

DOUBLE NEGATION AND NEGATIVE SHIFT IN KINYARWANDA\*

Alexandre Kimenyi  
California State University, Sacramento

The negative morpheme in Kinyarwanda can be marked either on the auxiliary verb or on the main verb. It is suggested that this is a case of negative shift from the main verb to the auxiliary rather than the other way around because this shifting is shown to be a raising process. It is claimed that this type of process is more natural and therefore more common in languages than a lowering one. The status of "auxiliary" verbs is also discussed. It is argued that formally they should be treated as main verbs whereas "main" verbs should be analyzed as subordinate verbs. This analysis can be extended to other languages also. In the case of "double negation", it is indicated that the first negative is a "non-existential" marker and the second a subordinate negative. It is observed that these two negatives can only appear in two separate clauses and it is concluded that languages that have negative markers might have got them from existential constructions.

In Kinyarwanda, it is possible to have two negative markers in the same sentence: I refer to this process a "double negation". When the verb has an auxiliary, the negative marker can appear either on the auxiliary or on the main verb. I will argue that this is a case of "negative shift" from the main verb to the auxiliary. Before I start discussing these two processes, I will first show the kinds of negative markers that exist in this language and describe their respective uses.

1. Negative Markers

Kinyarwanda has four distinct negative morphemes, which are *nti-*, *-ta-*, *-ii-* and *nta*. The morpheme *nti-* is preprefixed to the verb which simply means that it precedes other prefixes such as subject clitics, object clitics, and tense markers. Examples that illustrate

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this are given in (1) and (2) below:

- (1) a. *ábáana ba-zaa-som-a kîno gitabo*  
 children they-fut-read-asp this book  
 'the children will read this book'
- b. *ábáana nti-bá-záa-som-a kîno gitabo*  
 children neg-they-fut-read-asp this book  
 'the children won't read this book'
- (2) a. *tw-aa-kú-boôn-ye* 'we saw you'  
 we-pst-you-see-asp
- b. *nti-tw-aa-ku-boon-ye* 'we didn't see you'  
 neg-we-pst-you-see-asp

Examples in which *-ta-* appears are given in (3) and (4):

- (3) a. *n-zi kó ábáana bá-záa-som-a kîno gitabo*  
 I-know that children they-fut-read-asp this book  
 'I know that the children will read this book'
- b. *n-zi kó ábáana ba-tá-záa-som-a kîno gitabo*  
 I-know that children they-neg-fut-read-asp this book  
 'I know that the children won't read this book'
- (4) a. *kó tw-aa-ku-boôn-ye* 'how come we saw you?'  
 that we-pst-you-see-asp
- b. *kó tu-ta-aa-ku-boon-ye* 'how come we didn't see you?'  
 that we-neg-pst-you-see-asp

As the examples show, this morpheme appears between the subject clitic and the tense marker. The two morphemes, *nti-* and *-ta-*, accomplish the same function except that they are always in complementary distribution. That is, both negate the verb but the former is only used in main clauses and the latter in subordinate clauses. Verbs of main clauses differ syntactically very much from the ones of subordinate clauses. In fact, it has been proposed in Kimenyi [1978] that they are independent of each other. The morpheme *-ii-* is used to negate imperative sentences, as shown in (5).

- (5) a. *mw-ii-sóm-a kîno gitabo<sup>1</sup>*  
 you-neg-read-asp this book 'don't read this book'

<sup>1</sup>The verb *oya* plus the infinitive form of the main verb is some-

- b. b- ii- vúg- a<sup>2</sup> 'they shouldn't talk'  
 they-neg-talk-asp

The last negative morpheme is *nta*. It differs from the three mentioned above in two respects. First, it is not prefixed to the verb but rather occurs before a noun and secondly, whereas *nti-*, *-ta-* and *-ii-* are restricted in their uses (*-ii-* for imperative sentences and the former two occurring in complementary distribution, *nti-* in main clauses and *-ta-* in subordinate clauses), *nta* can occur in any type of sentence except the imperative.

