

Pragmatic Restrictions on Affirmative Response Choice in Brazilian Portuguese

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1. Introduction

The languages of the world present distinct systems of response to *polar*, or *yes/no* questions. Sadock and Zwicky (1985: 189) established a typology dividing languages into three distinct systems in terms of these responses. English is cited as a typical example of a *yes/no* system, with a “positive particle accompanying, or standing for, a positive answer, and a negative particle accompanying, or standing for a negative answer”. Japanese is described as a typical *agree/disagree* system with a positive particle used when the answer agrees with the question in polarity, that is, positive vs. negative, and a negative particle used when the answer disagrees with the question in polarity. The third part and final piece of the typology is the *echo system*, in which no special answer words are used at all. Instead, the system’s simple positive and negative responses to polar questions repeat the verb from the question. Morris Jones (1999) discusses Welsh as an example of an echo system in addition to a wealth of other languages that employ echo systems, among them Cantonese, Czech, Finnish, Latvian, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Thai and other Celtic languages. Brown et al. (forthcoming) suggest that such a system is a feature of Proto-Indo-European in general. For the purposes of this analysis, I will be concerned mainly with the echo response system, working within Sadock & Zwicky’s typology.

We cannot assume immediately that a language pertains typologically to any one given system based solely on the fact that the language possesses some of the characteristics of that system. Within the study of the relationship between grammar and conversational interaction, Sorjonen (2001) provides an exhaustive account of response particles in Finnish, a language which has been known to use echo responses (Morris Jones, *ibid.*) in which she explores the meaning and organization of two response particles, *nii(n)* and *joo*, as used in discourse. She argues that these linguistic units accomplish “interactional, cognitive (epistemological) and affective actions, and they also participate in constituting certain kinds of participant identity” (2001:4). Specifically, in her analysis of response particles in Finnish used for polar questions, Sorjonen offers an analysis of the aforementioned response particles in addition to a “repetition” response to a polar question (2001:33). The notion of repetition refers to some element of the question that is repeated as an affirmation. As noted above, the verb can be repeated as an answer, but other elements from the question can also be repeated under specific conditions¹. Sorjonen’s analysis of the distinct affirmative response to polar questions in Finnish reveals that speakers choose different responses based on pragmatic restrictions, as they convey varying meanings such as basic confirmation, offer of new information and confirmation of assumption. Therefore, within the affirmative responses to polar questions in Finnish we find a “multiplicity of meaning” (2001:92). In an effort to distinguish the division of labor within this mixed system, Sorjonen describes the restrictions for each of the available responses to polar questions in Finnish, as a result of “epistemic and interactional” differences (2001:36).

The reader will recall that Portuguese has been mentioned above as a language which employs verbal repetitions, showing features of an echo system. It has been noted in previous literature that the most common affirmative response to a polar question in the case of the variety of Portuguese spoken in Brazil, Brazilian Portuguese (BP), is that in which the verb from the question is repeated as the affirmative answer (Urbano et al 1993, Kato & Tarallo 1992). While for the most part, the Romance daughters fit into Sadock & Zwicky’s typology of *yes/no* systems (French *oui*, Spanish *sí*, Italian *sì*, Romanian *da*), it seems that Portuguese is marked within the family due to the default echo response. Though the Portuguese affirmative response particle *sim* does exist, it obeys syntactic and pragmatic restrictions that are not necessary for the default response (Santos, 2001). Yet like the Finnish case, BP

¹ In order for this to occur, the important element of the question would be suffixed with the enclitic particle *-ko ~ -kö* (2001:34).

employs an array of responses to polar questions that affirm, but have “multiplicity of meaning”. While the syntactic restrictions on affirmative responses have been discussed (Martins, 2006; Santos, 2001; Kato & Tarallo 1992), a pragmatic analysis for the responses is needed. Like Sorjonen’s work, which clarifies the pragmatic conditions licensing the various affirmative responses to yes/no questions in Finnish, I will discuss in detail five distinct affirmative responses from the BP system that demonstrate nuanced distinctions in meaning. I will demonstrate clearly how the licensing of these responses is triggered by specific pragmatic conditions. The analysis explains the “multiplicity in meaning” in terms of both information structure and cognition, examining the extent of their interaction. Two key elements that were found to be crucial for such an analysis are evidence and belief, and are discussed in the following section.

