Puzzle 5: general feedback

If you are turning in Puzzle 5 for assessment on 20 April 2023, you need to make sure your revised version addresses all of the following points (in addition to any issues I may have pointed out in my personalized feedback):

1. There are three main parts to this assignment. The first part is *diagnosing the problem*. The second part is *finding a solution to the problem*. The third part is *extending your solution to other examples*. Make sure your answers cover all of them in sufficient detail.

2. <u>Diagnosing the problem</u>. To see what the problem is, put together the parts given to you and see what they predict. The parts given are: (a) our semantics for plural nouns, (b) our semantics for adjectives like *striped* (from *Intro to Semantics*), and (c) the composition rule that puts (a) and (b) together, Predicate Modification.

3. <u>Finding a solution to the problem</u>. Try to find a solution that is *as simple as possible*. Here is what I mean by 'not simple': if you have to change all of (a), (b) and (c) in order to get the semantics for (1) right, you are not coming up with a simple solution. Try changing only one at a time. An argument for *not* changing something is if it has worked well in the past—if you change it, you have to go back to all the facts we accounted for with it in the past. Sometimes there's no avoiding changing something, even if it involves revisiting all of its past, but *change as little as possible*, while still predicting the correct meaning for (1).

4. <u>Extending your solution to other examples</u>. Whatever your solution, it should work straightaway for examples (6) and (7). A great change to a theory is one which, in addition to being simple (see point 5), accounts for additional examples.

5. As always, when you explain anything, *be specific and provide concrete examples*. If you say "The meaning of adjectives in (3) is wrong", say exactly why, down to the details. If you need to use examples in your explanation and they are not given in the puzzle, provide them.

6. This time, the puzzle provided you with the background you need in order to spot the problem. But usually problems don't come to us this way—take this puzzle as a sample of what you would have to provide first if I had simply asked you: what does our system predict for (1)? What is the problem with that? Etc.

Ideas for developing Puzzle 5 into (part of) your final assignment (submission on 9 May):

1. Consider adjectives like *numerous*, in sentences such as *The mistakes were numerous* or *The numerous mistakes annoyed him*. What should their semantics be? Why is **Each of the mistakes was/were numerous* ungrammatical? What other adjectives are like *numerous*?

2. In *Intro to Semantics*, we spent some time discussing the semantics of the adjective *former*. Does anything have to change about these kinds of adjectives if we now want to account for examples such as *The former presidents sneezed*? Explore any changes by considering their implications. Explore other adjectives like *former*.