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 WCCFL 34, Salt Lake City, 29 April - 1 May

① The Problem

- (1) a. unhappy b. *unsad c. not sad
 unfriendly *unhostile not hostile
 untrue *unfalse not false

- Positive adjectives may be prefixed with *un-*, but negative ones cannot (Zimmer 1964, Horn 2005).
- Positive and negative adjectives can be negated with *not*.

⇒ Existing accounts:

- (2) "Negative affixes are not used with adjectival stems that have a negative value." (Zimmer 1964:15)
 (3) "The stem to which a relatively nonproductive negative affix can attach tends to be an unmarked, weak positive scalar value." (Horn 1989:286)

⇒ (2) and (3) are inadequate:

- they are restricted to *affixal* negation (explaining (1c)), but we show that the pattern in (1) can be observed both with morphological and *syntactic* negation
- It is not a coincidence that *negative* markers are excluded with *negative* adjectives.

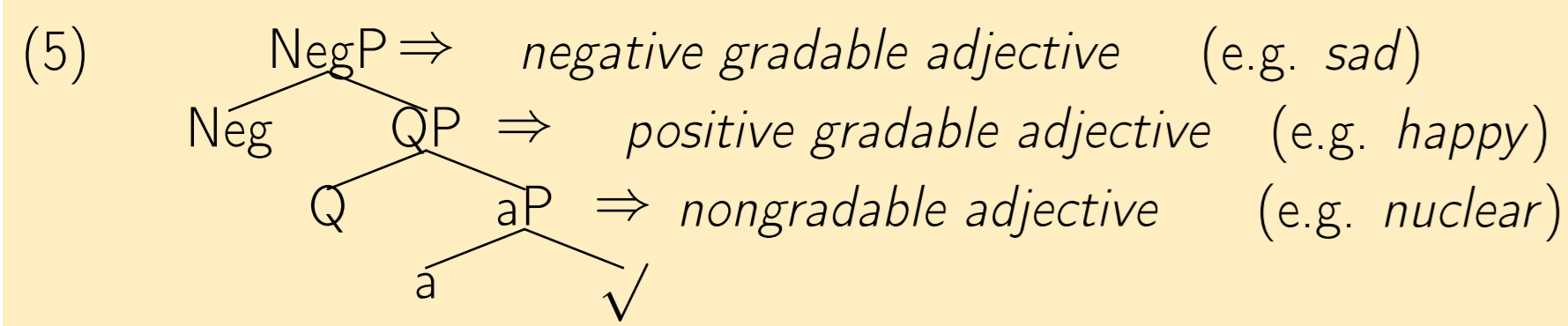
⇒ Instead, (1) is to be explained in terms of a constraint on double negation:

- (4) *<Neg, Neg>
 The functional sequence must not contain two immediately consecutive Neg-features.

② Prerequisites

• Size matters

- The difference between positive and negative adjectives is a difference in the size of the tree, i.e. the number of features they spell out.



• The feature Q

- Q denotes a positive quantity
- Evidence for Q:
 - gradable adjectives denote a high degree (e.g. Cresswell 1976, Seuren 1978, Bresnan 1973, Kennedy 1999, Kennedy & McNally 2005, etc.) → (6)
 - *much*-support (Corver 1997) → (7)

- (6) John is tall = John is MUCH tall ≠ John has a degree of tallness (Bresnan 1973)
 (7) John is fond of Mary. Maybe he is too *much* so.