2. Evidence and Belief

In order to discuss the set of affirmative responses used in BP, it is necessary to establish terms in which to discuss them. I use the terms *evidence* and *belief* in this paper as a result of an in-depth analysis of discourse and information structure, looking specifically at the polar questions themselves, the context for the questions and the actual affirmative responses. Through this research, it became clear that the elements of evidence and belief were crucial in an attempt to predict which answers a speaker might use in conversational interaction. An analysis of the questions that license affirmative responses in BP is essential, as questions most often are the trigger for the response itself. Sorjonen’s analysis states that answers are relative to the questions they are answering, and refers to answers as a relative category for that reason. She states that the fact that a speaker answers at all is evidence enough that the prior turn from the speaker’s interlocutor was indeed perceived as a question (2001:33). Hence, if we are to discover the licensing factors for any response, it is imperative that we analyze the questions that precede a given response. Assuming that the distinctions among various affirmative responses found in BP are nuanced, then a meticulous look at preceding questions is in order, to evaluate the information structure of these polar questions as well as the nature of the *propositions* found within the information structure. It is also necessary to consider which epistemological factors are at work when speakers make a seemingly automatic response choice.

We can assume that for polar questions, there is some proposition *p* associated with a given question. For the question *Did Maria see José?* there exists a proposition *Maria saw José*. For a polar question, according to Dryer (1996) a speaker *X* will have some sort of belief with regard to *p*, so that *X believes that p*, *X believes that not p*, or *X has no belief with regard to p* (1996: 485). These beliefs, according to Dryer, correspond to propositions in the mind of *X*, such that *X* might respond (for the case of English) to the question with words like *Yes*, *No*, *I don’t know* or *Probably* (1996:485). Additionally, Dryer discusses the activation of both propositions and beliefs. Both may or may not be activated. For example, if I ask the question *Is there life on Mars?* I am activating both a proposition in the discourse and a belief in my interlocutor’s mind. Both the proposition *There is life on Mars* and my interlocutor’s belief with regard to the proposition (perhaps that there is no life on Mars) would have been nonactivated (Dryer, *ibid.*) prior to my question. The question activated both the proposition and the belief. Therefore, beliefs that are related to a proposition may already exist, and can be activated within the discourse. However, it is not necessary that a belief exist prior to the discourse. Discourse context can also give rise to belief. For instance, if my interlocutor tells me that he called Dário this morning and found out in the conversation with Dário that Dário had a cold, and my interlocutor asks me later in the discourse *Is Dário going to the party?*, I might combine some background information that I already have (Dário doesn’t believe in staying home sick) with the information I received in the discourse (Dário has a cold) and respond *Of course he’s coming to the party!* In this case, my response to a question about the proposition *Dario is going to the party* was based on my own belief that Dário is going to the party. This belief was *inferred* using *evidence*. In this case, my evidence came from my knowing Dário, and the way Dário typically reacts to being sick. On the other hand, my interlocutor might give me some more information that changes my belief about whether Dário will go to the party by telling me that Dário has no ride to the party. This introduction of new information into the discourse might change my belief about Dário’s going to the party. Perhaps Dário lives farther away than the majority of the guests and it’s snowing. Therefore, when asked *Is Dário going to the party* I might respond *No, I doubt it*. In both situations, my beliefs depended on information I received, with which I was able to infer beliefs. In both cases, I used new information introduced into the discourse as evidence. The reader will note then, the interaction between belief and evidence, and the way in which this interaction yields a response to a polar question.

Büring and Gunlogson (2000) relate context and evidence in the following terms: *neutral context*, *contextual evidence*, and *compelling evidence*. For a given question that lacks evidence, a context is neutral as shown in (1):

(1) Context: A is calling her friend C but C's daughter B answers the phone. A hasn't talked to C in a long time, and doesn't remember what her schedule is like.

B: Hello?

A: Hi B, is your mom home?

B: Yep, just a minute.

This is a neutral context given A's lack of knowledge regarding C's whereabouts. There are two possible propositions here: p1 – B's mom is home, p2 – B's mom is not home. A's lack of knowledge is in turn a lack of evidence needed to form a belief that p1 or p2. This lack of evidence and ability to predict an answer creates a neutral context. On the other hand, the context can be changed so that the evidence is compelling:

(2) Context: A is calling her friend C but C's daughter B answers the phone. A lives next door to C and saw C carrying groceries into the house just one minute ago.

B: Hello?

A: Hi B, is your mom home?

B: Yep, just a minute.

