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(13)

(1) The Problem

- a. unhappy b. *unsad (1)c. not sad *unhostile not hostile unfriendly *unfalse not false untrue
- Positive adjectives may be prefixed with *un*-, but negative ones cannot (Zimmer 1964, Horn 2005). • Positive and negative adjectives can be negated with *not*.
- \Rightarrow Existing accounts:
- "Negative affixes are not used with adjectival stems that have a negative value." (Zimmer 1964:15) (2)
- "The stem to which a relatively nonproductive negative affix can attach tends to be an unmarked, weak (3) positive scalar value." (Horn 1989:286)
- \Rightarrow (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.
- \Rightarrow Instead, (1) is to be explained in terms of a constraint on double negation:

(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.
 - 'little +' peu + actif/*passif 'active/passive' aimable/*hostile 'friendly/hostile' clair/*embrouillé 'clear/confused' tolérant/*intolérant 'tolerant/intolerant' content/*mécontent 'satisfied/dissatisfied' heureux/*malheureux 'happy/unhappy'

'little +' weinig + 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>.

(16)

(14)

• The derivation which respects the fseq is given in (15), and the one that violates the fseq is in (16):

*<Neg, Neg> (4)

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.
- (5) negative gradable adjective (e.g. *sad*) positive gradable adjective (e.g. happy) Nég (e.g. nuclear) ⇒ nongradable adjective

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.) \rightarrow (6)
- *much*-support (Corver 1997) \rightarrow (7)
- John is tall = John is MUCH tall \neq John has a degree of tallness (Bresnan 1973) (6)
- John is fond of Mary. Maybe he is too *much* so. (7)
- *much* spells out QP
- positive gradable adjectives spell out $[QP [_{aP}]]$ (see (5)), whence we derive *much tall
- **3** 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):





- 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.
- 2 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 senseless *unsenseless not senseless *unuseless not useless useless merciless *unmerciless not merciless
- successful unsuccessful not successful (18)not lawful lawful unlawful uneventful not eventful eventful 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 Duch syntactic negation with *weinig*, which does not combine with lexically negative adjectives, un-prefixed ones, and -less-suffixed ones:

- 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 (8)

 - d. $[NegP Neg [QP Q]] \Rightarrow un-$
- 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).

(20)*weinig passief, saai, dom, ... *weinig on+gelukkig, on+tevreden, on+verstandig, ... *weinig nutte+loos, zin+loos, belang+eloos ...

'little passive, boring, stupid' 'little unhappy, dissatisfied, unintelligent' 'little useless, senseless, disinterested'

- **3** Apparent counterexamples
- Siegel (1977:190-191) notes the contrast between (21) and (22):

(21)a. *undishonest undiscoverable (22) b. *undiscourteous undisputed c. *undisloyal undisheartened d. *undiscomfortable 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)):
- a. *[A un_{Neg} [A dis_{Neg} [A honest]]] b. [A un_{Neg} [A [V dis_{Neg} [V cover]] able]] (23)
- 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:
- unharmed, unscathed, undefeated, unblamable, unobjectionable (24)
- These words have a structure where the two negative items are not structurally adjacent:
- [A un_{Neg} [A [V harm_{Neg}] ed]] (25)
 - The same logic applies to the positive Dutch *un*-prefixed adjective *onschuldig* un+guilty 'innocent'.
- (26)[A on_{Neg} [A [N schuld_{Neg}] ig]]
- All these data are reflexes of a general ban on structurally adjacent negative morphemes, ruled out by (4).



• (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.



(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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