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A sequential analysis of nú and núna in Icelandic conversation

(Svensk sammanfattning)

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Abstract

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This thesis is an empirical study of how two words in Icelandic, *nú* and *núna*, are used in contemporary Icelandic conversation. My aims in this study are, first, to explain the differences between the temporal functions of *nú* and *núna*, and, second, to describe the non-temporal functions of *nú*. In the analysis, a focus is placed on comparing the sequential placement of the two words, on their syntactical distribution, and on their prosodic realization.

The empirical data comprise 14 hours and 11 minutes of naturally occurring conversation recorded between 1996 and 2003. The selected conversations represent a wide range of interactional contexts including informal dinner parties, institutional and non-institutional telephone conversations, radio programs for teenagers, phone-in programs, and, finally, a political debate on television. The theoretical and methodological framework is *interactional linguistics*, which can be described as linguistically oriented conversation analysis (CA).

A comparison of *nú* and *núna* shows that the two words have different syntactic distributions. *Nú* has a clear tendency to occur in the front field, before the finite verb, while *núna* typically occurs in the end field, after the object. It is argued that this syntactic difference reflects a functional difference between *nú* and *núna*. A sequential analysis of *núna* shows that the word refers to an unspecified period of time which includes the utterance time as well as some time in the past and in the future. This temporal relation is referred to as reference time. *Nú*, on the other hand, is mainly used in three different environments: a) in temporal comparisons, 2) in transitions, and 3) when the speaker is taking an affective stance.

The non-temporal functions of *nú* are divided into three categories: a) *nú* as a tone particle, 2) *nú* as an utterance particle, and 3) *nú* as a dialogue particle. *Nú* as a tone particle is syntactically integrated and can occur in two syntactic positions: pre-verbally and post-verbally. I argue that these instances are employed in utterances in which a speaker is foregrounding information or marking it as particularly important. The study shows that, although these instances are typically prosodically non-prominent and unstressed, they are in some cases delivered with stress and with a higher pitch than the surrounding talk. *Nú* as an utterance particle occurs turn-initially
and is syntactically non-integrated. By using *nú*, speakers show continuity between turns and link new turns to prior ones. These instances initiate either continuations by the same speaker or new turns after speaker shifts. *Nú* as a dialogue particle occurs as a turn of its own. The study shows that these instances register informings in prior turns as unexpected or as a departure from the normal state of affairs. *Nú* as a dialogue particle is often delivered with a prolonged vowel and a recognizable intonation contour. A comparative sequential and prosodic analysis shows that in these cases there is a correlation between the function of *nú* and the intonation contour by which it is delivered.

Finally, I argue that despite the many functions of *nú*, all the instances can be said to have a common denominator, which is to display attention towards the present moment and the utterances which are produced prior or after the production of *nú*. Instead of anchoring the utterances in external time or reference time, these instances position the utterance in discourse internal time, or discourse time.

*Keywords:* particles, interactional linguistics, conversation analysis, prosody, syntax, temporal deixis, temporal origo, reference time, discourse time, Icelandic conversation.
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During my years as a graduate student, I was able to participate in a handful of linguistic projects. The first project in which I was involved was a network on language contact and teenage talk in Scandinavia, *UNO*. In 2000, I joined the *Network for Researchers in Conversation Studies (Convnet)*. Within *Convnet*, I was able to attend workshops and participate in highly stimulating data sessions with other Scandinavian researchers. Through *Convnet*, I also received a mobility grant which enabled me to spend two weeks at the University of Southern Denmark under the supervision of Johannes Wagner. In 2001, I received full-year funding from *Svestra (Finland Swedish Strategies in Conversational Discourse)*, funded by the Finnish Academy. This grant enabled me to devote a year to my research on a full-time basis.

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1 Introduction

Modern Icelandic has two words for what English expresses with the word *now*: nú and núna. Both words refer to the temporal origo. Temporal deictics such as the English *now* often develop parallel non-temporal functions, and the Icelandic nú is no exception: nú has over the centuries developed a wide array of different functions (cf. Íslensk orðabók 2002; Wide 1998). Consider the following excerpt taken from a phone-in radio program. Here, the moderator introduces and greets the first caller of the day:¹

(1.1) I'M GETTING FED UP: Soul 07.05.96 (→5.1)²
(M = Moderator; A = Arngrímar, a caller)

1 M Og Arngrímur Guðmundsson fyrstur í dag komdu sáll.
and 1nameM PatrM first.M in day GREET.
And Arngrímur Guðmundsson is first today hello

2 A Já komdu blessuð.
PRT GREET
Yes hello

→ A >Vi (h)öfum nú talað saman áður?<
we have.3.PL NÚ talk.PP together before
we have NÚ talked before

4 M J↓á:j↑á↓á: Hvort við ekki höfum,
PRT whether we not have.3.PL
Yes yes we certainly have

5 A Ýg skal segja þér eitt eh:e Eva- Eva Marie,
I shall.1 tell.INF you.DAT one eh- e- 1nameF 1nameF 1nameF
Let me tell you one thing eh- E- Eva- Eva Marie.

