'Ja-nee. No, I'm fine': A note on YES and NO in South Africa

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Abstract
This paper considers some unusual uses of NO and YES observed in South African English (SAE) and other languages spoken in South Africa. Our objective is to highlight the fundamentally speaker-hearer-oriented nature of many of these elements, and to offer a formal perspective on their use. We also aim to highlight the value of pursuing more detailed investigations of these and other perspectival elements employed in SAE and other languages spoken in South Africa.

Keywords: negation, affirmation, speaker-hearer perspective, clause structure, pragmaticalisation

1.   Introduction[1]

Our point of departure in this note is the peculiarity of South African English (SAE) illustrated in (1):

(1)   A: *How are you?*

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[1] This paper had its origins in a lively discussion, in which Johan Oosthuizen also participated, during the first author's 2017 Honours Syntax seminar. We thank the participants in that class and also the audience at SAMWOP 6, held in Stellenbosch (30 November - 3 December 2017) for their comments and questions on a paper with partly similar content, in particular Alex Andrason, Robyn Berghoff, Kate Huddlestone, Bastian Persohn, Johan Oosthuizen, Erin Pretorius, Kristina Riedel, Andrew van der Spuy, Tarald Taraldsen and Jochen Zeller. All usual disclaimers apply.

B: *No, I'm fine.*

For South Africans, this sequence is an entirely unremarkable interaction-initiating conversational routine. For many English speakers elsewhere, though, the *no* in the response constitutes a surprising element, initially leading to concern that all is not well, which is then, however, immediately reversed. Our purpose here is, firstly, to make an initial suggestion as to how SAE's "illogical" routinised greeting may be understood in pragmatic (section 2) and also formal (section 3) terms; secondly, to offer some further supporting evidence in support of this initial proposal (section 4), and, finally, in conclusion, to highlight the potential importance of the resulting perspective for our understanding of SAE and South African colloquial varieties more generally (section 5).

2.   Making sense of SAE *NO* in *No, I'm fine*

No in (1) at first sight does not seem to mean "no": B explicitly states that they are fine, i.e. a positive state of affairs, and A also did not ask a negatively biased question that might call for an initial denial by the addressee of negative speaker-bias of some kind (see discussion of (10) below). In fact, the usual expectation in this instance of phatic communication (Malinowski 1923) is for respondents to offer a stock-positive rather than genuine response: so, for example, just *I'm fine*, even if this is not actually the case. Also relevant is the fact that A's question takes the form of a so-called *constituent* or wh-*question*, i.e. a narrow-focus question that cannot be felicitously answered by either *yes* or *no*. Consider the constituent questions in (2-3) in this connection:[2]

(2)   A: *What are you reading?*
         B: *♯Yes./♯No./Oosthuizen (2012).*

(3)   A: *Why are you late?*
         B: *♯Yes./♯No./I lost track of time, reading Oosthuizen (2012).*

When we are dealing with *wh*-questions - which also include the *how*-question in (1) - neither *yes* nor *no* can actually answer the question posed, raising the question of what the *no* in (1) is doing in the structure to begin with. This, then, is our first question.

Yes and *no* do constitute felicitous answers to so-called *polar* or yes/no-*questions*. And here, *yes* means "yes" and *no* means "no" in SAE, just as it does in other varieties. In (4), for example, these elements provide a positive or negative reply to the initial question (as indicated in parentheses, this "real" *yes/no* can be thought of as an affirmation or negation of the statement corresponding to the original question; we return to this point below):

(4)   A: *Are you going to join us?*
         B: *Yes, we're just locking up the office./No, we have a squib to finish writing.*

Here again, though, SAE speakers can harness *no* in what seem for at least some (see below) non-SAE English speakers to be surprising ways. Consider the following attested examples:[3]

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[2] Here and elsewhere in this article, ♯ signals pragmatic infelicity.
[3] Unless otherwise indicated, the examples cited here were collected by one of the authors, all of whom are native-speakers of South African English. These examples were either recorded during the course of a

(5)   A: *Are you okay?*
        B: *No, I'm fine.*

(6)   [Scenario: *A is concerned that C (='she') may not be able to make it to a special dinner that had been arranged in honour of a close friend of C's. A therefore consults B for her views on the likelihood of C making it to the dinner on time.*]

        A: *Is she going to make it?*
        B: *No, I think she will.*

In both cases, B responds with a *no* that cannot be interpreted as a response to the *yes/no*-questions that was actually asked: in (5), B's response is interpreted as "Yes, I'm okay.", which is also what our British informants indicate that they would say in response to this question.[4] Similarly, the response in (6) is understood as "Yes, I think she will.".

The question that arises, then, is why SAE speakers can seemingly say *no* so readily when they actually don't mean either *yes* or *no* (cases like (1)), and, even more confusingly, when they actually mean "yes" (cases like (5) and (6)).

Our proposal is that the *no* in (1), (5) and (6) is in fact not the regular anaphoric negator that features in answers to *yes/no*-questions (see Holmberg 2016 for recent overview discussion and references). Instead, this *no* is directed at the addressee - A in the above examples: what the speaker - B in each example - intends is "No, don't worry".[5] In other words, the three SAE examples we have been considering are to be interpreted as follows:

(1)   A: *How are you?*
        B: *No, (don't worry:) I'm fine.*

(5)   A: *Are you okay?*
        B: *No, (don't worry:) I'm fine.*

(6)   [Scenario: *A is concerned that C (='she') may not be able to make it to a special dinner that had been arranged in honour of a close friend of C's. A therefore consults B for her views on the likelihood of C making it to the dinner on time.*]

        A: *Is she going to make it?*
        B: *No, (don't worry:) I think she will.*

By contrast, the "real" *no* in (4) can be thought of as marking the speaker's affirmation or negation of the deictically adjusted version of the statement corresponding to the original question:

(4)   A: *Are you going to join us?*
        B: *Yes, we're going to join you: we're just locking up the office.*
               No, we're not going to join you: we have a squib to finish writing.

