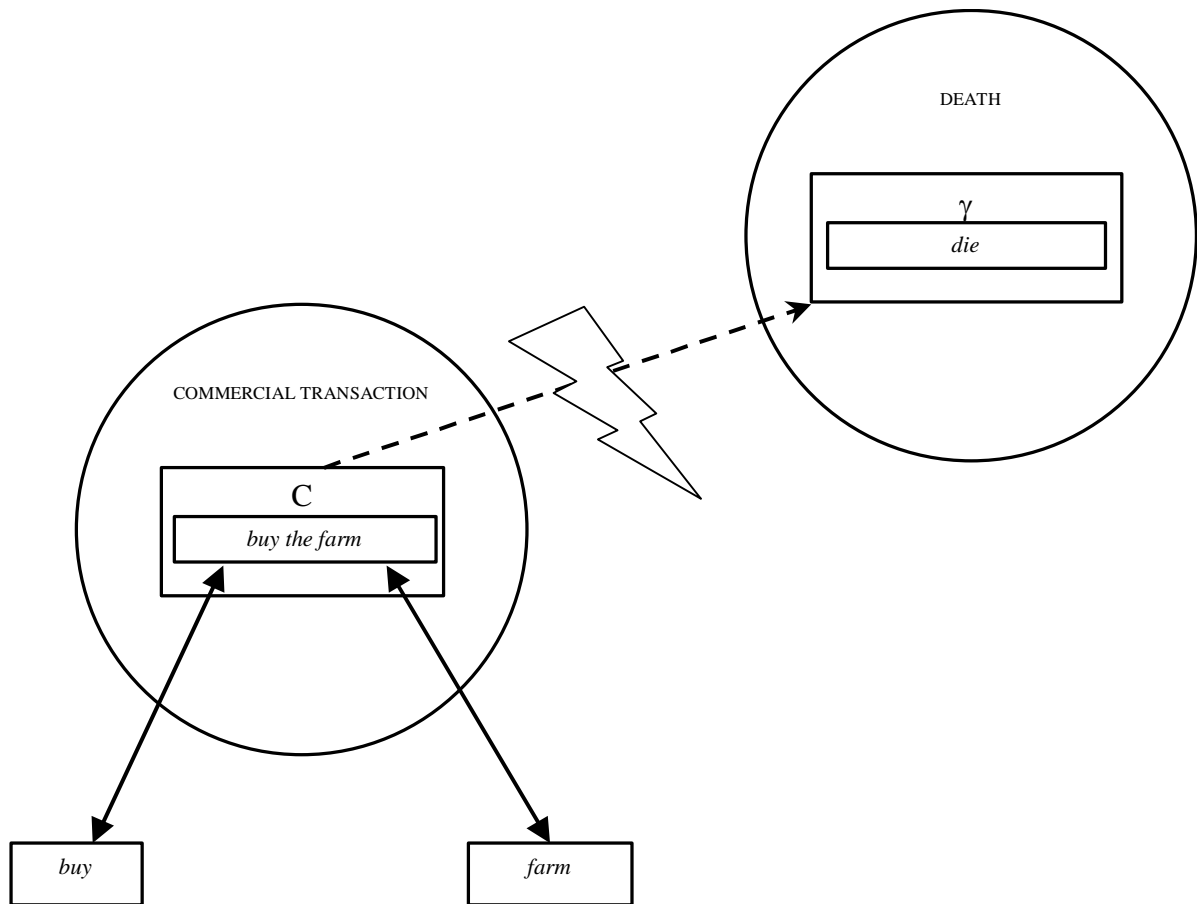
[C] <---> [γ] is motivated by L
[C] = [A] \cap [B]



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- d. Idioms with literal compositionality but with neither motivation nor isomorphism, e.g.:
kick the bucket, pop your clogs, bite the dust, buy the farm, carry the can, trail your coat,
etc.