→ A <NÚ: fer mér að leiðast svolítið hvernig að mYnd e:::::>
NÚ go.3 I.DAT to bore.MV little bit how that shape eh-
Nú I’m getting a bit fed up with that shape eh

→ forsetafram- forsetakosningarnar eru að taka á sig #núna#. 
president- presidential elections.DEF be.3.PL to take.INF on it.REF NÚNA
the president- the presidential elections are taking NÚNA

→ M NÚ:::

¹ Instances of nú and núna are boldfaced and marked with an arrow in the margin. The key for transcription and glossing conventions can be found in appendices A and B, respectively.
² An arrow pointing forward followed by a number refers to another excerpt in which the same stretch of talk is analyzed.
This short excerpt contains four instances of nú and one of núna, which seem to represent at least three different identifiable functions. Nú in line 6 and núna in line 7 both have a temporal function, and, therefore, it might seem redundant at first to use both forms in the same utterance. The temporal nú in line 6 is emphasized and has a slightly prolonged vowel, while núna is uttered more quietly than the surrounding talk. The instance in line 3, by contrast, is clearly not temporal, as the speaker is referring to something that happened at an unspecified time in the past. Similarly, the instance in line 9 is also not temporal. Instead of anchoring the proposition in time, these instances have some kind of modifying function, giving the utterance a particular tone. Such instances will be referred to in this study as tone particles (see section 3.4.1).

The instances mentioned above are syntactically integrated and prosodically non-prominent, except the temporal nú in line 6, which is slightly stressed. The instance in line 8 is different from the other instances: this nú occurs as a turn on its own, and it is prosodically dynamic, with a distinct rising intonation contour and a prolonged vowel. By using nú in this slot and with this particular intonation contour, the moderator registers the information she received in the preceding turn as new. At the same time, she gives the floor back to the caller. These instances of nú are referred to as dialogue particles (see section 3.4.3).

The analysis of the excerpt above raises two issues. The first issue relates to the co-existence of two temporal deictics with what seems—at least at first—to be the same meaning. As the two instances in line 6 and 7 show, the difference between temporal nú and núna is subtle. They both refer to the present moment, and, thus far, no convincing explanation for this dichotomy has been provided. The second problem relates to the poly-functionality of nú. As excerpt (1.1) illustrates, nú has at least three potential functions: to anchor the proposition in time, to give it a particular tone, and to register a piece of information as new. In addition to these three functions, nú may also function as a discourse structuring device, linking an upcoming turn to the previous one. These instances are in this study referred to as utterance particles (see section 3.4.2).

This study is an exploration of how the two historically related words nú and núna are used in conversation. Methodologically, it is grounded in interactional linguistics.
The aim is to describe how interlocutors employ nú and núna in talk-in-interaction and how they orient to utterances including these words. The study is entirely based on spoken interaction, and the data included consist of fourteen hours and eleven minutes of recorded conversation (see Chapter 5 for details).

Research on Icelandic grammar, with a few exceptions, such as Wide (2002) and Þ. Blöndal (2005), has been almost entirely based on introspection and isolated, constructed sentences. Yet, as Silverstein (1976: 49–50) has pointed out, speakers (including linguists) are only partially aware of their use of non-referential words or affixes. In other words, they are not always capable of explaining why they choose one grammatical form over another, and, therefore, studies of such phenomena should be based upon empirical data in which the speakers are actually making these choices. This is also the case regarding the temporal nú and núna. When asked about the difference between the two types, native speakers of Icelandic usually answer that both words have the same meaning. However, if there is no difference between the temporal functions of nú and núna, why has the Icelandic language developed two words which are interchangeable? Or, is the difference so subtle that native speakers cannot put their finger on it even though they make distinct choices in authentic conversations?

The present study of nú and núna has been preceded by smaller studies conducted by J. H. Jónsson (1982) and Wide (1998) (see Chapter 2). J. H. Jónsson’s study offers rich insights, especially regarding the history of núna and its function in Old Icelandic, as well as the function of the suffix na (see section 2.4). Similarly, Wide’s (1998) study offers many interesting observations on the communicative functions of nú, some of which will be developed further in the analytic part of this study. Neither of these studies, however, offers a detailed discussion in which the differences between the parallel forms nú and núna are explained. In this study, I will propose that the temporal elements encoded in nú and núna may function on two different levels: núna functions mainly on the referential level and nú on the non-referential level. By this I mean that núna has a referential meaning anchoring the proposition in time, while nú has also non-referential functions, such as adding emphasis. Furthermore, it is my aim to show that it is this emphatic function which the temporal and non-temporal nú have in common.

3 Bloomfield (1993: 145) points out that languages tend to avoid complete synonyms. Clark (1993: 65) describes this tendency as a “principle of contrast.”
In this study, I will show the complex nature of temporal deictics (cf. Chapter 3), and how a word such as nú may have different functions, which correlate with its sequential placement, syntax, and prosody. Thus, in addition to considering the importance of context, I will examine how interlocutors make distinctions between syntactically integrated and non-integrated nú, and how they employ prosodic cues such as vowel length, stress, and intonation contours.

1.1 Aim and scope of the study

The main purpose of this study is to explore and describe the functions of nú and núna in naturally occurring talk-in-interaction. I will make an in-depth analysis of the temporal as well as the non-temporal functions of nú. The questions I will address are as follows:

- Are the two temporal markers nú and núna used in similar contexts? If they are not, what is their distribution of labour?

- What are the formal features of the different types of nú? What is their sequential placement, where do they occur syntactically, and how are they delivered prosodically?

The empirical part of this study will focus on the functions of nú and núna in contemporary Icelandic conversation. It is a large task to explain the differences between the two temporal markers, and it is an even larger one to account for the various functions of non-temporal nú. Thus, it is not within the scope of this study to include a discussion of nú and núna in modern written texts, nor to make extensive diachronic comparisons. Such research questions would certainly be of interest, but, in order to make such comparisons possible, there is first a need for a functional analysis such as this study offers.

