A closer look at *oui*, *non*, and *si*

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16 December 2016

1 Introduction

- In French, response particles *oui*, *non*, *si* can be matrix or embedded

- What do they do? They answer polar questions? That's too simple as we'll see

- I'm going to focus on embedded contexts to better understand their syntax and semantics (similarly to what was done for questions)

- In (1) *oui* can be embedded under *penser* 'think' just like a clause it seems

(1) A: Est- ce qu' Alexandre est arrivé ?
    is   it   that Alexandre is arrived

Has Alexandre arrived ?

B1: Il est arrivé.
   he is   arrived
He's arrived.

B3: Je pense qu' il est arrivé.
   I think that he is arrived
I think that he's arrived.

B2: Oui.
   yes
Yes / He has arrived.

B4: Je pense que oui.
   I think that yes
I think so.

- The same goes for *si* in (2), *see* Roelofsen and Farkas 2014 about particles which reverse the polarity of their antecedent

(2) A: Est- ce qu' Alexandre n' est pas arrivé ?
    is   it   that Alexandre NEG is NEG arrived

Has Alexandre not arrived ?

B1: Il est arrivé.
   he is   arrived
He's arrived.

B3: Je pense qu' il est arrivé.
   I think that he is arrived
I think that he's arrived.

B2: Si.
   yes
Yes, he has.

B4: Je pense que si.
   I think that SI
I think the he has.

- But embedding is not this general (2): response particles are subject to a number of constraints that clauses are not

- They can only be embedded under verbs that otherwise accept finite clauses

(3) A: Il va   finir son assiette ?
    he goes finish his plate

He's going to finish his plate?

B1: Il va   s' efforcer de terminer.
   he goes REFL strive   to finish
He's going to strive to finish.

B2: *Il va s' efforcer qu' il termine.
  he goes REFL strive that he finishes

B3: *Il va s' efforcer que oui.
  he goes REFL strive that yes

B4: Il va s' y efforcer.
  he goes REFL to.it strive

  He's going to strive to.

- But even among the verbs that can take a finite clause complement, some cannot embed response particles

(4) A: Il va passer ses vacances avec son père ?
  he goes spend his holidays with his father

  Is he going to spend his holidays with his father?

  B1: Sa mère veut qu' il les passe avec lui.
    his mother want that he them spend with him

    His mother wants him to spend them with him.

  B2: *Sa mère veut que oui.
    his mother want that yes

- But in that case, factors that do not directly have to do with the predicate interact with response particle embedding

  – the *conditionnel* mood makes B2's answer acceptable (de Cornulier, 1973)

(5) B3: Sa mère voudrait que oui.
    his mother want.COND that yes

    His mother would like him to.

  '

– a kind of inanimate subject (Demirdache and Martin, 2015)

(6) B4: La logique veut que oui.
    the logic wants that yes

    Logic has it that he will.

- Polarity also conditions the embedding of response particles

(7) B5: Je ne pense pas qu' il est/soit arrivé.
    I NEG think NEG that he is/is.subj arrived

    I dont' think that he's arrived.

  B6: *Je ne pense pas que oui.
    I NEG think NEG that yes

    Intended: I don't think so.

- (7) is an example that shows that PolPart embedding is sensitive to a semantic principle (polarity) (which is not written in the semantics of the embedding predicate)

- We are going to look at two uses of response particles from the point of view of polarity

2 Response particles as answers to polar questions

- As shown above, response particles can be used to answer direct polar questions, but they can also answer indirect ones

- The answer can then be given by another speaker (in a dialogue) or coordinated to the indirect question

(8) A1: Je ne sais pas si Marie va venir.
         I NEG know NEG if Marie goes come

I don't know if Marie will come.

    A2: Est -ce que Marie va venir ?
         Is it that Marie goes come

Will Mary come?

    B: Je pense que oui.
       I think that yes

I think the she will.

(9) Je ne sais pas si Marie va venir mais je pense que oui.
    I NEG know NEG if Marie goes come but I think that yes

I don't know if Marie will come but I think she will.