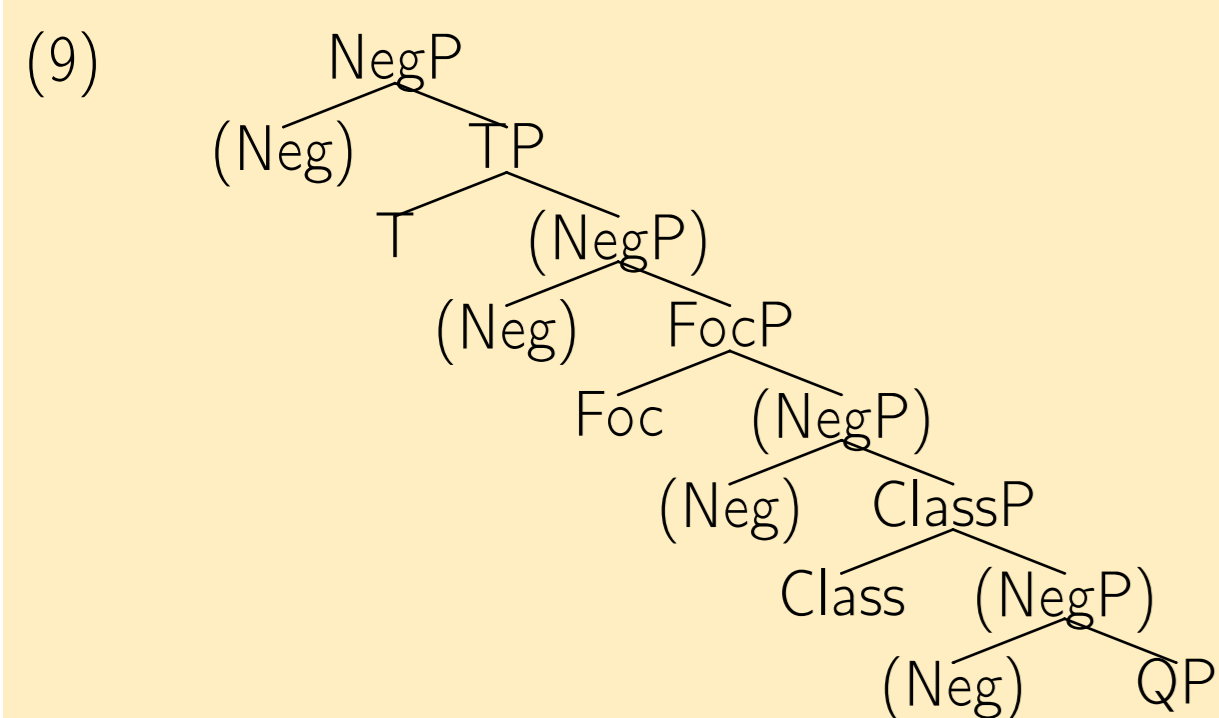
- *much* spells out QP
- positive gradable adjectives spell out [QP [aP]] (see (5)), whence we derive **much tall*

• The feature Neg

- Different negative markers all spell out a Neg-feature, but package it with various other features like T, Foc, Class, Q (De Clercq 2013):

- (8) a. [NegP Neg [TP T [FocP Foc [ClassP Class [QP Q]]]]] ⇒ *not* (sentential & constituent: syncretic!)
 b. [NegP Neg [FocP Foc [ClassP Class [QP Q]]]] ⇒ *not*
 c. [NegP Neg [ClassP Class [QP Q]]] ⇒ *non*
 d. [NegP Neg [QP Q]] ⇒ *un-*

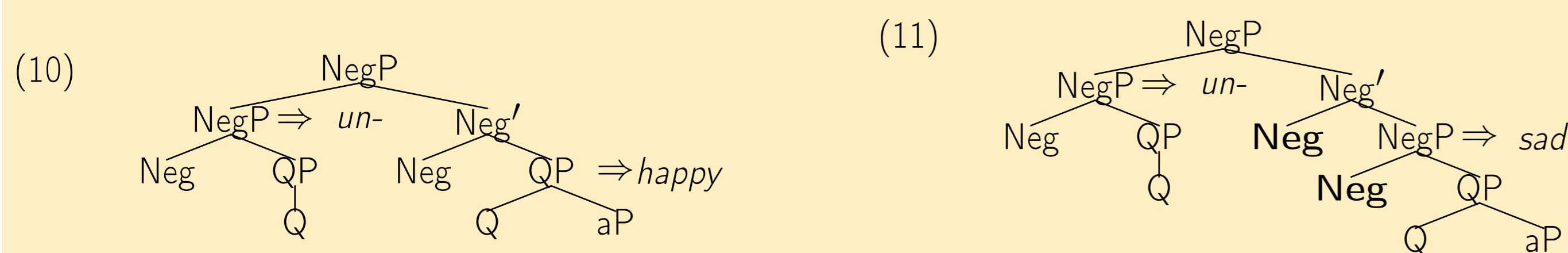
- The clausal spine features the exact same functional sequence, including the potential presence of a NegP at each successive level:



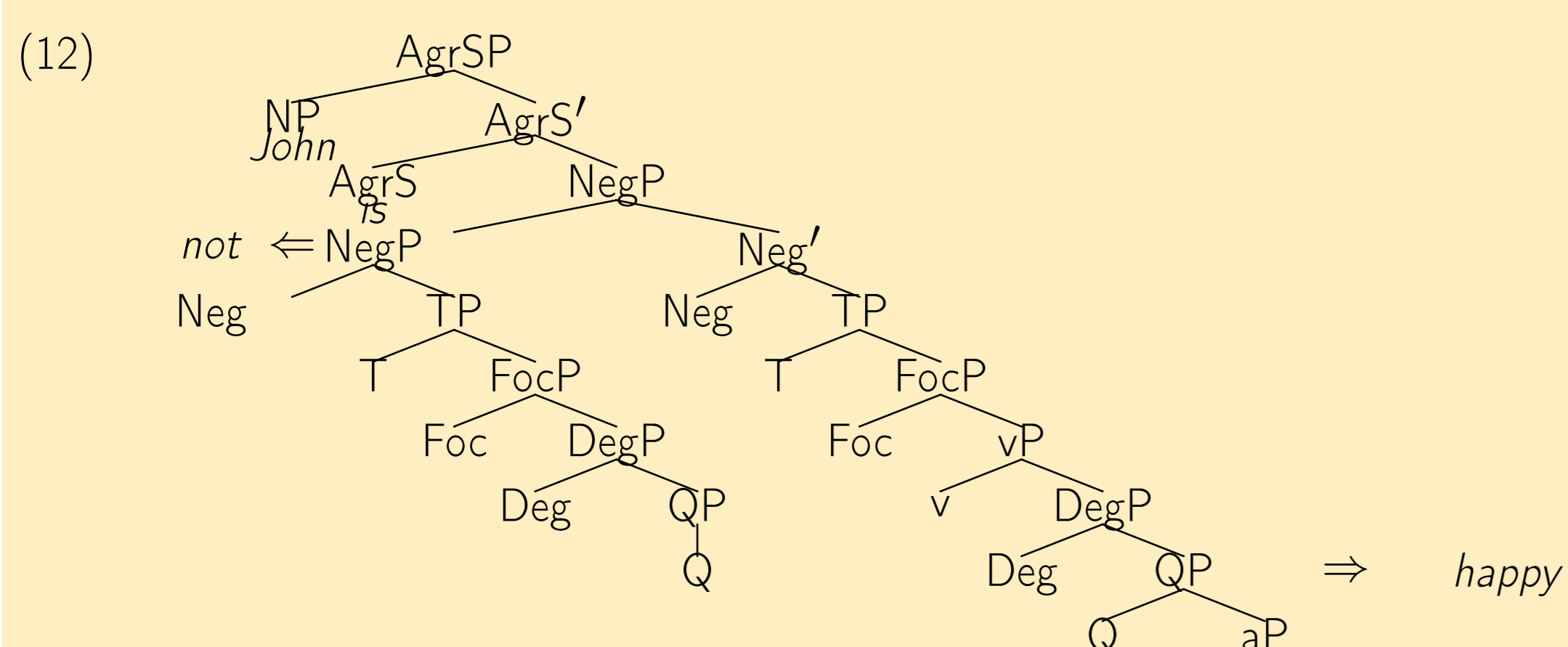
- By default, the functional heads are interpreted affirmatively, but they can be made negative by adding a NegP on top of them.
- Negative markers have internal structure (8), and external syntax (scope; (9)).
- The internal make-up of each negative marker determines its scope position:
 - *not* takes scope in TP or FocP;
 - *non* takes scope in ClassP
 - *un-* takes scope in QP.

③ The account

- Prefixing a *positive* adjective with *un-* yields (10).
- Prefixing a *negative* adjective with *un* yields **unsad*, as in (11).