On this proposal, then, the SAE "illogical" *no* is no more "illogical" than the "extra" negation element in negative concord structures. It is simply a different *no* to that found in the most familiar anaphoric negation contexts: while the anaphoric negator negates a just introduced proposition, the *no* in (1), (5) and (6) negates a just introduced (pragmatic) presupposition.[6] To distinguish the two negators, we will refer to the latter as *propositional no* and the SAE variant under discussion here as *presuppositional no*.

Importantly, our proposal about presuppositional *no* makes a number of empirical and theoretical predictions. We highlight only a few of these here.

Firstly, we predict that SAE speakers will only employ presuppositional *no* in contexts where a hearer-directed "don't worry" or other negative presupposition-cancelling response is warranted, i.e. where it is plausible to assume that the speaker-turned-hearer (A in our examples) initially asked their question out of concern of some kind that the hearer-turned-speaker (B in our examples) wishes to allay - that is, where there is a negative presupposition of some kind in play. Many *yes/no* questions, however, do not spring from concern, and are thus predicted not to give rise to a response of this type. Unbiased, true information-seeking *yes/no* questions, for example, do not do so. As the examples in (7-8) below show, the *yes*es and *no*s in each case have their usual RA interpretation:

(7)   A: *Are you familiar with SPSS?*
        B: *No, I've never used it.*
               ♯*No, (don't worry:) I needed stats for my MA work.*
               Yes, I needed stats for my MA work.

(8)   A: *Do you know why we're here?*
        B: *No, I don't have a clue.*
               ♯*No, (don't worry:) you want to show me your new office.*
               Yes, you want to show me your new office.

Secondly, since the presuppositional *no* is a response to a pragmatic presupposition - a negative perspective that B ascribes to A - we expect it to be possible even in response to

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[6] The sense in which *presupposition* is to be understood here is not the classic semantic sense in terms of which a presupposition is a proposition that is entailed both by a positive clause and by its negation. That is, we are not concerned here with the type of presupposition that is stake when we say that *The King of France is bald* presupposes the existence of a unique King of France, for example. What we have in mind in referring to *presuppositional negation* is, instead, pragmatic in nature, specifically discourse participants' expectations about the discourse context in which linguistic structures are used (cf. i.a. Gazdar 1979, Levinson 1983, Horn 1989, Carston 1998, Sweetser 2006, and Nahajec 2012).

questions where a *yes* or *no* answer - thus, a propositional *yes* or *no* - would not usually be appropriate. *Wh*-questions are a case in point. Consider again (2) and (3) above:

(2)   A: *What are you reading?*
        B: *♯Yes./♯No./Oosthuizen (2012).*

(3)   A: *Why are you late?*
        B: *♯Yes./♯No./I lost track of time, reading Oosthuizen (2012).*

As already indicated, bare *yes/no*-answers are not felicitous responses to *wh*-interrogatives. Strikingly, however, non-bare *no* is possible in circumstances where B assumes A's initial question to have been motivated by a negative consideration of some kind, i.e. where there is a particular pragmatic presupposition in play (see note 6). In a context where A had previously admonished B not to return to the novel they were reading before they'd completed the set reading for a Linguistics assignment, the presuppositional *no*-containing responses in (9) would, for example, be possible:

(9)   A: *What are you reading?*
        B: *No, Oosthuizen (2012).*
                (i.e. No, don't worry: I'm reading the set work, not my novel)
                No, I'm done with the set work, so I'm reading my novel.
                (i.e. No, don't worry ...)

Similarly, if the *wh*-question in (3) comes from a questioner (A) whose tone is accusing or who B has reason to believe may have negative expectations in respect of the cause of B's lateness, the *no*-containing response in (10) below is perfectly acceptable:

(10)   A: *Why are you late?*
        B: *No, I lost track of time, reading Oosthuizen (2012).*
                (i.e. No, it's not what you think/it's nothing bad: I just got so engrossed in my reading of Oosthuizen (2012), which I know/expect/assume you won't see as a bad thing.)

Importantly, the judgement that (9) and (10) are acceptable in the kinds of contexts outlined here seems to be one that is shared by SAE speakers and speakers of other varieties of English. In other words, presuppositional *no* is not unique to SAE (see i.a. Horn 1989, Carston 1998, Givón 2001, Sweetser 2006, and Nahajec 2012 for discussion of this type of negation in English and other languages). What is unique is its routineization in the phatic context in (1), to which we return below. A preliminary, part questionnaire-, part observation-based comparison with English Englishes[7] also suggests that presuppositional *no*-initial responses are more generally less marked in SAE than in English Englishes, i.e. that SAE speakers rather readily employ *no* under circumstances that would not, for English English speakers, constitute a context in which they feel the need to employ a hearer-oriented negative-presupposition canceller. So one of our English English informants, for example, observed in relation to (5) that "I would only say this in contexts where it appeared A was very worried for me, but would otherwise always answer this question with an answer

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[7] *English Englishes* designates the southern and northern Englishes spoken in England, but excludes the English spoken in Northern Ireland, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

beginning with 'Yes', or some other affirmative.", and, in relation to (6), "I would only say this if A appeared particularly shocked or worried, in order to reassure her by saying 'no' - otherwise I would use 'yes' instead". This need for a clear and specific signal that A is concerned in some way is repeatedly highlighted by our informants. For SAE speakers, however, an entirely neutral context, featuring an unbiased *yes/no*-question and involving no overt indication of speaker concern, also seems to suffice.

