

# The distribution of Embedded Polarity Particles in French (mainly)

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## 1 Introduction

- In French, Polarity Particles (PolParts) *oui*, *non*, *si* ‘yes, no’ can be embedded
- PolPart embedding is regulated by semantic principles
- There are two main questions I want to look at in my dissertation
  - what kind of object are PolParts?
  - **what is their distribution?** (today’s concern)
- In (1) *oui* can be embedded under *penser* ‘think’ just like a clause it seems

(1) Est- ce qu’ Alexandre est arrivé ?

is it that Alexandre is arrived

*Has Alexandre arrived ?*

a. Je pense qu’ il est arrivé.

I think that he is arrived

*I think that he’s arrived.*

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b. Je pense que oui.

I think that yes

*I think so (cf. lit. \*I think that yes).*

- But embedding is not this general (2)

(2) a. Je ne pense pas qu’ il est/soit arrivé.

I NEG think NEG that he is/is.subj arrived

*I don’t think that he’s arrived.*

b. \*Je ne pense pas que oui.

I NEG think NEG that yes

*Intended: I don’t think so.*

- PolPart embedding is constrained
- (2) 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)
- Plan
  1. Quick overview of the meaning of non-embedded PolParts
  2. Distribution of PolParts
    - (a) Overview of classes of predicates that allow/disallow PolPart embedding

- (b) Not about the subjunctive/indicative
  - (c) Past-reference as a predictor
3. The importance of polarity
    - (a) Neg polarity as a predictor
    - (b) Strictly local connection between PolParts and their embedding predicates
  4. Taking stock
    - (a) Why negative polarity and past-reference matter?
    - (b) PolParts in other environments
  5. Further evidence that PolPart bring something to their embedding predicate: a brief look at Italian embedded PolParts

## 2 Overview of the meaning of PolParts

- This is a whole interesting problem by itself
- The amount I will say on the structure of PolParts is limited to the amount necessary to move on to their distribution
- French has 3 such particles: *oui*, *non*, and *si*.
- Generally PolParts are odd used on their own, out of the blue, they need an antecedent in the discourse (*see* appendix)

### 2.1 Antecedent is positive: p

- *oui* is used to assert the antecedent p.
- *non* is used to assert the negation of the antecedent p.

(3) As- tu fermé la porte ?

Have you closed the door

*Have you closed the door?*

a. Oui, (je l' ai fermée).

I it have closed

*Yes, I have closed it.*

b. Non, (je ne l' ai pas fermée).

I NEG it have NEG closed

*No, I have not closed it.*

### 2.2 Antecedent is negative: $\neg p$

- *non* (or *oui* (*see* negative neutralization)) is used to assert the antecedent  $\neg p$ .
- *si* is used to assert the negation of the antecedent  $\neg p$ .

(4) Tu n' as pas fermé la porte ?

you NEG have NEG closed the door

*Have you not closed the door?*

a. Non, (je ne l' ai pas fermée).

I NEG it have NEG closed

*No, I have not.*

b. Oui, (je ne l' ai pas fermée).

I NEG it have NEG closed

*Yes, I have not.*

c. Si, (je l' ai fermée).

I it have closed

*Yes, I have closed it.*

### 3 Distribution of PolParts

#### 3.1 Classes of predicates that allow/disallow embedding

- When we look at the class of predicates that PolParts can be embedded under (verbs, adjectives, adverbs), we find (roughly):
  - predicates of speech: *murmurer* ‘mutter’, *chuchoter* ‘whisper’, . . .
  - predicates of thought: *penser* ‘think’, *croire* ‘believe’, *avoir l'impression* ‘have the feeling’ . . .
  - predicates of likelihood: *être possible* ‘be possible’, *être probable* be likely, *peut-être* ‘maybe’, *sans doute* ‘no doubt’, . . .
  - some predicates of preference: *préférer* ‘prefer’, *espérer* ‘hope’, *souhaiter* ‘hope’, . . .
- Predicates can be verbs, adjectives, adverbs or even nouns

#### 3.2 Don't blame it on the subjunctive

- (5) Est -ce que Marie va pouvoir rentrer pour Noël?  
Is it that Marie will can return for Christmas  
*Will Marie be able to come back from Christmas?*
- a. Je ne sais pas mais j' espère que oui.  
I neg know not but I hope that yes.
- b. Je ne sais pas mais je souhaite que oui.  
I neg know not but I wish that yes.
- c. \*Je ne sais pas mais je veux que oui.  
I neg know not but I want that yes.