In (2), A's sighting of C carrying groceries into the house is compelling evidence for C being home. Therefore, A has a belief that p1, B's mother is home, when she poses the question to B. Büring and Gunlogson's working definition for compelling evidence (2002: 7) is such that "a.) Evidence for p is compelling if, considered in isolation, it would allow the participant to assume (i.e. the evidence could reasonably be considered to justify the inference that p, and b.) Evidence against p is compelling if it is compelling evidence for the opposite of p, W-p". Contextual evidence, as defined by the same authors (2002:7), is "evidence that has just become mutually available to the participants in the current discourse situation." Such a situation is exemplified in (3):

(3) Context: A and B are talking about how great their favorite *American Idol* star is. While they watch the star perform, he slips and falls and has a hard time recovering from the mistake throughout the rest of the performance.

A: Do you think he can still be the next American Idol?

B: I really don't know.

While two propositions exist for A's question (p1 – He can still be the next American Idol, p2 – He cannot be the next American Idol), the contextual evidence that became mutually available to A and B within the discourse is evidence for p2, since a bad performance is not logically evidence for p1. Therefore, the visual evidence became mutually available to A and B within the discourse context. In turn, the evidence had an immediate effect on A and B's beliefs about p1, casting doubt on whether the contestant was indeed capable of winning the contest.

The literature cited in this section as well as the examples should make clear to the reader the importance of evidence and belief in the discourse context. The present paper concentrates on affirmative answers, and it will be important in the following sections to consider a speaker's belief with respect to the proposition in question, as well as which kind of evidence the speaker has to evaluate. The interplay of these two elements will be further exemplified in the following sections, with specific examples from BP.

3. BP Speakers and Short Affirmative Responses

Urbano et al. (1993) note that in BP, in the case of yes/no questions, there is a preference for elliptical responses, generally with the verb in the place of the response particle *sim*, or 'yes'. According to this account, the verbal response tends to be default, but it is noted that a BP speaker can choose among other responses. Kato and Tarallo (1992), in a syntactic account of affirmative responses in BP, note that verb raising in BP does not seem to have any restrictions, i.e. any verb whether auxiliary or not, can appear as the nucleus of an elliptical sentence. In Portuguese auxiliary

verbs are not phonologically autonomous, and can also appear as a nucleus, without the support of the main verb.

(4) Context: João meets Rebecca on a first date. The two have been set up by friends, and João is asking Rebecca about her family. He has no prior knowledge about Rebecca's family.

João: Você tem irmãos?
 You have-2SG.PRESENT brothers
 'Do you have brothers?'
 Rebecca: Tenho
 Have-1SG.PRESENT
 'I have.'

Example (4) presents a case in which the verb from the question is repeated as the affirmative response. In terms of context, the scenario lacks both compelling evidence and belief. Therefore, (4) is a neutral context. For the proposition *p* that Rebecca has siblings, activated by the question, it will suffice to posit that João has no compelling evidence for or against *p*, and no belief regarding *p* (the reader should assume that no such belief has been expressed by João). I will refer to this default response as the Simple Verbal Response (SVE)².

Verbal inflection in BP allows, in some cases, for a verbal response that contains morphological information about person and number. For example, the response from (4) above, *tenho* shows indicative mood, present tense, 1st person singular. Other persons for the verb *ter* present a more ambiguous case if the subject personal pronoun (SPP) is not realized. The 2nd person singular *você*, third person singular *ele/ela*, as well as a 1st person plural pronoun *a gente* (Zilles & King, 2001; Lopes, 2000) are all conjugated with the 3rd person singular form *tem*, creating a more ambiguous environment. However, the word *tenho* (1SG.PRESENT) does include the morphological information for 1st person singular; therefore it is not necessary for the SPP to be realized. That inflected verb forms in BP allow speakers access to such information demonstrates that BP allows for the null subject parameter (Jaeggli, 1982; Rizzi 1982), although the frequency with which BP allows for *pro-drop* is much less than in a language such as Italian (Kato & Tarallo, 1992). In any case, because inflected verb forms in BP contain morphological information for person and number, subject dropping is licensed. As in other environments, we see variation in subject dropping or realization in the case of affirmative responses that repeat the verb from the question. Therefore, where in (4) we see an example of a null subject, in (5), the subject personal pronoun (SPP) is realized.