1.2 Disposition

The study is organized as follows. In Chapters 2–5, I discuss the background of this study. In Chapter 2, I briefly review earlier research on the two key objects nú and
núna and discuss the historical roots of the words. In Chapter 3, the theoretical framework is presented. First, I review previous studies on words in other languages with etymological meanings similar to those of nú and núna. Secondly, I will present a general framework for the study of particles. The methodological foundation of this study is dealt with in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 includes a description of the data upon which the empirical part of the study is based and a discussion of transcription as a process and a product. The empirical part of the study is presented in Chapters 6–9. In Chapter 6, I address the temporal meaning of nú and núna and compare the two different forms, their formal characteristics, as well as their functions. In Chapter 7, I address the function of nú as a tone particle. In Chapter 8, I describe nú as an utterance particle, and in Chapter 9, I address the use of nú as a dialogue particle. Finally, in Chapter 10, I offer a summary and a concluding discussion.
2 Background on nú and núna

Although there is not a great deal of material written about the two words nú and núna, this study is not the first to address the topic. In this chapter, I will begin with a discussion of the dictionary definitions of nú and núna (2.1). In the sections that follow, I will summarize the major findings of previous studies (2.2). Then, I will briefly describe the function of the suffix na in modern Icelandic (2.3). This is followed by a discussion of the etymology of the suffix na and attestations of this element and of the adverb núna in medieval Icelandic texts (2.4).

2.1 Nú and núna in dictionaries

The authoritative dictionary of Icelandic (Íslensk orðabók = IO) is the most comprehensive dictionary of the language, and the only dictionary that attempts to give fairly detailed definitions of Icelandic lexemes as they are used today. Comparing two recent editions, the second edition from 1983⁴ and the third edition from 2002, reveals significant differences: the new edition is considerably more comprehensive, it places more emphasis on modern language use, and it takes a more liberal view of loan words and colloquial words.⁵ This edition also has an updated article on nú and núna.

Both editions gloss nú first as a temporal phrase referring to the ongoing moment: á þessari stundu, á líðandi stundu ‘at this moment, in the present moment’ (IO 1983; 2002). This entry is very similar to the entry for núna, which in both editions is defined as nú, einmitt á þessari stundu ‘now, exactly at this moment’ (IO 1983; 2002). In other words, núna is considered to be more precise than nú. However, unlike the entries for temporal nú, there are considerable differences between the entries in the two editions for non-temporal nú. In the second edition (IO 1983), the non-temporal use of nú is defined in the following way:⁶

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⁴ The first edition, which was published in 1963, is very similar to the 1983 edition (IO 1963).
⁵ The two editions have different editors: the second edition is edited by Árni Böðvarsson and the third edition by Mörður Árnason.
⁶ The original entry can be found in Appendix C.
2. With a question: **nú, er hann farinn?** ‘NÚ, is he gone?’

3. For some kind of emphasis, without a specific meaning: [...] *það máttu nú ekki* ‘you can’t NÚ do that.’

4. As a first word in conditional sentences, especially in judicial text: *Nú gerir ríkisstjórnin aðrar ráðstafanir, og skal þá...* ‘NÚ the government takes other measures, and then shall...’

5. As some kind of interjection, as an encouragement: **nú nú, haltu áfram** ‘NÚ NÚ continue!’; to show admiration: **nú nú fáleg eru gullin!** ‘NÚ NÚ the gold/treasure is beautiful’; for assurance or emphasis: **nú nú hættu þessu** ‘NÚ NÚ stop this’; as a part of a sentence replacement: **bitti nú** ‘signalling a pleasant and sometimes ironic surprise;’, **svona nú.** ‘so NÚ.’

The entry in the 1983 edition of *ÍO*, cited above, combines contextual (2 and 4), functional (3), syntactical (4), and grammatical descriptions (5) of *nú* in contemporary Icelandic. This multi-level definition of the non-temporal functions of *nú* reflects a well-known problem that arises in defining particles (cf. Wierzbicka 1986; Foolen 1996).

Wierzbicka (1986: 521) describes particles as “‘illogical,’ non-truth-functional, ‘subjective,’ and generally rather messy,” and, as a result, dictionaries often have insufficient definitions. Phrases such as “without specific meaning” or “semantically bleached” are thus commonly seen in dictionaries (e.g. *ÍO* 2002; cf. also *SAOB* for definitions of Swedish particles). Another way in which dictionaries approach the problem of defining particles is to give examples of common phrases that have been established in the language and are therefore known to speakers (cf. Hakulinen and Saari 1995: 488; cf. also Wierzbicka 1986: 521–2). The examples *bitti nú* and *svona nú* in the definitions above are good examples of such common phrases (see 5 above). In these cases, the function of *nú* itself is not explained.

The third edition of *ÍO* (2002) offers a more detailed description of the non-temporal functions of *nú*. In this edition, the entry on *nú* is divided into two main parts, on *nú* as an adverb and on *nú* as an interjection, on the basis of part-of-speech classification. The adverb *nú* is described as follows:7

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7 These descriptions and the terminology used in this entry have some similarities to statements made in a talk I gave for the Icelandic Grammar Society in May 2002, just a few months before the dictionary was published.
2. A word inserted in [the sentence] which sometimes adds emphasis with some kind of appeal to the recipient, sometimes hedges an assertion or description among other things by giving it a tone of accepted truth, and sometimes suggesting a topical shift in conversation or a monologue […] 

That I can NÚ hardly say. ‘That is NÚ so.’ […]

3. The first word in a sentence in a conversation in which a (true) assertion is presented on which a comment or a question is then based. Nú ert þú gamall Ísfirðingur, hvernig finnst þér … ‘NÚ you are an old Isafjordur inhabitant, what do you think…’ […]

4. (judicial texts) The first word in a conditional clause in which a potential incident is described before it is specified how to respond to it (the main clause usually involves þá ‘then’ and the verb skulu ‘shall’). […] Nú gerir ríkisstjórnin aðrar ráðstafanir, og skal þá… ‘NÚ the government takes other legal actions, and then shall…’

The entries above have been expanded considerably from the earlier edition, particularly in their attention to dialogical aspects of meaning and usage. The function that was characterized “as some kind of emphasis, without a specified meaning” in the 1983 edition is now explained in dialogical terms with notions such as recipient and topical shifts (see 2). The 2002 edition also contains a new entry which consists of a brief description of how nú is used in multi-unit questions8 (see 3). The description of nú in judicial texts has been left essentially unchanged from the previous edition, but it has been expanded upon (see 4).