- We would have expected the two bouletic verbs *souhaiter* and *vouloir* to pattern alike

- They pattern together in that they both select for the subjunctive mood for instance (7,8)<sup>1</sup>

- (7) a. \*Aurélien souhaite qu' Alexandra sait sa poésie.  
A. wishes that A. know.ind her poem  
*Intended: Aurelien wishes for Alexandra to know her poem.*
- b. Aurélien souhaite qu'Alexandra sache sa poésie.
- (8) a. \*Aurélien veut qu' Alexandra sait sa poésie.  
A. wants that A. know.ind her poem  
*Intended: Aurelien wants for Alexandra to know her poem.*
- b. Aurélien veut qu'Alexandra sache sa poésie.
- (9) a. Aurélien espère qu' Alexandra sait sa poésie.  
A. hopes that A. know.ind her poem  
*Aurelien hopes that Alexandra knows her poem.*
- b. \*Aurélien espère qu'Alexandra sache sa poésie.

- There are a few ways in which *espérer* and *souhaiter* pattern together to the exclusion of *vouloir*
- The most interesting one (I'll explain why later) is that both *espérer* and *souhaiter* can select a clause with past reference, while *vouloir* ‘want’ cannot.

#### 3.3 Past reference

- Remember that *espérer* and *souhaiter* can embed PolParts while *vouloir* cannot

<sup>1</sup> Note that *espérer* ‘hope’ can take the subjunctive in certain contexts. Most clearly, when used as an imperative.

- (6) Espérons qu' il vienne demain.  
hope.imp that he come.subj tomorrow  
*Let's hope he comes tomorrow.*

- *espérer* and *souhaiter* can take a clause with past time reference
- *vouloir* may only take a clause with non-past time reference<sup>2</sup>

(11) Context: I had a dinner party at my house last night. Luc was there. He had to catch a plane early in the morning but he left late due to his car not starting. The next morning I have not heard about him and I say:

a. J' espère qu' il a pu rentrer chez lui à temps.  
 I hope that he has can return at his.place on time  
*I hope that he managed to come back home on time.*

b. Je souhaite qu' il ait pu rentrer chez lui à temps.  
 I hope that he have.subj can return at his.place on time  
 time

*I wish that he managed to come back home on time.*

c. \*Je veux qu' il ait pu rentrer chez lui à temps.  
 I want that he have.subj can return at his.place on time  
*Intended: I wanted that he managed to come back home on time.*

- There seems to be a correlation between the ability to embed a PolPart and the ability to allow past time reference in the complement
- Let's *assume* a causal relation for a moment:
  - We would then predict that whatever operation allows the complement to have past time reference (w.r.t to the reference time of the embedding predicate) allows PolPart embedding

<sup>2</sup>Actually people speak of future reference (rather than non-past) but it seems to me that non-past is more accurate (at least for French) in light of examples like (10)

(10) Je suis doctorant parce que je le veux.  
 I am gradstudent because that I it want  
*I'm a grad student because I want it.*

- This is what we observe with two operations that make *vouloir* accept a complement with past time reference
  - \* the conditional mood
  - \* shift to reportative

### 3.3.1 Effect of the conditional on *vouloir* 'want'

- We've seen that *vouloir* 'want' can't embed PolPart's or a clause with past reference.
- The conditional makes those possible.

