Response Particles

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1 German response particles

Basic observation:

(1) A: *Bill raucht.* (‘Bill smokes’) B: *Ja. (= he does)*
Raucht Bill? (‘Does Bill smoke?’) *Nein*. (= he doesn’t)
#Doch.

(2) A: *Bill raucht nicht.* (‘Bill doesn’t smoke.’)
Raucht Bill (etwa) nicht? (‘Does Bill not smoke?’)

B: *Ja.* (= he doesn’t) cf. Blühdorn 2012
Nein. (= he doesn’t)
Doch. (= he does)

Wikipedia wisdom:

- „Nein“ verneint eine positive Frage:
  „Gehst du heute mit ins Schwimmbad?“ – „Nein!“, oder „Nein, ich gehe heute nicht mit ins Schwimmbad.“
- „Nein“ bestätigt eine negative Frage:
  „Kommst du heute nicht mit ins Schwimmbad?“ – „Nein, ich komme nicht mit ins Schwimmbad“.

  Umgangssprachlich wird für solche Fälle oft das semantisch gegenteilige Ja verwendet. („Ja, ich komme heute nicht mit ins Schwimmbad“.) Dabei bezieht sich das „Ja“ nicht auf die im eigenen Satz ausgedrückte Bedeutung, sondern signalisiert die Bestätigung der vorangegangenen Frage des Gesprächspartners.

  (Die Negation einer negativen Frage wird mit *doch* vorgenommen: „Kommst du heute nicht ins Schwimmbad?“ – „Doch, ich komme heute mit ins Schwimmbad“.)

2 Theories

Basic assumption of theories considered here:

- Response particles are / contain propositional anaphora
- Preceding clause introduces propositional discourse referents

3 Krifka 2013: Saliency account

(3) ⟦[*Bill* [$\overline{p}_{DR}$ t_{Bill} *doesn't* [p_{DR} t_{Bill} *smoke*]]]⟧ = ¬smoke(bill)

$\overline{p}_{DR}$: negative propDR, anchored to ¬smoke(bill)
p_{DR}: positive propDR, anchored to smoke(bill)

- p_{DR} more salient by default than $\overline{p}_{DR}$, hence prime target for discourse particles
- reason: Negated clauses when non-negated DR in previous discourse
- but there are contexts where this is not the case:

(4) A: *Who of your friends does not smoke?* B: *Bill doesn't smoke*.

Interpretation of response particles:
- *ja* picks up a propDR, asserts it
- *nein* picks up a propDR, asserts its negation
- *doch* picks up p_{DR} when $\overline{p}_{DR}$ is also salient, asserts it

In case of negated antecedent clause, default case where p_{DR} is most salient:
- *doch* for rejection (pick up p_{DR}, asserts it), blocks other expressions for rejection
- *nein* picks up salient p_{DR}, asserts its negation, preferred over *ja* for $\overline{p}_{DR}$.

Special case where p_{DR} is most salient (*doch* for rejection same as before):
- *ja* picks up salient $\overline{p}_{DR}$, asserts it, preferred over *nein* for p_{DR}.

Particle	Targeted propDR	Meaning		*BLOCK	PRES	*NONSAL	
Salient propDR = p_{DR}							
ja	p_{DR}	p_{DR}	= rejecting	*			
	$\bar{p}_{DR}$	$\bar{p}_{DR}$	= affirming			*	
nein	p_{DR}	$\neg p_{DR}$	= affirming				☜
	$\bar{p}_{DR}$	$\neg \bar{p}_{DR}$	= rejecting			*	
doch	p_{DR}	p_{DR}	= rejecting				☜
	$\bar{p}_{DR}$	$\bar{p}_{DR}$	= affirming		*	*	
Salient propDR = $\bar{p}_{DR}$							
ja	p_{DR}	p_{DR}	= rejecting	*		*	
	$\bar{p}_{DR}$	$\bar{p}_{DR}$	= affirming				☜
nein	p_{DR}	$\neg p_{DR}$	= affirming			*	
	$\bar{p}_{DR}$	$\neg \bar{p}_{DR}$	= rejecting				☜
doch	p_{DR}	p_{DR}	= rejecting			*	
	$\bar{p}_{DR}$	$\bar{p}_{DR}$	= affirming		*		

Prediction for negative antecedents, for saliency account (Krifka 2013) and feature model (Roelofson & Farkas 2013)

