

Answers Unit 13

1. The fundamental issues to consider here are (a) the ease of conversion as a word-formation process in modern English and (b) the widespread use of nouns as pre-modifiers of other nouns (both in noun-noun compounds and in syntactic phrases). Thus, comparing the following three examples:

a **golden** chalice (adj. + noun)

a **gold** watch (noun + noun, in syntactic phrase)

gold standard (noun + noun, in lexicalised compound)

we can note a fuzzy boundary even in those (few) cases in which the adjective and noun are morphologically distinct in modern English. The fuzziness is extended considerably for all those cases in which adjective and noun have the same form:

a **silver** ray

a **silver** tray

the **silver** trade

On the basis of such analogues, it is very easy to treat pre-modifying nouns as adjectives in all those combinations which are not strongly lexicalised:

a **family** relationship > an **exclusively family** relationship (but not, at least in this sense: * an **exclusive family** relationship)

family allowance > * an **exclusively family** allowance

2. Useful books for answering this question include:

Bauer, Laurie. 1983. *English word-formation*. Cambridge: CUP.

Bauer, Laurie. 2001. *Morphological productivity*. Cambridge: CUP.

Haspelmath, Martin. 2002. *Understanding morphology*. London: Arnold.

Plag, Ingo. 2003. *Word-formation in English*. Cambridge: CUP.

Schmid, Hans-Jörg. 2005. *Englische Morphologie und Wortbildung: eine Einführung*. Berlin: Schmidt.

Spencer, Andrew. 1998. *The handbook of morphology*. Oxford: Blackwell.

3. *I speak well all those ...*: rule breaking licensed by special circumstances, namely the length of the direct object, which can then be placed after the adverbial rather than before it to make comprehension easier.

This type of remark I really hate: The object is fronted here but the sequence S–V is not violated as in * *This type of remark really hate I*. Object-fronting of this type is a marked constructional variant which goes against SVO only to a limited extent.

On the wall...: The structure of this sentence is not OVS, but AVS. The reversal of Subject and Verb is possible in this case because of the heavy weight of the subject. This is again rule-breaking licensed by special circumstances. Note that this sentence instantiates the type of "verb-second" order which we are familiar with from German, and which was widespread in Old English. The fact that we still encounter it occasionally today shows how long grammatical change may take.

4. For a start, you may find it helpful to consider how the Saussurean distinctions between *langue* and *parole*, or between the synchronic and diachronic approach to the study of language, can be squared with the claims made in the first quotation.

The following explanations will help you when thinking about this question:

Langue: the language system shared by a community of speakers;

Parole: the concrete utterances produced by individual speakers in actual situations;

Synchronic: the study of language at a specific point in time; description of a state of the language, regardless of the changes that might be taking place;

Diachronic: the study of language from the point of view of its historical development, usually in terms of phonological, grammatical, semantic, or lexical development.

In suggesting an evolutionary approach to language, the first quotation clearly goes against the strict separation between synchronic and diachronic analyses advocated by de Saussure. Structuralists also tend to avoid fully confronting the messiness of linguistic data, by rapidly abstracting away from the level of *parole* to *langue*.