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Noun phrases in other-repetitions

Observations of Swedish talk-in-interaction

Jan Lindström, Martina Huhtamäki, Anne-Marie Londen

ABSTRACT¹

This study examines noun phrases in a specific sequential context: other-repetitions in Swedish conversation, including everyday as well as institutional interaction. Repeating the previous speaker's words can have various interactional functions, e.g., initiating repair, indicating surprise or challenge, or registering information. Our distributional results show that the NP is the typical item in repetition turns. The original structures targeted by repetitions vary from a single NP to clausal units housing NPs. The analysis shows that the identification of the interactional function of other-repetitions builds on their sequential position, prosodic design, and contextual information. Other-repetitions serve the general function of promoting intersubjectivity and participation in conversation, and the NP is demonstrably a central vehicle for this.

Keywords: noun phrases, other-repetition, prosody in conversation, social interaction, Swedish.

1. Introduction

In Swedish, like in other Germanic languages, the noun phrase is a grammatically central and versatile category. Features like number, gender, definiteness and case (nominative/genitive) can be coded in the inflection of a single nominal item. The internal complexity of noun phrases varies greatly, from single-word expressions to constructions involving determiners and attributes that can build complex groups of words. Noun phrases also occupy various slots in different syntactic configurations, taking the role as the subject, object, predicative and adverbial in clausal constructions and the object in prepositional phrases. It is thus no wonder that typical heads of noun phrases, that is, common nouns and pronouns, constitute the most frequent word-class items in spoken and written Swedish. However, their proportions

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vary in speaking and writing. Pronouns top the word-class items in spoken language (22.6%) while common nouns rank in the fourth place (12.2%). In writing, common nouns top the word-class distribution (26.7%) while pronouns are in the third place directly after verbs (16.5%); for the counts, see Allwood 1999. These figures suggest that speakers rely more heavily on pronominal and deictic expressions, whose reference can be understood or specified in the immediate context of speaking, whereas writers must be more explicit in the choice of referential expressions (cf. Chafe & Danielewicz 1987 on English).

As often mentioned in the literature, noun phrases can in many cases stand alone as full utterances, i.e. as “lexical” turn-constructive units (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974), perhaps typically in responses to questions, e.g. *What would you like to eat?* – *Fish*. (see e.g. Tomasello 2003: 196). While this may be true, we have found a specific sequential location in dialogic speaking in which noun phrases are particularly frequent when compared to other types of units (see also Robinson 2013 on *questioning repeats*): they are targeted in repetitions of what the previous speaker has said in the just-preceding turn (for the phenomenon, see Rossi 2020.; also Huhtamäki, Lindström & Londen 2020). This responsive pattern, then, warrants a closer analysis, and an example is given in extract (1), taken from a sociolinguistic interview. The interviewer (Int) has asked two senior high school students (Jenny and Anna) whether they want to raise a family in the future, and in line 1 she asks whether they would like to have children. Jenny, then, replies *massa barn* ‘lots of children’ (line 3).

(1) HI:03. “Lots of children.”

01 Int: å barn då, h- sku ni villa ha,
 and children then, h- would you like to have,

02 (0.6)

03 Jenny: [#mas]sa barn#, hh ORIGINAL TURN
 lots of children,

04 Anna: [()]

05 Int: £↑ma[ssa] barnf. REPETITION TURN
lots of children.

06 Jenny: [huh]=
((laughter))

07 Anna: =ja sku nu int villa ha så hemst mycke men (0.6)
I would not like to have so awfully many but

08 sådär två ti tre.

like two to three.

The interviewer receipts the answer in the sequentially next turn (line 5) by repeating the verbal material from Jenny's prior turn, which we call *the original turn* and mark with **boldface**. The turn containing the other-repetition is called *the repetition turn* and is marked with boldface and **highlighting**. When studying other-repetitions, we focus on recyclings of some or all of the verbal material in a prior turn, thus excluding semantic repetition. In the transcripts, some prosodic properties of the focused turns are marked, such as underlining, e.g. massa, for the phonetically accented syllable, and an upwards arrow ↑ to mark high onset. Punctuation marks are used to indicate the final pitch of all turns; see Appendix for transcription symbols.

As Tannen (1989) has pointed out, repetition is one of the central devices through which speakers can display interpersonal involvement in conversation. The interactional functions of other-repetitions can be more specific than that, and it is our aim here to analyze the formal and functional properties of repetition turns that pick up a noun phrase from a preceding (original) turn. A quite typical function of other-repetitions is to signal a problem of hearing or understanding and thus to initiate a repair sequence (see e.g. Kendrick 2015), but in other cases, as in (1), the functional scope goes beyond repair, for example, suggesting surprise, amusement or challenge at what is reported (e.g. Robinson 2013). Some repetitions also seem to do more unmarked receipting work by merely registering the information the other has given (e.g. Persson 2015), also a possible function in (1). Repetitions can appear in question–answer sequences, as above, or as responses to a narrative.