- (11) violates the functional sequence, since we now have <Neg, Neg, Q, a>, in violation of (4).
- In contrast, *not* takes scope over TP or FocP (Belletti 2004), as in (12); this structure respects the fseq.



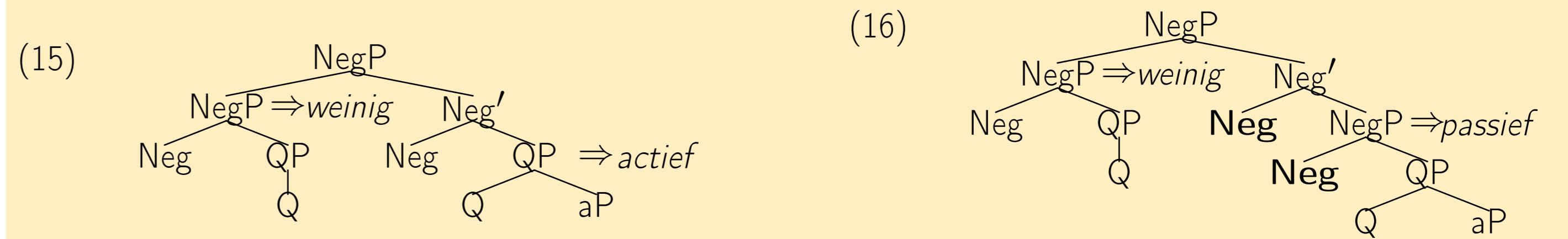
④ Supporting evidence

• French *peu* and Dutch *weinig* 'little'

- French and Dutch do not only show the pattern in (1), but the same pattern with a case of *syntactic*, not morphological, negation.

- (13) peu + 'little +'
 actif/*passif 'active/passive'
 aimable/*hostile 'friendly/hostile'
 clair/*embrouillé 'clear/confused'
 tolérant/*intolérant 'tolerant/intolerant'
 content/*mécontent 'satisfied/dissatisfied'
 heureux/*malheureux 'happy/unhappy'
- (14) weinig + 'little +'
 actief/*passief 'active/passive'
 correct/*fout 'correct/wrong'
 verstandig/*dom 'smart/stupid'
 interessant/*saai 'interesting/boring'
 duidelijk/*onduidelijk 'clear/unclear'
 geduldig/*ongeduldig 'patient/impatient'

- These data can be explained by the same account if we assume that
 - *peu/weinig* are the phrasal spellout of Neg + Q
 - merging these in the Spec of a negative adjective leads to the same violation against the ban on double negation (4) <*Neg, Neg>.
- The derivation which respects the fseq is given in (15), and the one that violates the fseq is in (16):



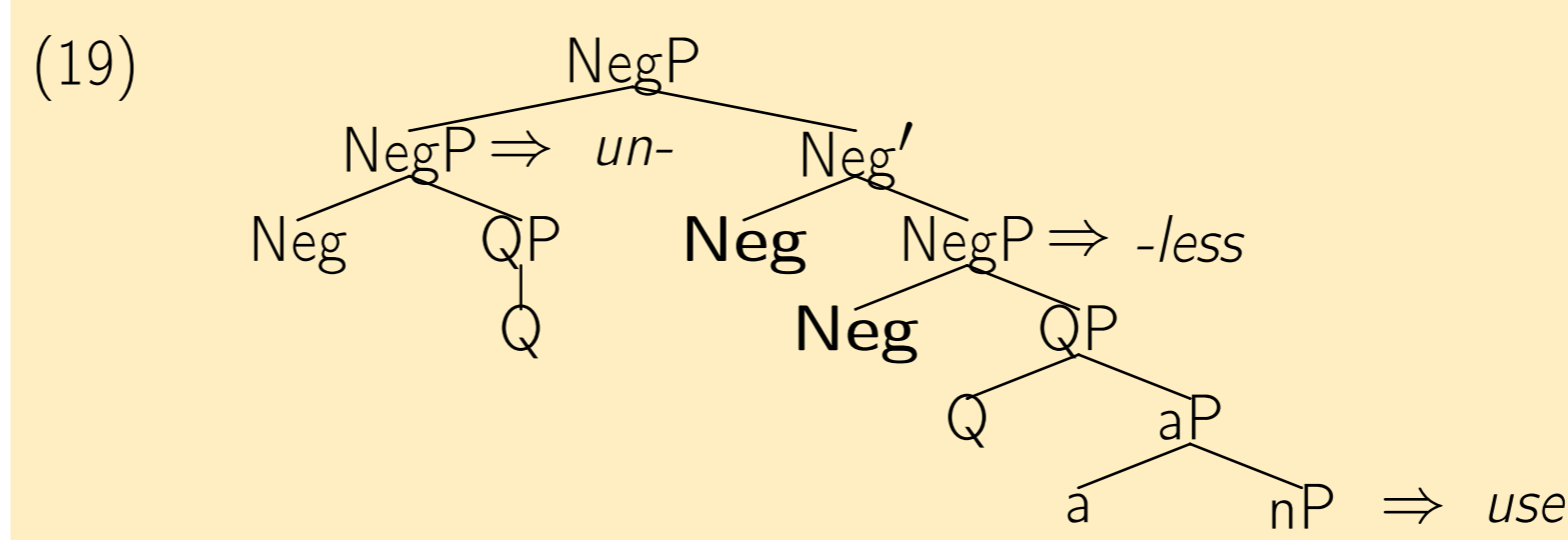
- These data provide a further argument against (2) and (3), since they show that the pattern in (1) is not restricted to morphological negation, but extends to certain cases of syntactic negation.

