On angorə in Abruzzese

In Abruzzese, the adverb angorə is ambiguous between “still” and “not…yet”. Differently from what happens in other Italo-Romance languages, the ambiguity between the two readings is not resolved by the presence of the negation and by the use of the perfective, but just by the position of angorə (D’Alessandro and Biberauer 2009, Cuonzo 2019). When the adverb follows the verb, it means “still” as in (1), while, when it precedes the verb, it means “not yet” as in (2).

(1) *Marija ci va angorə.*
   Mary CL.loc goes still
   “Mary still goes there.”

(2) *Marija angorə ci va.*
   NO PERF, NO NEG
   “Mary has not gone there yet.”

In this talk, I will only be concerned with preverbal angorə, arguing that it is a negative adverb lying in NegP1 (Zanuttini 1997) and not in the CP (pace Garzonio and Poletto 2013, 2017).

The phenomenon exemplified in (1-2) was first analysed by D’Alessandro and Biberauer (2009) who argue that preverbal angorə “not…yet” is derived from a focussed postverbal angorə “still” which then got reanalysed as a negative element. However, D’Alessandro and Biberauer (2009) do not specify where preverbal angorə “not…yet” is found synchronically. On the other hand, Garzonio and Poletto (2013, 2017) analyse preverbal angorə “not…yet” in Abruzzese on a par with other low adverbs such as già “already” and sempre “always” that can occur before the verb in Marchegiano and Abruzzese and could do the same in Early Modern Italian (at a stage when, however, Italian was no more a V2 language). In order to account for these cases, Garzonio and Poletto (2013, 2017) argue that these adverbs are found in the focus field within the CP. More specifically, noting that in the majority of occurrences of preverbal angorə “not…yet” in the ASIt database are found in questions, Garzonio and Poletto (2017: 28) argue that angorə is in IntP. However, as argued in Cuonzo (2019) this might simply be an accident of the data recorded in ASIt. Indeed, in Abruzzese angorə needs to occur preverbally in order to get the “not…yet” interpretation (regardless of whether it is in a question or not). Moreover, according to Rizzi (2001), the specifier of IntP is the position is usually reserved for the wh-word perché “why”. However, contrarily to the prediction made by Garzonio and Poletto’s (2017: 28) analysis, angorə and perché (the Abruzzese for perché “why”) can co-occur in the same sentence, as shown by (3).

(3) *Pecché angorə ci perbo?*
   why not-yet CL speak.2SING
   “Where haven’t you spoken yet with her/him/them?”

The data in (3) clearly show that preverbal angorə cannot be in SpecIntP, however I argue more generally that it is not in the CP (pace Garzonio and Poletto 2013, 2017). Indeed, it is not only preceded by subjects, but also by higher adverbs such as forə “maybe” which have been argued to be in the higher part of the IP (Cinque 1999).

(4) *Forsə Marija angorə arrive.*
   maybe Mary not-yet comes-back
   “Maybe Mary has not come back yet.”

Even though both forə “maybe” and the subject might be in the Left Periphery in a sentence like (4), further evidence that preverbal angorə is not in the CP comes from the fact that it can negate the whole sentence without any other overt negation, as clear from (2). Indeed, preverbal angorə can even license NPIs, just like the regular negation.
(5) Marija *(nön) mangh nienda.
    Mary not-yet eats nothing
    “Mary has not eaten anything yet.”

(6) Marija *(angorə) mangh nienda.
    Mary not-yet eats nothing
    “Mary has not eaten anything yet.”

The fact that preverbal angorə is actually the negation in sentences like (7) and not some kind of phonologically null negation is confirmed by the fact that it linearly manghə (Italian neanche “not…even”), while precisely the opposite order is predicted by the hierarchy postulated in Cinque (1999).

(7) Marija angorə manghə va.
    Mary not-yet even goes
    “Mary has not even gone there yet.”

Moreover, preverbal angorə “not…yet” allows for adverb interpolation (cfr. Ledgeway and Lombardi 2005), just like the regular negation nən.

(8) Marija nən čə manghə va a la scola.
    Mary not CL.loc even goes to the school
    “Mary does not even go to school.”

(9) I, nghə Marije, angorə čə manghə parla.
    I, with Mary, not-yet CL.loc even speak
    “I have not even spoken with Mary yet.”

(Cuonzo 2019: 14)

It is therefore plausible to think that angorə lies in NegP1, which, according to Zanuttini (1997), is the highest negation position in the IP preceding lower negations like neanche and the only one that is able to negate sentences on its own. Therefore, the data presented here therefore support D’Alessandro and Biberauer’s (2009) claim that angorə is actually a negative element endowed with an interpretable negative feature [Neg].

More specifically, I argue that angorə is generated in its base position (the specifier of TAnterior in Cinque’s (1999) analysis), but then moves to NegP1 to check its negative features and discharge its role as main negation of the sentence. At a first sight, this may seem a violation of Relativised Minimality (Rizzi 1990) since angorə crosses manghə on its path towards NegP, as visible from (10).

(10) [NegP1…[NegP2 michə/manghə … [T(Anterior) angorə …](adapted from Cinque 1999: 106 and 121)

However, in Abruzzese the feature specification of manghə is different from that of angorə: the former is an NPI with a [nNeg] that needs to be licensed by the main sentential negation, while the latter is itself a negation with an [ıNeg] that needs no licensing (cfr. Postal 2000a, b, Szabolsci 2004). Therefore, the order angorə> manghə, despite being the opposite of the one attested in other Italo-Romance languages (and postulated by Cinque 1999), is possible precisely because Abruzzese angorə is a negation proper and not just an NPI (different from other Italo-Romance languages).

Although Garzonio and Poletto’s (2013, 2017) account of low adverbs surfacing high might be on the right track for other Italo-Romance varieties and even for other adverbs in Abruzzese, this analysis cannot be extended to angorə. Indeed, if we take seriously its negative characterisation, we easily realise it

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1 According to Cinque (1999: 11) neanche “not even” occupies the same structural position as the counterfactual negation mica, while ancora “not…yet” occurs in the same position as già “already”.
is firmly in the IP and more specifically in NegP, the only position in which it can discharge its role as main sentential negation.

References


Postal, Paul M. (2000a), The Ohio lectures on squat. Ms., New York University.