(5) A: Você acha que o Lula vai vencer?
 You think-2SG.PRESENT that the Lula go-3SG.PRESENT win-INF.
 'Do you think that Lula will win?'
 B: Eu acho.
 I think-1SG.PRESENT
 'I think.'

Because this response veers slightly away from the canonical default response, it is now important to analyze the elements of evidence and belief in order to understand exactly what sort of strategy the

² Like the verbal response, BP speakers have access to an adverbial response which behaves as what Kato & Tarallo refer to as a "substitutive form." According to their account, of all the "substitutive forms," the adverb appears to be the most salient form. They note that for a given utterance containing combined forms, the hierarchy of "substitutive forms" based on frequency is: Adverb > *Sim* particle > Auxiliary > Verb. For the purposes of this paper, it is important to mention both the existence and saliency of this particular response, but I suggest that the prediction of this response relies more on syntactic rather than pragmatic conditions unlike other responses analyzed in this paper. Therefore, this paper does not address the pragmatic conditions of the adverbial response, albeit a highly frequent response choice for a BP speaker.

speaker is employing by realizing an SPP. This example presents two possible propositions, p1 – Lula will win and p2 – B believes that p1. Additionally, we can then infer that A believes that p1 or \neg p1, and A believes that p2 or \neg p2. B's evaluation of A's belief licenses the SPP + SVE response as an overt signal of B's evaluation of A's belief, i.e. an overt signal of the unexpectedness of B's response. B has then evaluated A's belief about p but also A's belief about the expectedness of B's answer. The prosody associated with this specific response all seems to be of importance, but is outside the scope of this paper and will not be discussed in further detail.

Given that with a simple verbal response, it is not necessary for the speaker asking the question to have evidence or belief regarding p, then we should analyze these elements in an effort to predict when the realization of an SPP will come into play. It is not apparent in (5) that A has any evidence with respect to B's opinion about p, that Lula will win (5) is a question of opinion; it seems just as probable that B would respond positively or negatively. In (5), there is no overt evidence in the question with respect to A's belief about p. However, giving the question a negative slant can change our scenario slightly.

(5') A: Você realmente acha que o Lula vai vencer?
 You really think-2SG.PRESENT that the Lula win-3SG.FUTURE
 'Do you really think that Lula will win?'
 B: Eu acho.
 I think-1SG.PRESENT
 'I think.'

While the SVE response is also grammatically acceptable, it does not accomplish what the SPP + SVE answer accomplishes pragmatically. That is, this response requires more than a yes. The extra phonological unit in the form of an SPP accomplishes this task. When the question is given a negative slant, the SPP + verbal answer is felicitous. More evidence for this is shown when we give the question a positive tag³.

(5'') Context: A has been talking about what a great candidate Lula is.
 A: Você acha que o Lula vai vencer, não é?
 You think-2SG.PRESENT that the Lula go-3SG.PRESENT win.INF.no be-3SG.PRESENT
 'You think Lula's going to win, right?'
 B: (Eu)Acho/
 I Think-1SG.PRESENT
 'I think.'

In (5''), B can infer that A wants Lula to win. Both the SVE and the SPP + SVE are acceptable in this example. Because B is not making such an unexpected contribution, the SPP + SVE is grammatical but not needed. In any case for the SPP + SVE answer, some unexpected contribution must be made, but this depends on the hearer's evaluation of whether or not her contribution will be unexpected. This response choice is further evidence for Dryer's argument about the activation of propositions versus belief with regard to a proposition. The questions present activated propositions and the hearer evaluates her own belief about the proposition along with her interlocutor's belief about her belief. Though it has been shown (Sperber & Wilson, 2002: 8) that Grice's 'belief-desire' psychology "underestimates the amount of metapsychological inference that is involved in comprehension," his "working-out" or "calculability" process is not so far off when considering what elicits the response we have just mentioned. Grice reasoned: "He said that P; He could not have done this unless he thought that Q; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I will realise it is necessary to suppose that Q; he has done nothing to stop me thinking that Q; so he intends me to think, or is at least willing for me to think, that Q" (1989:28-29). It seems that in (5), (5'), and (5''), a similar cognitive process must occur in order for B's evaluation and calculation of A's belief, then B's belief and A's belief about B's belief.

