Patterns of Coining
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All of the many competing accounts of the working of language draw a distinction in one way or another between what it is that speakers know outright about their language and what it is that they have to be able to figure out. For example, speakers of English have to know what *red* means and that it is an adjective, and they have to know what *ball* means and that it is a noun. They have to know that adjectives can co-occur with nouns in a modification structure (as in a phrase like *red ball*), and they have to know the proper strategies for giving a semantic interpretation to such adjective-noun combinations. But they do not have to know separately, or to be told, what the phrase *red ball* means. That is something which what they already know enables them to figure out. (Fillmore, Kay and O'Connnor ref [[1988: 502]])

0. Introduction

On the widely accepted view illustrated in the epigraph, a grammar should contain the strictly linguistic information required to produce and understand all possible utterances of a language *and no more*. In this paper, I will argue that there are many patterns that appear in language data that do not qualify as parts of a grammar (i.e., as grammatical constructions) because, unlike the nominal modification construction alluded to above, these patterns are neither necessary nor sufficient to produce or interpret any set of expressions of the language: each expression that exemplifies one of these patterns has to be learned and remembered on its own. With regard to synchrony, such patterns are non-productive generalizations over a lexically fixed set of phrases: diachronically they can motivate the entry of new expressions into the language. On the view that the grammar contains all and only the stuff a speaker has to know to speak and understand the language, these patterns are extra-grammatical, even though they are implicit in language data and diachronically productive.

The first time I heard the word *underwhelm*, I was impressed by what I took to be the speaker's cleverness in creating this instantly understandable neologism on the fly. As time went by and I heard more tokens of *underwhelm*, it occurred to me that possibly the person I had first heard this expression from was not really its creator. Nevertheless, *someone* had to be the first person to say *underwhelm*. Suppose this person was a man named Percival and consider Percival's act in producing the first token of

underwhelm. Two competing analyses of this act suggest themselves. One is that Percival simply used his knowledge of English grammar to produce a novel utterance, just as he would have done if, say, he had never heard the noun *invidiousness* but constructed it on the fly from his knowledge of the adjective *invidious* and the *ness*-suffixing construction. A second view is that Percival was not just using his grammar, but also adding to it. On this analysis, Percival coined a new word by analogy with things about English he already knew, involving the words *overwhelm*, *over* and *under*, the analogical proportion being

(0)   over : overwhelm :: under : ***underwhelm***

According to the first view, Percival was just putting to use his grammatical resources to create a novel utterance. According to the second view Percival had to add to his grammatical resources before using the resulting grammar, thus augmented, to construct his utterance. I hope you will find valid the distinction I have drawn between the first and second analyses of Percival's hypothetical act and agree with me that the second analysis is preferable.[1]

Fillmore (000) introduced the distinction between constructions proper and patterns of coining.

> We can distinguish two kinds of "creativity" in language. In one case there is the ability of speakers, using existing resources [viz. constructions, P.K.], to produce and understand novel expressions. In the other case, the one for which we use the term coining, a speaker uses existing patterns in the language for creating new resources.

This paper argues that Fillmore's patterns of coining, although frequently and properly studied by linguists, need to be distinguished from the true constructions.   A grammar is constituted by an ensemble of true constructions.

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[1] Whether or not *underwhelm* has made it into English is apparently still unsettled. The spell checker of Word 2001 votes nay. The authors of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary of English Usage are more sanguine:

> *Underwhelm* is certainly an innocuous word. It serves as a mildly humorous way of describing something unimpressive, and its common use has so far been largely uncontroversial. The only criticism that we know of is by the Harper usage panelists, who find it unacceptable by a large majority, essentially because they see it as a joke that is no longer funny. Several of the panelists regard its popularity as a fad, but over 40 years of increasing use strongly suggest that *underwhelm* is here to stay.

The somewhat severe view of grammar adopted here excludes partially productive processes[2] and consigns them to the meta-grammar: a compendium of useful statements *about* the grammar.[3]   Among the many victims of this purge will be a large number of imperfectly productive derivational processes.