Our impression, then, is that SAE speakers, more readily than speakers of English Englishes, take **as their point of departure** that their interlocutor requires reassurance that a negative presupposition is not justified. In other words, SAE speakers do this as a matter of convention, without there necessarily being any specific indicator in the discourse of a need for concern; SAE speakers, as it were, have a default "just in case you're worried" point of departure, which English English speakers do not typically have. In this connection, the observation of one our English English informants is particularly interesting. Chloe Allenby (p.c.) notes the individual- or personality-driven rather than dialect- or region-specific phenomenon of politeness-driven *no*-usage where *yes* is in fact intended. The following (constructed) exchanges, based on Allenby's real experiences with a particularly offence-aware, eager-to-please acquaintance, typifies this usage:

(11) a.   A: *Is that your junk in the kitchen?*
            B: *No, I'm tidying it in a minute.*

      b.   A: *Was that you singing at 3am?*
            B: *No, I was really drunk.*

Here, the answer to the *yes/no*-questions posed is clearly *yes* in each case; thus, *Yes, it is my junk* and *Yes, it was me singing at 3am.* Like the SAE *no*, B's *no* is a hearer-directed presuppositional *no*; whereas the SAE cases we have considered above are primarily directed at offering reassurance, however, B's *no*s in (11) have apology/supplication as their primary objective: *No, please don't be annoyed*. The key point for us is, firstly, that (11) illustrates a further hearer- rather than proposition-oriented use of *no*, and, secondly, that this use of *no* is perceived as being typical of speakers with a particular, politeness-driven orientation to their interlocutors. By contrast, the SAE *no* introduced above seems to be typical of speakers generally, and it also seems to be an unmarked, conventionalised usage, reflecting a default "hearer-concern" perspective.

This putative convention - which we hope to pursue in future work - might at first sight seem to be a matter of language **use** (performance) rather than language knowledge or what we usually think of as 'grammar' (competence). What we would like to suggest, however, is that SAE speakers' fondness for presuppositional *no*-containing forms does, in fact, go beyond use, i.e. beyond how frequently they make use of an element that is also, in principle, available to speakers of other varieties. Building on recent generative work that takes seriously the idea that aspects of the discourse context can be "syntacticised",[8] we propose,

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[8] See in particular the work of Martina Wiltschko and colleagues at the University of British Columbia's so-called *eh-lab* (https://syntaxofspeechacts.linguistics.ubc.ca), and also recent work by i.a. Alessandra Giorgi, Liliane Haegeman, Virginia Hill, and Halldór Sigurðsson.

firstly, that SAE's presuppositional *no* has a specific **grammatical** character, which it shares with presuppositional *no* in other varieties (section 3), and, secondly, that the broader *yes/no*-system in SAE is such that we might expect SAE presuppositional *no* to be bleached relative to its counterpart in familiar standard varieties (section 4). That is, our proposal will be that a grammatical system-based consideration underlies the peculiar usage in (1) and (5-6): SAE speakers are able to use *no* as they do owing to the wider lexico-syntactic make-up of their language.

3.   The grammar of SAE *no*: the view from modern generative syntax

Contrary to what is often thought, the proposal that grammar encodes more than just "traditional" grammatical notions like subject and object, tense aspect, and mood is well established in generative work. The idea that speakers are formally encoded in the grammar, for example, goes back to Ross's (1970) so-called *Performative Hypothesis*. In terms of this Hypothesis, every main clause - *S* at the time - is dominated by a speaker-oriented clause - a silent *S*, which, for declaratives, was assumed to covertly express something along the lines of *I state/declare that ...* Although this original proposal faced various difficulties, which led to its falling out of favour during the GB and early minimalist periods, information-structural notions like 'topic' and 'focus' became increasingly important during the 1980s and 1990s. Rizzi's seminal (1997) paper serves as both an excellent demonstration of how much was learned during this period, and, viewed from our current perspective, of what became possible once this clausal articulation was in place (cf. also Berghoff, this volume, for an illustration of the kind of questions that can be posed about topic-focus-related matters in 2017). This millennium, it has become clear that Ross was - as has so often proven to be the case - correct in thinking of speakers and hearers as further elements to be grammatically encoded within the clausal domain (see Heim and Wiltschko 2017 for recent overview discussion and references). The picture that seems to be emerging, therefore, is that the well-established clausal tripartition which is schematised and characterised in (12) and (13) respectively needs to be refined and expanded to include a fourth domain dedicated to the representation of speaker-hearer-related notions, as in (14) (see again Heim and Wiltschko 2017, and, more generally, the work of Wiltschko's *eh-lab* (https://syntaxofspeechacts.linguistics.ubc.ca) for the explicit proposal that speakers and hearers need to be grammatically encoded in a distinct clausal domain:

(12)   [**CP** Discourse domain [**TP** Anchoring domain [**vP** Thematic domain ...

(13)   The clause is a tripartite structure consisting of the following domains:
   a.   an argument-oriented thematic domain at its base, i.e. the first, "basic semantic" level of meaning in Chomsky's (2001: 8; 2004: 10) *duality of semantics*;
   b.   a tense-centred[9] anchoring domain, which relates the predicate, its argument(s) and associated material to some reference point, facilitating the establishment of truth conditions; and
   c.   a topmost domain housing elements which, effectively, allow speakers to do more with language than produce truth-conditionally evaluable declaratives. From this perspective, then, C-related elements share the property of facilitating

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[9] As Ritter and Wiltschko (2009, 2014) show, the tense-centricity of the Anchoring domain appears to be a language-specific rather than universal fact. Thus there appear to be grammars in which a deictic category other than Time - Location or Person, for example - serves as the basis for anchoring.

information-structurally oriented functions, thereby facilitating the second, non-thematic layer of meaning in Chomsky's *duality of semantics*.

(14)   [**SHP** Perspectival domain   [**CP** Information-structural domain   [**TP** Anchoring domain [**vP**   Thematic domain ...