- *see* appendix for a discussion of answer embedding and what makes an utterance an answer in general

2.1 *oui* / *non* are PPIs

- In order to compute the licensing of *oui*, it is not enough to just look at *oui*

- As can be seen in (10-B1 to B3), *oui*[1] is not good under an anti-additive (AA) operator (B2)[2] but it is perfectly acceptable under two such operators (B3).

(10) A: Tom a fait ses devoirs ?
      Tom has done his homework

Tom did his homework?

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[1]I use *oui* to illustrate my description of French embedded bare response particles, but all the data hold of all 3 particles. Where they do not, I mention it.

[2]Anti-additivity: a function f is Anti-Additive (AA) iff $f(A \lor B) \Leftrightarrow f(A) \land f(B)$.

    B1: Il est possible que oui.
         It is possible that yes

It's possible.

    B2: *Il est impossible que oui.
         It is impossible that yes

    B3: Il n' est pas impossible que oui.
         It neg is neg impossible that yes

It's not impossible.

- And like *some*-PPIs, putting the antiadditive operator in an extralayer does not antilicense *oui* (11, *cf* B5 and B6).

(11) B4: J' espère que oui.
         I hope that yes

I hope that he did.

    B5: *Je n' espère pas que oui.
         I NEG hope NEG that yes

    B6: Je n' ose pas espérer que oui.
         I NEG dare NEG hope that yes

I don't dare hope that he did.

- Also, an AA operator in the same layer, or in an extra layer can license an otherwise antilicensed particle (12, *cf* B1 and B2)

(12) A: C' est sa fille ?
      it is his daughter

She's his daughter?

B1:*Il nie que oui.

    he denies that yes

    Int. He denies that she is.

B2: Il ne nie pas que oui.

    he NEG denies NEG that yes

    He does not deny that she is.

B3: Il ne peut pas nier que oui.

    he NEG can NEG deny that yes

    He cannot deny that she is.

2.2 *si* is a stronger/global PPI

- Like *oui* and *non*, *si* is antilicensed under negation but good under two negations

(13) A: Tom n' a pas fait ses devoirs ?

    Tom NEG has NEG done his homework

    Tom didn't do his homework?

    B1: Il est possible que si.

        It is possible that SI

        It's possible that he did.

    B2: *Il est impossible que si.

        It is impossible that SI

    B3: Il n' est pas impossible que si.

        It neg is neg impossible that SI

        It's not impossible that he did.

- In (14), although the embedding predicate in B's answer contains one negation, it is not anti-additive and the response particle *oui* is felicitous.

(14) A: Aura-t -on nos nouveaux ordinateurs pour notre voyage en Italie ?

    have.FUT we our new computers for our trip to Italy

    Will we get our new computers for our trip to Italy?

    B: Je ne suis **pas** sûr que oui mais c' est probable.

      I neg am neg sure that yes but it is probable

    I'm not sure that we will but it's probable.

- Example (15) is exactly like (14) except that the question is negative, and B's answer contains *si* instead of *oui*. As shown, the resulting answer is not acceptable.

(15) A: N' aura-t -on pas nos nouveaux ordinateurs pour notre voyage en

    NEG have.FUT we NEG our new computers for our trip to

    Italie ?

    Italy

    Won't we get our new computers for our trip to Italy?

    B: *Je ne suis **pas** sûr que si mais c' est probable.

      I neg am neg sure that SI but it is probable

    Int. I'm not sure that we will but it's probable.

- So it looks like DE operators are enough to antilicense *si*

- Furthermore, unlike *oui* and *non*, *si* cannot be licensed more locally, it looks at the entire domain it is in

- In (16), matrix *non* and *si* are perfectly acceptable in A1's answer,

- However only *non* can be embedded in A2's answer.

(16) A: Tom is sad these days …

B. Pourquoi ? Il n' a   pas réussi son examen ?

Why?   He NEG has NEG pass his   exam

Why? He didn't pass his exam?

