É AND SIM AS AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSES IN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE

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2. Background
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AIMS

› To provide an analysis of two types of responses to yes-no questions in Brazilian Portuguese (BP): sim and é.

› Contribute to the better understanding of the response system to yes-no questions in BP.

› More generally
  › Practical applications in language learning.
  › Contributions to studies in Portuguese Variation.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

› Using conversation analysis, we examine sequences of questions and answers involving é and sim to answer the following questions:

› What are the functions and distribution of these responses?
› What kind of pragmatic meanings can be found encoded in them?
› How do these results match the previous classifications made about the response system of BP?
BACKGROUND

Comparative studies (Sadock & Zwicky 1985:189) have identified three systems for short answers to yes-no questions in world’s languages:

- yes/no systems.
  - English: *Yes[, I do]. No[, I don’t]*.

- agree/disagree systems
  - Japanese: positive particle when the answer agrees with the question in polarity, a negative particle when the answer disagrees.

- echo systems
  - no special answer words, repetition of the verb

- Combinations/mixed systems are possible! (e.g. Sorjonen 2001)
RESPONSE SYSTEMS IN BP

Brazilian Portuguese is normally considered to have an echo system, where the verb is repeated (Urbano et al. 1993, Kato & Tarallo 1992)

Ex. 1.

6 = Ele cantou?
He sang-3s
=’Did he sing?’

7 *L: Cantou:: a gente dançou e tudo.
Sang-3s the people danced-3s and all
‘Yes::: We even danced’. ((nod with the head))

But it has several other possibilities of affirmative responses to yes-no questions (e.g. Armstrong 2008)

> sim, ser-responses (including é), isso, etc.
RESPONSES IN CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

› Main concepts for analysis:

› preferred positive responses to yes/no question (Heritage and Roth, 1995),
› minimal responses (Hakulinen, 2001),
› type-conforming responses (Raymond, 2003).
DATA & METHODS

Data (Braga Mattos 2012-2014)

- Spontaneous conversations involving Brazilians (+1 non-native speaker) from different areas of Brazil.
- Number of persons: 9, length of interviews 3 hours.
- All conversations were recorded and filmed (Sony-DSC-W270).

Methods

- Data analysis and transcription in CLAN.
- The program Praat was also used to analyse intonation.
- The transcription conventions follow Jefferson’s (2004) with a few changes.
METHODS
EXAMPLES WITH É

Example 1 - Type-conforming positive response

17  *P:  Você ficou de ligar para ela também?
       You suppose-PAST-3s of to call to her too
       ‘Should you have called her too?’

18  (0.1)

19  *L:  É::
       be-3s
       ‘Yes’
**EXAMPLE 2 – Repair question**

10  *U:  ([Quanto cês pagam]) de média?
    How much you pay-PAST-3P on average
    ‘How much do you pay on average?’

11  *T:  [( ]

12  (.)

13  *T:  Quanto a gente tava pago:do?
    How much the people be-PAST-3S pay-GER
    ‘How much were we paying?’

14  *U:  ↑É o quanto vocês estavam:::
    be-PRES-3S the how much you be-PAST-3P
    ‘↑Yes how much were you:::’
EXAMPLE 3 – Extension with é

*E:  
Tomas, cê não queria perguntar pro Lucas=
Tomas, you no want-PAST-3s to ask to Lucas
‘Tomas, didn’t you want to ask Lucas=’

*E:  
=o negócio lá da ↑Nokia?  
the thing there of Nokia
‘=about that thing about ↑Nokia?’

*T:  
↑Ah é.  
Ah be-PRES-3s
‘Oh yes.’
EXAMPLE 4 - Positive response

*E: Como és que é esse esquema? Eu nunca usei.
   How be-PRES-3s that be-PRES-3s this scheme? I never use-PAST-1s
   ‘How does this work? I’ve never used it.’

(.

*U: Isso ai é uma bolinha. não?
   This there be-PRES-3s a little ball no
   ‘It is like a little ball. isn’t it?’

