Polar positive answers in Brazilian Portuguese
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Minimal answers are a locus of language cross-linguistic variation, and a place where children can find clues for the type of target grammar they are learning (see Kato & Tarallo (K&T), 1992). Thus, for a *yes/no* question like (1), languages answer with different types of clause structure:

(1) Q: *Have you seen John?*

A:	a. – *(Yes), I have.*	En
	b. - *Oui, je l'ai vu.*	Fr
	c. - *Si, lo ho visto.*	Sp
	d. – *(Hai), mimashita*	Jp
	e. – *(Sim), vi.*	P

The authors show that Portuguese, in this respect, resembles Japanese more than its Romance sister languages, due to the fact that both varieties (the European ,EP, and the Brazilian, BP) are apparently positively marked, like Japanese, for the Null Subject (NS) and the Null Object (NO) Parameters (see Hoji (1998) for Japanese).

(2) Q: *Você comprou o carro?*
you bought the car? 'Have you bought the car?'
  A: *pro$_i$ comprei pro$_i$*

However, Brazilian Portuguese (BP) has recently been described as a language on the way to become a non Null Subject (NS) language (Duarte 2005), with the exception of a few residual contexts, among which minimal positive answers consisting of just the verb.

(3) Q: *Você quer comer bolo?* BP A/A': *Quero. / *Eu quero.* BP/EP
you want eat cake want-1stP/ I want1stP
  Q': *Queres comer bolo?* EP 'I do.'
  want2psg eat cake
  'Do you want to eat the cake

(4) Q: *O Pedro tinha comido o bolo?* BP/EP A/A': *Tinha./ *Ele tinha* BP/EP
the P had eaten the cake Had./ he had.
  'had Peter eaten the cake? 'Yes he had.

Such verbal minimal answers have been analyzed for EP as consisting of a VP ellipsis structure in which the subject is inside VP and the verb moves from T to Σ (ex 5a) (Martins 2004). See a similar analysis for Irish (MacCloskey 1991). EP does not have to comply to the EPP-feature in TP, and the subject can stay inside VP. After the verb moves, the remnant VP is elided. But this analysis does not account for BP, in which subjects have to move to Spec of TP, and would not be affected by VP-ellipsis (see (5b and b'). The output of the derivation would be ungrammatical.

(5)a. [$_{\Sigma P}$ [$_{\Sigma'}$ comprou [$_{TP}$ T'~~comprou~~ [$_{VP}$ ~~O João~~ t$_{comprou}$~~um carro vermelho~~)]]]] EP
  b. [$_{\Sigma P}$[$_{\Sigma'}$comprou [$_{TP}$o João$_i$ T'~~comprou~~ [v$_P$ t$_i$ t$_{comprou}$~~um carro vermelho~~)]]]] BP
  b' *Comprou o João*.

The aims of the paper:
a)The first aim of the paper is to present a slightly modified version of Holmberg's IP/ ellipsis for MA in Finnish. In his analysis, the verb in Pol moves to C , and then PolP/IP is deleted.

(6) *Q: Puhuu-ko Joni ranskaa?*
  speaks-Q John French "Does John speak French?"
  A: *Puhuu.*
  speaks.
(7) puhun+ C [$_{PolP}$ minä [$_{Pol'}$ puhun [$_{TP}$ puhun [$_{VP}$ minä puhu ranskaa]]]]

In my cartographic approach of minimal answers, the inflected verb in Pol moves to F (Focus) in the left periphery (Rizzi 1997), and the Remnant IP moves to GroundP, where it is interpreted as the sentence presupposition, and then deleted at PF. We will see, with this analysis, that EP and BP both can license identical minimal answers despite the fact that EP is a prototypical null subject language and BP is not. The fact is that with IP-deletion, after the movement of the verb to T, the type of subject before deletion is not relevant. What counts here is V-movement to T and Remnant IP-ellipsis. This analysis also explains why BP, a variety that is on the way to lose the null subject, can exhibit an apparent context where the null variant seems to be categorical.

(8) a. [$_{FocP}$ quero$_V$ [$_{IP}$ eu/pro [t$_V$ [comer bolo]]   Movement of verb to FocucP position

   b. [$_{GroundP}$[[$_{IP}$ eu/pro t$_V$ comer bolo][$_{FocP}$ *quero$_V$*[~~IP~~]]]] IP remnant movement toGroundP

   c. [$_{GroundP}$[[$_{IP}$ ~~eu t$_V$ comer bolo~~] [$_{FocP}$ quero$_V$[~~IP~~]]]]   IP-ellipsis

b) the second aim is to analyze polar answers with more than just the verb.

b1. BP can have the polar item *sim* before the verb. *Sim* in preverbal position signals politeness or formal language. We propose that the derivation is identical to the simple Verbal response, with the additional merging of *sim in* ForceP.

(9) **Sim,** *quero* .

   yes,   want.Yes I do.

(10) [$_{ForceP}$ [$_F$ SIM [$_{GroundP}$ [$_{TP}$ ~~TP~~] [$_{FocP}$ quero [~~TP~~]]]

b2. In emphatic positive answers, the verb and the polarity item can also appear together, but with the latter occupying the post-verbal position (K&T 1992). Here, we propose that *sim* merges as the Focus head, and the remnant IP moves to GroundP, with the object optionally null, in both varieties and with the subject null in EP and overt in BP.

(11) Q: *Você comprou o carro?*

   you bought   the car   'Did you buy the car?'

    A: *eu/pro comprei,* **sim**.   A': *eu/pro não comprei,* **não**.'

      I/pro bought , yes   I/pro not bought , no

     'I certainly did.'   'No, I really didn't.'

(12) [GroundP [$_{IP}$ eu/pro comprei (o carro)] [$_{FocP}$ sim [~~IP~~]]]

b3. Subjects can be expressed marginally, in preverbal position, even without the polar expressions, in both varieties, in   contrastive or emphatic contexts. In this case, if the subject is a pronoun, it has to be of the strong type, and in both varieties it has to be merged outside IP, as a contrastive Topic or a contrastive Focus.

(13) Q: *Vocês   querem bolo?*   EP/BP

    you-Pl   want-3PPL   cake   'Do you want some cake?'

   A: *EU quero, não sei   se   a Maria quer.*   EP/BP

    I   want, not know   whether the Mary wants

    'I do; I don't know whether Mary does too.'

'(14) [$_{GroundP}$ [$_{IP}$ ~~quero comer bolo~~] [$_{FocP}$EU[$_{Foc}$ ' *quero$_V$*[~~IP~~]]]], *não sei se.......*

References

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