Answers Unit 4

1. *John **works** for IBM.*
   *These **days**, my mother **reads** a lot of historical **novels**.*
   *We **liked** it there a lot last year, but this year we **are looking** for a **cheaper** hotel.*
   *Can you identify the person to **whom** you **handed** the parcel?*

2. *He's the **most polite** person that you can imagine.*
   *I find the **cover of the book** very misleading.*

3. ***John's sister's children** are joining us for part of the trip.*
   *The door is now even **narrower** than before.*

4. Although the most recent **OED** entry for *utterest* dates from 1884, this superlative was most common in the 15th and 16th centuries and hardly used after. From the present-day point of view, *utterest* is considered obsolete in the OED. This is confirmed by **Webster's** *Third New International Dictionary of the English Language,* which does not record the word at all. The most recent entry of *merest* in the OED, on the other hand, is from 1984. Its usage in present-day English is recorded also in Webster's Dictionary.

   Both Greenbaum/Quirk's *Student's Grammar of the English Language* and Huddleston/ Pullum/Reynolds's *Student's Introduction to English Grammar* list *utter* as a peripheral adjective whose only adjectival characteristic is its attributive function. According to these grammars, *utter* is not gradable, i.e. cannot be used in the superlative.

   Evidence from present-day English corpora corroborate the assumption that the superlative *utterest*, in contrast to *merest*, is not current any longer. In the BNC (written and spoken British English from the 1960s to the 1990s), *utterest* does not occur at all. *Merest*, on the other hand, occurs 123 times in the BNC (121 times in the written part, and twice in the spoken material). *The Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA), though ten times bigger than the BNC, does not contain any examples of *utterest*, either. An even larger corpus, News on the Web (NoW) features two good examples, and more can be found on the World Wide Web, though these are mostly forms that we are not looking for, such as the archaic second-person singular form of the verb *utter* ("thou utterest") or, if used as the superlative of the adjective, occur in

quotations from texts that were produced hundreds of years ago. If you want to use the Web as corpus, you should consider the following points.

If a corpus is merely considered as a collection of texts, the Word Wide Web can easily be used as a corpus. However, if corpus is defined as a collection of texts compiled according to specific linguistic criteria and aiming at representativeness, the Web can hardly be compared to linguistic corpora such as the *British National Corpus* or the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA). On the Web, the number of texts is ever increasing (i.e. the corpus size is not defined; only estimates of the actual size of the Web exist), websites have different lengths and may contain duplicates or multiples of texts available elsewhere, and no genre distinction is made. Texts made available on US or British servers may have been produced elsewhere, and material in English need not necessarily have been produced by native speakers of the language. The Web can therefore not be considered a reliable corpus in the classic linguistic sense.

For a tool that makes possible a somewhat structured approach to Web data, see: www.webcorp.org.uk

5. *Long live the Emperor!* - simple; finite

Down with the Emperor! - simple; verbless

I don't want (you to be present at my birthday party). - complex; main clause finite, object clause non-finite

(Living in Scotland), you pick up one or two words (that would not be used South of the Border). - complex; adverbial clause non-finite, main clause finite, relative clause finite

Would you believe it? - simple; finite

He just upped and left. - simple (with coordinated finite verbs in the predicate); finite

I arranged (for an old friend of mine to meet me at the airport). - complex; main clause finite, object clause non-finite

Students (wishing to take the exam before the end of the summer term) must register by 30 April. - simple; finite, non-finite relative clause defining the main-clause subject *students*. Note that the presence of a relative clause does not make a sentence into a complex one. Relative clauses are post-modifications within a

constituent noun phrase, not expansions of constituents into sub-clauses.

The committee's report was not expected to be published before the elections. - complex; main clause finite; object clause non-finite. The structure of this clause is complicated to unravel because of double passivisation. Think of:

Noboby expected (the government [S] *to publish* [P] *the committee's report* [O] *before the elections* [(A)]

as a possible underlying form. Passivisation of the bracketed non-finite object clause yields:

Nobody expected (the committee's report to be published before the elections)

Now assume a reanalysis of the following type, which is permitted in this case:

(Nobody [S] *expected* [P] *the committee's report* [O]*) to be published before the elections*

Passivisation of the main clause yields the version you were asked to analyse.

6. *evlerde*: in (the) houses
   evim: my house
   evde: in (the) house
   evimde: in my house

7. The following reference works might help you with this question:
   Brown, Edward K. (ed.). 2006. *Encyclopedia of language and linguistics*. 2nd ed. Amsterdam et al.: Elsevier.
   Comrie, Bernard. 1989. *Language universals and linguistic typology: syntax and morphology*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.
   Croft, William. 2003. *Typology and universals*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
   Crystal, David. 2010. *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.