Our study sheds light on the category of noun phrase from a new perspective, as noun phrases are analyzed in short utterances in which they stand in their own right, but show dialogic dependency on a preceding contribution which they repeat in full or partly. The typicality of noun phrases in other-repeating turns reflects, we argue, the noun phrases' elementary status in dialogic participation. Noun phrases have a high referential relevance in meaning-making in real-time interaction and, therefore, constitute a central vehicle for using talk to build intersubjectivity. The study is organized in the following way: section 2 presents the data and section 3 gives an overview of some distributional aspects of other-repetitions in the data. In section 4 repetitions are analyzed in their sequential and functional contexts with a focus on the grammatical target of the repetition in the preceding turn. Section 5 summarizes the analysis including an account of prosody in repetitions, and the chapter ends with a conclusion.

2. Data

The analysis in this chapter is based on a corpus of Swedish talk-in-interaction that is collected from various settings, ranging from everyday to institutional situations, and from naturally-occurring conversations to arranged group discussions (see Table 1). The everyday situations include conversations among friends and families, while the institutional ones are service encounters. The arranged interactions are moderated, unscripted group discussions that serve the function of sociolinguistic interviews. Some of the older recordings in our corpus are audio-only, but no telephone conversations are included. Many of the recordings are multi-person interactions, but there are also dyadic conversations. All recordings represent southern varieties of the Swedish language spoken in Finland that in many prosodic respects have similarities with Finnish (see Bruce 2004 on prosody in Swedish; Reuter 1992 for Swedish as a pluricentric language). The data and the extracts cited in this chapter are transcribed according to standard conversation analytic principles (cf. Ochs et al. 1996) with some additional symbols for stress and pitch patterns.

Table 1. Types of research data; number and hours of recordings

	Number	Hours
<i>Everyday settings</i>	14	14:01:03
<i>Institutional settings</i>	30	3:29:25
<i>Arranged group discussions</i>	16	6:21:59
<i>Multi-person interactions</i>	27	16:30:50
<i>Dyadic interactions</i>	33	7:21:37
<i>Video recordings</i>	43	15:03:42
<i>Audio recordings</i>	17	8:48:45

The data contains 60 recordings of about 24 hours and the speakers are aged 9 to 89 years, both male and female. We have collected all other-repetitions of any lexical or syntactic category occurring in this data. This master collection contains 150 cases, of which 123 have a phrasal, non-clausal form. The majority of these phrasal repeats are noun phrases, N=78 (63%), and it is this sub-collection of nominal repetitions that we focus on in the analysis in sections 4 and 5.

3. The distribution of grammatical elements in repetitions

The structure of the repetition turn can vary from one-word phrases to multi-word phrases (like *massa barn* in extract 1) and to clausal constructions. When comparing these categories in our master collection of other-repetitions (N=150) we can note that most of the repetitions are typically short and phrasal, one-word phrases in 48% and multi-word phrases in 34% of the cases, whereas clausal constructions occur in only 18% of the other-repetitions (Table 2).

Table 2. The distribution of general structural types of repetition turns

Repetition turn	Occurrences	Percentage
One-word phrase	72	48%
Multi-word phrase	51	34%
Clause	27	18%
	150	100%

Table 3 presents the distribution of phrase types in other-repetitions that have a phrasal, i.e. non-clausal form (N=123). We can conclude that noun phrases are clearly the dominant category (63% of all phrasal repeats) followed by adverbial phrases (12%), numeral phrases (8%), prepositional phrases (7%), adjectival phrases (5%), and verb phrases (5%).

Table 3. Phrase types in (phrasal) repetition turns

Phrasal repetition turn	Occurrences	Percentage
Noun phrase	78	63%
Adverbial phrase	15	12%
Numeral phrase	10	8%
Prepositional phrase	8	7%
Adjectival phrase	6	5%
Verb phrase	6	5%
	123	100%

Finally, when we break up the distribution in the category of noun phrase repeats (N=78) we can in Table 4 see that *common nouns* stand as the head of the repetition turn most often (64% of all NP repetitions), followed by *proper names* (32%), and *pronouns* in only very few instances.

Table 4. Phrase heads in nominal repetition turns

NP head in repetition	Occurrences	Percentage
Common noun	50	64%
Proper name	25	32%
Pronoun	3	4%
	78	100%

This distribution differs radically from general frequencies for parts of speech in spoken Swedish where pronouns and verbs rank highest (see *Introduction* and Allwood 1999). We do not have reference counts for proper names in spoken Swedish in general, but they are probably over-represented in the present collection of other-repetitions, since the basic data contains a fair amount of interactions from service encounters. In these encounters, the participants (clients and staff) frequently repeat names of persons, products and events in a registering function, for the obvious reason that a correct reception of this kind of information is essential for a successful service transaction.

