

# Negative Raising From the Embedded Clause to the Matrix Clause

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## Abstract

The author puts forward some arguments in favor of the relation between such sentences: *I think that the maids won't pick up olives* and *I don't think that the maids will pick up olives*. This discussion is based on the syntactic account of the transferred negation from the embedded clause to the matrix one, but it is not devoid of some semantic hints on such constructions. Depending on the transformational approach, the conditions of this negative movement are investigated. Justifiably, the hypothesis of this paper includes that an explicit rule can be formulated to explicate the alleged class of verbs participating in the negative raising. Ultimately, a variety of scope interpretations of negation can be discussed in terms of a couple of positions of the negative element. The author observes that although negative element is moved out of the embedded clause, that clause is covertly negative because the negative items can still be licensed there.

## 1. Introduction

In this paper, the researcher will explore the negative raising, as a syntactic phenomenon, from a theoretical perspective. This topic has received its name from an analysis where negation is syntactically introduced to the embedded clause and interpreted there, and then it is raised to the matrix clause and interpreted there as well. The present paper proposes that negation does not satisfy all the requirements of the speaker in the previous position especially in some specific situations that is why it is transformed to another position. As a problem of this paper, the syntactic account of negative raising addresses issues such as why a certain predicate is a negative raising one whereas other predicates are not raising. Apart from such an issue whose explication is the central aim of this paper, some other angles of this transformation seem to be investigated.

The present paper has been designed in this way: In section one, a brief introduction of the topic has been mentioned. Section two accounts for the theoretical overview of negative raising in English which is enriched by the definition and various views concerning the phenomenon. Section three tackles the negative raising predicates covering the categorization as well as the properties of these verbs. Section four discusses the syntactic evidence confirming the raising constructions in English. Section five analyses the partially negative transferring constructions which are not really the raising ones. Section six highlights the scope behavior of such constructions incorporating wide and narrow scope of negation. The last section sheds light on the concluding points drawn from this paper.

## 2. Theoretical overview

Possibly the negative elements of any language could be located in various positions of a sentence. This variation results in different scope interpretations of negation across different languages. As far as the English language is concerned, a single specific location of negation is not sufficient to account for negation in a context. As a special structure of English, shared by some other languages, negation obeys the rule of shifting out of the complement clause to the matrix one, this operation is known as negative raising.

This topic has long been the subject of study and controversy; some linguists have tackled it from various perspectives. According to Trask's (1993: 180) and Matthews' (2007: 266) views, negative raising alludes to the phenomenon that negation of a complex sentence is transported from the subordinate clause to the superordinate clause to widen the domain of negation.

Apparently the raising of negation seems not to be a haphazard process because not all predicates fall into the category of raising predicates. Tovená (2001: 2) posits that "regarding the rule of negative raising, the negation originating in the nested clause can raise to the matrix one if the main verb is a particular member of subclass named the negative raising verbs, such as *think, believe, seem, suppose*, etc." Thus, these predicates, that do not contain this sort of verbs, are incapable of transforming the negative element. Consider these sentences:

- (1) Peter thinks that Tom is reliable.
- (2) a-Peter thinks that Tom is not reliable.  
b-Peter does not think that Tom is reliable.

Basically sentence (1) has not undergone any sort of negation, but sentence (2a) has undergone negation in the lower clause without raising. The negative element in sentence (2b) has been easily transferred to the higher clause via the raising verb *think*. Both sentences in (2) have different negative meanings because "the sentence (2a) conveys some degrees of uncertainty whose negative scope is narrower than (2b) whereas sentence (2b) conveys a greater degree of uncertainty and includes a wider scope of negation" (ibid: 1).

Strikingly there exist a group of verbs discussed in the context of negative raising, such as *say, hope, know, realize*, etc. but they do not constitute the raising predicates. Gajewski (2007: 292-93) asserts that the meaning of these verbs indicates that they cannot participate in the negative raising constructions. For instance:

- (3) a-We hope that the government will not postpone reformation.  
b-We do not hope that the government will postpone reformation.