Note that the CP domain in (14) is characterised as the domain of information structure rather than of discourse *tout court*. This is important as there appear to be good grammatical motivations for distinguishing between the actual "packaging"-of-content component of what we usually think of as 'discourse information', on the one hand, and the expression of speaker-hearer perspectives, on the other. It is, for example, clear that a speaker may choose to encode a given XP as, say, a topic, which may require a particular grammatical configuration (e.g. moving the relevant XP to an appropriate CP-internal projection), and that this is distinct from perspectival information that the speaker may additionally wish to encode, again potentially via some grammatical configuration. Much research this millennium has shown that grammars make distinct grammatical options available to encode these two types of discourse meaning (see again the sources cited above); (14) thus reflects the hypothesis that the Discourse domain in fact has a bipartite structure, with a speaker-hearer-related domain at the very top - a clear return to the ideas of Ross (1970).[10]

For our purposes, the key point is that the articulation in (14) allows us to gain a formal insight into the distinction between "regular" propositional *no* and the presuppositional *no* that has been the focus of discussion in section 2. As is by now well known, negation differs from, seemingly, most other syntactically encoded categories in not having a crosslinguistically invariant structural position in the clausal hierarchy (cf. i.a. Zanuttini 1997, Cinque 1999, Poletto 2008, and Biberauer 2017a). Thus neutral sentential negation is located "low" in Germanic (at the edge of vP), in an intermediate position in Romance (within the TP-domain), and "high" in Celtic (within the CP-domain). Additionally, negators may merge at the edge of other XPs to mark non-neutral/focused negation. For example, in English [**DP***Not the data*]*, but the analysis worries me, not* is merged at the edge of the nominal phrase, while in *I wanted that* [**PP** *not on the floor*]*, but in the washing basket*, *not* is merged at the edge of the PP. Anaphoric negators - which we have been referring to as *propositional no* here - are assumed to be merged at the edge of the domain over which they scope, i.e. over the proposition, and thus, taking (14) into account, over either TP or CP. Laka (1994) proposes that this option - which centres on the clausal location of Pol(arity)P - is subject to parametric variation, i.e. that it is another aspect of negative structure that is subject to language-specific considerations. For the purposes of simplicity, we will assume here that propositional *no* is merged above CP.

What about presuppositional *no*, however? On the basis of (14), our expectation would be that this *no* would merge in a different location to propositional *no* as it scopes over a different domain: where propositional *no* scopes over the proposition expressed by the clause,

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[10] As observed in Biberauer (2017b; cf. also Biberauer and Potgieter, this volume), there are indications that speakers and hearers are able to "look in" to the clausal structure at two distinct points: above CP and also above vP. In terms of the basic architecture sketched out here, this suggests a syntactic design in which perspectival domains are located at the edge of phasal domains, which leads us to expect perspectival domains beyond the clause and also at the word-level, a prediction that appears to be borne out (see again Biberauer 2017b for further discussion).

presuppositional *no*, which is, crucially, **hearer**-directed, scopes over the perspectival domain. As such, we propose that presuppositional *no* is consistently merged higher than propositional *no*, at the edge of SHP. This is illustrated in vastly simplified form in (15):[11]

(15) a.   propositional *no*:   [$_{SHP}$ [$_{CP}$ *no* [$_{TP}$ ...

       b.   presuppositional *no*: [$_{SHP}$ *no* [$_{CP}$ [$_{TP}$ ...

The question that we must address next is how the formal proposal outlined in this section impinges on the competence-performance question raised at the end of the previous section. That is, granting the validity of the formal structure presented here, why could we not simply say that SAE speakers make use of the higher-merged presuppositional *no* more frequently, and with fewer concerns about discourse-licensing conditions, than English English speakers? This is the matter to which we now turn.

4.   *Ja-nee,* it's more than just use: some initial conceptual and empirical arguments

Our objective in this section is not to provide an exhaustive argument in favour of the relevance of formal grammatical considerations to our understanding of SAE *no* - and, we will see, related items; instead, it is to offer a first selection of arguments that point to the conclusion that SAE *no* and related phenomena probably deserved systematic investigation by syntacticians of a kind they have not previously enjoyed.

Our first argument against the only-use analysis draws on our understanding of the formal consequences of frequent usage. Unquestionably the most famous example in this domain is Jespersen's Cycle (Jespersen 1917; see van der Auwera 2010, and Willis, Lucas and Breitbarth 2013 for overview discussion). In terms of this cycle, negation in particular undergoes a cyclic grammatical change as a consequence of frequency-of-use considerations (see van Gelderen 2011 for discussion of similar cycles in domains beyond negation). More specifically, frequent use of elements that may initially just have served an emphatic reinforcing function - like, historically, forms like *pas* ("step") in earlier French and *nought* in earlier English - can lead to this reinforcing function being bleached, which may then lead to that element being endowed with grammatical properties that it did not originally have. Thus - simplifying grossly for the purposes of exposition - *pas* and *nought* in earlier French and English were nouns, which were ultimately, as a consequence of a generation of acquirers no longer perceiving their use as emphatic, reanalysed as interpretively bleached elements associated with the expression of negation. In both cases, these elements ultimately evolved into the core sentential negation markers in the languages in question, replacing their earlier *ne*-forms.[12] What we learn from this well-known phenomenon is that frequent use, particularly where it occurs in tandem with a loosening of semantic or other discourse constraints on its use, can have a direct impact on formal representations, i.e. on grammar. Particularly also since section 3 has demonstrated that both propositional and anaphoric *no* are elements associated with particular grammatical domains, this known fact should motivate us to investigate the nature of SAE *no* - and similar phenomena - in more detail.

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[11]As indicated in the main text, propositional and presuppositional *no* are both assumed to be merged at the **edge** of the domains over which they scope, a fact which we cannot represent in the simplified structure given here.

[12] Were *not* and *pas* to lose the ability to independently express emphatic ("strong") negation, another round of reinforcement, potentially leading to the creation of a new sentential negation marker could result, thus producing the cyclic character for which this phenomenon is famous.