³ Like the English positive tags such as "You like milk, don't you?" BP also uses a negative particle in the tag for a positive slant.

guess or candidate understanding of an element in the co-participant's prior utterance". By the production of candidate understanding, the speaker allows her interlocutor a certain "veto power" (Ochs, 1988:136), a sort of last chance to confirm her answer. This environment favors the *nii* and *ser* responses in Finnish and BP respectively. Sorjonen (2001:58) addresses the specific type of an example like (7) when "the utterance is non-clausal: it consists of a word or a phrase". Later she mentions that cases of *nii* detail a context in which the speaker seeking confirmation has somehow indicated a problem in understanding, offering a solution to that problem (the non-clausal question) but ultimately giving her interlocutor the "epistemic authority" to accept or reject her offer, in which case *nii* is often times the answer chosen to convey that acceptance (2001:61).

Although the *ser* response behaves in a similar way to the *nii* particle in Finnish, it is noteworthy that *ser* is indeed a verb, and not a particle like *nii*. As noted earlier, in BP the particle *sim* does appear as an affirmative answer, the reader must bear in mind that *ser* does not appear as an affirmative answer in its infinitive form. The verb is always inflected for person and number when it appears as a positive response, and not necessarily in the frozen present form *é* (third person singular⁵), though this form is quite frequent.

- (8) A: O Edson saiu depois do almoço?
 'Edson left after the lunch?'
 B: Foi.
 be-3SG.PRETERITE
 'Yes.'

A speaker can also use a *ser* response to confirm inferred information.

- (9) A: Ham? eu não gosto de muito álcool. Eu tenho pavor. A cerveja tem um pouquinho, mas dá para tomar.
 'Huh? I don't like alcohol very much. I dread it. Beer has a little, but it's OK to drink.'
 B: Mas, quando seu time ganha...
 'But, when your team wins ...'
 A: Isso aí é uma atrás da outra.
 'Then it's one [beer] after another.'
 B: (rindo) Fica de porre?
 (laughing) 'You get drunk?'
 A: É .
 be-3SG.PRESENT
 'It is.'

In this example, B recovers information from the prior discourse that he uses to infer that A gets drunk when his team wins. He draws a conclusion, but contrastive to (7), forms a question with the same verb A used in the declarative. A chooses to respond with the 3rd person singular of *ser*. In this case it would be felicitous for B to respond *fico*, repeating the verb from the question in the first person singular. Yet for the proposition p that A gets drunk when his team wins, B has evidence (A drinks one beer after another) that allows him to form a belief, or rather infer, that p. Therefore, in (7), the *ser* response ratifies something that is inferred and is able to do so based on evidence inferred from world knowledge. The activated proposition (which, in turn, is B's evidence) allows B to believe it is true. These conditions license the *ser* response which allows A one more chance to ratify the information. There are other responses in BP that also behave in a manner similar to the *ser* response.

- (10) Context: A and B are driving to a party together. B has already told A how to get to the party.
 A: Então viro à esquerda na próxima rua, depois à direita na avenida?
 'So I turn left at the next street, then right onto the avenue?'
 B: Isso.
 That.
 'That's it.'

⁵ The verb 'to be' also appears in Welsh as a positive response under specific conditions (Morris Jones, 1999).

The demonstrative pronoun *isso* with the lexical meaning “that” behaves in a similar manner in that it ratifies or confirms some information that has been activated at some point in the past. With the *isso* response B ratifies p, that in order to get to the party one must turn to the right and then onto the avenue. A’s evidence for p may come from looking up the directions online, hearing the directions from B or looking at a map that B was holding. In any case, p had to have been activated at some point in the discourse. What distinguishes the *isso* response from the *Ser* response, at least for this case, is that the proposition is farther back in the discourse than the propositions discussed for *Ser* responses. Since the contextual evidence is farther back in the discourse, it makes a proposition more difficult to recover. Therefore, when B produces *isso*, it can be inferred that A might not have remembered the directions perfectly, but she did and was exactly correct. Therefore, though *isso* ratifies the proposition in question, the belief conditions differ slightly, and the evidence may be located farther back in the discourse if compared to the *Ser* response. Taking inventory of the set of responses analyzed in this paper, we can organize the responses in terms of the elements of evidence and belief. As in Table 1:

Table 1. Interaction of Belief and Evidence as Related to Response Choice

Proposition	Belief	Evidence	Response	Function
(4) Rebecca has brothers and sisters	José does not have a belief with respect to p	No evidence that p in the discourse	SVE	Affirms that p – neutral context
(5) Lula will win the election	B believes that A possibly believes \neg p	Evidence in discourse favors A belief that p ⁶	SPP + SVE	SPP is overt signal of answer’s unexpectedness
(6) Marina Lima like Jota Quest and <i>axé</i> music	Fernanda believes that \neg p	Fernanda supports her disbelief with evidence	PVS	<i>Sim</i> intensifies neutral SVE response, allowing the speaker to refute a proposition for which she has the belief \neg p. Response has more pragmatic force than neutral SVE
(7) The informant stayed in the military for a year and month	The interviewer believes p to be true, but asks for confirmation (further activating p)	Interviewer has reason to believe that p since informant stated it to be true.	<i>Ser</i> response	Confirms p – ratifies information that is activated and recoverable in the discourse
(10) A should turn at the next road and then to the right at the next avenue	B believes that p	p was previously asserted at some point and is reactivated in the question	<i>Isso</i>	Confirms that p, ratifies information that was previously asserted. Contextual evidence recoverable, but further back in discourse

⁶ Additional evidence may be found in the meaning of the prosodic contour of the question, which may convey disbelief.

4. Classification and Restriction of Response Choice

If we accept the above analysis, it seems that there is some gradient relationship between the responses we have visited in terms of evidence and belief. I therefore propose a scalar relationship between the responses, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Affirmative Responses in BP as they relate to Evidence and Belief

Response	Evidence	Belief
PVS	Refutes	Refutes belief
SPP + SVE	Unexpected evidence (discourse activated)	Unexpected with regard to interlocutor's belief
SVE	Neutral	Neutral
Isso	Confirms/ratifies information that was not activated explicitly in the discourse	Speaker confirms/ratifies proposition that she believes to be true
Ser	Confirms/ratifies information	Speaker confirms/ratifies proposition that she believes to be true

Based on this analysis, the responses discussed in this paper are grouped in terms of their relationship with evidence and belief. The first two response choices mentioned in Table 2. are used to refute a proposition or to convey the unexpectedness of the answer. While the answer used to convey unexpectedness, the SPP+SVE response, requires evidence and belief, the PVS response requires strong evidence and belief, as it is used to refute a proposition. By no means do the responses in the upper portion of the table confirm information, instead they counter belief and/or evidence. Contrastively, the responses shown in the bottom portion of the table interact with evidence and belief in a confirmative or ratifying nature. Belief and evidence are required for the production of the *Ser* response. This response ratifies information that a speaker producing a question believes to be true. Evidence for the truth of the proposition may be the activation of the proposition in the discourse. The *isso* response confirms for an interlocutor that the exact proposition in question is true by using the Portuguese word for “that”. Where belief in favor of some proposition is usually very strong with confirmative *Ser* responses, the belief is not necessarily as strong for the case of *isso*, which can be a result of evidence that became available farther back in the discourse or even outside of the discourse (for instance in (10) if A had consulted a map without telling B, but was aware that B knew the directions to the party and decided to confirm the directions with him for that reason). Therefore, we can conclude that belief and evidence interact with affirmative response choice when speakers refute or confirm some proposition. It remains clear, then that as a result, these non-default responses carry more pragmatically encoded information than the neutral, default response. Evidence shown in Santos (2001) corroborates this for the case of confirmative *Ser* responses when she showed that in early stages children have problems recognizing confirmation requests and are most often not aware of the pragmatic constraints for the *ser* response. To test the forms that seem to carry more encoded information than the default (non-default forms), we can look at an instance of confirmation:

(11) A: Tudo mundo fala que esse cara é um pouco malouco porque ele lê um monte de livros de lingüística.

‘Everyone says that that guy’s a little crazy because he reads a lot of linguistics books.’

B: Livros de lingüística?

‘Linguistics books?’

A: É /?/Isso/*Lê/*Ele Lê/*Lê sim.

(Ser/?/Isso/SVE*/SPP+SVE/*PVS)

Because of the absence of a verb in the question, neither the SVE nor the SPP + SVE response are felicitous, since there is no verb to recover from A’s initial utterance. The PVS response is also infelicitous in this context, due to both the absence of a verb and also because a response that goes beyond the scope of a neutral “yes” is simply not needed in this context. The *isso* response sounds strange because of the new information about linguistics books due to the very recent activation of the proposition. The very high discourse saliency leaves no room for any doubt about the proposition.

(12) Maria: Nossa, José! Você está muito doente! Você vai à escola amanhã?
 ‘Wow, José, you’re really sick! Are you going to school tomorrow?’