A1: Non et/ si mais … sa copine est partie.

no   and/ sɪ but   … his girlfriend is   left

No and/ yes he did but … his girlfriend left him.

A2: On ne peut pas dire que non/ *si.

we NEG can NEG say   that no/ sɪ.

One cannot say that he didn't /*did.

- While it is enough for *non* to be in the positive domain corresponding to the embedded infinitival, *si* is sensitive to the presence of the non-local negation, it is a 'global PPI' (Spector, 2014)

- At this point, several generalizations are possible but we will see in the last section that there is evidence that *si* needs to be in a maximal domain that is positive.

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(17)   Polarity particles as PPIs (D=domain)

	one D not AA	max D not DE
oui, non	+	+
si	-	+

2.3 Summary

- The data presented so far fit in the domain-based system of PSI licensing argued for in Homer 2011

- A response particle is licensed in sentence S only if there is an eligible constituent A of S containing the response particle such that A is not AA w.r.t. the position of the particle.

- In (18),
  - a. and c. are good because *oui* is in a + domain
  - b. is not good because *oui* is never in a + domain

(18) a. [$_+$ imaginer que oui]

b. *[$_-$ **pas** imaginer que oui]

c. [$_-$ ne **pas** falloir [$_+$ imaginer que oui]]

- In (19),
  - a. and c. are good because *oui* is in a + domain
  - b. is not good because *oui* is never in a + domain

(19) a. [$_+$ possible que oui]

b. *[$_-$ **im**possible que oui]

c. [$_+$ **pas im**possible que oui]

- In (20),
  - a. is not good because *oui* is in a - domain
  - b. is good because *oui* is in a + domain

(20) a. *[$_-$ **nier** que oui]

b. [$_+$ **ne pas** pouvoir [$_-$ **nier** que oui]]

- In (21),
  - a. is good because *oui* is in a + domain

– b. is not good because *si* is in a maximal domain which is −

– c. is good because *si* is in a maximal domain which is +

(21) a. [_ **ne pas** pouvoir [_+ dire que oui]]

b. *[_ **ne pas** pouvoir [_ dire que si]]

c. [_+ **ne pas** pouvoir [_ **nier** que si]]

3 Polarity particles as reversal particles

• In this section I want to understand why (22) and (23) are bad[3].

(22) #Tom est sûr que Benjamin est venu et je suis sûr que oui aussi.
Tom is sure that Benjamin is come and I am sure that yes too

Int. Tom is sure that Benjamin came and I'm sure of it too.

(23) #Tom est sûr que Benjamin n' est pas venu et je suis sûr que
Tom is sure that Benjamin NEG is NEG come and I am sure that

non aussi.
no too

Int. Tom is sure that Benjamin didn't come and I'm sure of it too.

• We are going to look at response particles when they are not used to answer a question

• Warning: particles work differently here, this is why I refer to them as 'reversal particles'

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[3]For uniformity's sake, I use coordinations throughout this section but I have checked that the same facts hold of assertion/comment dialogues.

3.1 Dismissing a non-starter: it is not about competition

• Note that *oui* is not possible but the proform *en* is

(24) a. #Tom est sûr que Benjamin est venu et je suis sûr que oui
Tom is sure that Benjamin is come and I am sure that yes

aussi.
too

Tom is sure that Benjamin came and I'm sure of it too.

b. Tom est sûr que Benjamin est venu et j' en suis sûr aussi.
Tom is sure that Benjamin is come and I of.it am sure too

Tom is sure that Benjamin came and I'm sure of it too.

• We could imagine that there is rule such that if a proform is possible, *oui* is not

• But this is not so since there are many examples where both *oui* and a sentence-level proform are possible

(25) a. Tom n' est pas sûr que Benjamin soit venu mais moi je suis
Tom NEG is NEG sure that Benjamin be.SUBJ come but me I am

sûr que oui.
sure that yes

Tom is not sure that Benjamin came but I'm sure of it.

b. Tom n' est pas sûr que Benjamin soit venu mais moi j' en
Tom NEG is NEG sure that Benjamin be.SUBJ come but me I of.it

suis sûr.
am sure

Tom is not sure that Benjamin came but I'm sure of it.