(12) Context: I had a dinner party at my house last night. Luc was there. He had to catch a plane early in the morning but he left late due to his car not starting. The next morning I have not heard about him and I say:

a. Je ne sais pas si Marie va venir nous aider mais je  
 I neg know neg if M. goes come us help but I  
 voudrais vraiment que oui.  
 want.cond really that yes

*I don't know whether Marie will come to help us but I'd really like it if she did.*

b. \*Je ne sais pas si Marie va venir nous aider mais je veux  
 I neg know neg if M. goes come us help but I want  
 vraiment que oui.  
 really that yes

*I don't know whether Marie will come to help us but I really want her to.*

(13) Same context as in (12)

a. Je voudrais qu' il ait pu rentrer chez lui à  
I want.cond that he have.subj can return at his.place on  
temps.  
time

*I wish he had managed to come back home on time.*

b. \*Je veux qu' il ait pu rentrer chez lui à temps.  
I want that he have.subj can return at his.place on time

*Intended: I wanted that he managed to come back home on time.*

### 3.3.2 *vouloir*: from bouletic to epistemic modal

- The verb *vouloir* in its usual bouletic use cannot embed a PolPart.

(14) a. Tom ne va pas venir mais Marie veut qu' il vienne  
T. neg goes neg come but M. wants that he wants  
pourtant.  
though

*Tom will not come but Marie wants him to come though.*

b. \*Tom ne va pas venir mais Marie veut que si pourtant.  
T. neg goes neg come but M. wants that yes though

*Intended: Tom will not come but Marie wants him to come though.*

- This verb has another use, a reportative one. In this use, it can embed a PolPart.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>In German, *wollen* 'want' is also ambiguous between bouletic and reportative, albeit not with the same conditioning.

(15) Anna will in Paris sein. Schenner2009  
Anna want in Paris be  
*Anna wants to be in Paris*  
*Anna claims to be in Paris.*

- The reportative use of *vouloir* is only available when the subject is from the list in (16).

(16) la logique 'logic'  
la théorie 'theory'  
la raison 'reason'  
la rumeur 'rumor'  
le paradoxe 'paradox'  
le principe 'principle'  
la croyance populaire 'popular belief'  
la coutume 'custom/tradition'  
la légende 'legend'  
le sens commun 'common sense'  
la législation française 'French legislation'  
leur philosophie 'their philosophy'  
la règle générale 'the general rule'  
la réalité de notre société 'the reality of our society'  
la politesse 'politeness'  
...

- In reply to the question "Faut-il vouvoyer ses beaux parents ?" (17), you can say (17a) or (17b).

(17) Faut -il vouvoyer ses beaux parents ?  
must one say\_vous\_to one's parents\_in\_law  
*Must one say "vous" to one's parents-in-law ?*

- a. La tradition veut que oui.  
The tradition wants that yes
- b. La politesse veut que oui.  
The politeness wants that yes

It is possible that *vouloir/wollen* can indeed be used as both a bouletic verb and a reportative evidential in French and German, but the conditions on the use of the reportative use differ.

- The sentences in (17) could be paraphrased roughly as in (18).

- (18) a. According to tradition, one must say "vous" to their parents-in-law.
- b. According to the rules of politeness, one must say "vous" to their parents-in-law.

- Also, if *vouloir* is used with its reportative value, past reference is possible ((19) and notice the indicative in b!).

- (19) a. La tradition veut que saint Patrick se soit servi de la  
the tradition wants that saint Patrick refl.be.subj used of the  
feuille de trèfle pour illustrer le mystère de la Trinité.  
leave of shamrock to illustrate the mystery of the Trinity  
*Tradition has it that Saint Patrick used a shamrock to illustrate the mystery of the Trinity.*

- b. La Légende veut que des soldats romains retiraient  
the legend wants that some soldiers roman removed.ind  
les roues de leur chariot afin d' en faire des  
the wheels of their chariot to of.them make some  
divertissements pendant des campagnes [...]  
games during some campaigns  
*Legend has it that Roman soldiers would remove the wheels from their chariot in order to use them as toys during military campaigns [...]*

The switch from bouletic to reportative as well as the concomitant switch from the impossibility to the possibility to embed PolParts is correlated with the possibility to select for a complement clause with past reference

### 3.3.3 Ambiguous verbs: the case of the directives

- There are verbs (20) which alternate between directive and reportative
- This correlates with whether they can embed a PolPart

- (20) suggérer 'suggest'  
faire signe 'beckon'  
indiquer 'indiquer'  
signaler 'signal'  
signifier 'signal'  
aviser 'warn/advise'<sup>4</sup>  
dire 'say'  
décréter 'decree'

- (22) Directive use of *suggérer*  
Yesterday I saw Martin. He said something I did not like, I got angry and he advised that I run to calm down.

