

Karen De Clercq & Guido Vanden Wyngaerd

Ghent University/FWO & KU Leuven

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① The Problem: morphological negation

- positive adjectives may be prefixed with *un-*, but negative ones systematically cannot; both positive and negative adjectives can be negated with *not* (???)

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

⇒ Zimmer/Horn-generalisation:

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

- on closer scrutiny, the pattern turns out to be more general:
- nouns suffixed with *-less* resist *un-*prefixation (though again not negation per se) → (3).
- nouns suffixed with *-ful* allow *un-*prefixation → (4).
- stacking multiple negative prefixes (*un+dis*, *un+iN*, *un+un*, *dis+dis*) is ruled out → (5)-(6).

- (3) breathless *unbreathless not breathless (4) successful unsuccessful not successful
 senseless *unsenseless not senseless eventful uneventful not eventful
 lawless *unlawless not lawless lawful unlawful not lawful

- (5) *undishonest not dishonest (6) *unimpossible not impossible
 *undiscourteous not discourteous *unillogical not illogical
 *undisloyal not disloyal *disdishonest not dishonest

Generalisation: negative morphemes cannot be stacked.

⇒ Two important questions:

- Q1 (empirical): Why is this pattern restricted to *affixal* negation?
- Q2 (theoretical): Is it a coincidence that *negative* markers are excluded with *negative* adjectives?

⇒ Answers:

- A1: The above pattern is not restricted to affixal negation, but can be observed both with morphological and syntactic negation.
- A2: This is not a coincidence, but it follows from a general restriction on admissible functional sequences, as claimed in (7):

- (7) *<X, X>
 The functional sequence must not contain two immediately consecutive identical features.