3.2 Conditions on 'reversal' particles?

- I'm going to use (26) as the baseline example for this section.

(26) a. #Tom est sûr que Benjamin est venu et je suis sûr que oui
     Tom is sure that Benjamin is come and I am sure that yes

     aussi.
     too

     Int. Tom is sure that Benjamin came and I'm sure of it too.

   b. Antecedent: Benjamin came

   c. ⟦oui⟧: Benjamin came

- This example becomes good in (27): the embedded particle in the second conjunct is interpreted relative to the embedded clause in the first conjunct

(27) a. Tom est sûr que Benjamin est venu mais (moi) je suis sûr que
     Tom is sure that Benjamin is come and I am sure that yes

     non.
     too

     Tom is sure that Benjamin came and I'm sure of it too.

   b. Antecedent: Benjamin came

   c. ⟦non⟧: Benjamin did not come

- Now look at (28)

(28) a. Tom n' est pas sûr que Benjamin soit venu mais moi je suis
     Tom NEG is NEG sure that Benjamin be.SUBJ come but me I am

     sûr que oui.
     sure that yes

     Tom is not sure that Benjamin came but I'm sure of it.

   b. Antecedent: Benjamin came

   c. ⟦oui⟧: Benjamin came

- In that example, the antecedent and the denotation of the particle are the same as in the problematic example

- What has changed though is the polarity of the embedding predicate

- So it looks like two things matter for reversal particles to be licensed:

  – The relation between the particle and its antecedent

  – The relation between two utterances: the one that contains the particle and the one that contains its antecedent

- So there are several moving parts that need to be inspected

  – The polarity of the matrix predicate in the 1st conjunct/assertion

  – The polarity of the embedded predicate (antecedent)

  – The polarity of the matrix predicate in the 2nd conjunct/response

  – The polarity of the elided clause that comes with bare *oui*, *non*, and *si* (I argue in my dissertation –ask me for evidence– that bare response particles come with an elided clause)

(29)   #Tom est sûr que Benjamin est venu et je suis sûr que oui
       Tom is sure that Benjamin is come and I am sure that yes

       aussi.
       too

       Tom is sure that Benjamin came and I'm sure of it too.

- Let's look at a summary table (30)

(30) Summary table

Profile 1		Profile 2			
matrix pred	emb. pred	matrix pred	Rev. Part.	acc.	conj.
+	+	+	+ oui	✗	et
+	+	+	- non	✓	mais
+	+	-	+ oui	✗	mais
+	+	-	- non	✗	mais
+	-	+	+ oui	✓	mais
+	-	+	- non	✗	et
+	-	-	+ oui/si	✗	mais
+	-	-	- non	✗	mais
-	+	+	+ oui	✓	mais
-	+	+	- non	✓	mais
-	+	-	+ oui	✗	et
-	+	-	- non	✗	et/mais
-	-	+	+ oui/si	✓	mais
-	-	+	- non	✓	mais
-	-	-	+ oui/si	✗	et/mais
-	-	-	- non	✗	et

- The table shows that reversal particles are subject to the generalizations in (31)

(31) Conditions a. and b. must be met for a reversal particle to be felicitous:

a. profile 1 ≠ profile 2

b. no - in third column

- About condition a: whenever there's reversal (i.e. non-identical profiles), two things become possible:

  – use of reversal particles

  – use of *mais* 'but'

- About condition b: reversal particles are global PPIs (Spector, 2014) like *si*

(32) Strength of PPIhood

		one D not AA	max D not DE
response part. {	oui, non	+	+
	si	-	+
reversal part. {	oui, non, si	-	+

3.2.1 What is reversal?

- Reversal particles seem to be sensitive to non-identity of profiles, to 'contrast' (note how contrastive accent on matrix subjects make sentences better)

- I am not sure at this point what the status of this notion is

- One idea might be that it is about expressing a disagreement but see (33): my opinion of where Pierre lives does not change (caveat: the construction involves polarity fragments not bare particles)

(33) a. *Je crois que Pierre, il vit à Londres et je crois que Marie,
       I think that Pierre he lives in London and I think that Marie

       oui aussi.
       yes too

       Int. I think that Pierre lives in London and I think that Marie does too.

   b. Je crois que Pierre, il vit à Londres mais je crois que Marie,
       I think that Pierre he lives in London but I think that Marie

       non.
       no

       I think that Pierre lives in London but I think that Marie does not.