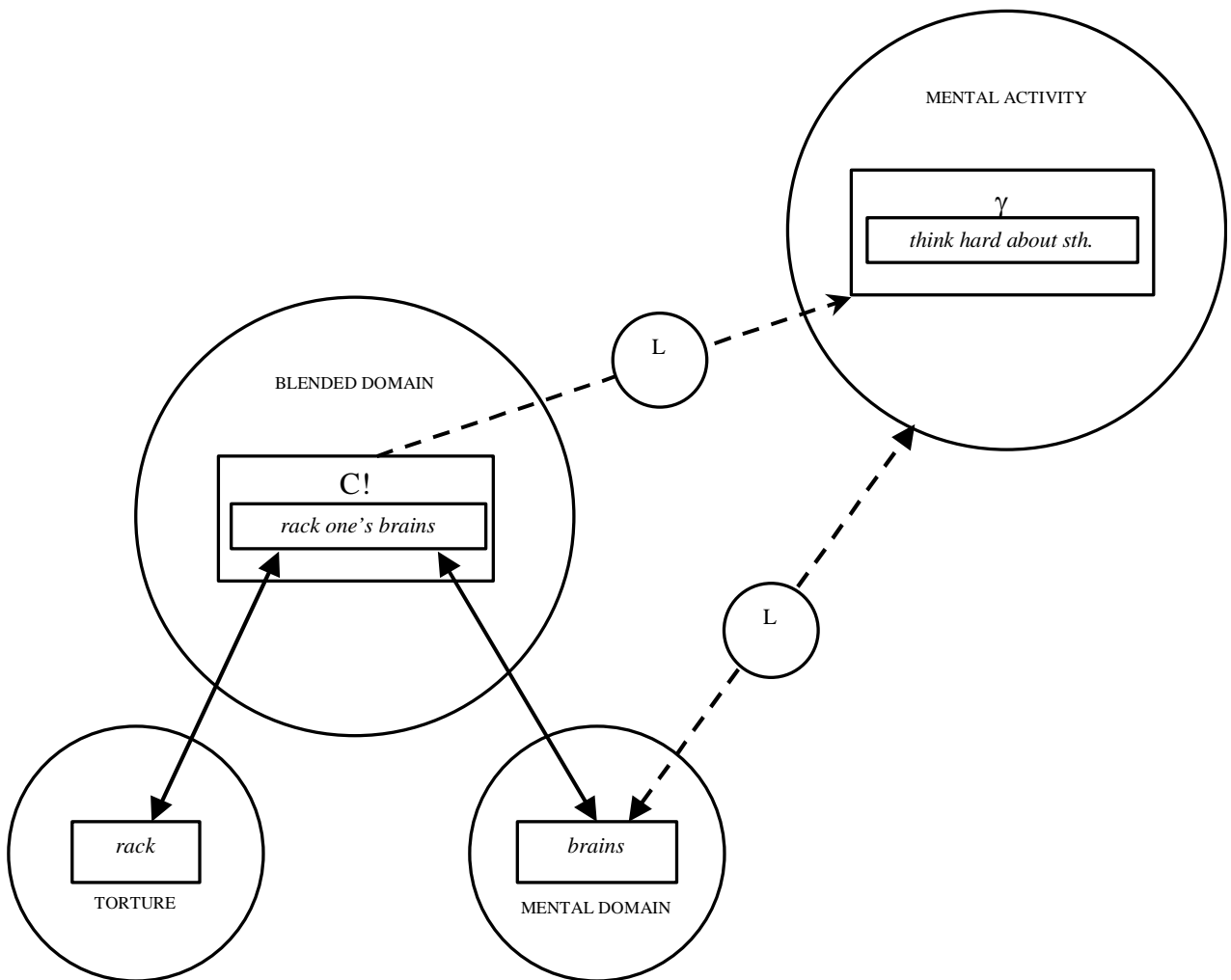
[C] ---> [γ] is not motivated
[C] = [A] \cap [B]