In fact, sentence (1) implies that *think* is neutral concerning the speaker's judgment, but *hope* is not neutral because it implies that the proposition is either good or bad for the speaker. This verb *hope* makes the speaker not to know what the facts are, but he expresses his wishes about what may turn out to be true (Cattell 1973: 630). In addition, this class of verbs seems to be miscellaneous because some verbs, such as *say*, participate in making indirect speech. Thus, one issue is how to characterize these predicates; we have to know whether the negative marker *not* is raised to the matrix clause by formulating a syntactic rule or not. Providing a theoretical overview for the negative transformation, it is time to account for various sorts of verbs allowing the raising of negation.

### 3. Negative raising predicates

Due to investigating different sorts of predicates, not every predicate can be categorized under the raising one. The analogy between predicates of negative raising and non-negative raising ones stipulates that the former contains raising verb whereas the latter lacks it. The grammatical status of the so-called verbs shows that they permit a syntactic rendering of negation. Prince (1976: 404) states that the structural analysis of negative raising specifies the membership of the matrix clause verb in the subclass of *think, believe, imagine, want*, etc. to operate the alleged rule of negative transformation.

#### 3.1 Classification of the negative raising verbs

The verbs allowing this phenomenon can be categorized into some classes. Horn (1978) observes that this sort of predicates seems to be classified into five classes which are based on a semantic status (cited in Sailer 2006: 376).

- 1-Verbs of opinion: *think, believe*, etc.
- 2-Verbs of perception: *seem, appear*, etc.
- 3-Verbs of intention: *want, intend*, etc.
- 4-Verbs of judgment: *suggest, suppose*, etc.
- 5-Verbs of probability: *be probable, figure to*, etc.

On account of shifting the negation and scope extension, the transferred negation to the matrix clause results in the existence of ambiguity. Originally this operation occurs according to a transformational rule; this rule must be meaning preserving, but this type of movement shifts the meaning because any sort of addition and change in a context affects the meaning of that context (Prince 1976:404 and Gajewski 2007: 290). Consider the following:

- (4) a-The villagers believe that Tom will not dismiss Jean.  
b-The villagers do not believe that Tom will dismiss Jean.

According to the idea of the afore-mentioned linguists, sentence (4b) seems to be ambiguous because it incorporates negation in the higher clause, which is not as strong as sentence (4a). The meaning of the latter is interpreted in this way:

- (5) It is not the case that the villagers believe that Tom will dismiss Jean.

According to others, such as Alexander (1995: 15), and Leech et al. (2001: 310), the meaning of both sentences seems to be rather identical; they are nearly synonymous because the meaning of (4a) is approximately included in (4b). It seems to me that the meaning of the former resembles that of the latter with the exception of containing the strength of negation in the former and extending the negative scope in the latter. Strikingly, what makes the distinction of meaning is the type of verb, which is non-negative raiser, such as *claim, say, hope*, etc.

- (6) a-Hill claims that Ross does not love her parents.  
b-Hill does not claim that Ross loves her parents.

Due to the lack of a negation-transferring verb, the meaning of both sentences is not similar because this group of verbs is not neutral in terms of judgment. The sentence (6a) does not share the interpretation with the sentence (6b) because the verb *claim* does not express the meaning of the lack of certainty, but the meaning of uncertainty can be expressed by the negative raising verbs. Thus, both sentences are transformationally unrelated.

#### 3.2 Properties of negative raising verbs

Transferring the negation imposes some sort of restriction to those predicates allowing this phenomenon. Thus, the membership in such class of verbs requires some specific features to cope with this operation. Depending on the behavior of these verbs, negation can be transformed to the higher clause. Generally speaking, dealing with negation in this sort of constructions has been reduced to co-occur with only a small class of verbs.

This class of verbs can be characterized by establishing a substantial connection between the subject and complement clause <sup>(6)</sup>. Cattell (1973: 629) and van der Wouden (1997: 223) think that there exist a number of verbs which relate their subjects with the complements in a special way. It seems to be a part of the meaning of the verb that enables the complement to coexist with the viewpoint of an individual named in the subject.

(7) a-I suppose that the judge is not coming.

b-I don't suppose that the judge is coming.