3.2.2 Reversal particles are global PPIs

- When *oui* does not answer a question, it cannot be under *refuser* 'refuse' even if it is non-local

(34) a. #Marie a éraflé ma voiture mais elle refuse de dire que oui.
Marie has scratched my car but she refuses to say that yes

Int. Marie scratched my car but refuses to say so.

b. Marie a éraflé ma voiture mais elle dit que non.
Marie has scratched my car but she says that no

Marie scratched my car but says she didn't.

- However, when *oui* answers a question, it can

(35) A: Est- ce que Marie a éraflé ta voiture ?
is it that Marie has scratched your car

Did Marie scratch your car?

B: Elle refuse de dire que oui.
she refuses to say that yes

She refuses to say so.

3.3 *oui* as an allomorph of *si*

- There are examples in which *oui* is used instead of *si*, i.e. where *oui* reverses the polarity of a negative antecedent

(36) Tom est sûr que Benjamin n' est pas venu mais (moi) je suis sûr
Tom is sure that Benjamin NEG is NEG come but me I am sure
que oui.
that yes

Tom is not sure sure that Benjamin didn't come but I am sure that he did ...

(37) Tom n' a pas triché mais le prof d' anglais (lui) est convaincu
Tom NEG has NEG cheated but the teacher of English him is convinced
que oui.
that yes

Tom didn't cheat but the English teacher is convinced that he did.

- but *oui* does not seem to be able to reverse the polarity of its antecedent in the following example

(38) *Tom dit à tout le monde que Benjamin n' a pas eu son
Tom says to all the people that Benjamin NEG has NEG had his
examen mais il [+est impossible qu' il [−ne sache pas que oui
exam but it is impossible that he NEG know.SUBJ NEG that yes
pourtant.
though

Int. Tom tells everyone that Benjamin didn't pass his exam but it's impossible that he does not know that he did though.

- note that particles which reverse the polarity of their antecedent *are* possible in this context (see minimally different example with *si* instead of *oui* and example with *non*)

(39) a. Tom dit à tout le monde que Benjamin n' a pas eu son
Tom says to all the people that Benjamin NEG has NEG had his
examen mais il [+est impossible qu' il [−ne sache pas que si
exam but it is impossible that he NEG know.SUBJ NEG that SI
pourtant.
though

Tom tells everyone that Benjamin didn't pass his exam but it's impossible that he does not know that he did though.

b. Tom dit à tout le monde que Benjamin a eu son examen
Tom says to all the people that Benjamin has had his exam

mais il [+est impossible qu' il [_ne sache pas que non
but it is impossible that he NEG know.SUBJ NEG that no

pourtant.
though

Tom tells everyone that Benjamin passed his exam but it's impossible that he does not know that he did not though.

- It is surprising that *si* can be embedded but not reversal *oui* since they do the same thing: they take a negative antecedent and assert its reversed polarity

- This suggests that *oui* can take on a reversal value under a restricted set of conditions: one of them is that all the domains it is in must be non-DE

(40) Strength of PPIhood

		$D_{\neg AA}$	max $D_{\neg DE}$	all $D_{\neg DE}$
response part. {	oui_{-rev}, non	+	+	+
	si	-	+	+
reversal part. {	oui_{-rev}, non, si	-	+	+
	oui_{+rev}	-	-	+

- That all domains should be not DE is necessary but it is not sufficient it seems