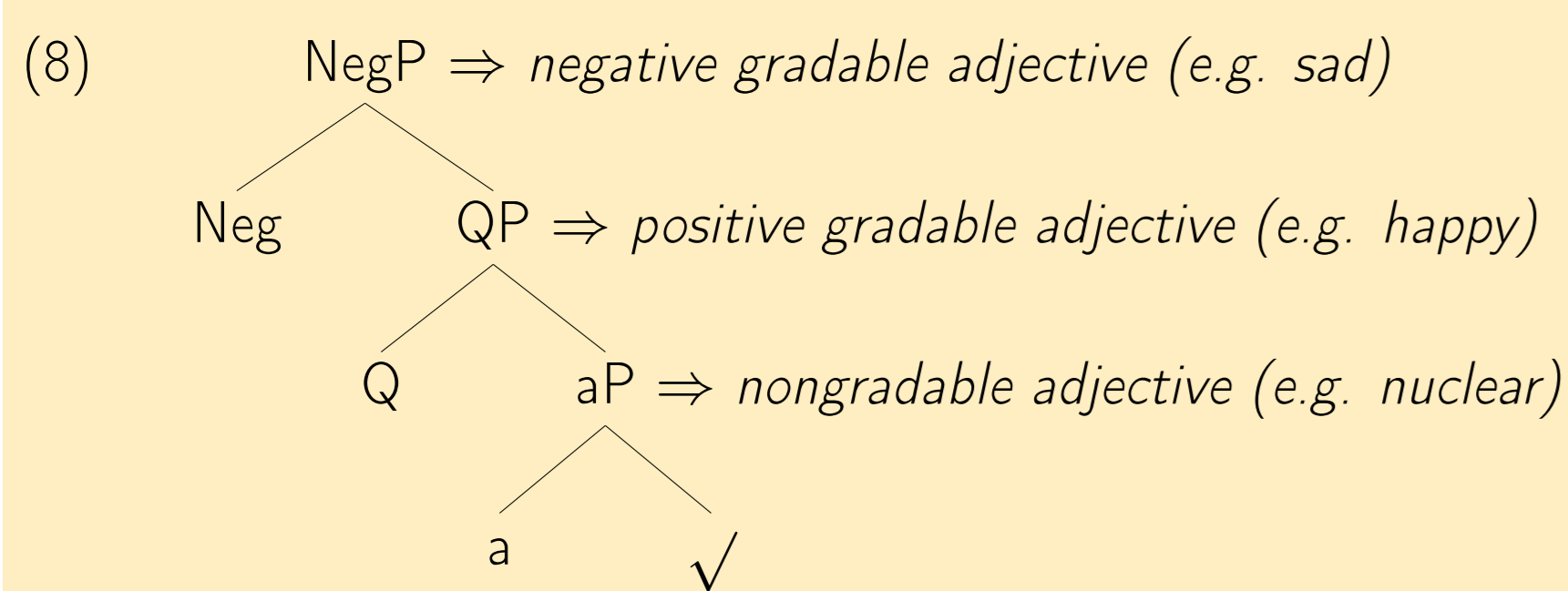
② Prerequisites

1 General background assumptions

- the lexicon is postsyntactic, the syntax works with features.
- phrasal spellout: words spell out syntactic phrases (i.e. collections of features).
- lexical insertion is subject to the *Superset Principle* (?) and the *Elsewhere Principle* (?)

2 The feature structure of adjectives

- there is a (partial) f_{seq} of features: <Neg, Q, a, \sqrt >
- \sqrt : a root feature (a dimension)
- a: a categorial head feature
- Q: contributes gradability (an ordering < on a scale)
- Neg: a negation feature (scale reverser: reverses the ordering of the scale of the adjective)



3 Un-prefixed positive adjectives

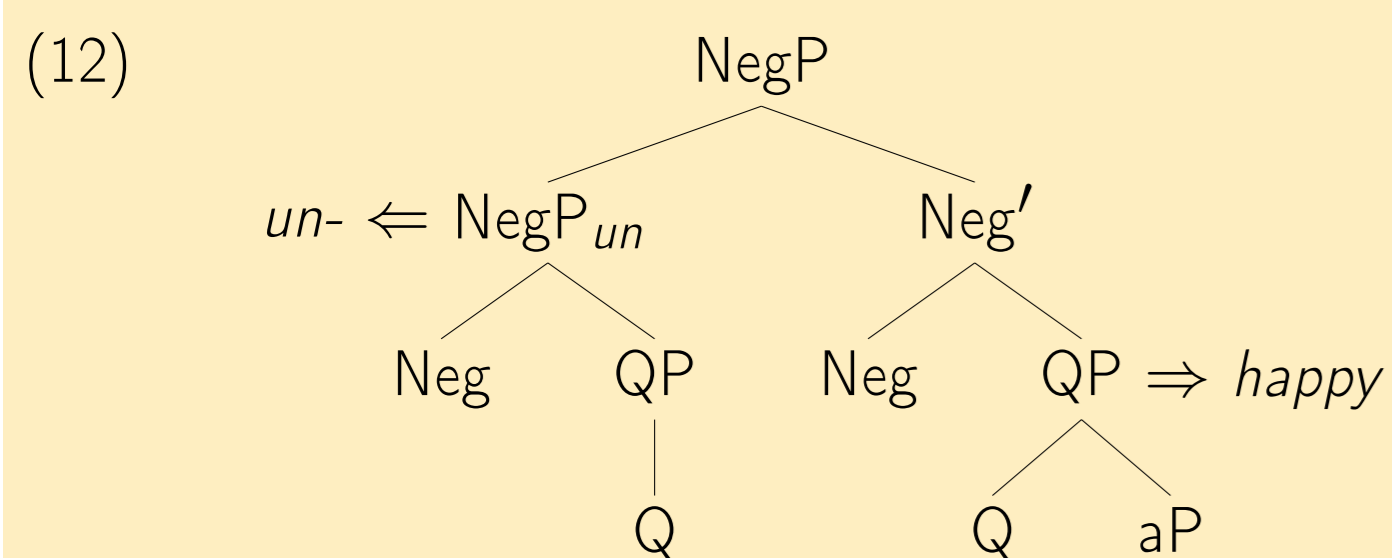
- the *un-*prefix spells out a Neg-feature and a Q-feature (?):

