

Beware

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unity amongst these varieties of *teach*: they are all variations on one basic idea. In each, some individual, temporarily accepted as an authority, attends to the behavior of someone else, and attempts to influence his behavior in the direction of what he considers to be correctness, by correcting his errors, etc. It is this complex of characteristics which enables us to describe his behavior as "teaching". Our analyses, therefore, completely miss what is felt to be common to the various meanings of *teach*, and furthermore, they fail to formalize our intuition that the various meanings belong naturally together. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that *teach* must occur as an element of deep structure.

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ON NONRECOVERABLE DELETION IN SYNTAX

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BEWARE

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In "On the Nature of Syntactic Irregularity" (Lakoff 1965, henceforth ONSI) G. Lakoff remarks that the verb *beware* is an exception to the question formation rule, citing as evidence the ungrammaticality of the following sentence:

(1) *Did you beware of John?

But this is the wrong thing to say about *beware*. Properly

analyzed, *beware* illustrates the defects of the ONSI approach to the idiosyncratic distributional limitations of certain lexical items, and also provides a strong argument in favor of posttransformational lexical insertion.

In the move towards more abstract (and hopefully universal) deep structures, Lakoff's theory of exceptions was a powerful tool. One of its most significant applications was in bringing the area of derivational morphology within the bounds of transformational treatment. Unlike the construction of sentences from words and phrases, the construction of complex words from morphemes is neither recursive nor fully productive. The forms that do exist seem to be related by fairly general rules, but not all forms that would be predicted by such rules actually exist. For these reasons, more conservative transformational linguists concluded that transformational rules of the kind found in the syntactic component were not the appropriate mechanism for describing the regularities of complex word formation.¹

Lakoff's theory of exceptions provided a way of handling the limitations on the rules of derivational morphology, thus allowing the rules themselves to be stated in fully general fashion, like regular syntactic transformations. "Accidental gaps" in the lexicon (e.g. *transgress*, *transgressor*, *transgression*; **agress*, *agressor*, *aggression*) were to be recorded by means of rule and structural description exception features (e.g. **agress* must meet the structural description of one or another nominalization rule).

The ONSI approach has subsequently been abandoned. In his preface to the 1970 version of ONSI (the book *Irregularity in Syntax*), Lakoff endorses Gruber's proposal "that irregular nominals like *aggression* could be handled by assuming that lexical insertion was posttransformational". The rules for forming complex words could still be formulated generally and thus assimilated to the rules of the syntactic component, so that deep structures would be relatively abstract. The nonexistence of many forms that would be generated by the rules would be accounted for by simply not listing them in the lexicon. The deep structures that would underlie these nonexistent words would thus fail to be mapped into terminal symbols and would be filtered out² (unless, perhaps, they could be substituted for by some other lexical item(s)). This posttransformational lexical insertion (henceforth PTLI) approach thus implicitly acknowledges a point that the standard theory makes too—that in the area

¹ Chomsky (1970) presents further arguments against a transformational approach to derivational morphology.

² See McCawley (1968a).

of word formation there really is no alternative to simply listing (somewhere, somehow) the words that do occur, to distinguish them from “possible words” that do not.

The verb *beware* did not, to my knowledge, play a role in the overthrow of the ONSI theory but it provides a very clear illustration of the difference between that theory and the PTLI theory, with the latter clearly winning the contest. Lakoff said that *beware* is an exception to the question rule. On similar grounds we would also be forced to say that it is an exception to the *Poss Ing* (or gerundive) nominalization rule:

(2) *John’s bewareing of the dog was unnecessary.

an exception to tense attachment:

(3) *John bewares of the dog.

(4) *John $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{bewared} \\ \text{bewore} \end{array} \right\}$ of the dog.

an exception to negation:

(5) *John doesn’t beware of the dog.

and an exception to emphatic placement:

(6) *John does beware of the dog.

If nothing else, these observations show that one cannot conclude from the fact that a verb does not show up in a certain sentence type (e.g. question) that it is to be marked as an exception to the rule that is characteristic of the derivation of that sentence type (e.g. subject-verb inversion). There are generalizations here that would be missed by marking *beware* as an exception to subject-verb inversion (question formation) as Lakoff proposed.

The nonexistent sentences fall into two types. In one type, the verb *beware* has a suffix attached to it. By making *beware* an exception to Affix Hopping, we could account for (2), (3), and (4) above, and also for the absence of perfective and progressive forms:

(7) *John has $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{bewared} \\ \text{beworn} \end{array} \right\}$ of many dogs in his lifetime.

(8) *John is bewareing of your dog.

Note that (8) cannot be excluded on the grounds of stativity, since we do have the imperative:

(9) Beware of the dog.

There is also no possibility of other *-ing* constructions such as:

(10) *Bewareing of the dog, John circled the yard.

SQUIBS AND DISCUSSION

The second class of ungrammatical sentences involves *Do-Support*, as in (1), (5), and (6) above. The noninflectability of *beware* does not explain these cases. But, even if we were prepared to list, as a quite independent fact about *beware*, that it is an exception to *Do-Support* as well as to *Affix Hopping*, we cannot do so. This is because *beware* does take *Do-Support* in emphatic imperatives:

(11) Do beware of the dog.