Our second argument appeals to the specific contact situation in which SAE is spoken. In particular, we will consider here the fact that SAE has been in longstanding contact with Afrikaans, and also, albeit until the later 1990s in a mostly less intensive way, with a range of Bantu languages (isiXhosa, isiZulu, siSwati, isiNdebele, Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga). Both contacts will be argued to be significant in that they expose SAE speakers to systems in which "high" hearer-oriented YES- and NO-elements[13] play a prominent role. Let us start with Afrikaans, on the grounds that the longer period of intense contact might be expected to produce deeply engrained formal effects.

Afrikaans's contact status is important as it is known to be a language in which an initially hearer-oriented element - *nee* ("no") or *ne* ("right") - became grammaticalised as part of the core sentential negation system (see i.a. Roberge 2000, Biberauer 2009, 2015). (16) schematises the relevant development, another example of the Jespersenian cycle highlighted in the previous paragraph:

(16)   Stage I: *nie(t)*   - the inherited Dutch pattern
          Stage II: *nie(t) ... (nee/ne)*   - the pre-standardisation, reinforced negation pattern,
                                                    with optional *nee/ne > nie*
          Stage III: *nie ... nie*   - the post-standardisation, neutral negation pattern, with
                                                    bipartite negation

Strikingly, the final *nie* may be harnessed outside of clausal contexts, as an optional emphatic reinforcer, i.e. in a Stage II-type function, where it serves to allow speakers to express stronger-than-usual commitment to a negative perspective. (17) illustrates (see Biberauer 2009 for further discussion):[14]

(17)   *Dit was* [***nie*** *vir 'n oomblik **nie***] *die idee dat   jy   moet daar wees nie.*
          it   was not for a moment POL the idea that you must there be   POL
          "It was not ever the idea that you would have to be there."

And final *nie* is not by any means the only speaker-hearer-oriented YES/NO-element in Afrikaans. A salient, but, in the linguistic literature, not much-discussed feature of colloquial Afrikaans in particular is its at first sight counter-intuitive *ja-nee* ("yes-no") form. Consider (18-20):[15]

(18)   a.   ***Ja-nee****, dit klink   soos 'n lekker plan!*
                yes-no that sound like   a good   plan
                "Yes, that really sounds like a good plan!"

          b.   ***Ja-nee****, dan maak ons maar   so.*
                yes no then make us   but.MP so (MP = modal particle)
                "Okay, then we'll just do that (since we don't have better options)."

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c. ***Ja-nee***, *ek het   gedink dit sal   gebeur!*
yes-no   I have thought that shall happen
"Yes, no surprises there: I THOUGHT that would happen!"

d. ***Ja-nee*** *ou maat, die lewe is maar swaar!*
yes-no old pal   the life is but   heavy
"Yes, my old pal, life is just a tough one!"

(19) Speaker A: *Dit lyk   nie asof ons nog reën gaan kry hierdie winter nie.*
it look not as-if us   still rain go   get this   winter POL
"It doesn't look as if we're going to get rain anymore this winter."

Speaker B: ***Ja-nee***. (resignation)
yes-no
"Indeed (sigh)."

(20) ***Ja-nee kyk***, *as ek sy pa was het hy al   lankal   pak gekry!*
yes-no look if I   his dad was had he already long.already hiding got
"*Ja-nee*, if I had been his dad, he'd have got a hiding a long time ago!"

Here we see that *ja-nee* can serve as an enthusiastic marker of agreement with the speaker (18a), a marker of unenthusiastic agreement (18b), a speaker-centric "I-told-you-so" marker (18c), a hearer-oriented empathy marker (18d), a speaker-centred resigned affirmation marker (19), and as part of a simultaneously speaker-coloured and hearer-oriented directive (20). This range of uses, which seems to us to represent only the tip of the iceberg as far as the uses of *ja-nee* is concerned, shares one key feature: all of the uses crucially express a perspectival meaning of some sort. In terms of the structure in (14), then, this evidently non-compositional combination of *ja* and *nee* rather clearly belongs within the perspective domain, SHP.

Importantly, *ja-nee* always seems to signify a qualified "yes" of some kind. As such, it is very different to a YES/NO amalgam found in colloquial German, namely *jein*.[16] Consider (21):

(21) A: *Hast du   schon   den neuen Film gesehen?*
have you already the new   movie seen
"Have you already seen the new movie?"

B: ***Jein***, *ich habe bis jetzt nur   den Trailer gesehen.*
Y-N I   have till now only the   trailer seen
"Yes and no/Sort of, I've only seen the trailer so far."

B': ***Jein***, *er war so langweilig, dass ich eingeschlafen bin.*
Y-N he was so boring   that I in.slept   was
"Yes and no/Sor of, it was so boring that I fell asleep."

---

[16] Thanks to Bastian Persohn for drawing our attention to this form. The examples in (21-22) derive from https://german.stackexchange.com/questions/6948/what-are-the-differences-between-jein-and-naja. Translations in both cases are by the first author.

As the translations show, colloquial German *jein* is a much more transparent lexical item than colloquial Afrikaans *ja-nee*: despite their reduced forms, both component parts contribute their meaning to the amalgam, whereas the Afrikaans form, with its unreduced parts, is, as noted above, not compositional. In fact, the meaning of *ja-nee* is in some respects closer to that of colloquial German *naja*. Compare (22):

(22)   A: *Wie findest du   den neuen Film?*
                how find   you the   new   movie
                "What do you think of the new movie?"

        B: *Naja,   ganz gut.*
                now-yes quite good
                "Yes well, quite good."

        B':   *Naja,   ich habe schon   bessere   gesehen.*
                now-yes I   have already better   seen
                "Yes well, I've seen better ones."

That *ja-nee* should be more similar to *naja* than to *jein* is significant in the context of our discussion of bleaching at the start of this section: *ja-nee* is evidently an interpretively bleached element, consisting of components that do not contribute their independent semantics, while *jein* is not (neither is *naja*, a compositional element which consists of colloquial German's discourse-particle "now" combined with "yes"; the fact that *ja-nee* is interpretively like a discourse-particle-containing form is important, as we will see directly, though.).