2. Marginal types: idioms with conspicuous or non-compositional literal meanings

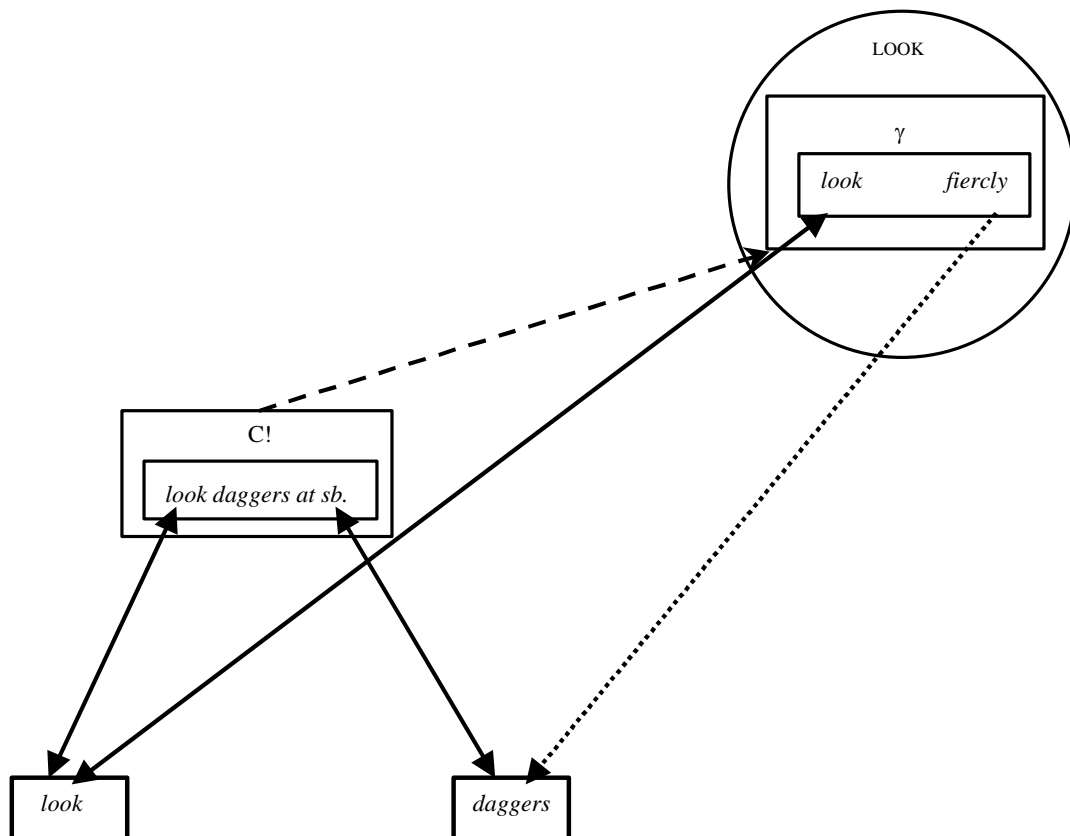
- e. Idioms with a compositional but experientially unrealistic literal meaning: blended metaphorical idioms, e.g.: *cook the books*, *rack one's brains*, *like greased lightning*, etc.

[C] <---> [γ] is motivated by L
 [A] ∩ [B] = [C!]