- For instance, the type of embedding predicate seems to have an effect

(41) Degree of certainty

a. #Tom pense que Marie n' est pas compétente mais il est
Tom thinks that Marie NEG is NEG competent but it is

possible que oui.
possible that yes

Int. Tom thinks that Marie is not competent but it is possible that she is.

b. #? Tom pense que Marie n' est pas compétente mais moi je pense
Tom thinks that Marie NEG is NEG competent but me I think

que oui.
that yes

Int. Tom thinks that Marie is not competent but I think that she is.

c. Tom pense que Marie n' est pas compétente mais moi je suis
Tom thinks that Marie NEG is NEG competent but me I am

sûr que oui.
sure that yes

Tom thinks that Marie is not competent but I am sure that she is.

4 Conclusion

- Embedded *oui*, *non*, and *si* are PPIs

- Descriptively, they have at least two uses:

  - Response to a question

  - Reversal (when not answering a question)

    * *oui*, *non*, *si* require disagreement (which means a different polarity profile in the two clauses; this in turn triggers the presence of *mais* 'but')

    * They become global PPIs, like *si* elsewhere, which specializes in reversal

- So we learn something about PPIs: the same items can become stronger PPIs in some contexts

- The hope is that the reversal use of *oui*, *non*, and *si* can tell us something about their response use so that maybe we can give a unified analysis of the particles

  - it could be that *oui*, *non*, and *si* are always reversal particles but that fact gets obscured in responses to questions

  - or it could be that *oui*, *non*, and *si* acquire a reversal use under certain conditions

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Appendices

A   Reflections on the nature of answers and their embedding

- I took for granted earlier that *oui* whether embedded or not was an answer in (42)

(42)   A: Est -ce que Marie va   venir ?
      Is   it   that Marie   goes come

    Will Mary come?

  B1: Oui.

  B2: Je pense que oui.
      I   think   that yes

    I think the she will.

- But it is in fact far from obvious that it is an answer in other examples like (43)

(43)   B3: J' espère que oui.
      I   hope   that yes

    I hope that she will.

  B4: Je voudrais que oui.
      I   want.COND that yes

    I would like her to.

- Intuitively, B3 and B4 don't really answer the question: hoping for X is not asserting that X will happen

- Still, dialogues made up of A's question in (42) and any of the answers in B1-B4 are perfectly well-formed

- Question: How can those dialogues be well-formed if B's response does not answer the question?

  – An idea is that maybe the answer is given by the non-asserted content of those answers

    * *j'espère que p* 'I hope that p' gives rise to the inference that the attitude holder does not know that p (*see* # It is raining and I hope that it is raising)

- * *je voudrais que p* 'I would like that p' gives rise to the inference that p is not the case (de Cornulier, 1973)

  – Interestingly, *souhaiter* gives rise to such an inference whereas *vouloir* 'want' does not

(44) a. Il pleut et   je veux qu' il pleuve.
          it rains   and I   want that it rains

      It is raining and I want it to be raining.

      b. #Il pleut et je souhaite qu'il pleuve.

(45) Tom va   venir demain ?
      Tom goes come   tomorrow

      Is Tom coming tomorrow?

      a. #Je veux que oui.
          I   want that yes

      b. Je souhaite que oui. (Inference: I don't know)

  – Maybe there is a correlation between predicates that give rise to an inference (which is used to answer a question) and predicates that allow response particle embedding

- Note that this question is not specific to embedded response particles since full clauses could just as well be embedded and be asserted in response to a question

(46) B5: J' espère qu' elle va   venir.
          I   hope   that she goes come

      I hope that she will come.

- In those cases, Simons (2007) says that the main point of the utterance is carried by the embedded clause

- Can all verbs embed the main point of the utterance / answer to a question?

- According to Truckenbrodt 2006, no. He notes that answering a question with *want* is odd.

(47) A: Is he coming today?
      B: # I want him to come today.