The use of this morpheme is illustrated by the examples in (6):

- (6) a. abagóre ba-zaa-ha úmwáana igitabo  
 women they-fut-give child book  
 'the women will give the book to the child'
- b. ntaa bagóre bá-záá-ha úmwáana igitabo<sup>3</sup>  
 neg women they-fut-give child book  
 'no women won't give the book to any child'

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times used also in imperative constructions and subjunctive forms that express orders:

- (i) oya kugeenda 'don't go'  
 you-not to-go
- (ii) babwiire b-oóy-e kugeenda 'tell them not to go'  
 them-tell-subj they-not-subj to go

Oya also means 'No!'

<sup>2</sup>The positive imperative form is the verb stem plus the imperfective marker *-a*. It only refers to the 2nd person singular:

- (i) soma 'read'  
 vuga 'talk'

To express the command on other persons, the verb takes a subjunctive ending *-e*.

- (ii) mu-sóm-e kîno gitabo 'read this book'  
 you-read-subj this book
- ba-vug-e 'they should talk'  
 they-talk-subj

<sup>3</sup>The last vowel of the morpheme *nta* is lengthened after the deletion of the initial vowel of the following noun. This phenomenon is discussed in great length in Kimenyi [forthcoming].

- c. ntaá mwáana abagóre bá-záá-ha ígitabo  
 neg child women they-fut-give book  
 'the women won't give the book to any child'
- d. ntaa gitabo abagóre bá-záá-ha úmwáana  
 neg book women they-fut-give child  
 'the women won't give the child any book'

All nouns, whatever grammatical relation they hold to the verb (subject, direct object, indirect object), can be preceded by this morpheme as seen in the examples provided above. It is important to note that any noun that is preceded by this morpheme has to occur at the beginning of the sentence thus preceding the subject. Not only does the last negative marker differ formally from the other three but it seems to have a different role also. It is used to negate the noun and as we can tell from the translation, it has the meaning of 'no' or 'not any'.

I should also mention that the copula in the main clause, *ni* 'be', doesn't take a negative marker but rather has a phonetic form different from the positive one. It is realized as *si* 'not be'. Examples are seen below:

- (7) a. uyú mwáana ni mugúfi 'this child is short'  
 this child be short
- b. uyú mwáana si mugúfi 'this child is not short'  
 this child not be short
- (8) a. ni Yohaâni ú-hamaga-ye 'it's John who calls'  
 be John he-call-asp
- b. si Yohaâni ú-hamaga-ye 'it's not John who calls'  
 be not John he-call-asp

The copula of the subordinate clause is different from that of the main clause: it is *ari*. This one, however, takes the subordinate negative marker *-ta-* which appears between *a* and *ri*. This *a* might be interpreted as the subject clitic, but this is not the case:<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Evidence of *a-* in *a-ri* and *a-ta-ri* not being the subject marker is that it doesn't change regardless of which class the subject happens to belong to. Consider the following examples:

- (i) a-zi ko aba báana a-tá-ri ibí cúucu  
 he-knows that these children not-be stupid  
 'he knows that these children are not stupid'

- (9) a. ba-azi kó uyú mwáana ári mugúfi  
 they-know that this child be short  
 'they know that this child is short'
- b. ba-azi kó uyú mwáana atári mugúfi  
 they-know that this child not be short  
 'they know that this child is not short'
- (10) a. a-zi kó ári Yohaâni ú-hamaga-ye  
 he-know that be John he-call-asp  
 'he knows that it is John who calls'
- b. a-zi kó átári Yohaâni ú-hamaga-ye  
 he-know that not be John he-call-asp  
 'he knows that it is not John who calls'

After this short presentation of different negative markers found in Kinyarwanda, I will discuss cases in which two negative markers (double negation) appear in the same sentence.