Response type	Context	Predicted preference patterns	
		Saliency account	Feature model
Rejecting	Positive (default)	*doch* > *nein* > *ja*	*doch* > *nein* = *ja*
	Negative	*nein* > *doch* > *ja*	
Affirming	Positive (default)	*nein* > *ja*	*nein* > *ja*
	Negative	*ja* > *nein*	

4 Experiments

4 acceptability judgement experiments (here: only for assertion antecedents)

- particle + full-clause responses to positive assertions
- preference patterns for *ja/nein* in affirming / rejecting particle + full clause responses to negative assertions
- particle + full clause responses to rejecting assertions, including *doch*
- bare particle responses to affirming responses to negative assertions

4.1 Experiment 1: positive antecedent, base line.

48 experimental items, 16 fillers, 48 subjects, 2x2x2 within subjects, rating 1-7

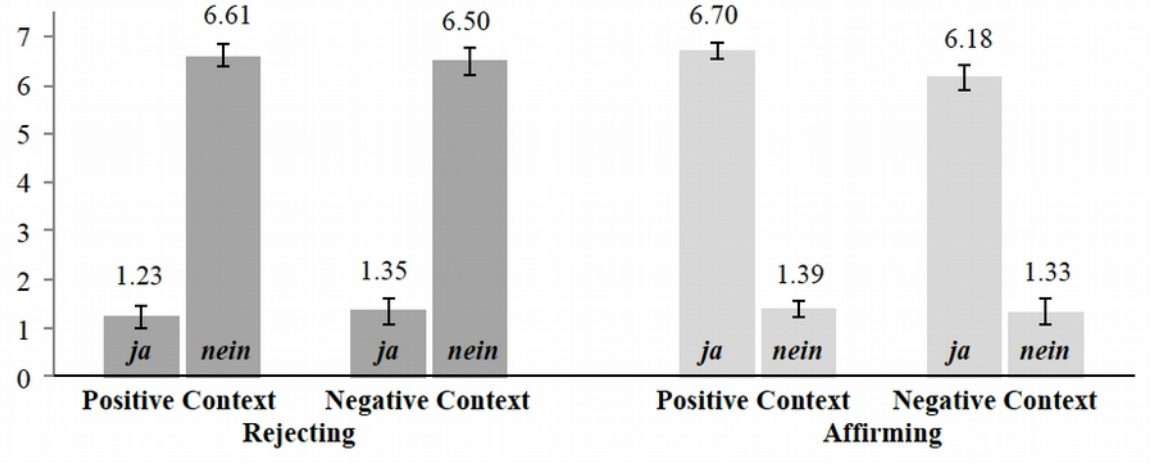
Context sentence: *Ludwig and Hildegard have their large garden redesigned.*

- Positive context: *They are talking about what the gardener has done already.*
- Negative context: *They are talking about what the gardener hasn't done yet.*

Ludwig: *The gardener has sown the lawn already.*

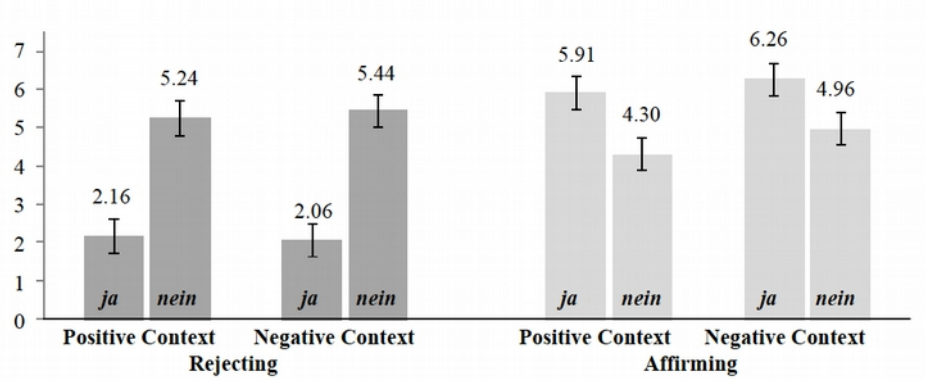
Hildegard: Affirming: *JA, he has sown the lawn already.*
NEIN, he has sown the lawn already.

Rejecting: *JA, he hasn't sown the lawn already.*
NEIN, he hasn't sown the lawn already.



