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## How *believing so* is different from *believing it*

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This study focuses on the English propositional anaphor *so*, in comparison to *it*; see 1. Native speakers report that in embedded responses to questions, such as 1, using *so* is better than using *it*. Needham's (2012) corpus study shows that antecedents of *so* mostly are questions. Furthermore, the distribution of *so* is quite restricted: it cannot occur with verbs such as *regret* or *resent*. Therefore, it has been suggested that *so* only occurs with non-factives (Kiparsky & Kiparsky 1971); that *so* does not presuppose that the referent is true (Cornish 1992); or that *so* refers to the question under discussion, to which the speaker is not committed (Needham 2012). However, Bhatt's (2010) finding, that *so* can occur with *know* in certain contexts, e.g. in 2, is problematic for these theories.

I argue that *so* presupposes that its referent is still under discussion and thus is not part of the common ground (CG), at the time of the occurrence of the eventuality of the predicate that *so* combines with. For *it*, I follow Moulton (2015) in assuming that it refers to salient propositional content, without speculating on whether the associated proposition is part of the CG or not. This explains the context-sensitive distribution of *so*, as well as the finding that *so* more is often used in response to questions. Following Farkas & Bruce (2009:24), I assume that propositions denoting polar questions are not part of the CG until the 'asker' (implicitly) signals agreement with the answer, whereas affirmation of an assertion can happen 'unsignalled'. Reference to asserted propositions by *so* is thus only possible in restricted environments; for example in rejecting responses such as *I don't believe so* or if the assertion was not confirmed yet by other speakers (e.g. 2).

1. A: Is John coming tonight?    B: I believe {*so* | ? *it*}.
2. It will rain tomorrow. I know *so*, because I checked the weather report.

**References:** • Cornish, F. (1992): *So Be It: The Discourse-Semantic Roles of So and It*. *JoS*. • Farkas, D. F. & K. B. Bruce (2009): On reacting to assertions and polar questions. *JoS*. • Moulton (2015): *CPs: Copies and Compositionality*. *LI*. • Needham, S. M. (2012): *Propositional anaphora in English*. PhD thesis, Carleton University Ottawa.