Most repetitions are structurally simple, as we can conclude from Table 2, and repeat only partially the verbal material of the original turn. If we examine the formation of repetition turns consisting of noun phrases with a *common noun* as the head we can observe that simple units consisting of a single lexeme (e.g. *mat* ‘food’) are somewhat more frequent (N=30; 60%) than structurally more complex noun phrases, i.e. NP + modifying attributes (N=20; 40%), and 16 of these multi-word NPs are of the type where the head is preceded by one modifying attribute (e.g. *massa barn* ‘lots of children’). Such lexical focusing in the repetition, i.e. keeping it short and specific, probably helps the recipient identify what exactly the speaker of the repetition turn targets as a possible problem or otherwise noteworthy information in the ongoing interaction.

4. Targets and functions of repetitions

The analysis presented in this section is based on our collection of 78 noun phrases that constitute the repetition turn in other-repetition sequences. The analysis is organized according to the structure of the original turn and the grammatical element that the repetition targets in it: a head of a compound, a single noun phrase, an object of a prepositional phrase, an object of a verb phrase, and a constituent of a clause. Interactional functions of the repetitions are discussed in the context of each example as well as key prosodic features of repetition turns (for the latter, see also the summary in section 5).

4.1 Head of a compound

In some cases the noun phrase that constitutes the repetition turn is just a repetition of a part of a larger nominal item – a compound – that has occurred in the original turn. Such repeating can serve the function of initiating repair, which is one of the conventional uses of other-repetition (see e.g. Kendrick 2015 on English and Rossi 2015 on Italian). These repair initiations typically have to do with problems of hearing or understanding the reference of an expression. This is also the case in Extract (2), in which it could be argued that the problem lies both in an uncertain hearing, or mishearing, and understanding the expression (because of the mishearing). The repetition targets the last constituent in a clausal TCU, but more significantly than that, only the latter part of this element which is a compound noun. The participants are three young women who are roommates, Sanna, Marina and Klara, sitting around their kitchen table. Sanna is using her tablet computer, while Marina is eating and Klara is concentrating on her smartphone. The sequence is initiated by Sanna moving her shoulders and sighing (line 1). Marina then suggests that they could give each other a massage, thereby interpreting Sanna as signaling pain (line 3). The third participant, Klara, responds enthusiastically and takes up the suggestion by proposing that they could line up to a *massagetåg* ‘massage-train’, i.e. sitting in a line giving and getting a massage from one another (line 4). The speaker is rubbing her nose, which possibly could disturb the hearing of what is said.

(2) Roommates. “Massage-train.”

- 01 Sanna: tk °ah°
(*moving her back and shoulders*)
- 02 (2.6)
- 03 Marina: vi kan massera varandra?
we can give each other a massage?
- 04 Klara: *JÅ: kan vi ha så hä ***massage#tåg#**.
*yes can we have like a **massage-train**.*
*((*looking up from her phone*))
*((*rubbing her nose*))
- 05 (1.0)
- 06 Marina: ↑**tåk.**
((*looking up at Klara*))
- 07 Klara: tå[g.]
train.
- 08 Sanna: [tå]:g:..
train.

10 Marina: mhuh mhuh massagetåk ba jeee.
 ((*laughing*)) *message-tåk right yeah.*

The original turn consists of two prosodic, grammatical and pragmatic units: the initial response particle *jå:* and the clause *kan vi ha såhå massagetåg*, in which the last word is a nominal compound consisting of a modifying part (*message* ‘message’) and head (*tåg* ‘train’). The intonation contour of the original turn is falling, and the last syllable *tåg* is pronounced with a creaky, silent voice. A pause follows, possibly indicative of trouble, and then Marina repeats the head of the nominal compound, but pronounces it *tåk* (line 6). *Tåk* means nothing in Swedish, and the repetition can be a reaction to an unidentified morpheme, although there is also some phonetic similarity to the verb *talk* in English. Both Sanna and Klara respond by correcting Marina’s repetition to *tåg* ‘train’ (lines 7–8). Sanna pronounces *tå:g*: with a lengthening of the sounds and careful articulation, which can indicate that she interprets Marina’s repetition as a problem of hearing. Marina reacts with laughter and repeats her own wrong hearing/understanding of the word, now as a whole compound, *massagetåk* (line 10). By repeating only the head of the compound the speaker focuses the repair on the key problematic item of the original turn.

4.2 Single noun phrase: noun, pronoun, proper name

Lexical turn-constructional units that consist of a single noun phrase are not uncommon, particularly in certain sequential environments such as in answers to a question, as we could see in extract (1) above. In this section we show examples of repetitions that target an original turn consisting of a single common noun, a pronoun, and a proper name.