Failure to observe the distinction between grammatical constructions and patterns of coining can have undesirable consequences beyond grammatical theory *per se*. In an otherwise exemplary study of the color terms of Yélî Dnye, an unaffiliated language of Rossel Island (Papua New Guinea), Levinson (000) notes that the three most prominent color terms are all recognizable as reduplications of nominal roots whose denotata, in two cases at least, saliently display the color in question. *kpêdekpêde* 'black' is derived from *kpêde*, the name of a species of tree that is perhaps not saliently black, but the other two main color terms *kpaapîkpaapî* 'white' and *mtyemtye* 'red' (dialect alternate: *taataa*) represent reduplications of the names of a saliently white cockatoo and a saliently red parrot, respectively.   Levinson reports that there is a "regular" (that is, widespread) derivational pattern in Yélî Dnye according to which an adjective denoting a property may be formed by reduplication of a nominal root that denotes something which saliently displays that property.   For example, the adjective *mty:aamty:aa* 'sweet' is derived from the nominal root *mty:aa* 'honey'.

Levinson notes further that Berlin and Kay's first criterion for a basic color term was that "its meaning is not predictable from the meaning of its parts " (1969: 6), and he points out that someone familiar with the birds in question and their names might well be able to guess the meanings of white and red for *kpaapîkpaapî* and *mtyemtye*. From these observations Levinson concludes that the white and red terms of Yélî Dnye are arguably not 'basic color terms' as defined by Berlin and Kay. And from the further observation that many Australian and Oceanic languages display similar patterns of reduplication, he suggests that perhaps several of these languages have no 'basic color terms' in the defined sense.

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[2] "A grammatical process or pattern or rule (or 'construction') can be said to be productive if the conditions of its applicability do not require the listing of exceptions. Actually, productivity is a notion of degree. All grammatical constructions have some constraints on their applicability, but the extent to which those constraints can themselves be formulated in general ways is the extent to which we can say that the construction is productive. Some constructions only work with monosyllabic words; some only with certain grammatical categories. But they are general to the extent that such non-lexical constraints involve general (Boolean) conditions involving properties shared by classes of lexical items, rather than lists of specific words" (Fillmore 000).
[3] A meta-grammar contains useful information about a language and is therefore of interest to the linguist. The degree to which speakers of a language share a common meta-grammar of that language is, however, particularly hard to evaluate, since meta-grammatical statements don't normally yield concrete predictions, as will be demonstrated below.

But it is clear from the facts as Levinson reports them that the meanings of white for *kpaapîkpaapî* and red for *mtyemtye* are not predictable from the meanings of their parts because the partially productive reduplication process of Yélî Dnye is not a predictive construction but a mere pattern of coining. The words for white and red might have been based on the words for sand and blood, respectively, or not based on any nominal root. Not all Yélî Dnye adjectives are formed by reduplication and for the ones that are there is no sure way to know which of the noun roots whose denotata prominently display the property in question names the actual eponym. For example, suppose you knew almost everything there was to know about the grammar of Yélî Dnye, including that *kpaapî* is the name of the white cockatoo and that a Yélî Dnye adjective denoting a property p is often formed by reduplicating a noun root whose denotata saliently display p. With this knowledge you could not deduce that the Yélî Dnye word for white is *kpaapîkpaapî* because the word for white might be an opaque root, might be derived by some other process, or might be derived by reduplication from another noun root. Nor, if you overheard the word *kpaapîkpaapî* could you deduce that its meaning is 'white', since – as Levinson points out – the meaning of *kpaapîkpaapî* might be based on, say, the cockatoo's distinctive screech.

In the remainder of this paper we will consider two patterns of English, one of which, I will argue, clearly qualifies as a construction, the other only a pattern of coining. The construction is in introduced in section 1, and the pattern of coining in section 2. Section 3 is concerned with a case that has been debated. Section 4 concludes.

1. The *All*-cleft Construction

A construction, which I will call *All*-cleft, is illustrated in (1).