This curious distribution of *do* with *beware* mirrors exactly the situation with *be* + Adjective (or *be* + Predicate Nominal) constructions. There is no *Do-Support* in questions or in negative or emphatic declaratives:

(12) *Did he be kind?

(13) *He didn't be kind.

(14) *He did be kind.

but there is in emphatic imperatives:

(15) Do be kind.

(16) Don't be rude.³

If *beware* is derived from a *be* + Adjective construction, this will simultaneously account for the distribution of *do* and for the noninflectability of *beware*, since adjectives do not take tense or aspectual suffixes in English. The real generalization about *beware* is that it can occur wherever uninflected *be* followed by an adjective can occur, e.g. in imperatives, infinitival complements, following modals.⁴

These limitations on the distribution of the verb *beware*, which could be expressed only in the most cumbersome and unrevealing fashion in terms of rule and structural description

³ The nonexistence of the negative imperative:

(i) *Don't beware of the dog.

requires explanation, since it mars the parallelism between *beware* and adjectival constructions. However, observe that the sentence:

(ii) *Don't take care to avoid the dog.

is also, unlike its affirmative counterpart, unacceptable. This suggests that what is wrong with (i) is not its *do* but its meaning. In support of this, as members of the Harvard Linguistics Group were quick to point out to me, there is in some dialects the exasperated nonimperative:

(iii) So *don't* beware of the dog!

said as John, despite our warnings, walks right into its jaws.

⁴ The reader is referred to the entry for *beware* in the Oxford English Dictionary, which makes the same point. Historically, the OE verb *warian* 'to guard', with compound *bewarian* 'to defend', have become inextricably entangled with the OE adjective *waer* 'cautious'. (The transitive construction *Beware the dog* derives from the verb, the prepositional construction *Beware of the dog* from the adjective.)

exception features, can be captured quite naturally by the PTLI approach. *Beware* must be derived from an underlying adjectival construction, and lexical insertion must take place at a point subsequent to Affix Hopping and *Do-Support*, since *beware* behaves like adjectives, not verbs, with respect to these rules.

In their attempt to repudiate the claim that generative semantics is 'merely a notational variant of' the standard theory, Lakoff and others have pointed out that on their theory (a) lexical insertion may (does) follow certain transformational rules, and (b) lexical insertion need not necessarily occur *en bloc*—different lexical items might be inserted at different stages of derivations. A difference having been established, it must be defended. So far, what evidence has been put forward bears mainly on point (a). This has apparently not convinced the opposition; the transformations concerned have tended to be ones which the standard theory is not prepared to recognize, or at least is prepared to relinquish to the semantic component (thus making deep structures shallower) in order to preserve the claim that lexical insertion occurs at the level of deep structure. But *beware* does constitute evidence for (a), inasmuch as we would be back in the taxonomic desert if we were to exclude from the syntax all rules down to and including Affix Hopping.⁵

Beware also bears on (b), for which I know of no other convincing or even unconvincing evidence.⁶ In order to

⁵ I have been unable to devise an account of *beware* which expresses simply and directly the obvious generalization about its distribution, and which is compatible with the standard theory. To insert *beware* as a normal verb and filter out illicit occurrences of it posttransformationally would miss the fact that the contexts in which it does occur mirror those of adjectival constructions, and in any case neither the contexts in which it does occur nor those in which it does not have a simple description in terms of surface structure. It might be proposed that *beware* is to be generated as *be* + Adjective, and that an adjustment rule will demote the word boundary to a morpheme boundary in surface structure. But what are we to take the adjective to be? If it is *ware*, then a filtering device is again needed to exclude constructions in which *ware* does not immediately follow uninflected *be*. If it is *wary*, then the adjustment rule will have to alter the morphophonemic properties of the adjective as well as switch boundary symbols; but surely there should be some limits on what adjustment rules are permitted to do.

⁶ There was a period of excitement about the possibility that idioms might have to be inserted at different stages of derivations in order to account for the fact that the transformations to which an idiom is subject differ from idiom to idiom. This proposal makes the very strong claim that if any idiom undergoes any transformation T, then it undergoes all transformations that are ordered after T. If this were true it would certainly constitute strong evidence in favor of staggered lexical insertion (of idioms!). But since little has been heard about this proposal lately, I suspect that no one was able to establish the necessary ordering.

establish (b), it would be necessary to show that some other lexical item(s) must be inserted before Affix Hopping, for if all items could be inserted late, lexical insertion need not be staggered. Generative semanticists seem to have retained the assumption of the standard theory that lexical insertion precedes some (many) transformations; that is, that it occurs somewhere around the middle of derivations.⁷ But in the light of *beware*, it now becomes important to prove, rather than simply assume, this point. The old argument based on nonduplication of selection restrictions can no longer be invoked to prove it if selection restrictions are regarded, as McCawley (1968b) argues they should be, as semantic constraints, for the constraints can then apply to prelexical structures before lexical items are inserted.