The interjection nú has, according to ÍO (2002), three different functions. They are defined as follows:

1. Expresses surprise (often with a question), nú, er hann farinn? ‘NÚ, is he gone?’ […] expresses admiration, nú, nú, fæll eru gullin. ‘NÚ NÚ, the gold/treasure is beautiful,’ as assurance or emphasis. nú, nú, hættu þessu. ‘NÚ NÚ, stop this.’ […]

2. Inserted word prompting an answer, encouraging the interlocutor or resuming a narrative after a digression: nú, nú, hvað sagði hann? ‘NÚ NÚ, what did he say?’, nú, efir þetta hélt ég svo áfram niðri bæ… ‘NÚ, after this I continued downtown…’

3. A call to a horse to spur him on.

---

8 The term multi-unit questions will be discussed further in section 7.2.2.
As the list above shows, the entry on nú as an interjection has also been expanded and elaborated relative to the 1983 edition. Dialogical notions such as “prompting an answer” and “resuming a narrative after a digression” have appeared as new functions. The first entry, however, is almost identical to the fourth entry in the second edition.

Comparing the entries in the two editions shows a shift from a simple example-of-use approach to an attempt to give a more detailed definition, somewhat based on dialogical concepts. The dictionary description of nú has therefore improved significantly. Yet, due to limited space and the demand that dictionary entries be concise and general, the description does not fully explain all the complex functions nú has in talk-in-interaction.

2.2 Previous studies of nú and núna

In the following three sections, I will discuss previous studies on nú and núna. First, I will discuss two studies which address the semantic differences between temporal nú and núna (2.2.1). In the second section, I will summarize the non-temporal functions of nú (2.2.2). The third section deals with the use of nú in medieval Icelandic law texts (2.2.3).

2.2.1 The difference between nú and núna

The most detailed study to date that addresses the difference between nú and núna is a study on the suffix na, conducted by J. H. Jónsson (1982). In his study, J. H. Jónsson (1982: 256–7) points out that nú and núna are often interchangeable, although sometimes they are not. When the two forms are interchangeable, he claims that the difference is mainly stylistic: nú belongs to a more formal register, while núna to a more informal. However, J. H. Jónsson does not base his argument on empirical data. Using empirical data, I will show that stylistic arguments do not fully explain this usage dichotomy (see Chapter 6).

When the two types are not interchangeable, J. H. Jónsson (1982: 257) claims that núna refers to a more specific and narrower time frame (cf. also Wide 1998: 248–9). He argues that the suffix na is a deictic marker; added after a deictic such as nú or hér, the deictic becomes more deictic. He supports his argument by pointing out that núna often co-occurs with other temporal deictics which refer to a moment close in time,
such as núna á eftir ‘in a little while,’ or núna áðan ‘just a little while ago.’ The deictics following nú, by contrast, refer to a much broader time frame, for instance nú i vor ‘now this spring’ or nú i ár ‘now this year.’ However, as I show in Chapter 6, there are many examples in my data which illustrate the opposite: núna á síðustu öld ‘now the last century’ contains núna and yet refers to a very broad time frame. Moreover, some expressions containing nú such as nú á þessari stundu ‘now at this moment’ refer to a narrow time frame.

One of the most interesting findings in J. H. Jónsson’s article (1982: 257–8) is his observation about the syntactical distribution of nú and núna (see also Table 6.3). He points out that the two forms have a clear distinction with respect to syntactic position; whereas nú tends to occur first in a sentence, núna tends to occur last. Compare the following two sentences, from J. H. Jónsson (1982: 258):⁹

a) Flugvélin er að lenda núna.
Airplane.DEF be.3 to land.INF NÚNA
‘The airplane is landing NÚNA.’

b) Nú er flugvélin að lenda.
NÚ be.3 airplane.DEF to land.INF
‘NÚ the airplane is landing.’

J. H. Jónsson proposes that the reason for this syntactic distribution is tied to the information structure. He points out that the question the first sentence is answering can be worded: “When is the airplane going to land?” The new and important information¹⁰ in (a) is the time, i.e., ‘now.’ J. H. Jónsson draws the conclusion that since the time reference is more important in (a), núna has a stronger deictic reference. In the second sentence, (b), the time reference is not presented as important new information. Thus, nú is placed in initial position, in the front field.

It is important to keep in mind that J. H. Jónsson’s observations on nú and núna in modern Icelandic are not based on empirical data. He is interpreting his own linguistic intuition and using examples which are isolated from any context. Hence, J. H. Jónsson’s analysis does not take interactional arguments into account. He is primarily interested in how the suffix na affects the grammatical function of the word, i.e., how the suffix makes some anaphoric words deictic. As Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974: 723) have pointed out, however, “some aspects of the syntax of a sentence will be best understood by reference to the jobs that need to be done in a turn-in-a-series,

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⁹ The glossing and translation is mine.
¹⁰ Here, J. H. Jónsson is referring to theme and rheme.
turns being a fundamental place for the occurrence of sentences.” The distributional difference between nú and núna seems to indicate that these instances need to be viewed in their natural environment in conversation.