- a. Martin a suggéré que je fasse trois tours de stade  
Martin has suggested that I do.subj three rounds of stadium  
pour me calmer.  
to myself calm

*Martin told me to run around the stadium three times to calm down.*

<sup>4</sup> More examples found on Google:

- (20) a. Il doit notifier au ministre les dates de départ et de retour; il doit aussi l'aviser de ce qu'un congé accordé n'a pas été utilisé.
- b. Elle lui dit les attentions du comte Franz, ses présents de galanterie, comment elle l'avait traité pour mieux l'enflammer, et que, découragé un moment, il venait de se repiquer, et hasardait de nouveau des bouquets. Arcangeli daignait parfois secouer la tête et approuver; puis, le récit terminé, il avisa Emilia de le laisser conduire l'intrigue.

b. Martin m' a suggéré de faire trois tours de stade  
 Martin to.me has suggested to do three rounds of stadium  
 pour me calmer.  
 to myself calm

*Martin told me to run around the stadium three times to calm down.*

(23) Reportative use of *suggérer*

Yesterday I saw Martin. We got to talking. His remarks led me to believe that he thinks the reason I run is to calm down.

a. Martin a suggéré que je fais trois tours de stade pour  
 Martin has suggested that I do.ind three rounds of stadium to  
 me calmer.  
 myself calm

*Martin suggested that I run three times around the stadium in order to calm down (i.e. Martin suggested that the reason I run three times around the stadium is to calm down).*

b. #Martin m'a suggéré de faire trois tours de stade pour me calmer.

- Interestingly, PP embedding is only possible under *suggérer* in its non-directive use.

(24) a. #Je ne sais pas s' il court bien tous les jours mais j' ai  
 I neg know neg if he runs VF all the days but I have  
 suggéré que oui en tout cas.  
 suggested that yes in any case

*Intended: I don't know whether he does run every day but I suggested that he do in any case.*

b. #Je ne sais pas s'il court bien tous les jours mais je lui ai suggéré que oui en tout cas.

(25) a. Je ne sais pas s' il court pour se calmer mais son  
 I neg know neg if he runs to self calm but his  
 nouveau comportement suggère que oui.  
 new behavior suggests that yes

*I don't know if he runs in order to calm down but his new behavior suggests so/that it's the case.*

b. Je ne sais pas s'il court pour se calmer mais son nouveau comportement me suggère que oui.

- We have seen that PolParts cannot be embedded under predicates that denote 'an order' (not simply non-bouletic Vs bouletic modality)
  - ✓ *espérer* 'hope', *souhaiter* 'wish', *voudrait* 'would want'
  - ✗ *vouloir* 'want', *suggest* 'suggest'
- Some of these predicates can, under certain conditions, shift to a reportative interpretation
- When they do, 2 things become possible
  1. PolParts can be embedded
  2. The complement clause can have past reference
- This shows that there is a link between the semantics of the embedding predicate and the possibility to have a PolPart
- I'm going to show that this link is strictly local
- We will see evidence that suggests that embedding PolParts does something to the directly embedding predicate

## 4 On negative polarity and PolPart antilicensing

### 4.1 The effect of negative polarity

- Negating an otherwise positive embedding predicate makes PolPart embedding unacceptable

(26) a. J' ignore si Tom va venir mais il est probable que  
I not.know whether Tom goes come but it is probable that  
oui.  
yes