Extract (3), taken from a sociolinguistic interview, presents a repetition that is embedded in a repair sequence. The participants are the interviewer (Int) and two senior high school students, Erik and Holger. The interviewer asks the students whether they think that the kind of education one has received has some bearing on the way one speaks (lines 1–3). This question is followed by a pause of 2.8 seconds, indicative of problems in tackling the question. Erik takes the turn in line 5 by saying slowly *säkert (nog)* ‘probably’, then noting that technical terms may enter into one’s language. In line 8 he is about to continue with a reflective formulation, *om man tänker på* ‘if we think about’. However, the interviewer intervenes here (line 11) and poses a question with the same initial formulation (*om man tänker på vardasspråke* ‘if we think about everyday language’) which is prefaced by the adversative conjunction *men* ‘but’ that marks this move as a perspective shift, proposing ‘everyday language,’ and disregarding professional talk, as the topic for further discussion.

01 Int: dedär öm: nå tror ni att: #öhm:#
PRT ehm well do you think that ehm

02 de har nån betydelse b-beroende på
it has any significance depending on

03 va man har för utbildning hur man °talar°,
one's education how a person speaks,

04 (2.8)

05 Erik: <säkert (nog)> (1.1) alltså, (0.4)
certainly PRT (1.1) you know,

06 no kommer de ju in en massa facktermer
PRT there will be a lot of technical terms

07 °å sånt här i ens språk å, (0.4)
and things like that in one's language and,

08 om man tänker på [()]=
if we think about ()

09 Int: [jä:
yes

10 Erik: =()]

11 Int: men om man tänker på vardas]#språke.#
but if we think about everyday language.

12 Erik: va,
what

13 (0.3)

14 Int: #vardassprå[ke#]
everyday language

15 Erik: [var_]dasspråke.
everyday language.

16 (0.9)

17 Int: om man int disku#terar sitt fack#.
if one is not discussing one's profession.

18 (0.4)

19 Erik: °#mm:::°

there weren't any

- 03 Liv: =min pappa va så himlades lyckli, (.)
 =*my dad was so incredibly happy*, (.)
- 04 ja ha allti varit snål efter gott.
 I have always been keen on sweets.
- 05 Petra: han då.
 him PRT
- 06 Liv: [ja:ag.
 me.
- 07 Synne: [eheh
- 08 Petra: aj du [:. heh[ehe
 oh you. ((*laughing*))
- 09 Eva: [du. [hehe
 you. ((*laughing*))

After this repair sequence, Liv continues with the story about how she was keen on sweets when she was a child.

Lexical other-repetitions do not always deal with an obvious interactional problem. Instead, they can indicate registering and adequate reception of the information in the prior turn (see Persson 2015; Yokomori, Yasui & Hajikano 2017). Extract (5) provides an example of the phenomenon from a service encounter at a ticket office between the staff employee (STA) and an elderly customer (CUS). After a reciprocal greeting sequence initiated by the employee (lines 1–2), the customer, somewhat hesitantly, asks where a movie about the Swedish jazz singer Monica Zetterlund is showing (lines 4–5). The employee answers the question in line 7 with the name of a theater that consists of two parts, a category label (*Kino*) and an identifying part (*Engel*).³ The customer repeats this proper name after a slight pause in exactly the same lexical form (line 9).

(5) H:LUC:145. “Kino Engel.”

- 01 STA: hej.
 hi.

³ In onomastics, the parts of a commercial name like *Kino Engel* are called “a part signifying the business concept” (*Kino*) and the actual naming or identifying part (*Engel*); see Ainiala et al. (2016).

02 CUS: >hej hej<, ((coughs)) .h
hi hi,

03 (0.3)

04 CUS: ja vet inte om ja alls e på rätt plats men
I don't know if I'm at all in the right place but

05 CUS: .h var går den här Monica Zetterlundsfilmen?
where is this Monica Zetterlund movie showing.

06 (0.6)

07 STA: **Kino Engel.**
Kino Engel. ((Name of a movie theater))

08 (0.3)

09 CUS: **Ki[no Engel.**
Kino Engel.

10 STA: [går den på]
it is showing in

11 (0.4)

12 STA: har ja hört.
I have heard.

13 (0.2)

14 CUS: har du adress på den,
do you have the address,

The staff employee seems to orient to the pause in line 8 by expanding his turn with two increments, the first in line 10 that comes partly in overlap with the customer's repetition turn, and the second in line 12. However, these additions are not hearable as orientations to a problem of hearing or understanding the reference of an expression; rather, the expansion in line 10 appears to fix a delay in turn transition and the one in line 12 provides a hedge by reframing the information the employee has given as hearsay. The customer's repetition, then, is treated as an acknowledgement of received information, and as such not as a need of an explicit confirmation. The repetition turn does not have prominent prosodic features: the pitch onset is low and the pitch span is narrow. These overall downgraded prosodic qualities in relation to the original turn (see Curl 2005 and Ogden 2006 on prosodic upgrading and downgrading) suggest that the speaker is reflecting on the proper name *Kino Engel* and trying to recall what theater it refers to (cf. Kelly & Local 1989). The customer does not apparently know this theater or its location, as he asks for the address in an ensuing turn (line 14). A

possibility would have been that the customer repeated only *Engel*, in which case this would have signaled that he knew other theaters beginning with *Kino*.