   But you open-PRES-3s like this? How? To where you open-PRES-3s
   ‘But do you open it like this? How? (. ) Where to do you open it.’

*U: É.
   Be-PRES-3s
   ‘Yes.’

(.

*E: Hâ::
   Hum:::
EXAMPLE 5 – Response to né

*E: Então o governo ↑só direciona recursos pro ensino superior
So the government only direct-PRES-3S resources to education higher
‘So the government ↑only directs resources to higher education’

(*)

*E: Mas a escola básica basicamente tá um:::
But the school basic basically be-PRES-3S a
‘But the elementary school is basically a ::’

*U: Uma merda, né?°
A shit PART
‘It’s shit, isn’t it?’°

*E: É então, eu acho que acho que eles agem=
Be-PRES-3S so I think-PRES-1S that think-PRES-1S that they act-PRES-3S
‘Yeah so, I think that I think that they act=’
*E:  $=[meio\ assim]$  
like this  
‘$\cong$Like’

*T:  $[pode\ falar]\ palavr\~ ao,$  $\mathit{n\acute{e}}?$  $\text{:(\text{\wink})}$  
Can  speak  bad word  PART  
‘We can say bad word, can’t we?’

*U:  $Pode,$  $pode\ falar.$  
Can,  can  speak  
‘Yes, we can.’

*T:  $\text{hahahahaha}$
Example 6 – Verb repetition?

23  *N:  Por que. xingar pro cês é falar palavrão?  
    why to swear for you be-PRES-3S to say bad word?  
    ‘Why. To swear for you is to say bad words?’

24  *A:  È::  
    Yes  
    ‘Yes::’

25  *N:  ↑Ah  
    ah  
    ‘Ah’
EXAMPLE 7 – É + expansion with *mas*

*N: [Nós achamos um:: tipo de financiamento aí]
We find-PAST-1P a kind of loan

*A: [º( )º]

*F: Hum?
‘Hum?’

*N: que paga quanto por mês, San? 1500 coroas.
That pay-PRES-3S how much per month, San? 1500 crowns.
‘That one pays how much per month, San? 1500 crowns?’

(·)

*S: É, *mas [aquele ali]
Be-PRES-3S, but that there
‘Yes, but that one’
*N:                         

[ O início do financiamento  
The beginning of the loan  
[ `At the start of the loan’  

( )

*S:   É.  
Be-PRES-3s  
`Yeah’

(0.1)

*S:   mas aquele ali na verdade (.) você tem que ter ↑mais crédito.  
But that there actually you have to have more credit  
`But that one actually (.) you must have ↑more credit.’
**EXAMPLE 8 – É + expansion with porque**

*F:  *[(        )]*

*N:  *[CÊ  FAZ?]*
     You  do-PRES-3s
     ‘Do you do it?’

*F:  *É,  porff porque  a gente  tem  coisa  ☺  em  REAL hh,  EM  COROA hh,  EM=
     Be-PRES-3s  because  we  have  things  in  Real  in  crowns  in
     ‘Yeah, because we have things in Brazilian real, in Danish crowns, in=’

     =EURO  hh☺.
     Euro
     ‘Euro hh☺.’

*F:  *Tem  tudo  [isso]*
     Have-PRES-3s  all  this
     ‘We have all [this]’

*A:  *[pra pagar]  e  pra  receber,  né?*
     To  pay  and  to  receive  PART
     ‘[To pay] and to be paid, right?’
EXAMPLES WITH SIM

EXAMPLE 9 – Agreement/Confirmation

*P: Uma coisa que ele sempre falava pra mim eu não quero você:: não=
A thing that he always speak-PAST-3s to me I no want-PRE-1s you:: no=
‘One thing he always told me: I don’t want you:: doing=’

*P: fazendo nada aqui você vai ficar deprimida. eu te conheco.
do-GER nothing here you will stay depressed you know-PRES-1s
‘nothing here. you will get depressed. I know you.’

*L: Sim.
Yes
‘Yes.’
EXAMPLES WITH *SIM*

**Example 10** – After verb

*A:  Lilian e Tomas aceitam [↑bolo?]
Lilian and Tomas accept PRES-3s cake
‘Lilian and Tomas, would you like some [↑cake?]’