There are some minor observations which are easy to account for if it is assumed that (some of) the rules that collect semantic constituents together under a single node apply before certain other rules apply. For example, if Affix Hopping follows the rule that combines adjectives with the inchoative pro-verb, it is easy to see why inchoative verbs such as *redden* undergo Affix Hopping as a single unit (*reddens*, *reddened*, *reddening*). But apart from not being entirely conclusive (a mere technical adjustment in the predicate lifting rule might account adequately for *reddens*, etc.), these observations do not bear on the ordering of lexical insertion in the sense of the determination of idiosyncratic syntactic and phonological properties. Lexical insertion in this sense might be quite late even if the collection transformations must apply relatively early. The point (b) above is intended, I believe, as a point about lexical insertion in the sense of specification of phonological and syntactic properties (assuming that these are determined simultaneously).

McCawley (1968a) has an argument that is addressed

⁷ *Beware* shows that lexical insertion transformations cannot be "anywhere rules", as suggested (tentatively) by McCawley (1968a). They might, of course, be "anywhere before T₁" or "anywhere after T₁" rules (e.g. *beware* might be insertable at any point subsequent to Affix Hopping), but this is a very intricate hypothesis and there is, to my knowledge, no positive evidence in favor of it.

It should also be observed that if lexical insertion is staggered, then (unless there are general principles which determine which lexical items are to be inserted at which stage in derivations, which seems unlikely) there must be extrinsic ordering of lexical insertion transformations with respect to other transformations. McCawley (*op. cit.*) rejected this hypothesis on the grounds that "the point at which these insertions take place is surely not a way in which dialects can differ from each other." But the "surely" here may be misplaced. I know of no current dialect in which *beware* is inflected like a normal verb, but there apparently was a period after 1600 when *beware* did inflect.

to this point. He observes that “*for* is deleted after *want* but not after *desire*”, which he takes to show that “the possibility of performing certain transformations depends on the presence of specific morphemes and not just on their meanings” and hence that lexical items must be inserted relatively early so that they can determine such idiosyncratic behavior under syntactic rules. But McCawley’s observation can be turned on its head; we might say instead that *want* and *desire* can be mapped onto (roughly) the same prelexical structures except that *want* cannot be inserted preceding *for*. In other words we might say that syntactic rules apply freely and that lexical insertion follows and is conditioned by aspects of relatively superficial syntactic structure.

The decision between these two approaches will depend on the exact nature of the syntactic variation possible among synonymous lexical items. In fact, another example that McCawley quotes in the same context does come somewhat closer to establishing his conclusion. He observes that “particle movement can only affect a verb-particle combination, but a verb-particle combination is often synonymous with a simple verb”. This is taken to show that verb and particle must be inserted before the particle movement rule. But this follows only if it is established that particle movement could not apply to prelexical structures; if it could, then lexical insertion could be made sensitive to whether or not the rule had applied, inserting (to take McCawley’s examples) *eject* only if particle movement had not applied, but *throw out* whether the particle had moved or not. This treatment requires that some constituent of the prelexical structure be identifiable with the particle *out*, so that particle movement could consist of repositioning this prelexical constituent. This is not implausible for *throw out*, but there are other examples which serve McCawley’s case better. In *look up*, it is hard to identify the particle *up* with any semantic (prelexical) constituent, so it is not clear what would be moved by a prelexical particle movement rule. And the synonymy between *phone* and *phone up* suggests even more strongly that the *up* must *not* be identified with any constituent of prelexical structure, and that particle movement must therefore be postlexical.

Beware must be inserted after Affix Hopping. When and if it is clearly established that some lexical item(s) must be inserted before certain transformations, in particular before Affix Hopping, then it appears that *beware* will provide an argument for staggered posttransformational lexical insertion, i.e. for (b) above as well as for (a). But perhaps some suspicion still lurks. Can so much weight be rested on this one example, on a word which is, after all, intuitively a very

exceptional one? Is it proper to extrapolate from *beware* to a theory of lexical insertion in general? To argue that it is not right to do so would require giving some principled backing for the intuition that *beware* really is abnormal in some way. The ONSI theory stretched the concept of an exceptional lexical item to such an extent that vast numbers of quite ordinary words must be counted as exceptional, among others any item that undergoes any minor rule such as inchoative, instrumental nominalization, and so forth. The only theoretically significant difference between *beware* and *red* (*reddden*) or *mix* (*mixer*) would be the number of exception markings it carried. But to resist the move from *beware* to posttransformational lexical insertion, a very much narrower notion of exceptional lexical item would have to be established, one that would differentiate between *beware* and unexceptional words like *red* and *mix*. Is it time to reinstate such a notion?

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A NOTE ON OPACITY AND PARADIGM REGULARITY

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Kiparsky (1971) proposes two principles governing reorderings:

- (A) Rules tend to be ordered so as to become maximally transparent.
- (B) Rules tend to be ordered so as to minimize allomorphic variation in a paradigm.

Moreover he suggests (1971, 625–626) that principle (B) applies in just those cases where principle (A) fails to be