In this talk, I will discuss ways to corpus-linguistically operationalize and explore four domain-general cognitive mechanisms that have figured prominently in usage-based studies of the lexicon/constructicon, namely frequency, contingency, context, and recency. For each I will point out some obvious and some much less obvious ways in which current practice is perhaps problematic or sub-optimal and will make some suggestions as to how to better operationalize these factors in corpus-based studies.