- So it could be that *vouloir*'s inability to embed *oui* stems from its more general inability to embed answers

- But I am not sure that it is this categorical: provided we make the subject of *want* someone who is a reliable source (Simons, 2007) for a given piece of information (e.g. a fearsome authoritative advisor about whether one of his PhD students should go to a conference), I think that *want* is a good answer

(48) A: Est -ce que ton étudiant va   à ce colloque ?
         is   it that your student   goes to this conference

      Is your student going to this conference?

      B: Je veux qu' il y   aille.
         I   want that he there go.SUBJ

      I want him to.

- But even to such a question, it seems that it remains bad to embed *oui*

(49) A: Est -ce que ton étudiant va   à ce colloque ?
         is   it that your student   goes to this conference

      Is your student going to this conference?
      B: *? Je veux que oui.

- So it's not clear that Truckenbrodt's observation can be used to account for the embedding of answers in general and response particles more specifically

- So the basic question really is: what is an answer?

- We have an understanding of question embedding (Lahiri, 2002) but we know that questions are special objects (syntactically and semantically speaking)

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- So what about answers? Maybe they are a specific kind of object

- I am not aware of work that has targetted this question directly, however there is work by Simons 2007, 2015 that has touched upon those issues

- Speculation: *oui*, *non*, and *si* lexicalize/mark the object 'answer' (with a specific semantics and syntax)

B Do embedded bare response particles involve ellipsis?

- First some terminology: in French response particles occur in three 'shapes': bare, with fragments, and with a full clause

(50) A: Ils vont venir ?
     they go   come

    Are they going to come?
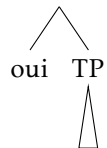
  B1: Je pense que oui.   Bare
      I   think   that yes

     I think that they will.

  B2: Je pense que Tom oui.   Fragment-edge

  B3: Je pense que oui, ils vont venir.   Clause-edge

- Some accounts analyze response particles as having an elidable full clause as their sister (51) while another analyzes them as being purely anaphoric sentential proforms (52) .

(51) Ellipsis analysis

    oui TP

(52) Proform analysis

    TP

    oui

Under the ellipsis analysis, bare response particles are the result of full TP ellipsis, polarity fragments the result of movement to a position higher than the response particle. Finally polarity-marked full clauses are the spell-out of the sister TP.

B.1 Argument 1: Non-finiteness

- If *oui* is a proform, we expect it to behave like other proforms in French.

- Sentence-level proforms (e.g. *le*, *en*, *y*) are not sensitive to whether a predicate embeds finite or non-finite clauses but response particles are.

- No verb, which may only take an infinitival complement (e.g. *s'efforcer* 'strive' in 3, *cf* B1 and B2), may embed a response particle (B3). However such verbs can occur with a sentence-level proform (B4).

(53) A: Il va finir son assiette ?
     he goes finish his   plate

    He's going to finish his plate?

  B1: Il va s' efforcer de terminer.
     he goes REFL strive   to finish

    He's going to strive to finish.

  B2: * Il va s' efforcer qu' il termine.
      he goes REFL strive   that he finishes

  B3: * Il va s' efforcer que oui.
      he goes REFL strive   that yes

  B4: Il va s' y efforcer.
     he goes REFL to.it strive

    He's going to strive to.

- Another example of the effect of finiteness is provided by raising verbs. The verb *paraître* 'seem' can appear in two constructions. In construction 1, the

subject does not raise and the complement of the verb is a finite clause. Polarity particles can be embedded in the latter construction as B2 shows.

(54) A: Léa souffre ?

    Léa hurts

    Is Léa in pain?

    B1: Il paraît qu' elle souffre.

        it seems that she hurts

        It seems that she's in pain.

    B2: Il paraît que oui.

        it seems that yes

        It seems that she's in pain.

- But in construction 2, the subject raises and the complement of the verb can only be non-finite. As B3 and B4 in (55) show, a response particle cannot be embedded there.

(55) A: Léa souffre ?

    Léa hurts

    Is Léa in pain?

    B1: Elle paraît souffrir.

        it   seems hurt.ɪɴꜰ

        She seems to be in pain.