If there is no such a strong relation, there will not be such a transparent transformation of negative element from the lower clause to the higher one. It is due to the verb that the negative meaning is not diverted from the lower clause.

On account of describing states, the negative raising verbs are considered as stative. These verbs express some states of affairs rather than performing an action (Cattell 1973: 621 and Gajewski 2007: 294). All of the stative verbs, however, do not function as the transporting verbs because a number of the mental state and perception verbs are incapable of performing this process. Consider the verb *know* in the following:

(8) I know that Bill is guilty.

This sentence, containing a stative verb, can be negated in both clauses; however, the verb is not counted as a negative raising verb.

(9) a-I know that Bill is not guilty.

b-I do not know that Bill is guilty.

Although the matrix and embedded clause have been negated, the verb *know* is not a negative raising one. It carries the presupposition that the complement is true.

Justifiably, this sort of verbs can be followed by not only that-clauses, but to-infinitives as well. Like that-clauses, to-infinitival clauses contain subject and verb, but unlike that-clauses, they are not tensed. They function as the lower clause and can be negated as well. Actually, the negative marker is raised from there to the matrix clause (Celce- Murcia and Larsen Freeman 1999: 634).

(10) a-I expect the decision not to be promising.

b-I don't expect the decision to be promising.

According to the degree of formality, the raised negative in that-clauses incorporates a more formal style than in the to-infinitives. Generally, they are more preferred than to-infinitives because they are more frequent in conversation and written form (ibid: 654).

A further restriction is that the raising verb must not be previously negated because a negative matrix verb can have no room for another negative element. Actually these sentences including negation in both matrix and embedded clauses are known as double negative constructions (Prince 1976: 423 and Tovena 2001: 2). Basically these sentences cannot undergo negative raising because firstly two negative elements *not* do not coexist together, and then the second negative interacts with the first one and consequently cancels out the effect of negation.

(11) a-I do not think that the pilgrim has not come.

b-*\*I do not not think that the pilgrim has come.*

If a negative element is raised into a negative matrix clause, it will result in ungrammaticality, as in sentence (11b). Basically a negative element suffices negating a context. The sentence (11a) contains the following meaning:

(12) I think that the pilgrim has come.

The negation of this sentence has been cancelled out semantically because the negative element of the lower clause has refuted the function of the first one. Consequently, this sentence behaves as if it is positive.

<sup>(6)</sup> These verbs seem to be known as bridge verbs due to building a link between the subject and embedded clause (Progovac 1994:59).

#### 4. Syntactic evidence

In fact certain syntactic evidence can be found that confirms the transfer of negation amid the lower and higher clause in English; the evidence incorporates non-assertive forms as well as tag questions.

##### 4.1 Non-assertive forms

Simply there exist considerable expressions that don't occur in a sentence without using a negative element, such as *ever, any, lift a finger, budge an inch, anything, anyone*, etc. The occurrence of these negative forms is restricted to the scope of clause mate negation (Linebarger 1980: 13). For instance:

(13) a- \*Tom has seen any traveler on the trip.

b-Tom has not seen any traveler on the trip.

Apparently, the non-assertive form *any* has not been licensed in (13a) due to the lack of negative element. However, it has been licensed in (13b) because of the occurrence of negative licenser. What is striking is that these non-assertive forms are allowed in a sentence including negative raising. Thus, the negative element which is located in the matrix clause can allow these negative forms in the embedded clause.

(14) a-I think that Sara will not lift a finger to help the Syrian immigrants.

b-I do not think that Sara will lift a finger to help the Syrian immigrants.

Here, the negative form *lift a finger* is licensed by the raised negative and the lowered negative in sentence (14). Sailer (2006: 377) states that these forms are not licensed in the matrix clause even if they are affected by negation. In fact, that viewpoint seems not to cover all the non-assertive forms because some specific ones can occur in the matrix clause.

(15) a- \*I do not suppose anyone that he will win the game.

b-I don't suppose at all that he will win the game.

The use of *anyone* in sentence (15a) results in ungrammaticality, but another negative form *at all* has been licensed there. However, both are located in the scope of negation. Generally, the non-assertive forms occur in the context of raised and lowered negation in English.