- (9) < /ʌn/, [NegP Neg [QP Q]] >

- evidence that *un-* makes gradable adjectives:

- (10) a. The blood found in in the closet was nonhuman/*inhuman. (classifies sth as human vs nonhuman)
 b. Their behaviour was inhuman/*nonhuman to the extreme. (puts sth on a scale of humanity)

- (11) a. *This sentence is more nongrammatical than that one.
 b. This sentence is more ungrammatical than that one.

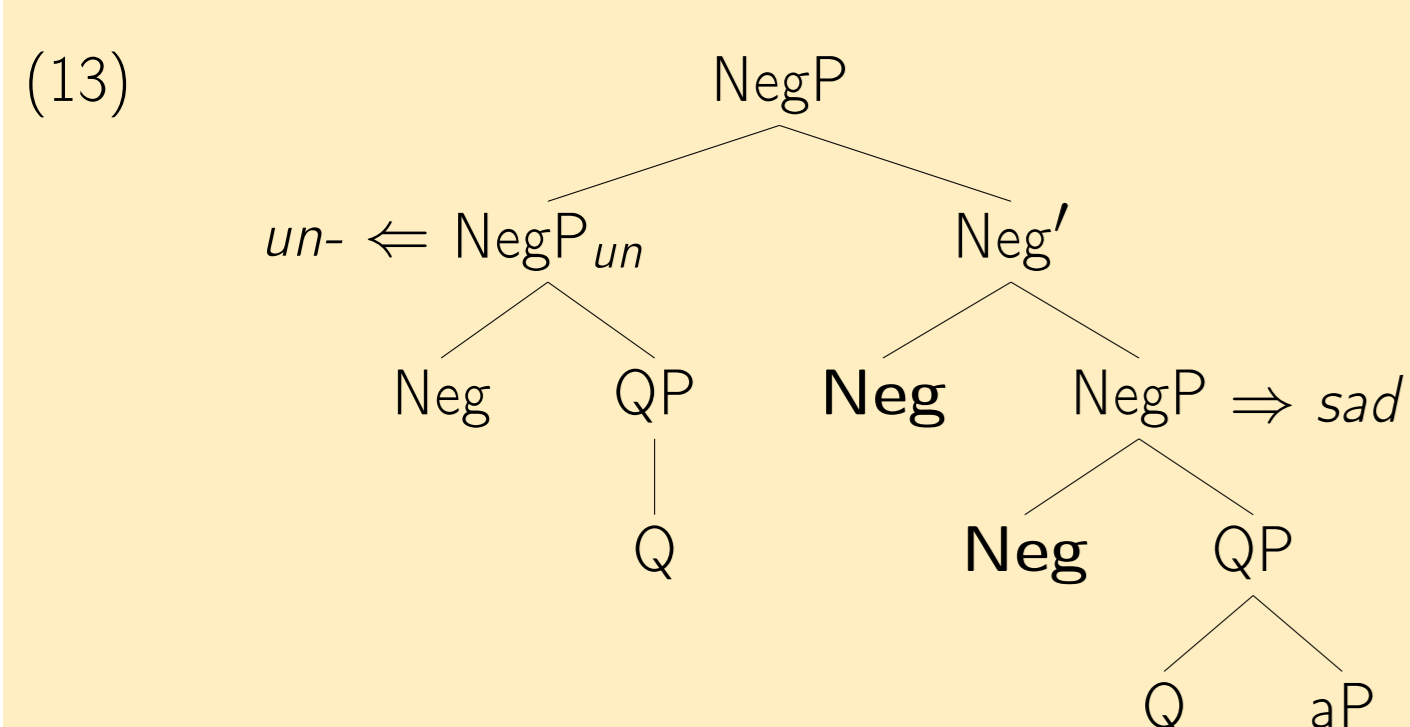


- happy* spells out QP.
- in a parallel derivation, a complex specifier (NegP_{un}) is created, which spells out as *un-*.
- this NegP_{un} is merged in the Spec of a Neg-head dominating the QP of *happy*.