(1)   a.   All that we had to say to them was that we intended to tax them more severely. [British National Corpus (BNC)]

          b.   All that one has to do is to start training earlier. [BNC]

          c.   All I want is to get it out of the flat, ... [BNC]

          d.   All we can reasonably conclude is that they happened at the same time. [BNC]

          e.   All as me mother's got to do that day is the dinners. [BNC]

          f.   All's I see is a crazy woman throwing away our supplies. [BNC]

          g.   … so all's we really need is cigarettes … [BNC]

With regard to syntax, *all*-clefts can be described as identical to wh-clefts except that the left isolate constituent of the subject clause contains, instead of a wh word, either *all that* (as in 1a, b), *all* (as in 1c, d), *all as* (as in 1e), or *all's*

(as in 1f, g).[4] The syntactic identity of *all*-clefts and wh-clefts can be appreciated by comparing the wh-cleft sentences in (2) to the corresponding examples in (1).

(2)   a.   What we had to say to them was that we intended to tax them more severely.
            b.   What one has to do is to start training earlier.
            c.   What I want is to get it out of the flat, ...
            d.   What we can reasonably conclude is that they happened at the same time.
            e.   What me mother's got to do that day is the dinners.
            f.   What I see is a crazy woman throwing away our supplies.
            g.   … so what we really need is cigarettes …

The syntactic identity of *all*-clefts and wh-clefts includes the properties of connectivity and reversibility. The connectivity property is illustrated in (3) and the reversibility property in (4).

(3)   a.   All the president wanted was to succeed himself.
            b.   What the president wanted was to succeed himself.
            c.   *That the president would be re-elected pleased himself.
            d.   *For the president to be elected pleased himself.
            e.   *The president's likely re-election pleased himself.

(4)   a.   To succeed himself was all the president wanted.
            b.   To succeed himself was what the president wanted.

Since *all*-clefts are identical to wh-clefts syntactically, we can assume *all*-clefts represent a construction that inherits its syntax from an abstract construction, which is also inherited, by the Wh-cleft construction and dispense with further discussion of the syntax of *all*-clefts.

The semantically interesting property of *all*-cleft sentences is that they don't mean what they might be thought to mean, containing, as they do, the universal quantifier *all*. A sentence like (5)a does not mean (5)b. Rather, (5)a is glossed reasonably well by (5)c.

(5)   a.   All I can eat is half a pizza.
            b.   Everything I can eat is half a pizza.
            c.   The most I can eat is half a pizza.

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[4] The *all's* form seems to be a contraction of the *all as* form. Examples (2)e, f, and g were the only examples of the *all as* and *all's* varieties, respectively, that I could find in the BNC. I suspect this may be due in part to the colloquial status of the *all as* and *all's* versions

More generally, utterance of an *all*-cleft sentence may express a proposition (e.g., *I can eat half a pizza*) that is taken to represent a lower point in a presupposed scalar model than some contextually given alternative (e.g., *I can eat a whole pizza*). For example, in (6), B_1 is an appropriate answer to A and B_2 is not an appropriate answer, despite the fact that B_3 is.

(6) A: I can jump six feet.
 B_1 That's good. All you need to win is five feet.
 B_2 *That's bad. All you need to win is seven feet.
 B_3 That's bad. What you need to win is seven feet.

Let us call this scalar reading of *all*-cleft sentences the 'below expectation' reading. Not all sentences with *all*-cleft syntax have this reading. Some do express universal quantification of the subject clause, as exemplified in (7). Compare the examples in (7) with the parallel examples in (8)

(7) a. All that I command is yours now. [BNC]
 b. All that we can see, feel, touch, taste and hear is of one, all-pervading force -- the god force. [BNC]
 c. All that we use in our modern world is a comment upon the delicate balance of human hand, eye and brain. [BNC]

(8) a. Everything that I command is yours now.
 b. Everything that we can see, feel, touch, taste and hear is of one, all-pervading force -- the god force.
 c. Everything that we use in our modern world is a comment upon the delicate balance of human hand, eye and brain.

Although *all*-cleft sentences with universally quantified readings, such as those in (7), appear in corpora, they are notably less frequent than *all*-cleft sentences with below-expectation readings. None of the examples of universally quantified *all*-clefts that I have found are of the *all as* or *all's* varieties. Moreover, although corpora can never present direct evidence of ungrammaticality, I believe *all as* and *all's* versions of *all*-cleft form force the below-expectation reading.