*I don't know whether Tom will come but it's probable that he will.*

b. \*J' ignore si Tom va venir mais il n' est pas  
I not.know whether Tom goes come but it neg is neg  
probable que oui.  
probable that yes

*Int. I don't know whether Tom will come but it's not probable that he will.*

- Note that PolPart embedding really is sensitive to negative polarity and not another notion like monotonicity

(27) J' ignore si Tom va venir mais il est peu probable que  
I not.know whether Tom goes come but it is little probable that  
oui.  
yes

*I don't know whether Tom will come but it's probable that he will.*

- It is not the case that PolPart embedding is sensitive to the mere presence of negation *pas* or *im-*. Rather, negative polarity is calculated at the level of the constituent (more on this later)

– negative polarity without overt negation<sup>5</sup>

(29) Has he finally confessed that he killed Mrs Jones?

a. \*Il nie toujours que oui.  
he denies still that yes

*Int. He still denies it.*

b. \*Il conteste toujours que oui.  
he contests still that yes

*Int. He still contests it.*

– overt negation does not lead to negative polarity

\* flip-flop

(30) Is Tom really the best pianist in the world?

a. Il est possible que oui.  
It is possible that yes

*It's possible.*

b. \*Il est impossible que oui.  
It is impossible that yes

*Int. It's impossible.*

c. \*Il n' est pas possible que oui.  
It neg is neg possible that yes

*Int. It's not possible.*

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

*It's not impossible.*

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(28) a. \*J'ai oublié si/que oui.

b. \*Il est bizarre que oui.



\* overt negation + negative verb

(31) Are you tired?

a. Je ne te cache pas que oui.

I neg to.you hide neg that yes

*I won't conceal that I am.*

b. \*Je te cache que oui.

· *catcher X à Y = not tell Y about X*

• One predicate seems not to be positive or negative

(32) Will Tom be valedictorian?

a. Je doute que oui.

I doubt that yes

*I doubt it.*

b. Je ne doute pas que oui.

I neg doubt neg that yes

*I don't doubt that he will.*

- This verb is strange in another respect: it seems to only embed *oui*

## 4.2 The effect of negative polarity on reportative *vouloir*

• Negating *vouloir* renders its reportative reading unavailability<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>The same occurs in German it seems

(33) a. Peter will die Zeitung von heute gelesen haben.

Peter wants the newspaper of today read have

*Peter wants today's newspaper to be read.*

*Peter claims to have read today's newspaper.*

b. Peter will die Zeitung nicht gelesen haben.

Peter want the newspaper not read have

*Peter does not want today's newspaper to be read.*

~~*Peter claims to have read today's newspaper.*~~

(34) a. La Légende veut que des soldats romains retirai-

the legend wants that some soldiers roman removed.ind

les roues de leur chariot afin d' en faire des

the wheels of their chariot to of.them make some

divertissements pendant des campagnes [...]

games during some campaigns

*Legend has it that Roman soldiers would remove the wheels*

*from their chariot in order to use them as toys during military*

*campaigns [...]*

b. #a La Légende ne veut pas que des soldats romains

the legend neg wants neg that some soldiers roman

retirai-ent les roues de leur chariot afin d' en faire

removed.ind the wheels of their chariot to of.them make

des divertissements pendant des campagnes [...]

some games during some campaigns

*Intended: It is not the case that legend has it that Roman sol-*

*diers would remove the wheels from their chariot in order to*

*use them as toys during military campaigns [...]*

## 4.3 Domain of evaluation of negative polarity

• Is reportative *vouloir* possible below extra-clausal negation? Yes.

(35) a. Je pense /Il me semble que la logique veut que nous

I think /it to.me seems that the logic wants that we

consultions les États concernés.

consult.subj the states concerned

*I think / It seems to me that logic dictates we consult the con-*

*cerned States.*

c. Peter will nicht die Zeitung von heute gelesen haben.

Peter wants no the newspaper of today read have

*Peter wants today's newspaper not to be read.*

*Peter claims not to have read today's newspaper.*

- b. Je ne pense pas/Il ne me semble pas que la logique veuille que nous consultions les États concernés.