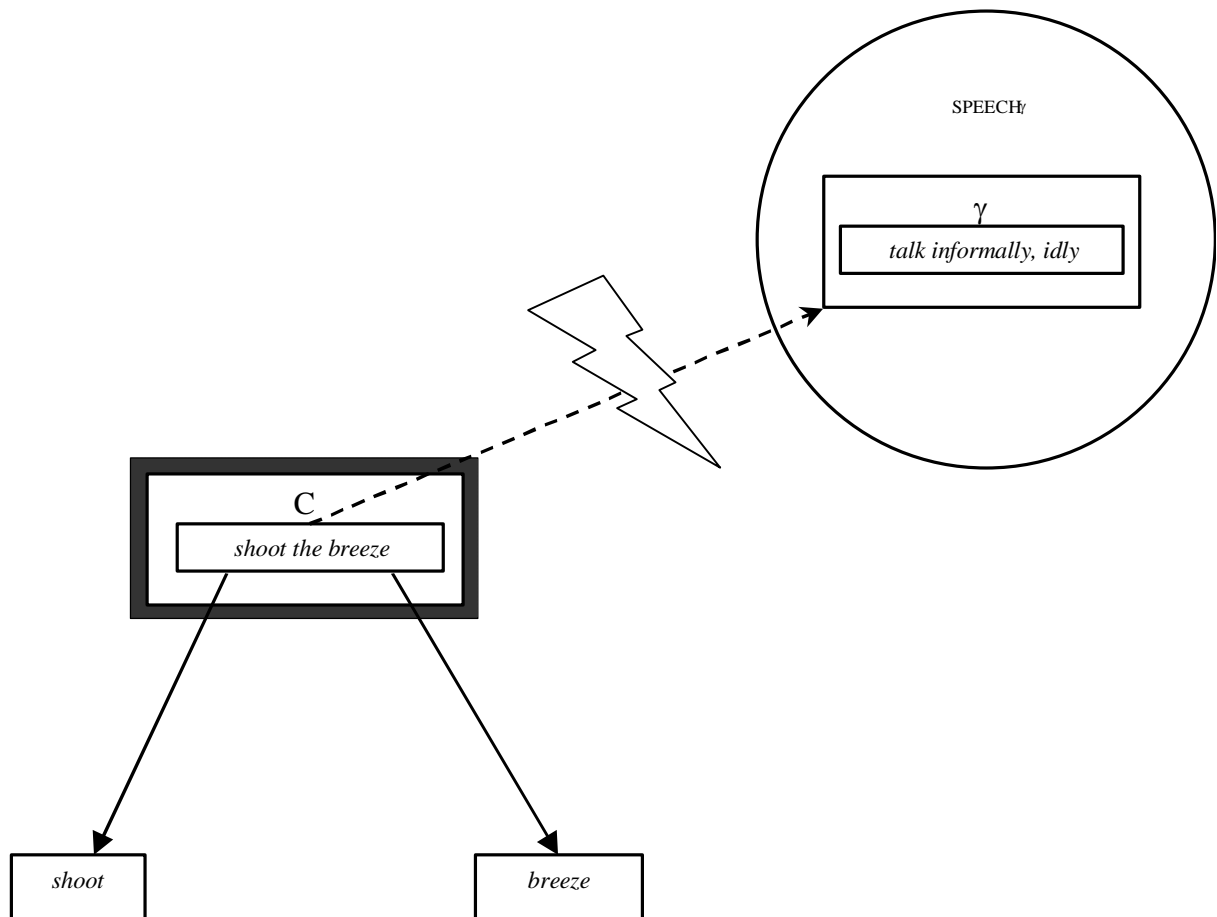
- f. Partially compositional idioms, e.g.: *know one's onion*, *look daggers at sb.*, *rain cats and dogs*, etc.

$[\gamma] = [[A] \cap [[B] \rightarrow [\beta]]]$ or $[[[A] \rightarrow [\alpha]] \cap [B]]$
[C] is often non-compositional or semantically idiosyncratic