José: *É*/Isso*/Vou/Eu vou/Vou sim.*

(**Ser*/Isso/SVE/SPP+SVE/PVS*)

Unlike (11), this is not a simple request for confirmation, ruling out the ratifying and confirming responses. Maria states that José is really sick, evidence that would cause Maria to believe that José might not go to school. The SVE, as a default is felicitous, but pragmatically does not accomplish the job of the responses with additional phonological units. Both the SPP + SVE and PVS responses are possible. Maria’s utterance “you’re really sick” would be evidence for José to believe that Maria does not believe he will go to school. José needs a response that will work against such a belief. He needs more than a yes, and must either add the SPP or a post-verbal affirmative response particle *sim*. Both adequately address the belief and evidence elements from the question.

(13) A and B recently met through a dating website and A is asking B about B’s living arrangements.

A: Você mora num bairro lindo?

B: *?É*/?Isso/Moro/Eu moro/Moro sim.*

(**Ser/?Isso/SVE/SPP+SVE/PVS*)

In order for a *ser* response to be possible in (13), A’s question would have to have been an inference based on evidence that B lived in a nice neighborhood. For example, if B started talking about the high real estate prices of the condos in his neighborhood, or if B showed A pictures that led A to believe that the neighborhood was nice. The *isso* response would also seem infelicitous for (12)⁷. The default SVE answer works along with the other non-*ser* verbal answers, though in order for those answers to work we must accept some additional context with respect to her evaluation of A’s beliefs, i.e. A did not expect B to live in a large building or A did not believe that B would live in a large building. This context could appear in previous discourse or, of course, in the prosody applied to the utterance.

5. Conclusion

Because affirmative responses vary in BP, it is indeed necessary to discover speaker motivation for response choice. This paper makes clear that speakers can choose from various responses that carry encoded pragmatic meaning. The analysis also points out the roles of evidence and belief in the cognitive process of a speaker when choosing a response. Evidence for a default response then becomes clear when one considers that what has been shown to be the default response, the SVE, does not rely on evidence and belief in the way other possible responses do. By taking evidence and belief into account for the analysis of affirmative responses in BP, the reader will note that these elements create restrictions for speakers in their response choice. A speaker’s own belief may vary about a given proposition, a speaker may need to refute the belief of her interlocutor, a speaker may have an opinion about her interlocutor’s belief about her own belief, or she may confirm her interlocutor’s belief. To do so, a speaker uses evidence to form her own beliefs, or to infer the beliefs of others. This evidence may come from the discourse or exist independently of the discourse. Either way, evidence is activated in speakers’ minds as they ask questions and provide responses. Therefore, while the default response in BP does not rely on belief and evidence, these elements will be of constant importance when choosing an affirmative response that carries encoded pragmatic meaning.

Interestingly, the analysis shows that the affirmative responses that are used to counter evidence or belief and that refute are both responses that echo the verb from the question. In fact, they are echo responses with some added element, whether it is a SPP or the response particle *sim*. However, the confirmative responses do not echo elements from the question. While the *Ser* response is indeed a verb, a verb must not be present in order for the *Ser* response to occur. The *isso* response is not a repetition response either. Both the presence and frequency of use of these responses offers evidence for BP as a mixed response system, much like the Finnish case. The data presented in this paper indeed support Sorjonen’s notion of “multiplicity of meaning” in responses due to “epistemic and

⁷ The *isso* response could be acceptable if, perhaps, B was hinting about where he lived but didn’t want to tell A explicitly that he lived in a nice neighborhood. If A finally guessed, the *isso* response would be felicitous due to the fact that A was guessing something that she had some evidence for but her own belief was not particularly strong about.

interactional” differences. Like Sorjonen, I have proposed a division of labor for some common affirmative responses in BP. In addition to the theoretical validity of this paper, my analysis should also prove useful for second language pedagogy. Those learners whose L1s have typologically different response systems from Portuguese would benefit from learning the pragmatic restrictions on affirmative responses found in BP. Further, it is clear that both the Finnish and BP echo systems possess particles and responses that behave differently. The responses carry distinct meanings and can appear in syntactically varying forms. Because both Finnish and BP present an apparent continuum of affirmative responses, we must then question whether this continuum is a characteristic of echo response systems. This involves a more rigorous look at response systems cross-linguistically in an effort to delineate specific details about the three categories outlined by Sadock and Zwicky. In this way, a more detailed typology can be developed to describe the response systems of the world’s languages.

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