- (36) Il ne me semble pas que la Légende veut que des soldats romains retirent les roues de leur chariot afin d' en faire des divertissements pendant des campagnes [...]
- it neg to.me seems neg that the legend wants that some soldiers roman removed.and the wheels of their chariot to of.them make some games during some campaigns

*It does not seem to me that legend has it that Roman soldiers would remove the wheels from their chariot in order to use them as toys during military campaigns [...]*

- This kind of domain sensitivity whereby a phenomenon (PP embedding, availability of reading) is dependent on the absence of negation in the domain immediately above the PP finds support from the following data point

- (37) a. \*Je ne sais pas si le nouveau gouvernement va augmenter le SMIC mais les ouvriers veulent que oui.
- I neg know neg if the new government goes increase the minimum.wages but the workers want that yes

*I don't know whether the new government will increase minimum wages but workers want them to.*

- b. Je ne sais pas si le nouveau gouvernement va augmenter le SMIC mais les ouvriers croient que oui.
- I neg know neg if the new government goes increase the minimum.wages but the workers believe that yes

*I don't know whether the new government will increase minimum wages but workers believe they will.*

- c. Je ne sais pas si le nouveau gouvernement va augmenter le SMIC mais les ouvriers veulent croire que oui.
- I neg know neg if the new government goes increase the minimum.wages but the workers want believe that yes

*I don't know whether the new government will increase minimum wages but workers want to believe they will.*

- d. \*Je ne sais pas si le nouveau gouvernement va augmenter le SMIC mais les ouvriers croient vouloir que oui.
- I neg know neg if the new government goes increase the minimum.wages but the workers believe want that yes

*Targeted: I don't know whether the new government will increase minimum wages but workers believe they want to.*

Extracausal negation can appear on a predicate embedding *oui* as long as it is not the immediately-embedding predicate

## 5 PolParts in other environments

### 5.1 PolParts can be complements to nouns denoting beliefs

- (38)• Context: I say 'I don't know if the new government will be good for higher education ...'

- a. L' opinion publique/ des étudiants est que oui.
- the opinion public of students is that yes

*The public's/students' opinion is that it will be.*

- b. La croyance populaire est que oui.
- the belief of.the.people is that yes

*The popular belief is that it will be.*

c. Le fait est que oui.  
 the belief of.the.people is that  
*The popular belief is that it will be.*

d. \*Son ambition est que oui.  
 his ambition is that yes.

- Polarity particles can be complements to nouns that denote a belief

(39) Does bathing bring diseases?

a. L' opinion que oui est encore prévalente.  
 the opinion that yes is still prevalent  
*Intended: (lit.) The opinion that yes is still prevalent.*

b. L' opinion que se laver est vecteur de maladie est encore prévalente.

c. La croyance que oui est encore très répandue.  
 the belief that yes is still very widespread  
*Intended: (lit.) The belief that yes is still very widespread.*

d. La croyance que se laver est vecteur de maladie est encore prévalente.

e. L' idée que oui est encore très répandue.  
 the idea that yes is still very widespread  
*This idea is still very widespread.*

(40) Must the two towns merge?

L' avis que oui n'est pas populaire.  
 the opinion that yes neg is neg

*Intended: (lit.) The opinion that yes is not popular.*

## 5.2 In conditionals

- Polarity particles in French can be embedded under the complementizer *si* as the indicative conditional construction shows in (41).

(41) Est -ce que Tom va venir ?

Is it that Tom goes come

*Is Tom going to come?*

a. Si oui, dis lui d' apporter du vin.  
 if yes tell him to bring some wine

*If so, tell him to bring wine.*

b. Si non, fais -moi penser à lui donner de nos restes.  
 if no make me think to him give of our leftovers

*If not, remind me to give him some of our leftovers.*

- As (42) shows, polarity particles cannot be embedded under any *si*. For instance, they cannot be embedded under counterfactual *si*.

(42) Est -ce que Tom est venu ?