(9) a. *All's/All as I command is yours now .
 b. *All's/All as we can see , feel , touch , taste and hear is of one , all-pervading force -- the god force .
 c. *All's/All as we use in our modern world is a comment upon the delicate balance of human hand, eye and brain.

It could perhaps be argued that in the case of below-expectation *all*-clefts of bare *all* or *all that* form, the literal meaning is one of universal quantification and the below-expectation reading is derived by conversational inference. The analyst who takes this line would, however, be required to

explain why this type of conversational inference does not apply to otherwise identical sentences with *everything*, *everyone* or other expressions of universal quantification in the extracted position. We cannot, for example say (10) to express what is expressed by (1)b, repeated.

(1)　　　　b.　　All that one has to do is to start training earlier. [BNC]

(10)　　　　　　#Everything one has to do is to start training earlier.

Moreover, if it is correct that only the below-expectation reading is available for the *all as* and *all's* versions, then a special construction stipulating *all*-cleft syntax (i.e., wh-cleft syntax) and below-expectation interpretation will be required anyway. We conclude that the grammar of English contains an *all*-cleft construction with wh-cleft syntax and below-expectation interpretation and that this construction is fully productive, being lexically constrained only with respect to the left-isolate constituent of the subject phrase.

2. The [A *as* NP] Pattern of Coining

Our example of a non-productive, non-constructional pattern of coining appears in (11).

(11)   a.   dumb as an ox
         b.   poor as a church mouse
         c.   green as grass
         d.   dead as a doornail
         e.   happy as a lark
         f.   strong as an ox
         g.   flat as a pancake
         h.   big as a house
         i.   stubborn as a mule
         j.   dark as night
         k.   plain as the nose on your face
         l.   quick as a wink
         m.   hard as a rock
         n.   free as a bird
         o.   dry as a bone
         p.   light as a feather
         q.   thin as a rail
         r.   hot as blazes
         s.   clear as a bell
         t.   black as coal
         u.   black as night
         v.   big as a house
         w.   snug as a bug in a rug
         x.   pure as the driven snow
         y.   cold as Hell
         z.   hot as Hell

The pattern exemplified in (11) is characterized by the formula in (12).

(12)   A as NP [interpretation: extremely A]

Despite the existence of many more formulaic expressions fitting the A as NP formula than are shown in (12), that formula does not constitute a construction because it is not productive. First, knowledge of formula (12) plus knowledge of the constituent words is not sufficient to license any of the expressions in (11). If a young, foreign or sheltered speaker of English knew what *easy* meant, and knew what *pie* meant and knew all the expressions in (12) plus many more built on the same pattern, they would still not know that *easy as pie* is a way of saying *very easy.* Secondly, one can't freely use the pattern to coin new expressions. Compare (13)a with a fixed collocation and (13)b, which, although understandable, is not English.

(13)   a.   What a healthy baby, strong as a horse!
         b.   *What a healthy baby, heavy as a truck!

There are many members of the A as NP pattern, and it is likely that new ones come into existence every now and then as analogical creations, like *underwhelm*, but, unlike *underwhelm*, die aborning. An unsystematic search of the BNC turns up several novel, singleton cases of the A as NP pattern, whose contents and contexts suggest self-conscious, literary usage.

(14)   a.   Because you 're always utterly alone then. There may be a lover, a friend, asleep beside you, but who is **wide-eyed as a marigold** in the trackless dark? Just you and you.

           b.   She selected Goyescas. The music was **sure as a swing in high summer**, to and fro, light as racing over a sunny lawn to the blessed shade under the trees. Up the garden path and a frisson of unease: there is no house, but a vista of a majestic lake.

           c.   They flirted with everybody especially each other. Only last summer, years after it was all over and Astrid had found her stone cottage with roses round the door, golden/grey in a late summer orchard, she met Jay, and her eyes were **green as the flames on ashwood**. Firelight, evening light.

           d.   She would change their lives. The hospital in Leninakan is **bare as a garage**. The red robe they gave her there was the first bright colour she had worn .