## 2. Double Negation

In the examples that are given below, the (a) sentences are positive, in the (b) sentences only the argument to the verb is negated, and finally (c) sentences present cases in which both the noun and the verb are negated.

- (11) a. umugabo y-a-haa-ye ábáana ibitabo  
 man he-pst-give-asp children books  
 'the man gave books to the children'
- b. ntaá báana umugabo y-a-haá -ye ibitabo  
 neg children man he-pst-give-asp books  
 'the man didn't give the books to any children'
- c. ntaá báana umugabo a-ta-aa-haá-ye ibitabo  
 neg children man he-neg-pst-give-asp books  
 'there aren't any children that the man didn't give the books to'

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- (ii) a-zi ko ibi bitabo a-tá-ri íbye  
 he-knows that these books not-be his  
 'he knows that these books are not his'
- (iii) a-zi ko ubu bwáato a-tá-ri búshya  
 he-knows that this boat not-be new  
 'he knows that this boat is not new'

- (12) a. abaantu b-aa-gii'-ye 'people went'  
 people they-pst-go-asp
- b. ntaa baantu b-aa-gii'-ye 'no people went'  
 neg people they-pst-go-asp
- c. ntaa baantu ba-ta-aa-gii'-ye  
 neg people they-neg-pst-go-asp  
 'there aren't any people who didn't leave'

We notice that "double negation" produces a positive statement. Another important thing to note is that whenever double negation occurs it is these two morphemes *nta* and *-ta-* that mark it, in this particular order. It is not possible to negate two nouns and have a sentence such as 'no one saw nothing'. Thus *nti* and *nta* never occur in the same sentence. These cooccurrence restrictions and the fact that when *nta* and *-ta-* appear in the same sentence they produce a positive statement have prompted me to treat the morpheme *nta* as a verb which means 'there is not'.

In the following section I will give arguments that indeed this negative marker is a verb and that it functions as the main verb in the sentence whereas the verb that carries the negative marker *-ta-* is subordinate. I will start by proving that the "verb" of the sentence is in fact the verb of the embedded sentence.

First, as I mentioned earlier, when there is *nta* in the sentence, the verb takes *-ta-* as the negative marker, it never takes *nta-*. I have argued elsewhere that indeed only verbs of subordinate clauses take this morpheme. Secondly, this verb manifests the relative tone (high tone) which appears on the vowel of the verb stem. Thirdly, it is noted that tenses that occur in main clauses only are not allowed in this construction which shows clearly that verbs that are used with this morpheme have the status of other verbs that appear in subordinate clauses. Thus, like the negative markers *nti-* and *-ta-*, some tenses appear in complementary distribution also: they are realized differently according to whether they are in the main clause or subordinate clause. This is discussed in great length in Kimenyi [1977b] and [1978]. Having established that verbs that appear in the *nta* construction are subordinate, I will show that *nta* has a verbal status.

This negative morpheme behaves exactly like two other verbs, namely *ni/si* 'it is/it is not' and *hari* 'there is'. The first is used in cleft constructions and the second in existential constructions. Like the morpheme *nta* these two verbs occur at the beginning of the sentence:

- (13) a. ni Karoôri n-aa-boón-ye 'it is Charles that I saw'  
           be Charles I-pst-see-asp
- b. si Karoôri n-aa-boón-ye it is not Charles that I saw'  
           not be Charles I-pst-see-asp

Like these verbs, *nta* doesn't have subject agreement, which is usually obligatory for Bantu languages. Like verbs in *nta* construction, verbs that are constructed with these morphemes have the relative clause form. They also take *-ta-* as their negative marker instead of *nti-*, which, as I have said, marks verbs of main clauses. Another proof that *nta* has the same status as *ni/si* and *hari* is the fact that it undergoes vowel lengthening like them if the following word begins with a vowel. This rule, which is purely phonetic in other environments, is grammatically motivated in this instance: vowels starting words that appear in the *attribute* position are lengthened, but the final vowel of the verb is deleted:

- (14) a. /uyu umwáana ni umugabo/ uyú mwáana n'úumugabo  
           this child be brave  
           'this child is brave'
- b. /abáana ba-ri aho/ ábáana bar'aaho  
           children they-be there  
           'the children are there' or 'the children are fine'
- c. /n-ri ikí/ nd'iíkí?  
           I-be what  
           'what am I?'
- d. /si abagabo m-bón-a/ s'aabagabo mbóna  
           be not men I-see  
           'it is not the men that I see'

*Nta* differs from these verbs in only that it is the vowel of the following word that deletes instead of the final vowel of this morpheme:



The fact that this morpheme can occur with definite NPs is not due to any difference with the existential *hari* but rather to the general difference of the nature of affirmative and negative sentences. As Givón [1974] has argued, negative sentences are more presuppositional than their positive counterparts. Contrary to *hari*, which can start a new discourse, *nta* is like other negative markers used after a question or to correct a misguided belief. Both of them, however, can occur in questions whether the nouns they are introducing are definite or indefinite as the examples below indicate:

- (20) a. har'aabaantu w-a-boón-ye? 'did you see any people?'  
 there be people you-pst-see-asp
- b. ntaa baantu w-a-boón-ye? 'didn't you see any people?'  
 neg people you-pst-see-asp
- (21) a. har'aabábyéeyi baa-njye ba-aa-hámaga-ye?  
 there be parents of-me they-pst-call-asp  
 'did my parents call?'
- b. ntaa 'abábyéeyi baa-njye ba-aa-hámaga-ye?  
 neg parents of-me they-pst-call-asp  
 'didn't my parents call?'

The above sentences show that *hari* and *nta* have the same function. Question (21a) can be asked without the existential and (20b) and (21b) can be formulated with the main clause negative marker *nti-*, thus yielding (22), (23) and (24).

- (22) abábyéeyi baa-njye ba-aá-hamaga-ye?  
 parents of-me they-pst-call-asp  
 'did my parents call?'
- (23) nti-w-a-boon-ye abaantu?  
 neg-you-pst-see-asp people  
 'didn't you see people?'
- (24) abábyéeyi baa-njye nti-ba-aa-hamaga-ye?  
 parents of-me neg-they-pst-call-asp  
 'didn't my parents call?'

There is a difference between the two types of constructions. When the existential *hari* and the "negative existential" *nta* are used in

questions with definite nouns, there is less presupposition or expectation on the part of the speaker from the hearer. In fact yes-no questions in Kinyarwanda presuppose most of the time what the hearer holds to be true. Questions with the existential and the non-existential can be translated as "by any chance?...".

If we accept *nta* as non-existential marker, or "exclusive marker" as it has been rightly called by Meeussen [1959] and Kimenyi [1977] and has been proposed in this paper, a lot of mysteries are solved. First, we understand why *nta* and *-ta-* give a positive statement when they occur in the same sentence. A non-existential predicated to a negative sentence would naturally produce a positive statement. Second, we know why two NPs cannot be negated: it is because two existential markers cannot appear in the same sentence. This morpheme is not found in imperative sentences either because existentials never occur in this type of construction.

These findings about the use of negation in Kinyarwanda have implications for other languages. If a language can negate both the verb and the arguments of the verb, there is the chance that the negative marker for nouns will have an existential origin. In English for instance nouns with negative markers can be paraphrased by the existential construction, e.g. 'nobody called' is the same as 'there isn't anybody who called'. The morpheme *nta* in Kinyarwanda can be used in both cases as either a *contradiction* or a *contrary* to use Lyons' terminology. A contrary is just the opposite of a positive statement. A contradiction is correcting a misguided belief. Suppose somebody asks, "Did you see John?" If the answer is negative such as "I didn't see John", the the negative marker is used as a contrary. But if somebody makes a false positive statement such as "John is rich", and the hearer responds and says, "John is not rich", the negation would be used as a contradiction. Lyons' terminology corresponds to what philosophers have called "external" and "internal" negation. The sentence, "I didn't see John", might mean, "It is not the case that I saw John", (external negation or contradiction) or simply, "I didn't