Is it that Tom is come

*Has Tom come?*

a. ?Si oui, il n' aurait pas été le bienvenu.  
 if yes he NEG would.have NEG been the welcomed

*If he had, he would not have been welcomed.*

b. S' il était venu, il n' aurait pas été le bienvenu.  
 if he was come he NEG would.have NEG been the welcomed

*If he had come, he would not have been welcomed.*

- Before exploring further what it is that makes embedding polarity particles possible or not, I review Krifka's analysis of English and German polarity particles.

### 5.3 In result clauses

- (43) a. Tu prends des notes ? (Google)  
you take some notes  
*Are you taking notes?*
- b. Je m'ennuie tellement que oui.  
I 1sg.REFL am\_bored so\_much that yes  
*I'm so bored that (yes) I am.*
- (44) a. Cap de faire 2 j'aime aux 2 premiers qui aiment ?(Google)  
able to do 2 I\_like to.the 2 first who like  
*Capable to do 2 "I like" to the first 2 who like?*
- b. Je m'ennuie tellement que oui et à tout le monde !  
I 1sg.REFL am\_bored so\_much that yes and to all the people  
*I'm so bored that (yes) I am, and to everyone.*
- (45) a. Alors vous avez bronzé ?  
si you have tanned  
*So you got tanned?*
- b. Y'avait si peu de soleil que non.  
there was so little of sun that no  
*There was so little sun that I didn't.*

## 6 On Italian embedded PolParts

- Italian PolParts are *sì* 'yes' and *no* 'no'
- Italian has two complementizers: *che* with finite clauses and *di* with non-finite clauses

- (46) Verrai alla festa stasera?  
come.fut.2sg to.the party tonight  
*Will you come to the party tonight?*

- a. Credo che verrò.  
think.1sg that come.fut.1sg

*I think I'll come.*

- b. Credo di venire.  
think.1sg that come.inf

*I think so.*

- PolParts can only be embedded using the complementizer *di*

- (47) a. Credo di sì.  
think.1sg that yes

*I think so.*

- b. \*Credo che sì.  
think.1sg that yes

*Int: I think so.*

- Many verbs show this alternation between *di* and *che*
- One hypothesis is that infinitival-introducing *di* and PolPart-introducing *di* are one and the same
- This would predict the following implications
  - Entailment 1: if a verb can embed a PolPart in Italian, this verb can take a *di*+infinitival complement
  - Entailment 2: if a verb can take a *di*+infinitival complement, this verb can embed a polarity particle (?)
- Entailment 1 does not hold: some verbs can embed PolParts while they cannot take a *di*+INF complement e.g. *preferire* 'prefer'

(48) a. Luca preferisce che Lorenzo rimanga a casa.  
 Luca prefers that Lorenzo stay.subj.3sg at home

*Luca prefers for Lorenzo to stay at home.*

b. Luca preferisce di sì / no.

c. \*Luca preferisce di rimanere a casa.

d. Luca preferisce rimanere a casa.

• Entailment 2 does not hold (?):

(49) Verrai alla festa stasera ?

a. Cerco di venire.

b. \*Cerco che verrò.

c. \*Cerco di sì.

• The fact that *preferire* does not take *di* when it is followed by an infinitival clause but takes it when it embeds *si* is an indication that

1. the *di* that introduces the infinitival clause and the *di* that introduces PolParts are not the same

2. *si* (or one of the possible sub-components that *si* spells out) selects for *di*

• *preferire* and *volere.cond* are two examples where *di* is licensed by the use of a PP only

(50) a. Vorrei andare alla festa.  
 want.cond.1sg go to.the party

*I'd like to go to the party.*

b. \*Vorrei di andare a la festa.

c. Non so se Luca verrà ma vorrei di sì.  
 NEG know if Luca come.fut.3sg but want.cond.1sg DI yes

*I don't know whether Luca will come but I'd like him to.*

• Further evidence for this view comes from sentences of the form 'PolPart p'

• In French, it is possible to have both the PolPart and the sentence it denotes (modulo the right discourse conditions)

(51) a. Marie ne va pas venir ?  
 Marie neg goes neg come

*Marie is not coming ?*

b. Si elle va venir.

si she goes come

*She WILL come.*

c. Je pense que si elle va venir.