4.3 Object of a prepositional phrase

Prepositional phrases can stand alone as turn-constructional units in the same kinds of sequential environments as single nouns phrases, for example, in answers to questions, which can be seen in (6). The extract comes from a family meeting where the father acts as chair and the children respond to matters on the agenda. We enter in a sequence in which the father asks what the elder son Kasper needs additional pocket money for (lines 1–2). Kasper responds with the prepositional phrase *ti mat* that he needs the money for food (line 4). The father then repeats the noun *mat* ‘food’ (line 6). The repetition begins high in his pitch range and falls over a wide pitch span. It is also prolonged in relation to the original.

(6) Family meeting. “Food.”

- 01 Father: .hhh #e:# kan du berätta va #ev:# vas- (.)
.hhh e: can you tell me what ev: vas- (.)
- 02 va behöver (du) pengar till.
what you need money for.
- 03 (0.6)
- 04 Kasper: **f ti ma:t?f**
for food?
- 05 (0.8)
- 06 Father: → [**↑ma:t.**]
food.
- 07 Kasper: [m-] mellanmål eftä: skolan?
m- snacks after school?

The function of this repetition goes beyond repair: there is not a problem of hearing or basic understanding of the reference of the expression. Rather, the contents in the prior turn go against the recipient’s expectations: in this case the father knows that Kasper gets food at home. Hence, he seems surprised and questions through the repetition the validity of what the son has reported in the previous turn, thereby challenging it and calling for a justification (see

e.g. Robinson 2013; Benjamin & Walker 2013). The son then attempts to justify his claim by referring to a need to buy some snacks after the school classes. By repeating just the noun *mat*, the father singles out ‘food’ as the questionable item in a slot where the son has the possibility to provide an object for his need of more money (i.e. in the prepositional phrase that specifies the object). Kasper is probably aware of the problems with his formulation in line 4 as he produces it with a smile voice.

4.4 Object of a verb phrase

Verb phrases that do not appear in a clausal frame can occasionally constitute stand-alone turns. Extract (7) gives us an example in a question–answer sequence (line 8). The extract is taken from a sociolinguistic interview and the interviewer asks in lines 1–2 whether (or not) the two senior high school students Josefina and Carola that are being interviewed plan to do something special after their graduation. After a pause, Josefina responds laconically *utomlands* (line 4), i.e. that she will go abroad, ending the turn with some laughter that may indicate that the plan is not so serious at this point. The other interviewee, Carola, concurs in line 6. The interviewer then asks what the girls plan to do abroad, and Josefina replies with the verb phrase *studera franska* that she would study French (line 8).

(7) HI:25. “French.”

01 Int: ni har alltså inga planer (.) #sen# (.)
 so you don't have any plans (.) then (.)

02 #efter# "studenten".
 after the graduation.

03 (1.8)

04 Jos: utomlands eh [ehh
 abroad ((laughing))

05 Int: [hehe=

06 Carola: =jå (0.3) "utomlands".
 yeah (0.3) abroad.

07 Int: va ska ni göra utomlands.
 what will you do abroad.

08 Jos: **studera franska.**
 study French.

09 Int: **franska.**
 French.

10 Jos: ^omhm^o.
 11 (1.9)
 12 Jos: eller lära franska språke. eheh
 or learn French. ((mild laughter))

The interviewer repeats the object of the verb phrase, *franska* ‘French’, in line 9 with stronger prominence than the original turn, which calls for some further action. Josefina confirms minimally with *mhm*, and as a pause ensues, she adds the modification *eller lära franska språke* ‘or learn French’ (line 12). This modification also has the form of a verb phrase and is initiated with the conjunction *eller* ‘or,’ which makes it an alternative to the first answer in line 8. This modified, alternative formulation shows that Josefina treats the interviewer’s repetition possibly as a call for a further motivation and specification of what was said in the original turn, i.e. there might be something ‘wrong’ or challengeable in it (cf. Benjamin & Walker 2013; Robinson 2013). By repeating just the noun *franska*, the interviewer shows that the crucial thing is not that Josefina has plans to continue her studies, but rather why French is the relevant item (e.g. would she travel to France or some other place, or why French in the first place?). As the ensuing interaction, which is not reproduced here, reveals, Josefina is not really planning to *study* abroad: she just wants to spend some time in France and learn the language in that way. This is a less serious plan for her life after graduation and is probably oriented to as such by Josefina’s laughter in lines 3 and 11, and by her modification from the verb *studera* ‘study’ to *lära* ‘learn.’

