Formal Semantics: Lecture 5

Some case studies

## Nominals: Predication vs. Modification

### Case 1

*What is the difference between these pairs of examples in the contribution to the overall meaning made by the underlined word?*

1. Jake is short.
2. Jake is a short boy.
3. Steph is tall.
4. Steph is a tall woman.

### Case 2

*Can the underlined adjectives in examples(2) and (3) be interpreted in the same way as the (1)? Think especially in terms of the relationship between the adjective and the noun…*

1. Kennedy is a tall president.
2. Kennedy is a former president.
3. Kennedy is a fake president.

*Can you think of other adjectival examples like these?*

### Case 3

*Compare the following:*

1. The tree is dead. / That’s a dead tree.
2. The tree is tall. / That’s a tall tree.

*Do we need the same sort of information to interpret* dead *and* tall?

### Case 4

*Consider the following case study:*

* Suppose Jacqui is a woman who, compared to the average woman, is **not** tall. Now consider these alternative situations:
  1. Jacqui finds herself in a room full of other women, all of whom are of the same height as her.
  2. Jacqui finds herself in a room full of other women, all of whom are shorter than her.
  3. Jacqui finds herself in a room full of other women, all of whom are taller than her.
  4. Jacqui finds herself in New York, surrounded by lots of highrise buildings.

In which of the above situations would it be ok to say that *Jacqui is short* vs. *Jacqui is tall*?