see John", where only the verb is negated instead of the whole sentence (internal negation or contrary). Nta is ambiguous in this respect, but the *nti-/-ta-* morpheme is only used as a contrary. This proves that the distinction made by philosophers about external and internal negation has some linguistic validity. As a matter of fact, Turkish happens to confirm this also. It has three types of negative markers, namely *-me-*, *yok*, and *değil*. The first, which undergoes vowel harmony, is suffixed to the verb; *yok* is a non-existential marker; and finally *değil* is an external negator that negates the whole sentence.<sup>5</sup> The remaining part of the paper is concerned with the "negative shift".

### 3. Negative Shift

The negative shift in this language is attested by the fact that the negative morpheme can appear either on the auxiliary or on the main verb without affecting the meaning of the sentence. The auxiliary always precedes the main verb. This is illustrated by the examples given below:

- (25) a. *ábáana ba-zaa-ba bâ-som-a ibitabo*  
 children they-fut-aux they-read-asp books  
 'the children will be reading books'
- b. *ábáana nti-bá-záá-ba bâ-som-a ibitabo*  
 children neg-they-fut-aux they-read-asp books  
 'the children won't be reading books'
- c. *ábáana ba-zaa-ba ba-da-sóm-a ibitabo*  
 children they-fut-aux they-neg-read-asp books  
 'the children won't be reading books'

As we see from the examples (25b) and (25c), the auxiliary takes the negative marker, which as we have already noted, goes with verbs of main clauses and the "main verb" takes the subordinate negative marker *-ta-*.

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<sup>5</sup>I owe this information to Eser Erguvanli.

One might argue that this is not a shift since the two morphemes are different. This is only a spelling process, which says that the negative marker is realized as *nti-* in main clauses and *-ta-* in subordinate clauses. We notice in fact that when it is embedded, the negative marker *nti-* becomes *-ta-*. Example (26) shows that the negative marker of the auxiliary verb and that of the main verb are neutralized to become *-ta-*.

- (26) a. *y-a-vuz-e*      *kó*      *ábáana*      *bá-záa-ba*      *bâ-som-a*      *ibitabo*  
 he-pst-say-asp    that    children    they-fut-aux    they-read-asp    books  
 'he said that the children will be reading books'
- b. *y-a-vuz-e*      *ko*      *ábáana*      *bá-tá-záa-ba*      *bâ-som-a*      *ibital*  
 he-pst-say-asp    that    children    they-neg-fut-aux    they-read-asp    books  
 'he said that the children won't be reading books'
- c. *y-a-vuz-e*      *ko*      *ábáana*      *bá-záa-ba*      *bâ-da-sóm-a*      *ibitabo*  
 he-pst-say-asp    that    children    they-fut-aux    they-neg-read-asp    books  
 'he said that the children won't be reading books'

The negative shift and the fact that the auxiliary behaves like a main verb and the main verb as a subordinate raise some questions of great importance to the grammar of this language in particular and to linguistic theory in general. I will be concerned with the following two:

- i. What is the status of the auxiliary verbs on the one hand and the status of main verbs, on the other hand? Should their structure be analyzed as a single clause or two clauses? If they are treated as two separate clauses, which is proposed here, are they going to be analyzed as sisters dominated by the same node or does the auxiliary dominate the main verb?
- ii. Secondly if indeed negative shift is taking place, in which direction is it moving? Does it shift from the auxiliary verb to the main verb or from the main verb to the auxiliary?