4.5 Constituent of a clause

Many original turns in the interactional sequences have a clausal form, although most repetitions are phrasal (see section 3). This means that it is usual that the repetition turn picks up and singles out a specific item in a clausal configuration, i.e. the repetition targets a constituent in a clausal TCU: its subject, object or adverbial or predicative complement. Such repetitions can have various functional motivations; below we exemplify using two instances that have to do with problems of expectation. In extract (8) we see a repetition that serves to display surprise or (ritualized) disbelief at what the other has reported. The participants are the couple Torsten and Siv, who are having coffee with their guest Ulla. The two women have been talking about how difficult it is to find craftsmen who would come to fix things at a home. Then, Torsten takes the turn and provides a concrete example of the problem: he and his wife Siv had made an inquiry about getting a tinsmith to fix the tin roof of their house (lines 1–3). The answer they received was that it could

take two years (*de kan ta två år*) to get somebody, lines 6 and 9 in Torsten's turn).

(8) November coffee. “Two years”

01 Torsten: å så fråga vi nån ställe att jahh (0.9)
 and then we asked some place that yes (0.9)

02 att öh kan man få: beställa nån
that erm can we get to hire someone

03 som sku komma å laga [plåtta(k)]
who could come and fix a tin roof

04 Siv: [ja.]
yes

05 Torsten: ja: de (0.4) de .h h
well it (0.4) it .h h

06 de kan ta två år inna[n du få-] =
it can take two years before you ge-

07 Ulla: [↑↑TV] Å: Å: [R.]
two years.

08 Siv: [jå:]
yes

09 Torsten: =inna[n du får]
 before you get

10 Ulla: [↑e de s]ant.
 is it true.

11 Siv: ↑#jå: jå:#.
 yes yes.

12 Ulla: °@herrejes@°.
good heavens.

The long time it takes to get a roof repairman is the pragmatic key information that Ulla responds to by repeating the noun phrase *två år* ‘two years’ (line 7), still in overlap with Torsten’s ongoing talk, which is a form of mutual participation in a moment when another’s action is still in the process of emerging (see Goodwin 2018: 49). The repetition has a very high pitch onset, and both words in this noun phrase are produced with a wide rise-fall contour going above the speaker’s habitual pitch range. Siv responds to Ulla’s repetition with the confirmation *jå* ‘yes’ (line 7). Then, again in overlap with

Torsten, Ulla displays ritualized disbelief (Heritage 1984; Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2006) by exclaiming *e de sant* ‘is it true?’ (line 10). Siv responds by reduplicating the response token *jå ja* (line 11), confirming the veracity of what Torsten reported and orienting to Ulla’s signaled disbelief. Finally, Ulla follows up with the softly spoken exclamation *herrejes* ‘good heavens’ (line 12). The upgraded prosodic qualities of the repetition turn as well as Ulla’s ensuing exclamations display surprise as well as a strong affiliative stance towards the trouble her host and hostess have had with finding a roof repairer.

Another kind of repetition dealing with unexpectedness is presented in Extract (9), taken from a casual conversation between two female friends in their twenties, Katti and Anne. The participants are having coffee, facing each other across the table, while Katti is talking about an encounter with an old mutual friend, Missu, whom she has seen at a wedding. This gossiping story is framed as ‘strange’ (*konstit*) by Katti in line 1, which refers to Missu’s unexpected presence at the wedding.

(9) August coffee. “Missu.”

- 01 Katti: men de va nu så konstit nä vi kom dit
 but it was so strange when we came there
- 02 ti Connys å Lenas bröllop så,
 to Conny’s and Lena’s wedding,
- 03 på lördag: så (.) Missu va där?
 on Saturday so (.) Missu was there?
- 04 (0.6)
 ((K gazes at A, A reciprocates with a delay))
- 05 >kommer du ihåg< Missu från Eira?
 do you remember Missu from Eira?
- 06 (0.8)
 ((A and K gaze at each other))
- 07 Anne: aj ↑Miss: [u]. *((nods down towards K))*
 oh Missu.
- 08 Katti: [m]m:m.
- 09 ja ha int [sett henne lik]som en enda gång
 I haven’t seen her at all you know
- 10 Anne: [jaha:]
 I see
- 11 Katti: >så hon< sällskapa me den dä ena, (0.2)
 so she was together with that one,

The first mention of Missu is in Katti's turn in line 3, produced after a scene description that projects a newsworthy conclusion, Missu's presence at the wedding (*Missu va där* 'Missu was there'). During the pause in line 4, Katti directs her gaze towards the co-participant Anne, who has not displayed recognition or any active listenership. Then, Katti poses a question (using the person name Missu and a prepositional phrase associating her with a neighborhood) in an attempt to help Anne to identify, or indeed to 'remember,' the person in question (line 5). This turn ends with the pitch rising to mid in the speaker's pitch range, which frames it as an act of checking common ground before a story (cf. Huhtamäki 2015; Routarinne 2003). Katti's turn is followed by a pause again during which Anne, staring ahead of her, seems to be engaged in cognitive work as Katti has brought up the task of 'remembering' (line 5).