4.2 Experiment 2: negative antecedent

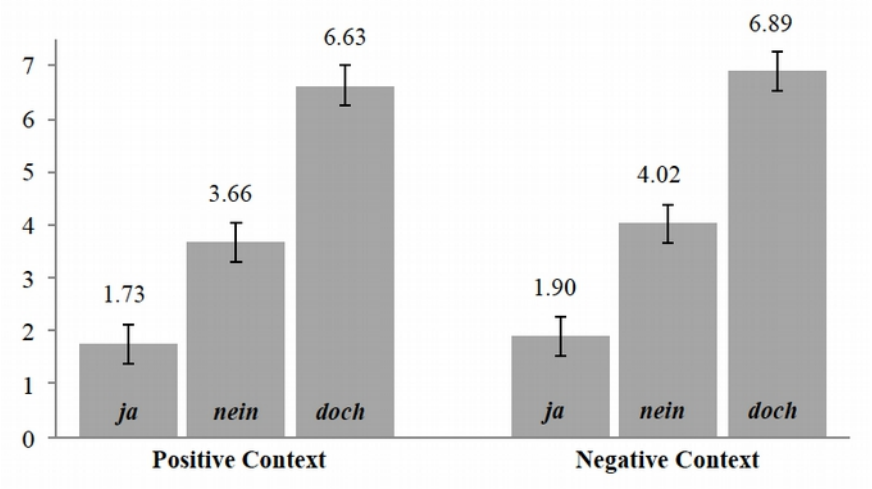
Ludwig: *The gardener hasn't sown the lawn yet.*



- No influence of context, against prediction by saliency account
- Preference for *nein* for rejecting responses (no *doch* provided)
  not predicted by feature model, predicted as default by saliency account
  (*NO, he has sown the lawn;* recall that *doch* was not offered as option)
- Slight preference for *ja* for affirming responses
  against default prediction of saliency and feature model,
  common knowledge (e.g., Wikipedia)
  (*JA > NEIN, he hasn't sown the lawn yet*).

4.3 Experiment 3: negative antecedent, with *doch*

Results for rejecting answers:



- no influence of context, as before, contra saliency account
- *doch* clearly the best option, as expected
- *nein* better than *ja*, different from expectations of both accounts, as before

4.4 Bare particle responses to negated antecedents

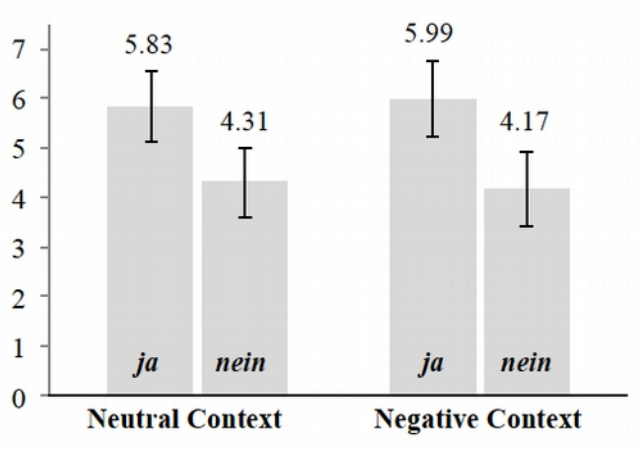
Setting: *Ludwig and Hildegard have their large garden redesigned. This morning, Hildegard talked to the gardener, who told her that because of the weather he would sow the lawn only in a couple of days.*

Context:
- Neutral: *During lunch, Hildegard and Ludwig are talking about the gardener and the redesigning of their garden.*
- Negative: *During lunch, Hildegard and Ludwig are talking about what the gardener hasn't done yet.*

Dialogue:
- Ludwig: *The gardener hasn't sown the lawn yet.*
- Hildegard: *Ja. / Nein.*

Results, again:

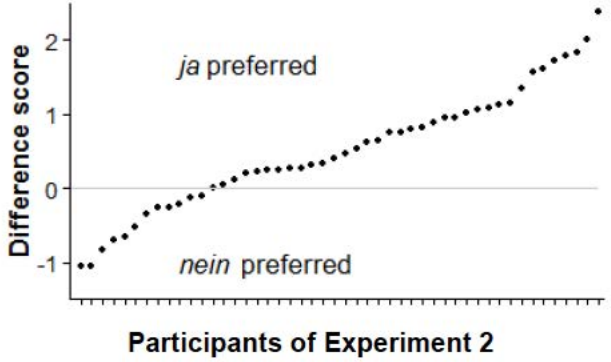
- No influence of context
- Slight preference for *ja* for confirmation