③ The account

1 Un-prefixed negative adjectives

- both *sad* and *un-* spell out a Neg feature:

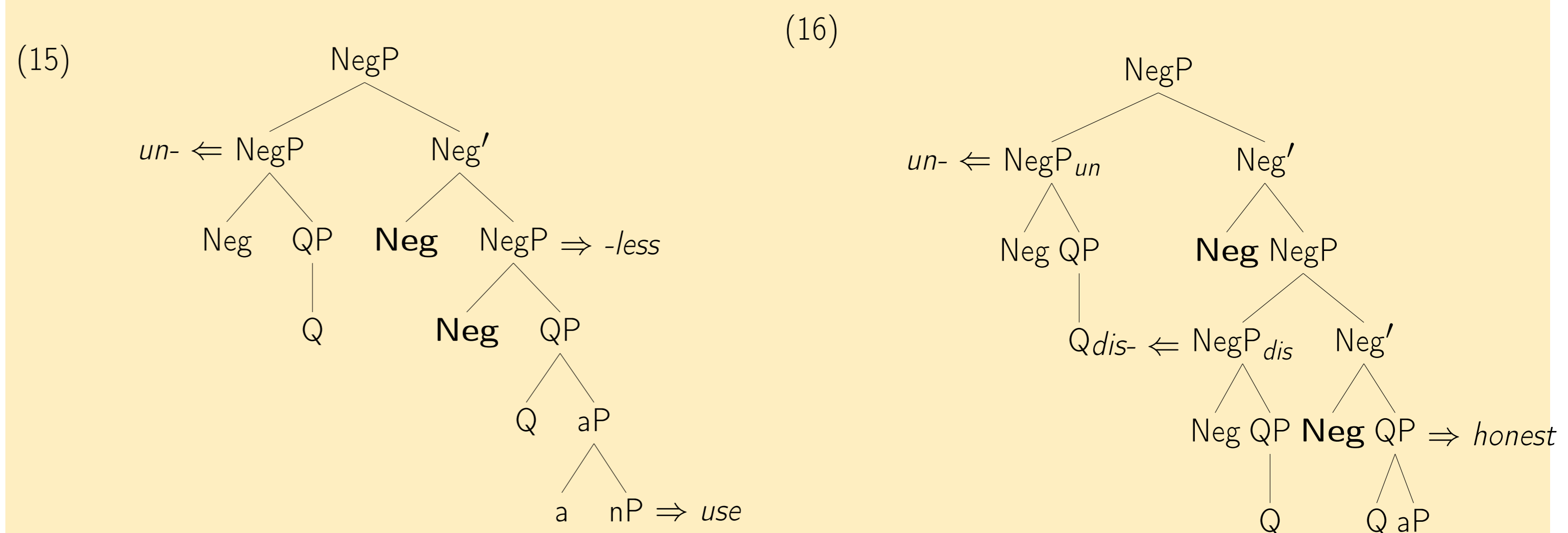


- (13) violates the restriction on the functional sequence in (7), since we now have <Neg, Neg, Q, a>.

2 Un-prefixed derived negative adjectives

- the feature set of *-less* reflects the fact that *-less* derives negative gradable adjectives (i.e. Neg, Q, and a, respectively).
- dis-* spells out the same features as *un-*.

- (14) a. < /ləs/, [NegP Neg [QP Q [aP a]]] >
 b. < /dis/, [NegP Neg [QP Q]] >



- (15) and (16) have the same violation of (7) as *unsad* in (13): <Neg, Neg, Q, a>
- the restrictions on morphological negation discussed in section 1 are accounted for in a principled manner by the restriction on the f_{seq} in (7).