Considering the indexical nature of both nú and núna, I propose that a sequential analysis of naturally occurring interaction could contribute to a better understanding of how interlocutors make distinct choices between the two types. Wide’s (1998) study of nú and núna in radio conversation is a step in this direction. The data used in her study are taken from a phone-in program on the Icelandic state radio, Bjóðarsálin ‘The soul of the nation,’ from 1996. It includes approximately 85,000 words among which she found 821 instances of nú, i.e., almost one instance for every hundred words. The results indicate that nú is a highly frequent word in modern Icelandic (Wide 1998: 246). These results show that nú is even more common in spoken interaction than in written texts. According to the frequency dictionary of Icelandic, nú on the one hand is the 38th most frequent word in modern Icelandic, with 1,284 instances in a corpus of 500,000 words (Pind, F. Magnússon and S. Briem 1991). These instances occur in all 100 texts included in the corpus. Núna, on the other hand, is clearly less frequent and occurs 148 times in 50 different texts.

Wide agrees with J. H. Jónsson that the difference between nú and núna could possibly be related to the exactness of the time reference. However, she does not exclude the possibility that the two forms have different interactional functions (Wide 1998: 249). In order to find that difference, she points out, it is necessary to make a more detailed analysis using a larger and more varied corpus.

2.2.2 The non-temporal functions of nú

Wide (1998: 248) notes that there are actually comparatively few instances of nú as a temporal marker in her data. Instead, the temporal meaning is most often indexed with núna. She draws the conclusion that nú may be going through a grammaticalization process, and that it is nowadays mostly reserved for a more pragmatic meaning (Wide 1998: 249). This pragmatic meaning is, as she finds, complex, layered, and not easily identified. Thus, Wide makes the position of nú in the turn her point of departure. She classifies examples of nú into four different categories: (i) nú as a temporal adverb, (ii)

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11 Some of the data are used in the present study (see Chapter 5), including excerpt (1.1) above.
12 Wide (1998) compared her results with Hakulinen and Saari’s (1995) study on nu and nyt in Finland Swedish and Finnish. According to Wide (1998: 246), these two studies show that Icelandic nú is far more frequent than nu and nyt.
nú as an initial discourse marker,\textsuperscript{13} (iii) nú as a backchannel,\textsuperscript{14} and, finally, (iv) nú as a medial discourse marker.

Wide suggests that nú as an initial discourse marker typically marks a transition to new subtopics. She compares this function to the textual functions that similar words in other languages have been shown to have, for instance, \textit{now} in English (Schiffrin 1987). Wide does not, however, distinguish between syntactically integrated and non-integrated nú (see Table 4.1). In this study, integrated, non-temporal nú will be referred to as a \textit{tone particle} (see Chapter 7), while non-integrated nú will be referred to as an \textit{utterance particle} (see Chapter 8). The following excerpt, which is taken directly from Wide’s study and translated by me, shows an instance of the latter type. Here, RP is telling a moderator and radio listeners about a trip he has just been on in Germany. Wide compares this use of nú in line 4 to the use of the English now as described by Schiffrin (1987: 237), i.e., as a discourse marker signalling shifts between different parts of a list:

\begin{equation}
(2.1) \text{(Wide 1998:250)}
\end{equation}

\begin{align*}
1 & \quad \text{RP Við flugum til Frankfurt (Kvs: já)}^{15} \text{ og svo fór- og svo we flew to Frankfurt (Kvs: yes) and then we went- and then} \\
2 & \quad \text{keyrðum við til Rothenburg og var þar eina nótt (Kvs: uhum) we drove to Rothenburg and were there one night (Kvs: uh huh)} \\
3 & \quad \text{og svo fórum við til Kempten í Suður-Þýskalandi. Vorum þrjár and then we went to Kempten in South Germany. We were three} \\
\rightarrow & \quad \text{nætur þar (Kvs: jäh) nú svo fórum við að smella okkur yfir nights there (Kvs: yeah) NÚ and then we started popping over} \\
5 & \quad \text{Alpana. /.../ the Alps /.../}
\end{align*}

In Wide’s (1998: 251) study, over 70% of the instances of nú are described as medial discourse markers. This type is syntactically integrated in a syntactic construction and it typically occurs directly after the finite verb: \textit{En svona er nú lífið ‘but that’s NÚ life.’} She describes the function of these instances as marking in some way the speaker’s attitude towards his or her utterance. Wide compares some of the pragmatic functions of \textit{nu} described in the comprehensive Swedish dictionary (\textit{Svenska

\textsuperscript{13} Wide uses the term \textit{discourse marker} for what I will refer to as a \textit{tone particle} (see section 3.4.1).}\\
\textsuperscript{14} This is what I will refer to as a \textit{dialogue particle} (see 3.4.3).}\\
\textsuperscript{15} Short backchannels are here notated within brackets in the same line as the speaker’s turn.
The interactional functions of *nu* and *nyt* in Swedish and Finnish described by Hakulinen and Saari (1995) (see section 3.2.1). She argues that medial *nú* is usually emphatic and occurs where speakers are expressing their conviction or belief (Wide 1998: 252; cf. also Andvik 1992 on *nu* in Norwegian). In addition, Wide (1998: 252) argues, medial *nú* has a text-binding function in that it refers to something that has happened earlier in the discourse (cf. even Andvik 1992: 96). These instances often occur when the speakers are expressing their own opinions or when they are creating a context in which the co-participants can respond by expressing their opinions (Wide 1998: 252).