##### 4.2 Tag questions

The other syntactic evidence in favor of the existence of negative raising in English is the tag question. Lakoff (1969) has argued that the tags can be accounted for in various ways (cited in Prince 1973: 4). Consider the following tags:

(16) a-The shopkeeper will sell flowers, won't he?

b-The shopkeeper will sell flowers, will he?

c-The shopkeeper will not sell flowers, will he?

d-The shopkeeper will not sell flowers, won't he?

Actually, Lakoff believes that sentences (16 b, d) show the matching polarity because the tag and the host clause are identical. However, sentences (16 a, c) show the contrasting polarity because the tag and the host clause are opposite to each other.

Semantically, these two types of tag are quite different. The matching tag indicates that the viewpoint expressed in the host clause is not the speaker's, but he asks whether the listener agrees with it. On the other hand, the contrasting tags indicate that the speaker introduces his own views and asks for confirmation (Cattell 1973: 615).

Basically, the normal aspect of the tag questions is that they must show the contrasting polarity with the sentence on which they are formed. As far as the negative raising constructions are concerned, the tags are formed on the higher clause because the raising verb is located at the higher clause (Quirk and Greenbaum 1973:436), such as:

(17) a-The man thinks that Tom will not repair the car, doesn't he?

b-The man does not think that Tom will repair the car, does he?

However, when the higher clause contains a performative **I**, the lower clause may take the tag, even if the higher clause incorporates the negative raising verb.

(18) a-I suppose that the system is not changing, is it?

b-I do not suppose that the system is changing, is it?

Evidently, the host clause is the lower clause, not the higher one. However, sentence (18b) is a negative raising sentence; the higher clause negation is sufficient for negating the whole sentence even the lower clause that is why the tag is positive.

### 5. Quasi-raising

Simply the negative element incorporated in the negative raising constructions is the form of *not*. However, sentence negation has not been specified only to one sort of negative. The matrix clause negative can have a variety of forms, such as *no one, nothing, no body, never*, etc. Progovac (2004: 85) calls these sentences containing negative words rather than *not* in the matrix clause quasi negative raising sentences.

The negative words are considered as alternative negative elements negating other elements rather than the verb. Frequently, the negative scope seems to be different and consequently the meaning is changed (Quirk and Greenbaum 1973: 185). They can occur in various sentence positions. For instance:

- (19) a-An academic author will not plagiarize.  
 b-An academic author will never plagiarize.  
 c- No academic author will plagiarize.

The distinction between the negative element *not* and negative words is that the former is not changed during the transformation of negation from the embedded clause to the matrix clause. The negative words are transformed with some sort of change because the same form cannot be raised without changing some elements. For instance, if the negation of sentence (19 a) is raised, we can have the following sentences:

- (20) a-I do not believe that an academic author will plagiarize.  
 b-No one believes that an academic author will plagiarize.

What is striking here is that the negative words tend not to be mobile easily because they are not transparent to the phenomenon. Linebarger (1980: 48) posits that the sentence with the negative words does not have an obvious source for some sentence elements.

- (21) No one expects Tom to donate his money.

The appropriate source of the negative noun phrase (*no one*) will not be apparent when the negative element is lowered. It may include many interpretations, such as the following:

- (22) a-Someone expects Tom not to donate his money.  
 b-Some people expect Tom not to donate his money.  
 c-Everyone expects Tom not to donate his money.

The validity of negative words in the higher clause can be justified by applying the non-assertive forms in the lower clause. Hoeksema (2007: 24) states that the negative words other than *not* license the non-assertive forms because these forms are affected by even long distance licensors, such as:

- (23) a-Nobody thinks that Tom will ever find the money.  
 b-No one believes that Tom will finish the report at all.

These items *ever*, and *at all* have been licensed by the negative words *nobody* and *no one* in succession. Actually, their negative feature suffices negating both clauses.

