Ktunaxa (isolate, BC) uses a variety of polar response particles (PRPs), notably *hiyi* and *waha*, that are frequently translated as 'yes' and 'no' respectively (Kootenai Culture Committee, 1999) and similarly appear in response to polar questions. Both of the responses in (2) are felicitous answers to the question in (1). This is consistent with descriptions of PRPs which identify particles as affirming or rejecting a proposition.

(1) 兑ə́ł ə’inam .Msg party-obv
    is Mary going to the party?

(2) a.  *hiyi*, 兑ə́ł ə’inaxi.
    Yes, she is.

   b. *waha*, 兑ə́ł ka-ə’inaxi
    No, she isn’t.

This situation is preserved under negation, so that PRPs in Ktunaxa continue to target the proposition. The question in (3) is identical to that in (1) except for the names and negation. The possible direct answers also target the propositional content of the question, namely that John is not going to the party, which is clear in (4a, c). Answers that use PRPs to contradict the propositional content are grammatical, but are not considered as acceptable answers, as shown in (4b, d).

It is important to distinguish between an answer and a response; an answer targets the propositional content and resolves the question under discussion in a linguistic way. In contrast, a response can target both linguistic and nonlinguistic stimuli and take a linguistic or nonlinguistic form; rather than speaking to the question under discussion directly, a response is intended to be indirect. The speaker’s comments are that (4b, d) are not direct responses to the question in (3), that *hiyi* ‘yes’ and *waha* ‘no’ agree with utterances that follow the PRPs and are not intended or understood as answers to the question.

(3) 兑ə́ł ka-ə’inam Msg party-obv
    Is John not going to the party?

    Yes, he isn’t going.

   b. *?hiyi*, 兑ə́ł ə’inaxi.
    Yes, he’s going.
c. Waha, əxał ə'ìnaxi  
   no FUT go.  
   No, he is going.

d. ?Waha, əxał ka-ə'ìnaxi  
   no FUT NEG-go.  
   No, he is not going.

Moreover, bare PRPs are not ambiguous answers; the question in (3) can be answered with the bare responses and meanings indicated in (5).

(5)  a. Hiyi.  
    Yes Meaning: Yes, he's not going.  

b. Waha.  
    No Meaning: No, he is going.

Preliminary data also suggest that this pattern obtains more broadly, both as responses to other questions and to statements. In accounting for these data, we look to Krifka (2013) and his proposal that PRPs are anaphoric, targeting the previous proposition or speech act as their antecedent. The data from Ktunaxa suggest that they must also be cataphoric, targeting the following proposition as well. In addition to the conditions that precipitate an anaphoric or cataphoric reading, we consider the effect of answers versus responses on the resolution of questions under discussion and the common ground.

An equally important part of this project is the attention given to the general distribution of PRPs as responses to questions, assertions, commands, and in other environments, as well as our investigation into discourse level phenomena in an underdocumented language such as Ktunaxa.

References