*U:  [Eu vou [aceitar] sim.
I will accept yes
‘[Yes, I [would].’

*E:  [Eu querer bolo
I want cake
‘[Yes], I want some cake.’

*E:  É
Be-PRES-3s
‘Yeah’
EXAMPLE 11 – *Sim, sim* (agreement, confirmation, emphasis)

*U:  ([*Quanto cês pagam]*)  de média?]
    How much you pay-
    pon average
    ‘How much do you pay on average?’

*T:  [(
      ]
    (.)

*T:  *Quanto a gente tava pago:*do?
    How much the people be-
    s pay-
    ‘How much were we paying?’

*U:  ↑*É o quanto vocês estavam:
    be-
    the how much you be-
    ‘↑Yes how much were you:’
*E:  "Acho que seten::ta coroas?"  
Think- PRES-1s that seventy crowns  
"I think seven::ty crowns?" ((gazing at T))

*T:  Setenta e:::: cin:co coroas cada um  
Seventy and five crowns each one  
'Seventy fi::ve crowns each'

*U:  E aí [(  )]  
And then  
'And then'

*T:  [↑Pra você usar no mínimo né das coisas né=  
For you to use the least PART of things PART  
'[,↑For basic usage='

*U:  =Sim sim  
yes yes  
='Yes yes'
EXAMPLE 12 — É sim (emphatic)

*A: ↑Mas como é que mostra a foːto (.) e eles apontam.
but how be-PRES-3s that show-PRES-3s the picture and they point-PRES-3p
‘↑How come you show a piːture (.) and they point it?’

(0.1)

*N: É mas eu acho que- diz q-mm- eu vi
be-PRES-3s but I think-PRES-3s that say-PRES-3s mm- I see-PAST-1s
‘Yes, but I think that- they say th- mm- I saw’

Eu [li que na-
I read-1s that in the
‘I[read-PAST-1s that in-’

*S [ahː: mas eu acho que não é até [dois anos [nãː:o.
but I think-PRES-3s that no be-PRES-3s up to two years no
[‘Ahː: but I think it is not up to [two years old [no.’

*N: [nãː. [êː sim
no be-PRES-3s yes
‘No. it: is’
EXAMPLE 13 - Emphatic

*A: E assim, se fosse um lugar onde você não tivesse o que fazer.
And like if be-PAST-SUB-3s a place where you no have-PAST-SUB-3s the that do
‘And like if it was a place where: you wouldn’t have what to do.

↓Poxa, mas você ainda vai continuar seu doutorado [entendeu]?
PART, but you still will continue your PhD understand-PAST-3s
‘But you will still continue doing your PhD, you see?’

*L: ↑[Ssi]:m=
↑[Yee]:s=

*L: =sabe, tipo
Know-PRES-3s, like
=‘You know, like’

*P: [(XXX Suécia, né?)]
Sweden, PART
‘[(Sweden, right?)]’

*A: [Você não vai perder nada]
You no will lose anything
[‘You are not gonna lose anything’]
*L: N\ão
   ‘No’

*A: N\ão vai perder [nada]
   No will lose anything
   ‘Not gonna lose [anything]’

*L: [N\ão]
   [‘No’]

*A: Pelo contrário assim você vai ganhar saindo da roça
   On the contrary like you will gain leave-GER of the countryside
   ‘On the contrary like you will win leaving the countryside’

   E indo pra cidade grande.
   And going to city big
   ‘And moving to a big city’

*P: É
   Be-PRES-3s
   ‘Yeah’
CONCLUDING REMARKS

› *Sim* was not found as a positive response to yes/no question in our data.
› *Sim* is used to agree, confirm, and emphasize what was said in the previous turn.
› *É* is used as a positive type-conforming response to yes/no questions.
› Echo system (with no special answer word) does not seem to be the most appropriated response system to characterize Brazilian Portuguese.
REFERENCES


OBRIGADA 😊