I think that si she goes come

*I think that she WILL come.*

• The same is possible in Italian, although the structure is interestingly different (52b)

(52) a. Lorenzo pensa che Ilaria venga.  
 Lorenzo thinks that Ilaria come.subj

*Lorenzo thinks that Ilaria will come.*

b. Lorenzo pensa di sì, che venga.

c. \*Lorenzo pensa di sì venga.

d. \*Lorenzo pensa che sì venga.

e. \*Lorenzo pensa di sì venire.

f. Lorenzo pensa che . . . sì venga.

• Finally, another argument that both *di* are not identical from ? is that while *di*+infinitival is contingent on the embedded subject being controlled by the matrix subject, *di*+PolPart is not.

(53) Gianni viene alla festa di Natale ?

- a. \*Pensi di Gianni venire.
- b. Penso che Gianni venga.
- c. Penso di sì.

- In Italian, 'PolPart p' constructions, each component comes with its complementizer

PolPart contribute more than the propositional content they are anaphoric to

## 7 Conclusion

- We have seen that PolPart embedding is sensitive to semantic operations
- We have also seen that there is a tight connection between PolParts and the directly embedding predicate
- One idea is that predicates which can embed PolPart's are somehow used in a way similar to evidentials
- Evidentials can typically not be negated (Aikhenvald 2004)
- PolParts cannot be embedded under negative predicate because negative predicate  $\neq$  evidential

## 8 Appendix

### 8.1 Use of PolParts

Polarity particles used on their own have mainly 3 uses, which I illustrate below with the particle *non*.

- *oui* can be used in a reply to a question

(54) a. Tu viens demain ?

You come tomorrow

*Are you coming tomorrow?*

b. Non (je ne viens pas).

I NEG come NEG

*No, I'm not coming.*

- *non* can be used as a comment on an assertion. The assertion and the comment can be done by two different speakers, or by the same speaker.

(55) a. Christine va venir au pique-nique.

Christine goes come to.the picnic

*Christine is coming to the picnic.*

b. Non, il est encore trop tôt pour qu'elle sorte.

it is still too soon for that she

*No, it's still too soon for her to leave the house.*

### 8.2 Types of embedding predicates

**Verbs** Polarity particles cannot be embedded under all verbs. In (56), the polar particle *oui* can be embedded under *penser* 'think'.

(56) a. Tom va venir aujourd'hui ?

Tom goes come today

*Tom will come today?*

b. Oui.

c. Je pense qu' il va venir.

I think that he goes come

*I think he will come.*

d. Je pense que oui.

I think that yes

*I think he will.*

**Adjectives** Some adjectives can embed too.

(57) Will BS win the election?

- a. Il est probable que oui.  
it is probable that yes  
*It is probable.*
- b. Il est possible que oui.  
it is possible that yes  
*It is possible.*
- c. Il est souhaitable que oui.  
it is wishable that yes  
*It is desirable.*
- d. Il est préférable que oui.  
it is preferable that yes  
*It is preferable.*

**Adverbs** Epistemic adverbs allow polarity particle embedding too(59)<sup>7</sup>.

(59) Has Aurélien arrived?

- a. Sans doute. 'Without doubt.'
- b. Sans doute que oui.
- c. Peut-être. 'Maybe.'

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<sup>7</sup>Some epistemic adverbials cannot embed polarity particles (58). Note though that they also cannot embed full clauses.

(58) Has Aurélien arrived?

- a. De toute évidence.
- b. \*De toute évidence que oui.
- c. \*De toute évidence qu'il est arrivé.
- d. Sans aucun doute.
- e. \*Sans aucun doute que oui.
- f. \*Sans aucun doute qu'il est arrivé.

- d. Peut-être que oui.
- e. Bien sûr. 'Of course.'
- f. Bien sûr que oui.
- g. Evidemment. 'Obviously.'
- h. Evidemment que oui.