I doubt that *wide-eyed as a marigold* or *sure as a swing in high summer* will become as familiar as *light as feather* or *pure as the driven snow*. But if either of these things should happen, it will simply represent another case, like that of *underwhelm*, in which a coinage sticks. The existence of a handful of novel literary or poetic examples in a corpus does not prove that a pattern of coining is a productive construction; it only illustrates the familiar fact that nonce coinages do occur. Often they strike the hearer as inventive, clever or elevated. This observation will come up again.

Example (14)d is representative of a small number of cases in the BNC which appear to reflect a literary turn of phrase according to which the first token of *as* is dropped from a standard *as…as* comparative construct. This not general in any dialect of English I am familiar with.[5] The examples in (15) are ungrammatical for me.

(15)   a.   *John is obese as Tim.

           b.   *Mary is clever as Sue.

           c.   *A hippo can be heavy as two small cars.

           d.   *Your suitcase is not heavy as mine.

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[5] I must, however, confess ignorance about regional and non-standard UK and Commonwealth dialects.

Many of the expressions in the A as NP pattern are motivated by the meaning of the NP, but quite a few are not. There is nothing particularly easy about pie or duck soup – if there is such a thing as duck soup.

Further evidence that individual expressions of the A as NP variety must be learned individually is that even among those that appear to be motivated, there are several kinds of idiosyncrasy to be observed. The first has to do with the association of some A as NP collocations with literal meanings of the adjective, others with metaphorical meanings of the adjective while yet others occur with both literal and figurative meanings. Consider some fixed expressions with *hot* and *cold*. These adjectives can be used metaphorically in sports contexts to indicate skillful and unskillful play, respectively.

(16)   Our best shooter was hot/cold tonight.

The expressions *hot as a firecracker* and *hot as a two-dollar pistol* can be used in this metaphorical sense, but not in the literal sense of elevated temperature. A different metaphor opposes *warm* and *cold* personalities. We can say that a person is *cold as ice,* but not that the weather is cold as ice. However, I think we can say that *our best shooter was cold as ice tonight*. Although we can say both that the weather is *hot as Hell* and *cold as Hell*, we cannot say that out best shooter is *hot as Hell,* although it sounds okay to me to say that *our best shooter was cold as Hell tonight*.

A second kind of idiosyncrasy of A as NP expressions is that some of them can occur with comparative morphosyntax, while others cannot. This is true of the expressions in (11), some of which are given below in comparative form. Some expressions of this type occur only in comparative form, as illustrated in (18).

(17)   a.   deader than a doornail
            b.   hotter than Hell
            c.   bigger than a house
            d.   flatter than a pancake
            e.   *happier than a lark
            f.   *quicker than a wink
            g.   *easier than pie
            h.   *drier than a bone

(18)   a.   larger than life
         b.   *large as life[6]
         c.   better than a jab in the eye with a sharp stick/eating a bug
         d.   *as good as a jab in the eye with a sharp stick/eating a bug

We conclude that although there is a very large number of collocations build on the A as NP pattern, this pattern is not productive.   Expressions of this form cannot be freely produced as novel expressions using the existing resources of English grammar. The A as NP pattern, meaning very A, has seemingly provided a fecund source of analogy for coining new English collocations but it is not a construction of English grammar.

I hope you have been convinced that there exist families of lexically restricted expressions, originally identified by Fillmore as patterns of coining, which although sporadically productive diachronically are not systematically productive synchronically.   Fillmore writes

> There is a view of grammar according to which the grammar proper will identify only the productive processes. Since the ability to create new words, using non-productive processes, is clearly a linguistic ability, it is my opinion that a grammar of a language needs to identify constructions that exist for "coining" purposes as well. Technically, the coining constructions will simply be thought of as bound constructions, constructions that are "bound" to - inherited by - particular complex words. They will serve to motivate and represent the substructure of morphologically complex words and some idiomatic phrases. But they are also available for the coining of new words. (ref)

The narrower view, expressed in the first sentence of the quoted passage, is more in keeping with the notion of grammar expressed in the epigraph: that a grammar represents the minimal amount of what a speaker-interpreter needs to know about the language in order to be able to figure out