Eventually, Anne responds with a repetition turn that takes up the name Missu (line 7), prefaced by the change-of-state token *aj*. In addition to reacting to unexpectedness, the speaker retrospectively indexes trouble with the recognitional work that is overcome by the time the repetition turn is produced; thus, the repetition turn functions as delayed realization. The pitch onset of the repetition is high and the pitch span is wide as in (8) and Anne produces an embodied enhancement (Ambrazaitis & House 2017) by nodding downwards when she says the name Missu. Katti receipts the display of recognition with an accented and prolonged *mm:m* in line 8 and continues to talk about Missu. Anne produces a weak news receipt *jaha:* in overlap (line 10), an item which could have been adequate at the first mention of Missu.

The noun phrases in the two repetition turns above focus on the exact item that invokes the reaction, that is, the element that bears the moment of unexpectedness or newsworthiness: an item referring to an absurd duration ('two years') and the name of an infrequently seen mutual friend. The noun phrase *två år* in (8) is syntactically the object of a verb phrase but semantically close to an adverbial (cf. *Vi sökte en taklagare två år* 'We looked for a roof maker two years'). The repetition of the person name *Missu* in (9) also relates to the object complement of the original clausal turn. In addition, the name *Missu* is specified with the prepositional attribute *från Eira* 'from Eira' in the original. It is not, however, the larger noun phrase *Missu från Eira* that is targeted for the repetition but the very person name that was also intended as a sufficient reference in the first mention in the sequence. If the name and the prepositional attribute were repeated (*Missu från Eira*), it would rather suggest a contrast between two or several persons with the same name (e.g. *Missu från Stockholm*).

5. Summary on repetition forms, prosody and interactional function

The typical repetition turn in our sub-collection of nominal repetitions (N=78) reiterates only partially the material of the original: a noun that is the head of a compound, the head of a noun phrase, a noun that is the object of a prepositional phrase or a verb phrase, or a noun that is a constituent in a clause. Such partial repetitions pick up a specific item that is targeted as the key problematic item in case of problems of hearing or understanding (*repair*), as the locus for something questionable or surprising in the context of speaking (*expectation*), or as the acknowledged key information (*registering*). Naturally, full repetitions occur when the original turn consists of a single noun phrase, but such verbatim repetitions are sometimes modified with additional elements, like the change-of-state token *aj* ‘oh’ that contribute to the function of the repetition turn, for example, as a display of realization. There is no clear general tendency for what kind of an element stands as the source for the repetition turn *vis-à-vis* its interactional function (cf. the analysis in Section 4). However, we can note that original turns that consist of a single noun phrase are most commonly repeated in registerings. Most of these are proper names and occur in service encounters, but reiterations of single-NP turns consisting of common nouns are also found in the other datasets in a registering function.

Turn position coheres with interactional function to some degree in that repetitions dealing with expectedness can serve as affiliative or challenging responses to an informing, for example, in a narrative episode, but they also occur in answers to questions. The typical locus of registering repetitions is as sequence-closing thirds (Schegloff 1997: 527), i.e. in a third-turn position where they indicate adequate reception following a question–answer adjacency pair. Next-turn repair initiation may become relevant in all sequential positions, but unlike affiliative repeats (dealing with surprise, for example) they always halt the sequential progressivity and initiate an insertion sequence to solve a targeted interactional problem.

Prosodic cues are also important for understanding what a repetition is doing. We have therefore performed acoustic and auditory analyses of prosodic properties of the repetition sequences. More specifically, we have compared the pitch onset and pitch span as well as the duration of the original turn and the repetition. For the acoustic analyses and visual presentations we used the software *Praat* (v. 6.0.39); see Boersma & Weenink 2018. The pitch traces were plotted on a logarithmic Hertz scale, with the generic range of 50–300 Hz for men and 100–500 for women (cf. Walker 2017). Our analysis shows that the speaker of the repetition turn may vary the prosodic design in relation to the original turn but also in the range of his or her own register. We present below three main prosodic types of repetitions with a short example of each, including a visual representation.

Repetitions used for repair initiation tend to have a (moderately) higher onset and a wider pitch span than the corresponding material in the original

turn, as in extracts (2) and (3) (see Huhtamäki et al. 2020). In Extract (2), the repetition turn *tåk* starts higher than the beginning of the second TCU of the original turn, and falls steeper than the syllable *-tåg* (see Figure 1). Furthermore, it is longer than the syllable *tåg* ‘train’ in the original turn. However, it is not possible to fully compare the two words, as *tåg* in the original is part of the clause-final compound *massagetåg* ‘massage-train’, and *tåk* is a turn (and phrase) of its own.