Before I answer these questions, something should be said about auxiliary verbs. In this language, auxiliary verbs don't have any semantic function of their own but rather bring grammatical information to the verb, especially temporal or aspectual. Thus, an auxiliary verb such as



- (30) a. ba-ba      bâ-kor-a                      'they are (habitually) working'  
           they-aux    they-work-asp
- b. ba-ba      íno                              'they live here'  
           they-aux    here
- (31) a. mu-siga-ye    mú-mu-kuund-a                      'you like him now'  
           you-aux-asp    you-him-like-asp
- b. mu-siga-ye    mw'iishuûri                      'you stay in the class'  
           you-stay-asp    in school

All these observations clearly show that at least syntactically auxiliary verbs should be analyzed as main verbs.

The so-called "main verbs" have the status of finite verbs also because they agree with the subject and carry tenses and aspect markers like other finite verbs. They can carry clitic object pronouns also. Examples are provided in (32) and (33).

- (32) ábáana      b-aa-ri              b-aará-gfi-ye      'the children had gone'  
       children    they-pst-aux    they-pst-go-asp
- (33) mu-zaa-ba      mw-áa-gi-som-ye                      'you will have read it'  
       you-fut-aux    you-pst-it-read-asp

The problem is to determine the status of the verbs that have auxiliaries. Should they be treated as sister constituents to the auxiliaries or should they be analyzed as being dominated by the auxiliaries. It is the latter analysis that has been adopted here.<sup>6</sup> It has been shown that

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<sup>6</sup>Some auxiliaries, especially the ones that mean to 'start' and to 'continue', allow the main verb to occur in the "main verb form". But this is allowed with the -ra- tense only.

- (i) ba-ra-komez-a              ba-rá-mu-kubit-a  
       they-T-continue-asp    they-T-him-beat-asp  
       'they kept beating him'
- (ii) ba-ra-komez-a              nti-ba-aa-mu-kubit-a  
       they-T-continue-asp    neg-they-T-him-beat-asp  
       'they kept not beating him'

This sequence of tenses is found in historical present.

The auxiliary -riho allows the main verb to carry the main clause negative marker also:

auxiliary verbs are really main verbs because they take all the tenses of main verbs, carry the negative marker of the main verbs and occur only in three moods, namely indicative, subjunctive, and imperative, which are the only ones the main verb can occur in, as shown in Kimenyi [1978]. Verbs that have auxiliaries are really subordinate, first because they take the subordinate negative marker *-ta-* and always occur in the participial mood which never allows verbs of main clauses. Secondly, these verbs behave exactly as those of sentential complements of sensory verbs, such as feel, see, hear, find and dream. In Kinyarwanda, verbs found in this type of construction appear in the participial mood as shown in (34) and (35). This mood is marked by a high tone on the first vowel of the verb, which falls if the vowel is preceded by a consonant.

(34) n-aa-saanz-e    b-áará-gíi-ye  
 I-pst-find-asp    they-pst-go-asp  
 'I found out that they had left'

(35) n-d-úumv-a        n-dwáa-ye  
 I-pres-fee-asp    I-be sick-asp  
 'I feel sick'

These types of verbs allow negative shift also, because the meaning is not affected whether the negative marker appears on the sensory verb or on the embedded verb, as seen in (35) and (36).

(35) a. si-<sup>7</sup>n-aa-saanz-e    b-áará-gíi-ye    'I didn't find them gone'  
 neg-I-pst-find-asp    they-pst-go-asp  
 b. n-aa-saanz-e    ba-ta-áara-gíi-ye<sup>8</sup>    'I didn't find them gone'  
 I-pst-find-asp    they-neg-pst-go-asp

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(iii) tu-rího    tu-rá-kor-a                    'we are working'  
           we-aux    we-T-work-asp  
           nti-tu-rího    du-kór-a                    'we are not working'  
           neg-we-aux    we-work-asp  
           tu-rího    ntî-du-kór-a                'we are not working'  
           we-aux    neg-we-work-asp

<sup>7</sup>The negative marker for the first person is *si-* instead of *nti-*. This is true for many other eastern Bantu languages.