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[6] Thomas Egan and David Denison have both pointed out to me that the star on 18b is wrong. *Large as life* is indeed a fixed expression of English, perhaps more frequently encountered east of the Atlantic than west. The claim of idiosyncrasy of A as NP expressions is, however, only strengthened by this observation because, as Egan makes clear (pc) *large as life* and *larger than life* mean quite different things, apart from comparative degree. Egan writes (p.c.), "1. 'as large as life' is well attested in BE. See BNC for examples. [Also, 'large as life', without initial 'as', is frequent in BNC. PK] 2. More interestingly, it is not an instance of your (12). It does not mean 'extremely A', but rather 'extremely N'. It can normally be paraphrased 'in the flesh'. Similarly, 'larger than life' does not normally mean 'particularly large' but 'particularly lively'," Some might not readily accept the gloss 'particularly lively' for *larger than life* although Egan's questioning of whether larger than life is an example of the A as NP pattern, meaning 'very A', appears legitimate. A claim that there is a metaphorical sense of *large* being compared in this expression would be hard to find hard evidence either for or against.

the rest. Patterns of coining are not part of what a speaker must know because, as we have seen in examining the A as NP pattern, the speaker of English has to know each of the members of the set of expressions exemplifying this pattern individually. Speakers of English who already know the words *red* and *ball* and the nominal modification construction do not have to know separately the form and meaning of the expression *red ball*. That is something they can figure out from what they already know. But speakers who know the words *light* and *feather* and the A as NP pattern of coining, cannot deduce from this knowledge that *light as a feather* is a way to say extremely light. That is something they must possess as a separate piece of knowledge.

3. Caused Motion

Having argued that the *All*-cleft pattern and the A as NP pattern provide clear illustrations of a productive construction and a pattern of coining, respectively, we consider a case that is likely to elicit more – or should I say even more? – controversy. I argued at the first meeting of this conference that the caused motion pattern, illustrated in (19) is properly viewed as a pattern of coining and not as a productive construction.

(19)   a.   Kim pushed the shoe under the sofa.
            b.   They laughed his Hamlet off the stage.
            c.   Frank sneezed the tissue off the table.[7]

To summarize briefly, following some ideas of Gawron (ref), which are considered but not to my mind successfully refuted by Godlberg (ref), I first pointed out two drawbacks in positing a caused motion construction as part of English grammar. That grammar will need a transitivizing construction, which adds an agent argument to an intransitive verb, in order to license examples like (20)b, along with many others involving non-motion verbs such as *boil, melt, grow, evaporate, freeze*, and so on.

(20)   a.   The top spun.
            b.   Kim spun the top.
            c.   The top spun off the table.
            d.   Kim spun the top off the table.

The grammar of English will also need a construction that adds a path argument to intransitive verbs, as illustrated by (20)c. If we now posit a caused motion construction, licensing the verbal valence exemplified in (20)d, that sentence will be accorded a spurious ambiguity by our grammar, its valence being licensed both by the caused motion construction alone and by the combination of transitivizing and path-adding constructions.

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[7] Most of the examples in this section are Goldberg's examples or based on Goldberg's examples.

We noted in connection with the A as NP pattern of coining that such patterns are not productive. Another way to say that a pattern is not productive is to note that treating it as a productive construction leads to overgeneration. Overgeneration with the caused motion pattern is illustrated in (21).

(21)   a.   *He bragged her out of the room.
        b.   *She screamed him under the bed.

If caused motion were really a construction, English sentences like those in (21) should be good.

The foregoing observations argue against the existence of a caused motion construction. There remain, however, three types of examples, all discussed by Goldberg (ref), of acceptable caused motion sentences that do not yield to an analysis in terms of agent-adding and path-adding constructions. In the first of these, the theme argument cannot occur without the path argument, as in (22) and (23).

(22)   a.   They laughed him off the stage.
        b.   *They laughed him.

(23)   a.   We let the water out of the pool.
        b.   *We let the water.

A second, and related, group of examples involves verbs that do not have motion meanings unless the path is added.

(24)   a.   She showed him to the door.
        b.   He squeezed the shim under the pedestal.