Figure 1. Pitch trace and waveform of the original turn and repetition of Extract (2); female speakers.⁴

Repetitions showing that a previous turn is unexpected or otherwise noteworthy often do that with a much higher onset and a considerably wider pitch span than the original turn, possibly in combination with longer duration. Such repetitions, then, are prosodically clearly upgraded in relation

⁴ There are some movements in the waveform that stem from the sounds of cutlery on dishes (e.g. during the pause of 1.0 sec.).

to the original (see Extracts 6, 8, 9). For example, the contour of the name *Missu* in (9) consists of a rise-fall both in the original turn and in the repetition turn (see Figure 2). The onset on the accented syllable *Mis-* in the repetition is higher than the onset of the original turn and the pitch span in the repetition is much wider. The sibilant in *Missu* is also prolonged, which gives the name an extra emphasis. The upgraded prosody and the embodied enhancement, i.e. the nod (Ambrazaitis & House 2017), make the repetition turn and the recognitional work it is doing stand out in the context.

Figure 2. Pitch trace of the original turn and repetition of Extract (9); female speakers⁵.

Repetitions used for registering, in contrast, tend to have the same or lower pitch onset, narrower pitch span and possibly a faster tempo than the original matter, i.e. they are prosodically downgraded. The original turn and the repetition in (5) have similar kinds of pitch contours with falling final pitch (see Figure 3), but the pitch onset is lower and the pitch span is narrower in the repetition. Although the repetition is in a partial overlap with the staff member's turn continuation (*går den på*) it is possible to detect the pitch span of the repetition turn (see note 6); moreover, the first and the last pitch accents of the repetition are outside of the overlapping segment. The proper name

⁵ The movement on the waveform on the last syllable stems from the beginning of Katti's *mm:m*, and because of the overlap, it was not possible to detect a pitch trace on the last syllable of the repetition.

Kino Engel is accented in a way that is typical of lexicalized phrases in Swedish (see Anward & Linell 1976), realized as a moderate rise-fall on the first syllable of *Engel* in the original turn, and two small rise-falls in the repetition.⁶

Figure 3. Pitch trace and waveform of the original turn and repetition of Extract (5); male speakers⁷.

The mapping between function and prosodic form, however, is not complete, but prosodic features help recipients distinguish between the interactional functions of repetitions in combination with other cues, such as sequential

⁶ The two accents are probably a reflection of the speaker's regional variety, as he is from the western part of southern Finland, known for varieties with special phrasal accentuation (cf. Selenius 1969).

⁷ The latter part of the waveform depicts both the customer's and the staff member's turns, but it was possible to separate the pitch contour of the customer's turn by listening to the turns and correcting the pitch trace manually.

position, the speakers' relative knowledge about the subject matter (epistemics) and other contextual information (for example, embodied cues); see further Huhtamäki et al. 2020.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter we have demonstrated the relevance of noun phrases in the practice of other-repetition, which is an important sequentially-located phenomenon in intersubjective meaning-making in conversation. Generally, other-repetitions pick up an item from the previous speaker's turn that is consequential for the ensuing interaction: it may be in a need of clarification, in which case a repair sequence is initiated, or it engenders an affiliative or a challenging response calling for further talk and justification (in the case of challenge), or it is a piece of key information which is acknowledged through repetition. The functional values of repetitions – dealing with repair, expectation, registering – are tied to the sequential positioning of the repetition turn, its prosodic design, as well as other contextual cues (for an elaboration on function ascription, see Huhtamäki et al. 2020). Nominal repetitions are a powerful means to focus on the crucial item in the original turn. This is a difference, for example, to open-class repair initiations, like *huh* in English, which have the whole previous turn as their scope. When used as repair initiations, NP turns stop the sequential progression for as short a time as possible, as they are concise and specific.

Noun phrases are by far the most typical phrase type to occur in other-repetitions, which speaks strongly for their relevance as meaning-bearing elements in interactional sequences where the coordination of mutual understanding becomes an issue. Noun phrases, then, offer the speakers a fundamental means of participating in conversation and advancing intersubjectivity.

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Appendix: Transcription symbols

<u>but</u>	emphasis
bu:t	lengthening of a sound
#but#	creaky voice
°but°	sotto voce
£but£	smile voice
@but@	altered voice quality
BUT	louder than surrounding talk
(but)	parenthesized words are possible hearings
bu-	cut-off word or unfinished intonation unit
<but>	talk at a slower pace than the surrounding talk
>but<	talk at a faster pace than the surrounding talk
.h	audible inbreath
h	audible outbreath
but=	two latching turns or the turn continues in a subsequent line
[but	beginning of overlapping talk
but]	end of overlapping talk
,	level (“continuing”) intonation
.	falling intonation
?	rising intonation
↑	locally rising intonation
(0.6)	silences timed in 10ths of a second
(.)	micropause (less than 0.2 seconds)
((gazes))	transcriber’s comments
*	timing of embodied action with talk (beginning point)
(...)	continuing talk