This paper analyzes the distribution and interpretation of polarity particles in Spanish (sí, no, and the colloquial sí no) in response to yes-no questions and assertions with the goal of determining their function and distribution as a response.

1A: Y ¿ibas tú solo?
And GO-past perf 2p PRN 2p sing. Genitive alone?

“And did you go alone?

1B: No, iba con mi hermana
No, GO-past perf 1p sing. with PRN 1p Genitive sister

“No, I went with my sister.”

2A. No la critico en absoluto
No PRN 3p sing. Direct object CRITICIZE – 1p Genitive absolutely sing

“I’m not criticizing her entirely…”

2B. Sí no pero
Yeah no but

“Yeah, no, but…”

Using the Corpus de conversación coloquial from the University of Valencia, Spain, polarity particles in response to assertions, statements, and questions are analyzed using frameworks of given and new information (Prince, 1981), common ground (Lewis, 1969), and agreement in polarity (Farkas, 2011). Farkas has shown that there is cross-linguistic difference between the distribution of polarity particles in English and Romanian. Through her research, she has demonstrated that English and Romanian differ in their distribution of particles for reversing polarity. Using her research as framework, this current project will add to the admittedly small amount of current literature on the topic, which shows a systematic situational variance of these particles and cross-linguistic differences in their usage.

Bibliography


Farkas, Donka F. "Polarity particles in English and Romanian." Romance Linguistics 2010: Selected papers from the 40th Linguistic Symposium on Romance Linguistics (LSRL). 2011.