I would suggest that these examples are individually conventionalized, like the conventionalized examples of A as NP given in (11). For example, there appears to be a conventional valence configuration of the verb *let* that allows theme and path arguments.   The same valence behavior is not possible with the semantically similar verbs *allow*, *permit*, *enable*, and the seemingly semantically identical (highly colloquial) *leave.*

(25)   a.   *We allowed the water out of the pool.
        b.   *We permitted the water out of the pool.
        c.   *We enabled the water out of the pool.
        d.   *We left the water out of the pool.
        e.   We left our dog run loose. [Colloquial]

Defending constructional status for caused motion, one might argue that *let* has a particular semantic property that entitles only it, among this group of near synonyms, to unify with the caused motion construction. Taking this line, however, will oblige the defender of construction status for caused motion to specify what that property is. There is a number of near synonym sets only one member of which permits the caused motion pattern, as illustrated in (26) and (27).

(26)   a.   They laughed him off the stage.
             b.   *They coughed him off the stage.
(27)   a.   She showed him to the door.
             b.   *She displayed/demonstrated/illustrated/… him to the door.

The defender of a uniform caused motion construction will have to identify a single semantic property that characterizes just the miscellaneous array of verbs that accept the caused motion valence, e.g., *let*, *laugh* and *show,* while ruling out the verbs that are semantically similar to each of these but do not accept the caused motion valence, e.g., *allow, cough*, and *demonstrate*. Failing the identification of this semantic property, we must conclude that these first two kinds of examples show only that the caused motion valence reflects a pattern of coining.[8]

The third and final set of examples consists of seemingly unconventionalized expressions like the oft-repeated (19)c. Possibly this set of examples is restricted to sentences involving the verb *sneeze*. Goldberg (pc) points out that (28)a occurs in a children's book by Robert Munsch. Example (28)b is from the BNC.

(28)   a.   He sneezed his tooth right across town.
             b.   'She could find a job as a housemaid, sneeze away the dust,'
                    said Hubert, staring at Flora. [BNC]

It is possible that examples (19)c and (28)a,b, represent independent nonce expressions, each formed on analogy with the many conventionalized examples of the caused motion pattern of coining. It is also possible – and seems more likely to me – that some speakers have a version of *sneeze* with a caused motion valence. Goldberg (pc) offers (29) as a constructed example.

(29)   She sneezed the foam off the cappuccino.

It is not necessary, nor I think reasonable, on the basis of occasional examples like (19)c and (28)a,b to conclude that caused motion is a productive construction. The hypothesis that the verb *sneeze* has acquired a caused

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[8] Boas (ref) makes a similar point and draws similar conclusions from an extensive analysis of the resultative pattern, which I suspect is also best thought of as a pattern of coining.

motion valence for some speakers is more conservative and more in accord with the full range of facts presented above.

4. Conclusion.

Much of what I have said here can, and probably will, be contested. First, one may accept the distinction between constructions proper and patterns of coining and still argue whether specific patterns, such as caused motion or resultatives, exemplify one or the other category.   Perhaps some of these cases can never be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

Secondly, and of more general interest, one can simply reject the distinction between productive constructions and unproductive patterns of coining, admitting both to the grammar on the same footing. If that theoretical choice is made, then one abandons the idea that a grammar contains all and only the information a person needs to speak and understand the language and thereby abandons prediction of grammaticality as a key method in empirical grammatical study. Patterns of coining are not predictive of grammaticality. Nothing about the A as NP pattern (nor the meanings of the words involved) tells you that (30)a is English and (30)b is not. These are just facts one has to know on their own.

(30)   a.   easy as duck soup
          b.   *easy as goose fritters

Rejecting the construction/coining distinction and accepting both types of patterns as constructions of equal status has the undesirable result of robbing grammatical research of one of its main methods: prediction of grammaticality. I have proposed that patterns of coining be excluded from a grammar, although they do deserve study as meta-grammatical patterns likely to influence grammatical change. Fillmore, on the other hand, suggests that we include patterns of coining in the grammar as a special kind of "bound" construction. The differences between these two proposals are probably more terminological than substantive. Common to both views – and constituting the main point of this paper – is the recognition that ordinary constructions yield predictions regarding grammatical and ungrammatical expressions while patterns of coining do not.