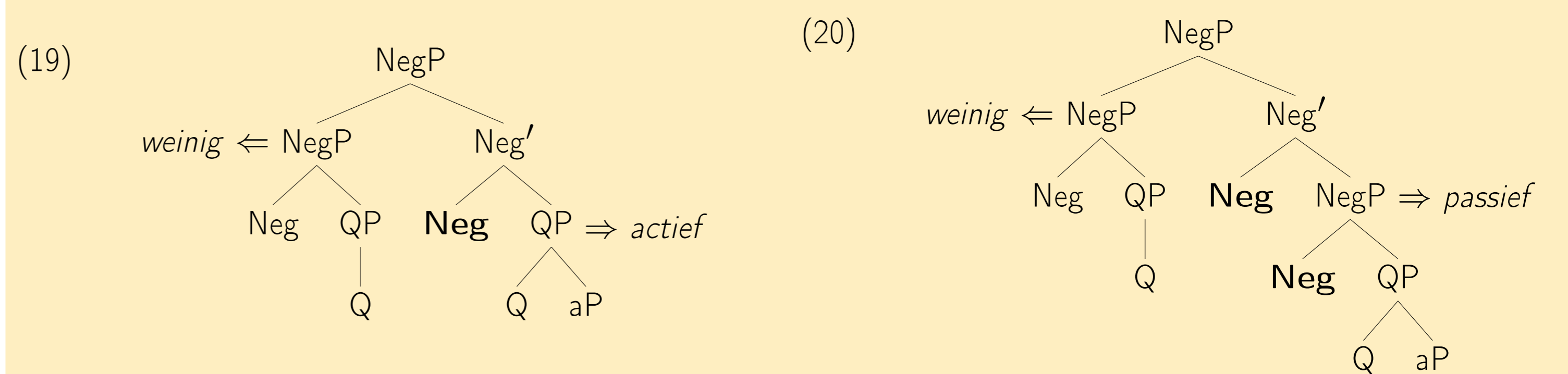
④ Additional support

1 Syntactic negation

- French and Dutch not only show the pattern in (1), but the same pattern with the syntactic modifiers *peu* and *weinig* 'little', respectively:

- (17) **peu** + 'little +'
 actif/*passif 'active/passive'
 aimable/*hostile 'friendly/hostile'
 tolérant/*intolérant 'tolerant/intolerant'
 content/*mécontent 'satisfied/dissatisfied'
 heureux/*malheureux 'happy/unhappy'
- (18) **weinig** + 'little +'
 actief/*passief 'active/passive'
 correct/*fout 'correct/wrong'
 interessant/*saai 'interesting/boring'
 duidelijk/*onduidelijk 'clear/unclear'
 zinvol/*zinloos 'useful/useless'

- these data can be explained by the same account if we assume that *peu/weinig* 'little' are the phrasal spellout of Neg+Q:



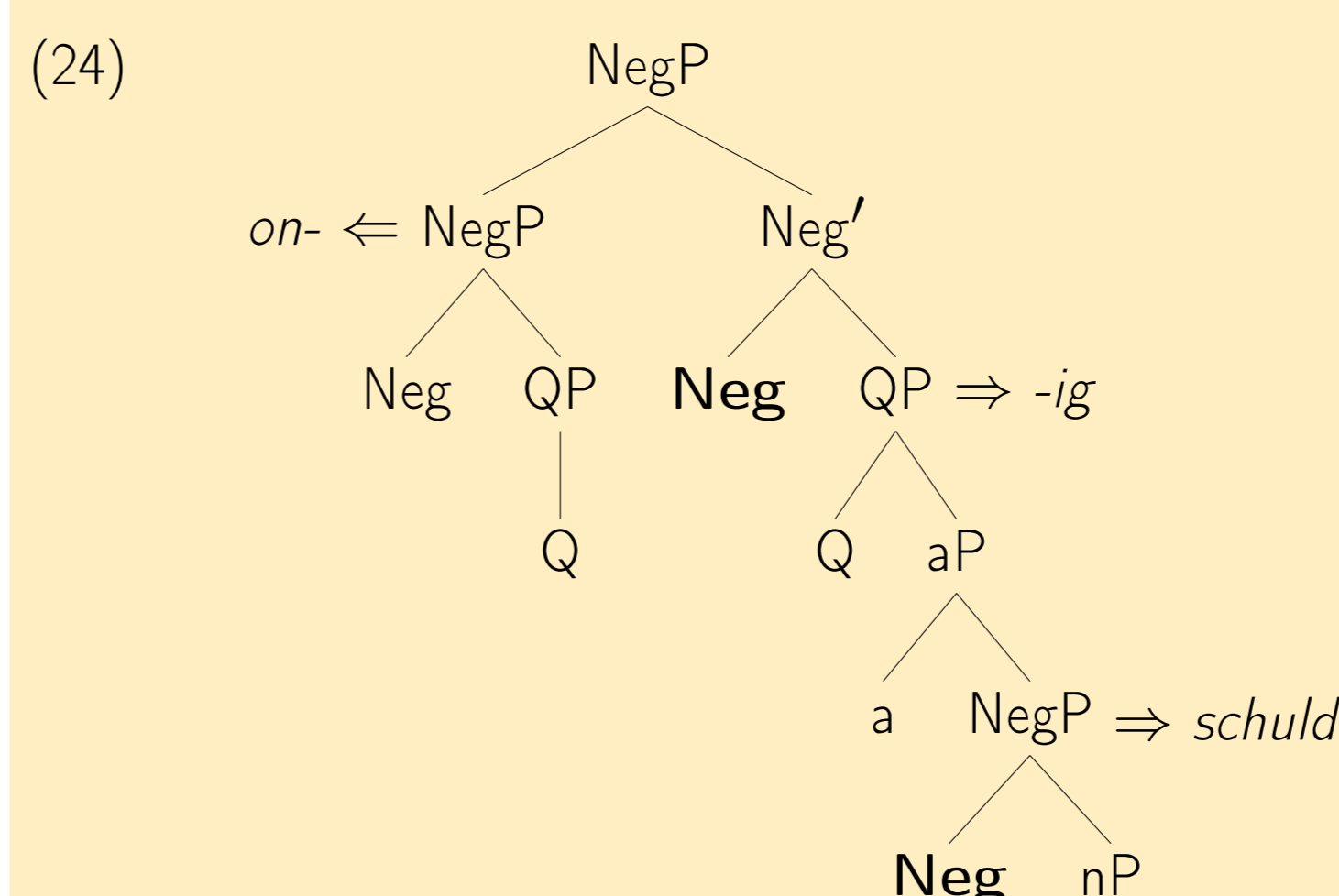
- these data show that the pattern in (1) is not restricted to morphological negation, but extends to certain cases of syntactic negation.

2 Apparent counterexamples

- cases like (21) (? :190-191), (22) (?) and (24) appear to contradict the earlier generalisation:

- (21) a. undiscoverable (22) a. unharmed (23) a. onschadelijk 'harmless'
 b. undisputed b. unscathed b. onschuldig 'innocent'
 c. undisheartened c. undefeated c. ondogmatisch 'undogmatic'
 d. undismayed d. unblamable

- these adjectives are all derived from (negative) verbs or nouns.
- if there is a negative head, it attaches to the noun or verb.
- this does not conflict with the higher negative head spelled out by *un-/on-*.



- the two Neg heads are separated by other heads in the f_{seq} : the tree does not violate (7).

⑤ Conclusion

- empirical evidence suggests that the restriction on the stacking of multiple negative morphemes is not to be formulated in terms of the morphology-syntax divide.
- we account for it in a principled manner in terms of a general constraint on two successive identical features in the f_{seq} .

References

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