The main function of *nú* as a backchannel is, according to Wide (1998: 250–1), to express surprise or reservation. She points out that *nú* usually prompts an explanation or a motivation for what has just been said. As with *nú* as an initial discourse marker, *nú* as a backchannel often signals some kind of objection. In the following excerpt, the moderator, Kvs, receives a phone-call from a man who wants to get the phone number of a woman who wants to sell a stuffed falcon. A’s *nú* in line 4 functions, according to Wide, as a surprise marker:

(2.2) (Wide 1998: 251) (→9.5)
(Kvs = Moderator; A = Caller)

1 Kvs /.../ þáð var að hringja hér hæstaréttarlögmaður og segja okkur
   /.../ a supreme court judge was just calling and telling us

2 að samkvæmt fuglafriðunarlógum mega einstaklingar ekki eiga
   that according to bird protection laws individuals are not allowed to own

3 erni og fálka uppstoppaða eða stoppa þá upp sjálfir.
   eagles and falcons stuffed or stuff them themselves

   (A: *nú*). Þeim ber að skila til ríkisins (A: já, já) /.../
   (A: NÚ). They should be returned to the state (A: yeah okay) /.../

Although Wide’s aim is not to make a very detailed analysis of the different functions of *nú*, her study clearly shows that *nú* has highly interactional functions, functions which require further investigation. A more detailed analysis beyond this general description may provide some insight as to how the four different functions, which at first may seem quite unrelated, are actually connected.
2.2.3 *Nú* in judicial texts

As mentioned above, *nú* is often used in judicial texts. ÍO (2002) does not explicitly specify whether *nú* in such utterances has temporal functions or not. Instead, *nú* in judicial texts is characterized as: “a first word in a conditional clause where a potential incident is described before it is stated how it should be responded to” (my translation and emphasis). In other words, the definition is based on the syntactic position of *nú* rather than its function. S. Blöndal’s (1920–4) Icelandic-Danish dictionary describes such *nú* as an initiating particle, while H. Bráinsson (2005: 130) describes their function as being temporal.

It is important to keep in mind that law codes form a highly specific genre in which the use of certain sentence structures and phrases is a part of a long tradition, originating in Nordic oral tradition (cf. G. Nordal, S. Tómasson, and V. Ólason 1992). Thus, the use of *nú* described above is neither a modern construction, nor is it restricted only to Icelandic. In fact, such use of *nú* (or *nu*) is also used in medieval law codes from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden (cf. Naumann 1979). Consider the following excerpt from the Icelandic medieval law code *Grágás*:

(2.3) *Grágás*

Sonr a arf at taca at föðor sín oc moðor frials boríñ oc arfgengr. **Nu** er eigi sonr til ða scal taca dottir. **Nu** er eigi dottir. ða scal taca faðir. ða broðir samféðri. ða móðir. **Nu** er eigi hon til. ða scal taca systir samféðra. (cited from *Grágás* 1852: 218)

‘A son free born and a lawful heir is to inherit on the death of his father and mother. **If** a son does not exist, then a daughter is to inherit. **If** a daughter does not exist, then the father is to inherit, then a brother born of the same father, then the mother. **If** she does not exist, then a sister born of the same father is to inherit.’

(Transl. Dennis, Foote and Perkins 2000: 3)

The excerpt begins by stating that it is the *son* who is the primary heir after the parents. In the second sentence, a potential scenario is presented: **Nu** er eigi sonr til ‘If a son does not exist (lit. *Now* there is no son),’ followed by a description of a proper response: ða scal taca dottir ‘then a daughter is to inherit.’ This pattern is then repeated.

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16 The two main sources for *Grágás*, *Konungsþók* and *Staðarhólsþók*, are estimated to have been written shortly after the middle of the 13th century (cf. G. Nordal, S. Tómasson, and V. Ólason 1992: 563).
Although the historic development of *nú* and *núna* is not within the scope of this study, the examples found in the medieval law code show that *nú* has a long history of serving functions other than temporal ones. Furthermore, some functions of *nú* in contemporary Icelandic are in many ways reminiscent of the use of *nú* in medieval law (see 7.2.2).

### 2.2.4 Summary

In the last three sections, I have been discussing previous research on *nú* and *núna*. The discussion was divided into three different sections: First, I addressed the temporal functions of *nú* and *núna*; secondly, the non-temporal functions of *nú*; and thirdly, the function of *nú* in judicial texts. The first two sections were mainly based on J. H. Jónsson (1982) and Wide (1998). J. H. Jónsson’s and Wide’s results are compared in Table 2.1. The table also summarizes the two editions of *Íslensk orðabók* (1983; 2002) which were presented in section 2.2:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>-Adverb</td>
<td>-Adverb</td>
<td>-Adverb</td>
<td>-Temporal adverb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interjection</td>
<td>-Interjection</td>
<td>-Interjection</td>
<td>Discourse marker</td>
<td>-Discourse marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Back-channeling signal</td>
<td>-Back-channeling signal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic or turn position</td>
<td>-In the adverbial position</td>
<td>-In the adverbial position</td>
<td>-Initial</td>
<td>Initial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Non-integrated interjection</td>
<td>-Non-integrated interjection</td>
<td>-Medial</td>
<td>Medial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-As an independent turn</td>
<td>As an independent turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special syntactic structures</td>
<td>-With questions</td>
<td>-As the first word in a sentence that includes a statement upon which a question or a second statement is then based.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-First word in conditional sentences</td>
<td>-First word in conditional sentences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function 1 (Adverb/discourse marker)</td>
<td>-Some kind of emphasis without a specific meaning</td>
<td>-Emphasizes</td>
<td>-Shows the speaker’s attitude towards the utterance</td>
<td>Shows the speaker’s attitude towards the utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Appeals to the recipient</td>
<td>-Organizes and structures</td>
<td>Organizes and structures</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Hedges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Indicates topical shifts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function 2 (Interjection/back channeling signal)</td>
<td>-To show admiration</td>
<td>-Expresses surprise</td>
<td>-Expresses surprise or reservation</td>
<td>Expresses surprise or reservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-To assure, emphasize</td>
<td>-Expresses assurance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-In conventionalized phrases</td>
<td>-Prompts an answer or encourages the interlocutor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The difference between nú and núna</td>
<td>-Núna more exact</td>
<td>-Núna more exact</td>
<td>-Núna more exact</td>
<td>Núna more exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Stylistic</td>
<td>Stylistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Syntactical difference</td>
<td>Syntactical difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Information structure</td>
<td>Information structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 J. H. Jónsson’s (1982) main focus is to characterize the suffix na. Therefore, he only sets out to discuss nú and núna as temporal markers, although he mentions that nú is sometimes used with non-temporal meaning.
Non-temporal \textit{nú} is treated in a similar fashion in ÍÓ (1983; 2002) and Wide (1998). The adverb or discourse marker is described as an emphatic and discourse structuring marker that can have interpersonal functions (i.e. as a tone particle or utterance particle). The non-temporal interjection or back-channel is described as a token that expresses surprise, or prompts the interlocutor and encourages him to continue his turn.