### 6. The scope of negation

The placement of a negative element in a context is crucially important because it indicates what part of a context is negated. In fact, the scope of negation contains the part of the sentence that has been influenced by negation. Normally, it is a syntactic framework occupied by negation whose meaning is quite different from the meaning of the portion having not been fallen into this scope. As far as the negative raising is concerned, negation is observed as simultaneously having two scopes: one scope is taken as a part of the lower clause and the other scope as a part of the higher clause.

## 6.1 Lower scope

Originally, the negation of the negative raising constructions is located at the lower clause. Due to the occurrence of negative element, it can negate the lower clause alone. Thus, the negative scope has been specified only to the lower clause because "in English the scope of negation typically extends from the negative word until the end of the sentence" (Crystal 2003: 407). From this perspective, the scope includes post negative position, not pre-negative one and it cannot extend to the higher clause.

The subject position in English does not fall into the scope of negation. Thus, the same thing applies to the lower clause because the subject does not follow negation, but precedes it (van der Wouden 1997: 165).

(24) a-The adviser believes that everyone cannot solve this problem.

b-The adviser believes that not everyone can solve this problem.

Apparently, the subject of the lower clause in sentence (24 a) does not fall into the scope of negation because it comes before *not*. Although sentence (24b) has not undergone the negative raising, it incorporates the displaced negation. Here, negation takes the scope over the subject, so the scope has been widened to the subject position.

Depending on the position of negative element, the scope of negation can be widened and narrowed as well. The raised negation includes the lower clause in its domain because evidently the non-assertive forms can be licensed in the lower clause whether the negative element is positioned inside the scope of lower clause.

(25) a-Tom thinks that Fred will not visit anyone.

b-Tom does not think that Fred will visit anyone.

Whether the negative raising exists or not, the non-assertive form *anyone* is allowed in the lower clause with a narrow scope as in sentence (25 a) or with a wide scope as in sentence (25 b). Notably, we can come out to the fact that where there is no negative raising, negation is syntactically part of the lower clause with a narrow scope. But where there is negative raising, negation is semantically part of the same clause.

## 6.2 Higher scope

Owing to the transportation of negative element into the higher clause, the scope of negation is intrinsically shifted. Apparently the domain of negation is extended because it includes the components of the lower clause as well as the higher one. Sailer (2006: 378) observes that when the negation takes scope over the lower clause, the non-assertive forms are licensed in that clause, not in the higher clause. When negation is raised, these forms are licensed in the lower clause and the higher one, if any. For instance:

(26) a-*\*I* suppose anymore that Tom will not finish his study.

b-I don't suppose anymore that Tom will finish his study.

c-Nobody supposes anymore that Tom will finish his study.

In fact, the negation does not take the scope over the non-assertive form *anymore* in sentence (26 a), that is why it is ungrammatical. That scope extends to the higher clause in sentences (26 b, c), so this negative form is taken into the scope of negation.

Superficially in the negative raising sentences, we do not perceive negation in the lower clause because it has been transformed into another clause. In reality, the lower clause falls into the scope of negation because "negation in the higher clause yields the relevant effect in the lower clause if a negative raising predicate intervenes" (van der Wouden 1997: 223). Although no negation can be seen in the lower clause, the higher clause negation suffices negating the whole complex sentence.

What is presented here supports the idea that the interpretation of negation in the negative raising constructions is not equivalent to that of overt negation in the embedded clause because negation is only semantically present there. Actually, the raised negative contains a wider scope than that of the embedded clause.

**Conclusion:**

1-The negative raising phenomenon, that includes shifting a negative from the higher clause to the lower one under certain syntactic conditions, seems to be highly optional.

2-The negative raising, as a syntactic transformation, can be applied to a class of verbs occurring in, at least, two structures; one with the raised and the other with the lower clause negation. Thus, the lexical description of the so-called verbs will justifiably limit the rule of negative raising. These verbs denote attitudes rather than actions; they express a negative attitude towards a state or an event.

3-In the negative raising constructions, negation is syntactically integrated into the matrix clause, but it is semantically located at the embedded clause. The transferred negation still dominates the embedded one because due to the influence of negation, the non-assertive items are licensed there.