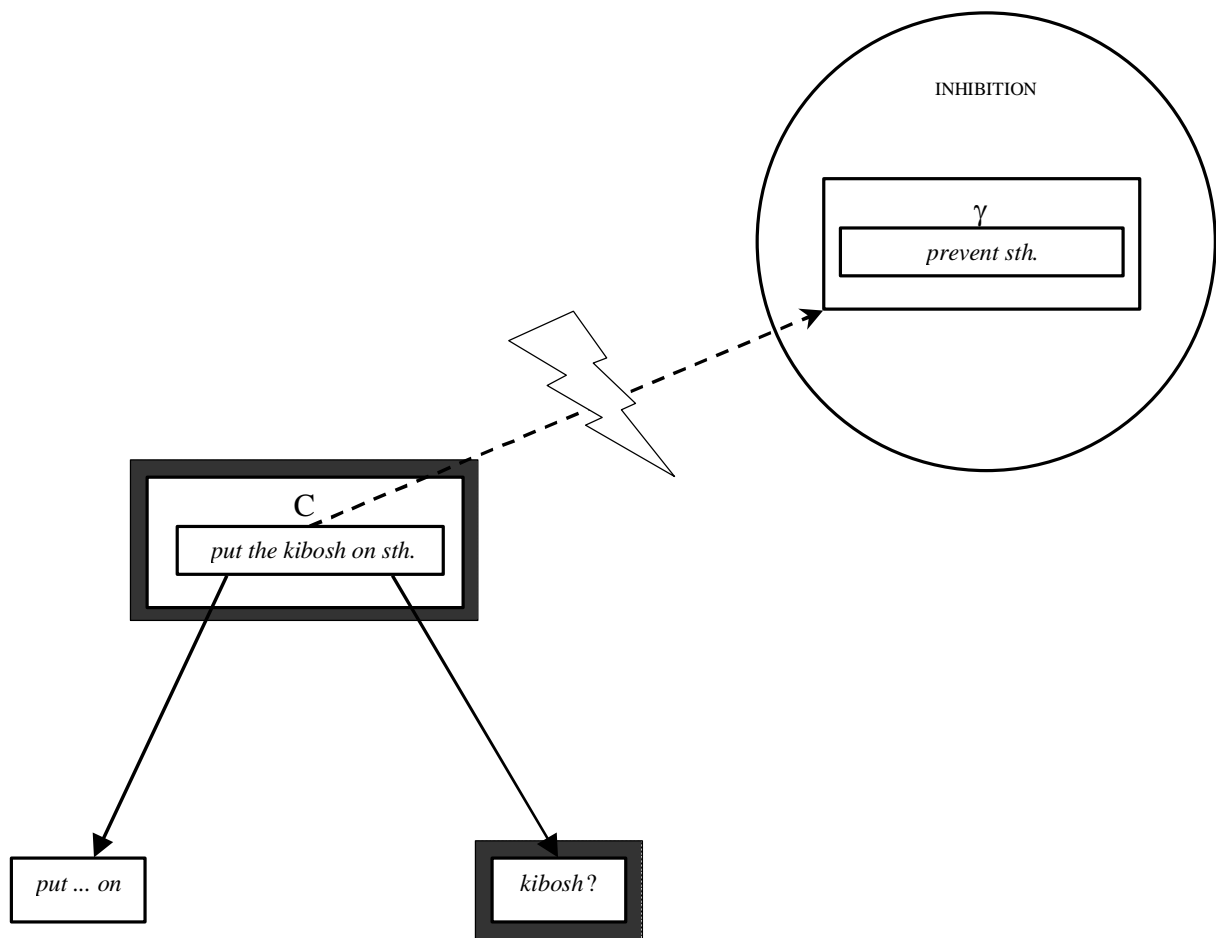
- g. Literally non-compositional, constructionally idiosyncratic idioms, e.g.: *trip the light fantastic, come up roses, shoot the breeze, go places*

$[A] \cap [B] = [C?]$, form of integration (\cap) is not conventional



- h. Literally non-compositional idioms with cranberry morphs, e.g.: *the whole kit and caboodle*, *put the kibosh on sth.*, *cock a snook*, *blow the gaff*, etc.

$[A] \cap [X] = [C?]$, one constituent $[X]$ does not appear as a linguistic unit outside the context of $[I]$. Therefore, it is not possible to activate a meaningful literal scene $[C]$



- i. Idioms with absent literal compositionality due to the presence of highly specialised word-meanings and garden-path constituents, e.g.: *hide your light under a bushel*, *have had one's chips*, *across the board*, *chomp at the bit*, *kick the bucket*, etc.

$[A] \cap [B_{\text{specialised}}] = [C?]$, one constituent is so specialised that it is known by few speakers only

$[A] \cap [B_{\text{polysemous}}] = [C?]$, one constituent is ambiguous, which makes it difficult to activate the right literal scene on the basis of which the idiom can be motivated.