Regarding the difference between the two forms \textit{nú} and \textit{núna}, S. Jónsson (1976), J. H. Jónsson (1982), and Wide (1998) seem to agree that \textit{núna} refers to a more precise point in time than \textit{nú}. In addition to this argument, J. H. Jónsson (1982) claims that the difference is mainly a matter of different stylistic registers. However, as I will show, there does not seem to be empirical evidence for either of these assumptions.\footnote{However, as pointed out above, this study does not address the use of \textit{nú} and \textit{núna} in written texts.} J. H. Jónsson’s third argument is more convincing. He argues that, on the one hand, because \textit{núna} is used in a sentence-final position where time is the new and important information, \textit{núna} is more closely linked to the temporal origo than \textit{nú}. \textit{Nú}, on the other hand, is typically used first in sentences where time is not the new and important information.

The non-temporal \textit{nú} has been treated in fairly general terms also and interactional regularities have not yet been described in any detail. I will show that studies based on conversational data reveal patterns in the use of this particle, and, as a result, identify the common denominator in the different functions of \textit{nú}. The earlier studies mentioned above offer some excellent insights and a good foundation for studies such as the one which I will present here.

### 2.3 The function of the suffix \textit{na} in \textit{nú(na)}, \textit{hér(na)}, \textit{þar(na)}, and \textit{svo(na)}

Before I proceed to discuss the meaning and function of \textit{nú} and \textit{núna}, I should point out that the suffix \textit{na} is not only limited to the temporal deictic \textit{nú}. The function of \textit{na} suffixed to other adverbs might give us some clues about how it works with \textit{nú}. Modern Icelandic has four adverbs that have, besides their basic forms, a form ending in \textit{na}: \textit{nú(na)} ‘now,’ \textit{hér(na)} ‘here,’ \textit{þar(na)} ‘there,’ and \textit{svo(na)} ‘so.’

According to standard descriptions of contemporary Icelandic, on the one hand, the suffix \textit{na} does not make any significant difference for the deictics \textit{nú(na)} and...
hér(na); each of the forms with or without na seem to have very similar, or even the same, meanings (cf. J. H. Jónsson 1982). For þar(na) and svo(na), on the other hand, the suffix can change the grammatical function of the word from anaphoric to deictic.¹⁹

According to J. H. Jónsson (1982: 221–223), þar and svo have anaphoric functions, that is, they refer back to something said earlier in the discourse. The secondary forms þarna and svona, by contrast, refer to something in the physical context. They function as deictics.²⁰ Therefore, J. H. Jónsson (1982) argues, sentence (a) below refers to a place mentioned in a previous sentence, while the interpretation of (b) is based on the time and place in which the utterance is produced:

a) Leigubíllinn stóð þar
taxi.DEF stand.3.PT there
‘The taxi stood there’

b) Leigubíllinn stóð þarna
taxi.DEF stand.3.PT over there
‘The taxi stood over there’

Table 2.2 shows the functional difference between the four adverbs in contemporary Icelandic, according to J. H. Jónsson (1982):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anaphoric function</th>
<th>Deictic function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>þar ‘there’</td>
<td>þarna ‘over there (pointing)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svo ‘so, then’</td>
<td>svona ‘like this (showing)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hér / héra ‘here’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nú / núna ‘now’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to these adverbs, a few deictics and demonstratives have the same ending, although they do not have parallel forms. The following definitions are from ÍO (2002):

¹⁹ The suffix na also existed in a reduplicated form, such as in hérnana and þarnana (S. Jónsson 1976).
²⁰ However, J. H. Jónsson (1982: 227) points out that þarna and svona may in some cases have anaphoric functions as well.
(sv)arna!  [...] Occurs with an object as some kind of emphasis (sometimes with a pejorative meaning or without a specific meaning) maðurinn sú arna ‘that man,’ stúlkan sú arna/stúlkan svarna ‘that girl,’taskan sú arna ‘That bag.’ [...] 

(a)tarna!  Used for various reasons, sometimes pejorative, sometimes as some kind of term of endearment, sometimes without a specific meaning [...] hvað er að tarna? ‘what’s wrong?’ [...] tarna var auman ‘that was bad.’

hana (nú!)  Interjection that signals that something is handed over, that something has changed or is about to change, e.g. that something is ready or finished, or that it is time to start something. Svona! Nú! Hérna!: hana, þarna kemur hann loksins! ‘Well, there he is finally!’ hana, taktu á móti ‘there you are, take this,’ hana nú, þá er ég búinn ‘there you go, I’m done.’ [...] 

