

## Bimodal particles – the impact of German on response particles in DGS

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AG 2

Response particle systems vary cross-linguistically regarding the number and discourse functions of the response elements. Some languages have two particles (English *yes*, *no*), others have three (German *ja*, *nein*, *doch*). Traditional accounts of response systems distinguish truth-based and polarity-based systems (Pope 1976, Jones 1999). In truth-based systems, *yes*-type answers confirm the truth of the antecedent proposition (1bi, 2bi); *no*-type answers reject it (1bii, 2bi). In polarity-based systems, response particles signal the polarity of the response clause: positive (*yes*-type 1bi, 2bi) or negative (*no*-type, 1bii, 2bii). Languages may also employ both systems and use *no* to reject the truth of a proposition (1a<sub>ii</sub>) or signal the negative polarity of the response (2b<sub>ii</sub>). Languages with a three-particle system often have a dedicated response particle for rejecting negative propositions (scenario 2bi), although other dedicated particles exist, too (Roelofsen & Farkas 2015).

Concerning the visual-gestural modality, very little is known about the inventory of (non) manual response elements (but see Gonzalez et al. on ASL), including their role in signaling truth vs. polarity. Sign languages are of particular interest here since they have multiple articulatory channels, which may simultaneously encode truth and polarity. The present study provides data from a production experiment with 24 native signers of DGS investigating responses to positive and negative assertions. It shows that DGS favors a truth-based over a polarity-based strategy, as does German, but it also exhibits modality-specific response strategies that combine truth and polarity. Additionally, DGS integrates non-manual gestural components and exhibits interesting bimodal combinations of signs and (German) mouthings.

- (1) a. Anna smokes.  
     b. i. Yes                               (= She does).  
        ii. No                               (= She doesn't)
- (2) a. Anna doesn't smoke.  
     b. i. Yes/?No                       (= She does).  
        ii. ??Yes/No                   (= She doesn't)

**References:** Claus, Meijer, Repp & Krifka (2017). Puzzling response particles: An experimental study on the German answering system. *Semantics & Pragmatics* 10(19). González-Fuente, Tubau, Espinal & Prieto (2015). Is there a universal answering strategy for rejecting negative propositions? Typological evidence on the use of prosody and gesture. *Frontiers in Psychology* 6(899). Gonzalez, Henninger & Davidson (2018). Answering negative questions in American Sign Language. NELS 49 abstract. Goodhue & Wagner (2018). Intonation, yes and no. *Glossa*. Jones (1999). The Welsh answering system. Berlin: de Gruyter. Krifka (2013). Response particles as propositional anaphors. In *Proceedings of the 23rd Semantics and Linguistic Theory Conference*. Pfau (2008). The grammar of headshake. *Linguistics in Amsterdam* 1, 37–74. Pope (1976). Questions and answers in English. The Hague: Mouton. Roelofsen & Farkas (2015). Polarity particle responses as a window onto the interpretation of questions and assertions. *Language* 91, 359–414.