Ways of Breaking out of Normal Interpretation and Meaning

English Sentences

Compare these two sentences:

```
Say your name out loud.

Say "your name" out loud.
```

By wrapping those two words in quotes they are broken out of their normal meaning. In the second sentence the quoted words mean themselves, rather than being a reference to the name of whoever is speaking.

This illustrates the `use`/`mention` distinction in natural language semantics. The unquoted is `used`, the quoted is `mentioned`. For more about this, see http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/quotation/.

XML Markup

Compare these:

```
<Book>

&lt;Book>
```

By escaping the less-than symbol it is broken out of its normal meaning. An XML parser will no longer treat it as signifying the start of an element; it will simply treat it as a meaningless character, along with the following characters.

Regular Expressions

XML Schema, XSLT 2.0, Schematron, and HTML5 use regular expressions.

In the regular expression language, the asterisk (*) symbol is a special character that means zero or more occurrences. The following regular expression says zero or more occurrences of the letter `a`:

```
a*
```

By preceding the asterisk with a backslash:

```
a\*
```

we have broken the asterisk out of its normal meaning and it just becomes a meaningless character. The regex now says the letter `a` then the letter `*`.

Recurring Pattern

Above are three examples of breaking out of normal interpretation/meaning. This suggests that breaking out of normal interpretation/meaning is a recurring pattern.

Acknowledgements