There is more than one 'emphatic' negation: correction and contrastive confirmation.

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This contribution focuses on two different discourse-sensitive uses we dub 'correction' and 'contrastive confirmation' and how they are encoded by 'emphatic' negative structures in Italian as those in (1a) to (1d). Our core empirical claim is that not all 'emphatic' structures can be used for all functions. Their different distribution calls for a more refined typology of 'emphatic' negation and for a better understanding of the grammatical correlates of 'emphasis'.

(1)   a.   Non sta   mica dormendo!   **Mica Type**
           NEG be.3SG crumb sleep.PROG

      b.   Non STA   dormendo!   **Focus on the element hosting negation (FHN)**
           NEG be.3SG sleep.PROG

      c.   NO che non sta   dormendo!   **Sentence initial NO**
           no   that NEG be.3SG sleep.PROG

      d.   Non sta   dormendo NO!   **Sentence final NO**
           NEG be.3SG sleep.PROG no
           'Hes not sleeping'

We argue that correction and confirmation have a structural correlate in Italian, and that variation in the distribution of the four structures reflects differences in i) how the set of alternatives on which correction and confirmation operate is introduced and ii) how the fundamental ingredients of corrective and contrastive focalization (Bianchi and Bocci, 2012) are structurally encoded in each case. Under correction (in 2), Speaker 1's utterance implies the p 'Paolo is sleeping', and Speaker 2 targets this p, objecting that what is actually the case is $\neg p$: 'Paolo is not sleeping'. This can only be conveyed by either combining sentential negation with the minimizer *mica* 'crumb' (1a) or by focussing the host negation (1b), in this case via the stressed intonation of the complex of *non* 'NEG' and the inflected verb. On the contrary, structures involving the holophrastic NO (1c-1d) are not felicitous.

(2)   Sp1: *Non vorrei svegliare Paolo.*   Sp2: **(1a) / (1b)** / #(1c) / #(1d)
           'I wouldn't want to wake Paolo up.'

The pattern is reversed under confirmation (in 3). Speaker 1's utterance introduces $\neg p$: 'Paolo is not sleeping' as possible/probable, while Speaker 2's answer conveys that indeed $\neg p$ and that there cannot be any doubt about it in light of the available evidence. In this case, only the use of the two structures with the polarity particle NO (1c-1d) is felicitous, whereas *non...mica* (1a) and FHN (1b) are excluded.

(3)   Sp1: *Ah quindi Paolo non sta dormendo?*   Sp2: #(1a) / #(1b) / **(1c) / (1d)**
           'Is Paolo not sleeping, then?'

We connect this contrast to the distinction between 'corrective' and 'contrastive' Focus (Bianchi and Bocci, 2012; Magistro, 2022). correction reduces to corrective focus of negation: sentences with *mica* (1a) or FHN (1b) assert $\neg p$, targeting an incompatible alternative p inferable from discourse. Structures with the particle NO (1c-1d) instead target a set of alternatives $\{p, \neg p\}$ made at issue by another speaker, and assert $\neg p$ while excluding its alternative, as under contrastive Focus. Our analysis assigns a structural correlate to the distinction between correction and contrastive confirmation. The former is encoded by material internal to the negative sentence, namely the adverb *mica* or FHN. The latter involves instead biclausal structures with the holophrastic polarity particle

NO combining with its target proposition as a separate CP, which is represented both as a Hanging Topic and as a declarative complement (cf. Poletto and Zanuttini, 2013). The difference between NO *che* and sentence-final NO results from the optional ellipsis of the two identical clauses in (4), which however may also be simultaneously pronounced (at least in some varieties).

(4) [$_{CP1}$ non sta dormendo [$_{PolP}$ NO ... ... [$_{CP2}$ che non sta dormendo]]]

Moreover, we propose that the 'incompatibility' component involved in correction can be introduced independently of the structural and intonational realization of Focus. Actually, this is the presuppositional contribution of *mica*, and correction results from its combination with Focus somewhere else in the clause. The other three structures, instead, encode their pragmatic function by directly focussing negation: the element carrying sentential negation for corrective Focus, or the holophrastic NO for contrastive Focus, respectively. This accounts for two observations: 1) unlike the other 'emphatic' structures, *non...mica* can co-occur with a focussed constituent (5a vs. e.g. 5b); 2) *mica* too is not compatible with focus fronting, which can be independently argued to encode the same 'incompatibility' component of corrective Focus (Bianchi and Bocci, 2012).

(5) a. (*MARTA) Non è   mica arrivata   MARTA!
         Marta   NEG be.3SG crumb sleep.PROG Marta

     b. (*MARTA) Non È   arrivata   (*MARTA)!
         Marta   NEG be.3SG sleep.PROG Marta
         Intended: 'It's not Marta who has arrived!'

More generally, this analysis of emphatic negation in Italian contributes to filling a gap in the current literature on negation: Emphatic negative structures are crosslinguistically common, if not universally available (Van Der Auwera, 2010). However, current studies merely mention them as inputs to diachronic processes like the Jespersen Cycle (Kiparsky and Condoravdi, 2006) or focus on the analysis of specific elements (Frana and Rawlins, 2019; Magistro, 2022; Wu, 2024). Crucially, they do not systematically analyze the division of labor among different structures within a single 'negative' system. From this perspective, our observations raise the question of whether functions like correction and confirmation universally have a dedicated negative structure, and whether the structural correlates observed in Italian have counterparts across languages.

References

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