Interestingly, *jein* also seems to be propositionally oriented, while *ja-nee* and *naja* are clearly speaker-hearer-oriented; that is, *jein* seems to be structurally lower than *ja-nee* and *naja*, within the domain that we would usually associate with propositional negation and affirmation (cf. (14)). In the context of generative approaches to grammaticalisation which view grammaticalisation as a process of upwards reanalysis (cf. Roberts and Roussou 2003), it is, at first sight, tempting to say that *ja-nee* and *naja* are more grammaticalised elements than *jein*: the YES- and NO-components of these forms can no longer be merged within the CP-domain as they have grammaticalised into elements that need to be first-merged within the higher SHP-domain. Taking into account that these particles have taken on new speaker-hearer meaning, though, one might instead want to appeal to pragmaticalisation (Diewald 2012): Biberauer (2017b) suggests that pragmaticalisation can involve semantic bleaching of a lexical element that, in this bleached - or underspecified - form, then becomes available for merger not only in its original domain(s), but also at the edge of one or more perspectival domains (see note 10). The thinking here is that a semantically bleached element is, in effect, "less fussy" about the domains in which it can be merged, meaning that its merge options become less restricted; underspecified forms seem to be common feature at the edge phasal domains (cf. Biberauer 2017a, and see again note 10). Regardless of the kind of formal analysis one might wish to pursue, however, it is evident that *ja-nee* instantiates a salient YES/NO-containing speaker-hearer-oriented left-peripheral form in colloquial Afrikaans, and that it is a form that has undergone the kind of bleaching that we typically see where lexical items become incorporated into the grammatical system.

Additionally, colloquial Afrikaans also features *ja wat* ("yes what") and *nee wat* ("no what"), which, again, constitute perspectivally marked YES/NO-forms. In both cases, the presence of *wat* signals attenuation. In all of the examples in (18) above, for example, *wat* could replace *nee*, and the result would be diminished speaker commitment and/or enthusiasm. Further, *nee* is completely unmarked in the contexts that initially started our discussion in this paper. Consider the Afrikaans counterparts of (1), and (5-6):

(22) A: *Hoe gaan dit?*   (cf. (1))
          how go   it
          "How are you?"

      B: *Nee, goed.*
          no   good
          "No, fine."

(23) A: *Is jy   okay?*   (cf. (5))
          is you okay
          "Are you okay?"

      B: *Nee, ek's reg.*
          no   I'm right
          "No, I'm fine."

(24) A: *Gaan sy dit maak?*
          go   she it make
          "Is she going to make it?"

      B: *Nee, ek dink sy   gaan.*
          no   I   think she go
          "No, I think she will."

Without detailed diachronic research, we cannot be sure whether Afrikaans *nee* influenced SAE *no* or vice versa; what we can already conclude, based on the facts at our disposal here, though, is that colloquial Afrikaans is a system which features multiple YES/NO-containing lexical items with an unambiguous speaker-hearer orientation. In other words, this appears to be a system in relation to which one can meaningfully refer to a **class** of speaker-hearer-related YES/NO-elements which an acquirer might be expected to identify as such. This is significant against the backdrop of a grammar in which clause structure includes a specially designated perspectival domain, as in (14).

Importantly, *ja-nee* - and likewise *ja*, to which we return below - has been borrowed into SAE. Consider the following:[17]

(25) a.   ***Ja-nee***, *I'm fine, thanks.*
      b.   ***Ja-nee**, that's just annoying!*

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[17] Both of the examples in (25) were recorded by the first author, while the second author collected the examples in (26).

(26) a. ***Ja-no**, I mean I understand where you're coming from, but I think you need to put yourself in his shoes.*
      b. ***Ja-no**, I think she's being completely unreasonable.*

The data in (26) are particularly interesting in light of our observations about the non-compositionality of Afrikaans *ja-nee* above. The fact that the *nee*-component has been independently translated into its English counterpart suggests a more compositional use, in which *no* contributes negative semantics to the resulting structure, and this seems correct: in (26a), the speaker is leading into an alternative perspective (*but I think you need to ...*), and in (26b), *no* seems to serve the presuppositional, hearer-oriented use also observed in the structures that initiated our discussion ((1) and (5-6)), i.e. *No, don't worry, I also think she's being completely unreasonable.* In both cases, then, negative meaning is activated in a way that it does not seem to be in Afrikaans *ja-nee* (see again the discussion surrounding (18-20) above). Similarly, the meaning that *ja* contributes is part discourse-continuative - indicating that the speaker is continuing with the line of discussion/argument articulated in the previous contribution - and part speaker-hearer-oriented, i.e. it also does not contribute the meaning of a "low" YES. *Ja-no*, then, appears to be a compositional element combining a "high" YES and *no* (an element very similar to colloquial German *naja*, thus). This is important as it means that, SAE *ja-no*, despite its superficial similarities to *ja-nee,* exhibits a perspectival profile that distinguishes it from *ja-nee*. And the same may be true for the borrowed *ja-nee* form: empirical investigation is required to establish whether the full range of Afrikaans *ja-nee* uses is also available in SAE. Regardless of the outcome of these investigations, however, it is clear that SAE has, as a result of its contact with Afrikaans, added to its lexical inventory a salient speaker-hearer-oriented YES/NO-form, i.e. a new form associated with SHP.