<sup>8</sup>One of the readers of *SAL* asked if there really is a difference

- (36) a. nti-w-a-boon-ye      ábáana      bâ-som-a  
 neg-you-pst-see-asp    children    they-read-asp  
 'you didn't see the children studying'
- b. w-a-boon-ye      ábáana      bâ-da-sóm-a  
 you-pst-see-asp    children    they-neg-read-asp  
 'you didn't see the children studying'

We have established that main verbs are subordinate. I want to claim now that the shift goes from the main verb to the auxiliary. One argument I am giving is that there exist in Kinyarwanda movement rules such as topicalization and raising, which move one element from one clause to another and all of them go from the lower clause to the one on the top. There are no lowering processes in this language. It would be inappropriate to claim that negative shift is a lowering process when no other transformation of this type is attested.

Negative shift has been reported in other languages also. In English for instance where pairs such as 'I don't think he is here' and 'I think he is not here' are found, the second sentence is supposed to be closer to the underlying structure whereas the former is a transform of the latter. Cases of negative lowering have been cited in English [Stockwell 1977] but no real evidence has been given to support this hypothesis. In English again we notice that the negative marker is either marked on the verb or on the auxiliary, e.g. 'hasn't he read the book?' versus 'has he not read the book?'; aren't you leaving now' versus 'are you not leaving now?' Although nobody else has suggested this, this is a case of negative shift in English from the main verb to the auxiliary. We know that the negative contraction which applies only when the negative marker is on the auxiliary is a late development

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between (a) and (b) since examples such as

'you didn't see the children studying (but they were)' vs.  
 'you saw the children not studying (but watching TV instead)'

can not be differentiated in Kinyarwanda. The fact is that this type of construction is ambiguous. In Kinyarwanda, to a question such as 'did you find the students studying?' the answer can either be 'I didn't find them studying' or 'I found them not studying'.

in English. We see also that when the subject inversion applies, the negative marker remains at the right side of the subject if it is not contracted.

Another reason why the main verb should be treated as the source of the negative shift is because of its ambiguity. When the negative marker appears on the main verb, the sentence can have two meanings but one interpretation only is possible when the negative morpheme is marked on the auxiliary.

- (37) a. ba-zaa-ba      bâ-da-kór-a  
           they-fut-aux    they-neg-work-asp  
           'they won't be working'                    'they will not be working'
- b. nti-bá-záá-ba    bâ-kor-a  
           'they won't be working'

When the negation is on the main verb, this may be a simple statement or the negation may be used emphatically or contrastively. When the negative marker is on the auxiliary, however, both the emphatic and the contrastive meanings are lost. Another argument that favors my analysis is the fact that the negative marker is the only linguistic element that brings new information in the whole sentence. As I have argued elsewhere, the new information (stress, contrast, surprise, focus, etc.) tends to come last in the sentence whereas the old information (presupposition: information shared by both speaker and hearer) comes earlier.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper I have shown that auxiliary verbs are main verbs in Kinyarwanda. A similar analysis has already been proposed by Ross for English. I would tend to believe that it can be generalized to other languages also. In French, for instance, this proposal would be correct since the auxiliary verbs carry tenses and moods whereas the "main" verb appears in the participial form.

If it is true that the negative shift in Kinyarwanda goes from the subordinate verb to the auxiliary and if languages tend to favor raising processes to lowering ones, a principle or an explanation should be

formulated. In French, for instance, we witness the shift to the clitic object position of main verbs of subject pronouns of sentential objects of sensory verbs, e.g. Old French \*j'entends le chanter but Modern French je l'entends chanter 'I hear him sing'. Lowering processes are not attested in linguistic change. I think an explanation can be found if we look at the functional roles of movement transformations. Fronting movements and raisings put elements in the prominent position, making them topics whereas backgrounding movements put them in the focus position. Lowering processes don't seem to meet any of these functions.

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