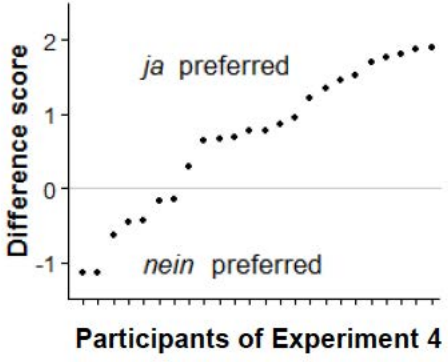


4.5 Group differences

Evidence for different behavior of participants

- Difference scores for each participant: Mean rating of *nein* – mean rating of *ja*
- z-value transformation

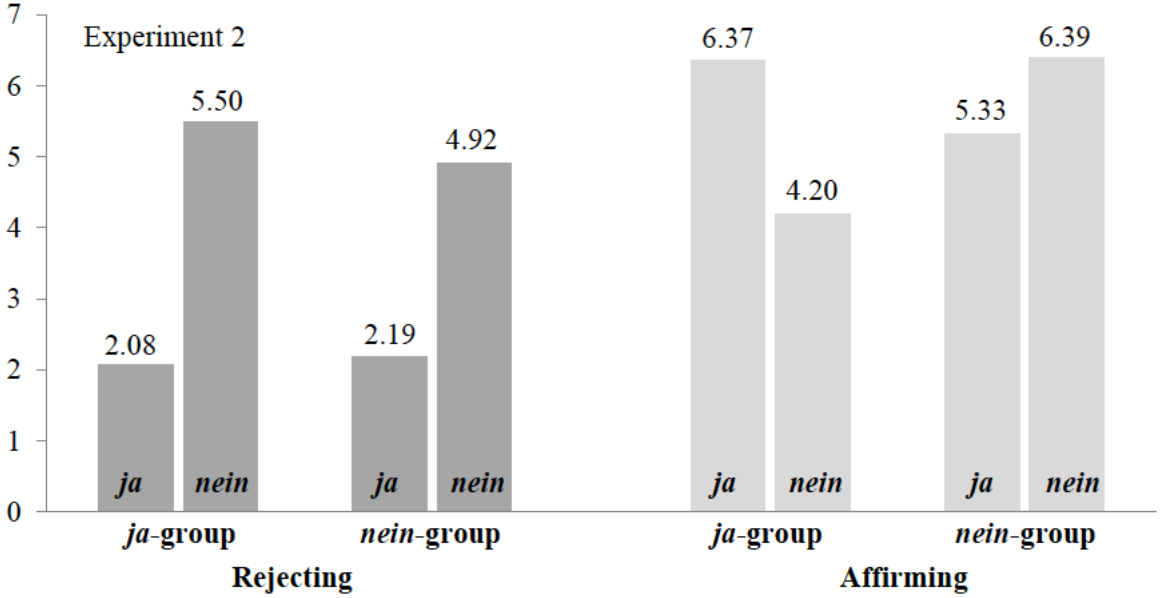




Two groups:

- *ja*-group (majority) prefers *ja* as affirming particle to negative antecedent
- *nein*-group (minority) prefers *nein* as affirming particle to negative antecedent

Acceptability judgements by groups, here: Experiment 2



5 Revised saliency account

For negated antecedents:

(5) ⟦[*Bill* [$\overline{p}_{DR}$ t_{Bill} *doesn't* [p_{DR} t_{Bill} *smoke*]]]⟧ = ¬smoke(bill)

ja-group:

- The negated DR $\overline{p}_{DR}$ is more salient
- Reason: It is introduced by the major constituent vs. a subconstituent
  cf. Gordon, Hendrick, Ledoux & Yang (1999) on nominal anaphora:
  Mary's aunt owns a lake house where she likes to go swimming.
- Result: *ja* preferred for affirming responses, as it picks out $\overline{p}_{DR}$

nein-group:

- No saliency differences between the two groups
- The use of *ja* is penalized, as the result is ambiguous (creates a tie)
  between p_{DR} and $\overline{p}_{DR}$
- With *nein*, picking up $\overline{p}_{DR}$ would result in a double negation: $\neg\overline{p}_{DR}$, to be avoided,
  hence *nein* picks up p_{DR} and negates it: $\neg p_{DR}$
- *doch* can only pick up a negated DRs and negates it: $\neg\overline{p}_{DR}$