Afrikaans *ja* has also been independently borrowed into SAE. Again, it is not clear at this point precisely how *ja* and *yes* distribute in SAE grammars, but there are certain indications that more in-depth study of this matter may prove rewarding. To give just one example, *ja* is possible in the English countepart of the *naja*-structures in (22) above:

(27) A: *How did you enjoy the movie?*
      B: ***Ja/??Yes**, it was quite good.*
      B': ***Ja/*Yes**, I've seen better.*

As discussed above, these structures feature a "high" *yes*-element, which suggests that *ja* in SAE may differ from *yes* in being able to realise this higher position. This impression is reinforced by its ready combinability with another Afrikaans-derived hearer-oriented form that is often cited as a characteristic of SAE: quasi-vocative *man*, as in *Ja, man*, *it was quite good* or *Ja, man, I've seen better,* both of which can be addressed to one or more men, women or children. It is known that *yeah* has a range of functions that go beyond that of *yes* - including, tellingly, both discourse-regulation and more generally speaker-hearer-related ones (cf. i.a. Drummond and Hopper 1993), and this also seems to be true for *ja* - a topic well worth investigating in more detail.

Also worthy of closer investigation is the more general fact that modern-day SAE features a strikingly large and varied lexical inventory of *yes*- and *no*-items. isiZulu-derived *yebo* and its emphatic counterpart *YEEEBO!*, and additionally *aweh, yas(s), yip,* and *yeah,* among others, are all cases of the former, while isiXhosa-derived emphatic *(h)aikhona* (literally: *hayi* +

khona = "no+here", or a clear-and-present *no*), and *nei* are two examples of the latter. In some cases, it is immediately clear that we are dealing with "high" *yes/no*-element. Consider, for example, isiZulu *yebo*, which is also a greeting form, as demonstrated in the now-iconic *Yebo gogo!* ("Hello, grandmother!") of South Africa's Vodacom advertisements.[18] Tellingly, *yebo* can combine with *yes*, giving *yebo yes!*, a reinforced version of *yebo*, which therefore calls to mind the Jespersenian cycle depicted in (16). To the extent that SAE speakers - and here it is worth emphasising that there are, in fact, different varieties of SAE (cf. i.a. Mesthrie 2002) - employ a range of YES- and NO-forms alongside one another, we would, in light of the putatively human preference to avoid true synonymy, expect these forms not to have unduly overlapping distributions. Co-occurrence phenomena such as that illustrated by *ja-nee, ja-no, yebo yes, and also (h)aikona no, yes-ja*, and other attested forms that we have not been able to discuss here clearly require the postulation of a formal distinction between the combined items: formally identical items are standardly assumed to "compete" for the same structural position and, as such, they cannot co-occur. Given the structural template in (14), it is clear that there is "space" for (a range of) clearly distinct proposition- and speaker-hearer-oriented YES/NO-forms, and it would seem that SAE acquirers receive significant input explicitly signalling the fact that the contact-influenced system they are acquiring is one in which both types of YES/NO-items occur.

Before concluding, let us consider the second major contact factor mentioned above: the Bantu languages spoken in South Africa. To the best of our knowledge, all of these languages employ what has in the literature been called a *truth-based* or *agree/disagree-based* system of answering negative questions (see Holmberg 2016 for discussion and references). To see what what this means, consider (28), which is adapted from Holmberg (2016: 4):

(28)   A: *Does John not drink coffee?*
        B: *No.*
        B':   *Yes.*

In truth- or agree/disagree-based systems, the answer to this question will be that given by B' above: YES - in other words, *Yes, it is true: John does not drink coffee.*, or *Yes, I agree with you that John does not drink coffee.* As will be clear from the latter answer in particular, this YES is a speaker-hearer-oriented YES*: Yes, I agree with you, the speaker/now my hearer, that John does not drink coffee.* In the context of the clause structure sketched in (14), then, we would expect response particles in truth-based systems to be structurally high, crucially located within the perspectival domain, SHP. As we will see shortly, there seems to be further evidence to support this analytical proposal.

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[18] As pointed out by Andrew van der Spuy, this *yes*-greeting syncretism in isiZulu may well be the source of the *yes*-greeting that seems to have arisen in general colloquial SAE and also colloquial Afrikaans during the past few decades. Consider (i) and (ii) in this connection:

(i)   **Yes!** *Howzit?*

(ii)   **Yes**! *Hoe gaan dit?*
        yes how go   it
        "Yes/Hello! How are you?"

First, though, let us also consider B's answer in (28). NO is the answer that we would expect in standard English and also in standard Afrikaans: *No, John does not drink coffee*. This is the so-called *positive/negative-* or *polarity-based* system because the answer picks up on the polarity (positive or negative) of the original question. Since answers in this system are specifically oriented to the polarity of the proposition, we might expect the response particles in these systems to be located in a position where they scope directly over the proposition, i.e. at the edge of the Discourse domain or CP. In other words, YES and NO in these systems are, by hypothesis, merged in a structurally lower position than the corresponding elements in Bantu languages. (29) gives a highly simplified representation of the proposed formal distinction:[19]

(29) a.   truth-based systems (e.g. Bantu languages):   [SHP YES/NO [CP [TP ...
      b.   polarity-based systems (e.g. English):   [SHP   [CP YES/NO [TP ...

Recalling the discussion in section 3, where we analysed presuppositional *no* as an SHP-associated element which contrasts with CP-associated propositional *no* - cf. (15) - we see that the "regular" YES/NO particles in truth-based systems would seem to be merged in the same domain as the "special" hearer-oriented presuppositional particles in SAE and English more generally (cf. in this connection, our discussion of isiZulu *yebo*, where there is independent motivation for postulating a "high" merge position). As such, we might expect L2 difficulties where native-speakers of Bantu languages - or other truth-based systems - acquire English. That is, we might expect these L2 learners not to pick up on the fact that the "regular" *yes/no* in English is, in fact, a CP-related element and thus not formally identical to the (apparent) translation equivalent in their L1. In this case, the would analyse "regular"/non-presuppositional English *yes* as a (29a)-type SHP-element rather than as the (29b)-type CP-element.

