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. - Sì, 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?
   A:  pro, comprei proi

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?
   A/A’: Quero. / *Eu quero  BP/EP
   ‘Have you bought the car?’
   Q’: Queres comer bolo?
   want2psg eat cake
   ‘Do you want to eat the cake
   (4) Q: O Pedro tinha comido o bolo?
   A/A’: Tinha./ *Ele tinha  BP/EP
   ‘had P eter 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. [\[Σ comprou \[TP T’comprou \[VP O João tiaux comprou um carro vermelho \]]]]  EP
   b. [\[Σ comprou \[TPo João, T’comprou [\[VP tiaux 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?
   ‘Does John speak French?’
   A: Puhuu.
   ‘speaks.
   (7) puhun+ C [POIP minä [POF 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. \(\text{[FocP querer}_IP\text{ eu/pro [ tV [ comer bolo]]}\) Movement of verb to FocucP position

\[\text{b. [GroundP[IP eu/pro tV comer bolo] [FocP querer}_IP\text{]]]\) IP remnant movement to GroundP

\[\text{c. [GroundP[IP eu tV comer bolo] [FocP querer}_IP\text{]]}\) IP-ellipsis

**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, querer .

yes, want. Yes I do.

\[(10)\] [FocP IF SIM [GroundP [TP TP] [FocP querer [ 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.*

\[\text{I/pro bought , yes}\]

\[\text{I/pro not bought , no}\]

‘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?*

you-pl want-3PPL cake ‘Do you want some cake?’

A: EU querer, não sei se a Maria quer. \(\text{EP/BP}\)

I want, not know whether the Mary wants ‘I do; I don’t know whether Mary does too.’

\[(14)\] [GroundP [IP querer comer bolo] [FocP EU [Foc- querer [IP]]]], não sei se.......

References


