LING 304 HW 1 (due Monday 9/5)

1. Nootka

Consider the following data from Nootka (data from Sapir and Swadesh, 1939), a language spoken in British Columbia, Canada, and answer the questions that follow.

a) Mamuːk-ma   quːʔas-ʔi.
   working-PRES   man-DEF
   "The man is working."

b) Quːʔas-ma   mamuːk-ʔi.
   man-PRES   working-DEF
   "the working one is a man."

(The : mark indicates a long vowel. ʔ is a glottal stop. PRES in the second line means "present tense". DEF means "definite determiner" (the).)

1) In sentence a, is *quːʔas* functioning as a verb or a noun?

2) In sentence a, is *Mamuːk* functioning as a verb or a noun?

3) In sentence b, is *Quːʔas* a verb or a noun?

4) In sentence b, is *mamuːk* a verb or a noun?

5) What criteria did you use to tell what is a noun in Nootka and what is a verb?

6) How does this data support the idea that there are no semantic criteria involved in determining part of speech?

2. Nominal prenominal modifiers

Part 1: Based on syntactic distributional criteria alone, what part of speech would the underlined words in the following examples be? Briefly describe your reasoning.

a) the <u>leather</u> couch
b) the <u>water</u> spout

Part 2: By contrast, what do the following acceptability facts tell us about the parts of speech of *leather* and *water*? Do you need to revise your hypothesis from Part 1, and if so, how? Do the data below lead you to formulate a new hypothesis about the parts of speech for these words? If so, what is that new hypothesis?

a) the leather

b) the water

c) ?the very leather couch (cf. the very red couch)

d) ?the very water spout (cf. the very big spout)

e) *the more leather couch / *The leatherer couch (cf. the bigger couch)

f) *the more water spout

g) *The waterest spout

3. Subcategories of adverbs

Your goal in this problem is to determine subcategories for adverbs. Consider the following adverbs.

luckily, earnestly, intently, hopefully, probably, certainly, frequently, patiently, always, completely, almost, again, evidently, frankly, demandingly, yesterday, necessarily.

Part 1: For each adverb determine the following syntactic distributional properties:

1) Can it appear before the subject (e.g., Unbelievably, I don't know any physicists.)

2) Can it appear between a modal or helping ('auxiliary') verb (e.g., *will*, *have*, *is*, *can*) and the main verb? (e.g., I have often wondered about the existence of ghosts.)

3) Can it appear after the object? Or at the end of the sentence (e.g., Linguists read books quickly.)

4) Can it appear between an object and a PP in a ditransitive (e.g., I pit the book carefully on the table.)

Part 2: Group the adverbs together into subcategories based on your answers to part 1. Don't just group them into "Group 1", "Group 2", "Group 3", etc. See if there are any meaningful generalizations that can be made based on how the adverbs pattern, in terms of syntactic distribution, meaning, how they modify nearby material, etc.. Briefly justify and describe your groupings.

Suggestions: It may be easier for you to organize your responses in a table or a matrix, which would allow you to check off each property in 1-4 for each verb.