• The suffixes *-less* and *-ful*

- Nouns suffixed with *-less* resist *un-*prefixation, though not negation per se.
- Nouns suffixed with *-ful* do not resist *un-*prefixation.

- (17) breathless *unbreathless not breathless (18) successful unsuccessful not successful
 senseless *unsenseless not senseless lawful unlawful not lawful
 useless *unuseless not useless eventful uneventful not eventful
 merciless *unmerciless not merciless helpful unhelpful not helpful

- These data can be explained if we assume that *-less* spells out Neg+Q+a.
- The derivation which violates the fseq is in (19):



- The same pattern extends to Dutch syntactic negation with *weinig*, which does not combine with lexically negative adjectives, *un-*prefixed ones, and *-less*-suffixed ones:

- (20) *weinig passief, saai, dom, ... 'little passive, boring, stupid'
 *weinig on+gelukkig, on+tevreden, on+verstandig, ... 'little unhappy, dissatisfied, unintelligent'
 *weinig nutte+loos, zin+loos, belang+eloos ... 'little useless, senseless, disinterested'

• Apparent counterexamples

- Siegel (1977:190-191) notes the contrast between (21) and (22):

- (21) a. *undishonest (22) a. undiscoverable
 b. *undiscourteous b. undisputed
 c. *undisloyal c. undisheartened
 d. *undiscomfortable d. undismayed

- The negative prefixes *un-* and *dis-* are *linearly* adjacent in all these cases
- They are not *structurally* adjacent in (22) (whereas they are in (21)):

- (23) a. *[A unNeg [A disNeg [A honest]]]
 b. [A unNeg [A [V disNeg [V cover]]] able]

- The same reasoning applies to a class of English examples noted in Zimmer (1964) and Horn (1985), where the *un-*prefix apparently does attach to a negative base, yielding an *un-*prefixed positive adjective:

- (24) unharmed, unscathed, undefeated, unblamable, unobjectionable

- These words have a structure where the two negative items are not structurally adjacent:

- (25) [A unNeg [A [V harmNeg] ed]]

- The same logic applies to the positive Dutch *un-*prefixed adjective *onschuldig* un+guilty 'innocent'.

- (26) [A onNeg [A [N schuldNeg] ig]]

- All these data are reflexes of a general ban on structurally adjacent negative morphemes, ruled out by (4).

⑤ Conclusion

- We account for the pattern (1) in terms of the general constraint on two successive Neg-features in the fseq given in (4).
- (2) and (3) are inadequate as explanations for (1), because
 - the pattern in (1) extends to certain (but not all) cases of syntactic negation
 - they fail to explain why it is that *negative* prefixes cannot combine with *negative* adjectives

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