6 No saliency differences

ja-group:

- Always picks up the propositional discourse referent that was asserted
- With negative antecedents, this is $\overline{p}_{DR}$
- *doch* expresses negation of negated DR: $\neg\overline{p}_{DR}$

nein-group:

- *ja/nein* always pick up the TP discourse referent of the antecedent
- With negative antecedents, this is p_{DR}
- *nein* picks up p_{DR} and negates it: $\neg\ p_{DR}$
- *doch* is like *ja* but requires presence of a negated propDR, $\overline{p}_{DR}$
  picks up p_{DR} and affirms it: p_{DR}

7 Question antecedents

Low negation questions:

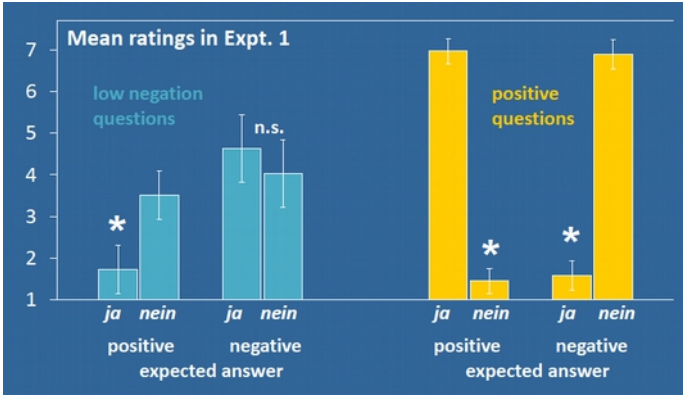
- Example: *Has the gardener not sown the lawn yet?*
- Two propositional discourse referents, p_{DR} and $\overline{p}_{DR}$

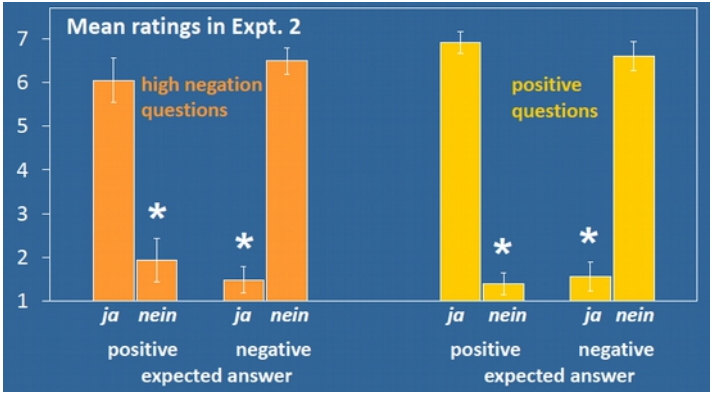
High negation question:

- Example: *Hasn't the gardener sown the lawn already?*
- High negation is not propositional, hence only one propDR: p_{DR}

Two experiments:

- Low negation questions similar to negated assertions as antecedents
- High negation questions similar to non-negated assertions as antecedents





8 Other Responses

Conventional gestures:

- Nodding / Head shake

“Paralinguistic” gestures:

- English: *uh-huh, uh-uh*
- German: *m-hm, m-m*

Expressing agreement / disagreement with assertions, biased (!) questions.

- English: *Right. / Wrong.*
- German: *Richtig. / Falsch. / Stimmt. / Stimmt nicht.*

9 *Jein*


ein klares
JEIN


FETTES
BROT
Jein


Ja?
Nein?...
Jein!
Kompass für den täglichen
Gewissenskonflikt
1LIVE


Ja...
Nein...
Jein...

Use of *jein*:

- Typically used after questions, not after assertions.
- Agreeing response, but signals that usual stereotypical inferences (I-Implicatures, Levinson; R-Implicatures, Horn) should not be drawn.

(6) A: *Have you ever been to Bremen?*

B: *Jein, ich bin nur mal durchgefahren.*
'Jein, I just drove through once.'

B: *Nein, ich bin nur mal durchgefahren.*
'No, I just drove through once.'

B: *Ja, aber ich bin nur mal durchgefahren.*
'Yes, but I just drove through.'

- Agreeing response for one aspect of a question.

(7) A: *Would John be a good for the job?*

B: *Jein. Er bringt die nötige Qualifikationen mit, aber er ist unzuverlässig.*
'Jein. He has the necessary qualifications, but he is not reliable.'