And this expectation is indeed borne out. Thus Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008: 86-89) note that Black South African English (BSAE) speakers respond with the "wrong" response particle when confronted with negative questions. (30) illustrates:

(30) Q: *Isn't he arriving tomorrow*?
      A: *No*. (meaning "Yes, he is arriving tomorrow.")

Here the response is equivalent to *No, it is not true/I don't agree with you that he isn't arriving tomorrow*, i.e. he is arriving tomorrow. As Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008: 87) note, this "wrong" answering pattern also surfaces in other African and Asian L2 Englishes. As the relevant parts of Africa and Asia are dominated by truth-based answering systems (see Holmberg 2016: chapter 4 for discussion), it is tempting to diagnose structural interference from the L1 in all of these cases. In other words, it is tempting to suggest that response particles in the relevant L2 Englishes are located in the higher perspectival zone, rather than in the standard English CP-domain. This then creates a favourable context for the standard English presuppositional *no* - an SHP-element - to conflate with the L2 English *no*, which, like *no* in truth-based systems more generally, always takes the previous speaker as its point of departure.

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[19] The same *caveat* as for the representation in (15) holds here: YES/NO are assumed to be merged at the edge of the domains with which they are associated, but this fact cannot be represented in the simplified structure given here.

In certain varieties of SAE, then - Black varieties - *yes* and *no* may always be structurally higher than their regular standard English counterparts, proposition- or polarity-oriented *yes* and *no*. For speakers of these varieties, "over-use" of *no* in structures like those which kicked off our discussion in this paper is very clearly more than a matter of use; there is, additionally, a specifiable difference at the level of grammatical structure. For L1 SAE speakers, by contrast, it does not seem correct to say that *yes* and *no* have simply become reanalysed as "high" SHP-elements. To the best of our knowledge, these speakers respond to negative *yes-no* questions in the same way as standard English speakers elsewhere, which means that they must be able to merge *yes* and *no* within the CP-domain in these contexts at least: polarity-based answering systems, like standard English, have "low" response particles. Since *yes/no*-questions are high-frequency structures in child-directed input - at least for languages spoken in familiar Western cultures - we might expect this "low" *yes* and *no* to be acquired early. What our discussion in this section has shown, however, is that SAE acquirers will also encounter a diverse range of further YES/NO-elements, which are rather clearly not associated with the CP-domain, but instead with the perspectival SHP-domain. The cue that *yes* and *no* can merge in two different domains is therefore particularly clear in the SAE input. Furthermore, the densely populated nature of the class of perspectival YES/NO-elements might lead one to expect certain interpretive developments, including (i) the development, over time, of non-overlapping uses, and (ii) as a result of the overall frequency with which these elements, *as a class*, are employed, the bleaching of some of the conditions that would ordinarily have held of the use of individual members. This second consideration, we argue, underlies the availability of SAE presuppositional *no* in structures like (1) and (5-6). That is, we propose that SAE's peculiar *no* owes its bleached "concern" requirement - creating the impression that SAE speakers are, almost by default, keen to "reassure" their interlocutor - to the fact that it is part of a class of high-frequency perspectival elements, many of which have, as a result of the frequency with which they are used, undergone bleaching relative to their original meanings and contexts of usage. Of the elements we have been able to discuss here, *ja-nee* and *ja-no*, for example, seem to instantiate this bleaching rather clearly. Our prediction, though, is that this pattern will emerge even more clearly as a general pattern if further perspectival forms, *yes/no*-based and otherwise, are taken into account.

5.   Conclusion

Our discussion began with a single unusual *no*-form employed by SAE speakers. As has hopefully become clear during the course of our discussion, however, SAE and other languages spoken in South Africa have a rich and diverse inventory of YES- and NO-elements, many of which exhibit, both in isolation and in combination, properties that we might not initially associate with affirmation and negation elements. In particular, we observe that YES and NO in languages spoken in South Africa appear to be intimately and, crucially, distinctively associated with discourse and, particularly, perspectival functions of the kind that modern-day generativists associate with particular clausal domains. As such, these elements are already worth detailed study, something that they have not received to date.

Further reason to investigate these elements and their interrelations carefully is that they evidently make a very significant contribution to the natural, idiomatic use of the languages concerned: SAE employed without the elements discussed here, and without the wider inventory of perspectival elements of which they are a part, would lose much of its distinctive character. And the same is true for colloquial Afrikaans and, we suggest, for colloquial

varieties more generally: in such systems, perspectival elements arguably take on greater significance than they do in less fundamentally interaction-oriented systems, leading to the rich speaker-hearer-oriented lexical inventories and (in part, associated) grammatical conventions that we observe in colloquial varieties. Importantly, the elements that serve speaker-hearer-oriented functions are typically drawn from (i) elements already in the system, which undergo reanalysis (pragmaticalisation), or (ii) elements borrowed from other systems with which it is in contact. Because of (ii), contact varieties are predicted to vary considerably in respect of the way in which speakers "do" perspective and hearer-management more generally. This seems correct if we consider the striking differences between contact Englishes in this domain (see i.a. Mesthrie and Bhatt 2008 for discussion and references, and note also that languages appear to vary as to the extent to which they employ just or predominantly the outermost clausal periphery - SHP in (14) - or just or predominantly the inner clausal periphery - see note 10 - or some combination of the two). The cross-varietal variation introduced by (ii), however, necessarily also has consequences for the way in which (i) contributes to the encoding of speaker-hearer-oriented meanings.

Owing to our limited objectives in this paper, we have not been able to go into detail about the precise articulation of the perspectival domain depicted in (14), or of that which we assume to be present at other phase edges (see note 10). The full grammatical significance of the elements and patterns that we have highlighted here, and the very clear sense in which these regularities are truly **grammatical**, must therefore await future research. In the interim, the sceptical reader is, like readers more generally and the recipient of this festschrift in particular, invited to consider the output of Wiltschko's *eh-lab* (see note 8), and to follow up on other studies referenced in this work.

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