Answers Unit 13

1. The fundamental facts to consider here are that (a) verbs and nouns can easily be converted into each other in Modern English and (b) nouns can freely be used to pre-modify other nouns, not only in noun-noun compounds, but also in syntactic phrases. The distinction between the three types is clear in the following example:

   *a **golden** chalice* (adj. + noun in syntactic phrase)
   *a **gold** watch* (noun pre-modifying noun in a syntactic phrase)
   goldmine (lexicalised noun+noun compound)

   Boundaries become fuzzy where the adjective and the 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, for example by modifying them with an adverb or putting them into comparatives and superlatives:

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

   *an even **more South London** voice than her husband's*

2. Useful books for answering this question include:

   Bauer, Laurie. 1983. *English word-formation*. Cambridge: CUP.
   Bauer, Laurie. 2001. *Morphological productivity*. Cambridge: CUP.
   Plag, Ingo. 2003. *Word-formation in English*. Cambridge: CUP.
   Schmid, Hans-Jörg. 2005. *Englische Morphologie und Wortbildung: eine Einführung*. Berlin: Schmidt.

   Assuming a zero-morpheme makes most sense in cases in which there is overwhelming presence of explicit markers serving the same purpose. For example with past tense forms such as *put* and *hit*. After all, most verbs do have explicit tense-marking. By contrast, it is more difficult to justify zero-morphemes to distinguish between transitive and intransitive uses of verbs (e.g. *walk* vs. *walk the dog*, *break* vs. *break something*, etc.). Here the more economical and elegant solution would be to subsume them under the heading of polysemy.

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.

4. Generative theory assumes that syntactic structures are well-defined (rather than fuzzy) and that the grammar of a language is autonomous (i.e. not determined or explained by meaning and language use). As in structuralist linguistics, Chomsky puts the priority on the synchronic perspective on language.

   In suggesting an evolutionary approach to language, the first quotation blurs the boundary between synchronic and diachronic analysis. The evolution of linguistic form under functional communicative pressure is fundamentally opposed Chomsky's view, who assumes an autonomous grammar. The second quotation challenges Chomsky's assumption that – at least at the level of competence – grammars are well-defined rule-based systems.