4-Semantically, the pairs of sentences, one of which has undergone negative raising, seem to be approximately equivalent because this syntactic operation does not allow a radical change. However, there is a slight semantic change including the direction of negation where a direct negation is changed into an indirect one, but the authentic negative meaning of the context is preserved.



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## پوخته

ئەم لیکۆلینەوویە لە دیاردەى گواستەووی ئامرازى نەرى کردن لە رستهى لاوهکییەووه بۆ رستهى سەرەکی دەکوئیتەووه لە زمانى ئینگلیزیدا. ئامانجى ئەم لیکۆلینەوویە بریتییە لە شیکردنەووی رستهسازیانەى ئامرازى نەرىکردن لەنیوان دوو دەستەواژەى رستهیەکدا، جگەلهووش هەندیک لایەنى واتاسازى ئەو پەيوەندییەش باسکراوه . توێژەر لیکۆلینەوویەکی وردى ئەو فرمانانەى کردوووه کە رینگە بەو گواستەووه دەدەن ، پاشان بەراوردى کردوووه لەگەڵ ئەو فرمانانەى کە رینگە بەو گواستەووهنادەن ، هەرودها تايبەتمەندى ئەو فرمانانەشى خستۆتەرپوو. کاتیک ئامرازى نەرىکردن لە شوپنیکەووه بۆ شوپنیکى تری رستهیەک دەگوازریتەووه مەوداى نەرىکردنیش گۆرانکارى بەسەردادیت، چونکە مەوداى نەرىکردن پابەندە بە ئامرازى نەرىکردنەووه ، بە گواستەووی ئامرازەکە مەوداکەش دەگۆردریت لە مەوداى کورتەووه بۆ مەوداى فراوان . توێژەر دەریخستوووه کە هەرچەند گۆرانکارى لە شوپن و مەوداى نەرىکردندا رپووبادات ، واتاى بنجى رستهکەناگۆریت تەنها ئاراستەى نەرىکردنەکە نەبیت. گرنگترین ئەنجامەکانى ئەم لیکۆلینەوویە ئەو دەردەرخەن ئە ئەودیاردهیه ئارەزوومەندانەیه و بەکارهێنانەکەشى پابەندە بە ویستی قسەکەرەووه ، هەرودها لەگەڵ ئەووشدا کە ئامرازى نەرىکردن لە رستهى لاوهکییەووه بۆ رستهى سەرەکی دەگوازریتەووه ، بەلام کاریگەرى ئەو نەرىکردنە لەسەر رستهى لاوهکی هەر دەمییت.

## المُلخَص

هذا البحث هو دراسةٌ حول ظاهرة تحويل أداة النفي في الجمل الثانوية، إلى الجمل الرئيسية، في اللغة الإنكليزية، والهدف من هذا البحث هو عبارة عن تحليل النحوي، لأداة النفي بين عبارتين في الجملة الواحدة، إضافة إلى أن هذا البحث تَضَمَّن الحديث عن بعض الجوانب لعلم المعاني، وقد درس الباحث الأفعال التي تتمتع بتلك التحولات دراسة دقيقة، وقارن هذه الأفعال التي تتمتع بهذه الخاصية، مع الأفعال التي تمنعها، وعرض خصائص تلك الأفعال، وكيف أن أداة النفي تؤثر على مدى النفي، من خلال تنقلات أداة النفي في الجمل، من موقع إلى آخر وذلك لأن مدى النفي، متعلق بأداة النفي، ويتحول الأداة، أو تنقله بتغير هذا المدى من النفي القصير المدى إلى النفي الطويل المدى . ويظهر أن الباحث، يرى رغم إحداث هذه التغيرات في أداة النفي، سواءً أكان في تنقل الأداة أو التغير في الموقع والمدى في النفي، هذا كله لا يؤثر على المعنى الأساسي للجملة، باستثناء جانب النفي. ومن النتائج التي توصل إليها الباحث، أن هذه الظاهرة، واستخدامها، هي عائدة إلى رغبة المتكلم، إضافة إلى أن تحول الأداة النفي من الجمل الثانوية، إلى الجمل الرئيسية يبقى أثر هذا النفي في الجمل الثانوية.