    B2: *Elle paraît qu'elle souffre.

        she seems that   she

    B3: *Elle paraît oui.

        she seems yes

    B4: *Elle paraît que oui.

        she seems that yes

B.2 Argument 2: Obviation

- There is a phenomenon in French known as obviation which refers to the ban that certain embedding verbs, all assigning subjunctive, impose on an embedded pronominal subject against its being coreferent with the matrix subject.

- For instance (56a) is fine but (56b) is not. The only thing that has changed though is the embedding verb, therefore I will say that *espérer* is –obviation whereas *souhaiter* is a +obviation verb.

- The only way to make coreference acceptable with +obviation verbs is for the embedded clause to be non-finite as in (56c)

(56) a. J' espère que je jouerai demain.

        I hope   that I play.ꜰᴜᴛ tomorrow

        I hope I will play tomorrow.

    b. *Je souhaite que je joue   demain.

        I ꜱᴏᴜʜᴀɪᴛᴇʀ that I play.ꜱᴜʙᴊ tomorrow

        Int. I want to play tomorrow.

    c. Je souhaite jouer   demain.

        I ꜱᴏᴜʜᴀɪᴛᴇʀ play.ɪɴꜰ tomorrow

        I want to play tomorrow.

- If embedded bare response particles come with an elided finite clause, we expect them to show the same sensitivity to obviation that full clauses do. On the other hand, if they behave like proforms, we should not see any effect: the sentence-level proform *le* 'it' is not sensitive to obviation (57).

(57) A: Tu vas jouer demain ?
      you go play tomorrow

      You are going to play tomorrow?

      B1: Je le souhaite.
          I it SOUHAITE

          I want to.

      B2: Je l' espère.
          I it hope

          I hope to.

- Interestingly, obviation effects obtain with response particles when the subject in the antecedent is the same as the matrix subject of the embedding verb (56b). This is expected if PolParts come with a full clause at some level of representation. Interestingly, no such effect occurs when the antecedent is picked up by a proform (56c).

(58) A: Tu vas aller à leur mariage ?
      you go go to their wedding

      Are you going to their wedding?

      B1: *Je souhaite/ aimerais bien que j' y aille.
          I SOUHAITER/ would like that I there go.SUBJ

          Int. I want/would like to go.

      B2: *Je souhaite/ aimerais bien que oui.

      B3: Je le souhaite/ aimerais bien.

- Obviation does not occur in two cases: if the subjects do not corefer (59) and if the embedding verb is -obviation (60).

- In both cases, response particles embedding becomes possible which is exactly what is predicted if bare response particles in those examples have an elided full clause.

(59) A: Tom va aller à leur mariage ?
      Tom goes go to their wedding

      Is Tom going to their wedding?

      B1: Je souhaite/ aimerais bien qu' il y aille.
          I SOUHAITER/ would like that he there go.SUBJ

          I want/ would like him to go.

      B2: Je souhaite/ aimerais bien que oui.

      B3: Je le souhaite/ aimerais bien.

(60) A: Tu vas aller à leur mariage ?
      you go go to their wedding

      Are you going to their wedding?

      B1: J' espère que j' irai.
          I hope that I go.FUT

          I hope to go.

      B2: J'espère que oui.

      B3: Je l'espère.

B.3   Argument 3: Antilogophoricity effect

- If bare response particles involve ellipsis, we expect that if the elided constituent contains an antilogophoric element bound by the subject, the sentence will be unacceptable (61B1).

- This is what we find (61B2).

(61) A: Tu crois que Marie aime cet imbécile$_i$?
      you think that Marie loves this idiot

      Do you think that Marie loves this idiot?

B1: *Il$_i$ pense qu' elle aime cet imbécile$_i$. C' est évident.

      he thinks that she loves this idiot   it is obvious

B2: *Il$_i$ pense que oui. C' est évident.

      he thinks that yes it is obvious

B3: Il$_i$ le pense. C' est évident.

      he it thinks it is obvious

      He thinks so, it's obvious.

B4: Je pense que oui. C' est évident.

      I think that yes it is obvious

      I think that Marie does, it's obvious.