The deictics and demonstratives listed above are typical for the spoken language. They are highly conventionalized and it is difficult to translate them into English. Most of these words are, as a result, only explained by means of usage examples in ÍO.

Icelandic is the only Nordic standard language that has developed side forms of deictics ending in na. However, similar pairs of forms can, for instance, be found in some Swedish dialects, such as nunna ‘now,’ hänna ‘here,’ and dänna ‘there’ (Hellqvist 1922), and in certain phrases used only in spoken Swedish: såna härna ‘this kind’ (SAOB: här).

2.4 The etymology of núna

Núna is, as J. H. Jónsson (1982) explains, secondary to nú, and is formed with the basic form nú and the suffix na. According to the etymological dictionary of Icelandic (Á. B. Magnússon 1989) the suffix na can be traced back to common Scandinavian nā and Proto-Germanic nē. It is related to the ending –n seen in adverbs like aftan ‘from the back’ and hēðan ‘from here’ and may be related to the Indo-European demonstrative stem *eno, *ono. De Vries (1962) traces the na in hérna to Proto-Germanic nō. The na forms in Icelandic can be traced back at least to the 13th century (J. H. Jónsson 1982: 233).
The suffix *na* was originally used in Icelandic as an independent interjection to express a feeling of surprise or disgust (Á. B. Magnússon 1989). This interjection does not seem to exist any longer in modern Icelandic.21 The feeling of surprise can instead be expressed with particles such as *nú* and *no*, which, according to *ÍO* (2002), are used to express surprise or annoyance: *no, svona för það þá* ‘mmm, so that’s how it goes.’ Although *na* is regarded as archaic in Icelandic, it is still frequently used independently as a dialogue particle, for instance in German22 and various Slavic languages such as Russian.23 The function may vary slightly between languages, but the common denominator seems to be an expressive or demonstrative function. The Icelandic particle *na* occurs in the modern language only as a suffix, and, as such, *na* has been characterized as having an emphatic function (*ÍO* 2002; J. H. Jónsson 1982: 258). As J. H. Jónsson (1982: 236–7) has shown, however, the function of the suffix *na* has changed through the centuries.

In order to find out how the suffix *na* was used in old Icelandic, S. Jónsson (1976) excerpted instances of *na* in Icelandic medieval literature. His study accounts for a total of 56 instances of *na*. More than half of these instances, or 35, occur as a suffix in the adverb *hérna*. In 28 instances, *na* co-occurs with the imperative of *sjá* ‘see’ (S. Jónsson 1976: 15). The other adverbs mentioned in Table 2.2 only occur a few times each: there are five instances of *parna* and *svona* respectively, and only three instances of *núna*. *Nú*, however, is a highly frequent word in the Icelandic family sagas. In fact, it is higher on the frequency list in the saga literature than in modern Icelandic (cf. E. Rögnvaldsson, B. Kristjánsdóttir and Ö. Thorsson 1996; Pind 1991).24

Based on the empirical data presented in S. Jónsson’s (1976) study, J. H. Jónsson (1982: 236) makes some interesting observations regarding the use of *na* in medieval literature:

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21 Also related to *na* is the Icelandic interjection *nà*. The etymological dictionary of Icelandic (Á. B. Magnússon 1989) describes the latter interjection as an exclamation expressing surprise or interest.

22 Grimms’ German dictionary suggests that *na* is a weakened form of *nu* and *nun* (*Grimms Deutsches Woerterbuch* 1889).

23 According to a Russian-Icelandic dictionary (H. Haraldsson 1996), *na* in Russian may be translated by *hana!* or *hérna!*

24 Frequent use of *nú* is regarded as a certain stylistic effect in the storytelling of the sagas, which is often referred to as *narrative style* (cf. S. Blöndal 1920-1924): *nú víkur sögunni til ...* ‘Now the story goes to ...’
a) *Na* only occurs in direct speech

b) *Na* is often uttered when someone is pointing at something, showing something or trying to get someone’s attention towards something

c) Most instances of *hérna* occur after the imperative *sjáðu* ‘see’

In addition to these observations, J. H. Jónsson points out that all instances of *na* occur close to deictic words, although they are not always cliticized or placed directly after the deictic. The suffix *na* occurs in the saga literature also after pronouns (*þatna* ‘it’), prepositions (*vitna* ‘with/by’), verbs (*varna* ‘was’), other adverbs,\(^{25}\) or even as an autonomous word.\(^{26}\) Furthermore, J. H. Jónsson (1982: 237) points out that, in Old Icelandic, the adverbs *par* and *parna* did not have different grammatical functions: they could both function deictically or anaphorically. Thus, he concludes that “the suffix *na*” only served as a general emphasis (cf. also B. K. Þórólfsson 1925: 121). It is only later in history that the two forms *par* and *parna* develop in two different directions: *par* as anaphora and *parna* as deixis (see section 2.3 above).

In his study of Old Icelandic, J. H. Jónsson seems to assume that *na* is essentially used to emphasize one particular word, e.g., a deictic or a pronoun. However, I will argue that instead of emphasizing one particular word, it modifies the utterance as a whole. Therefore, rather than being interpreted as a suffix, *na* could be seen as an emphatic particle (cf. Chapter 3 for a discussion on particles). There are several arguments in the literature that support this, including S. Jónsson’s (1976) and J. H. Jónsson’s (1982) arguments mentioned above. In addition, I have made the observation that *na* is typically used in responsive utterances, for instance in emphatic replies, refusals, and denials. Consider the following extract from *Heiðarvígs saga*, which some scholars consider the oldest extant saga and which is dated back to the early 13th century (G. Nordal, S. Tómasson and V. Ólason 1992: 316–7):

\(^{25}\) B. K. Þórólfsson (1925: 121) and S. Jónsson (1976: 18) point out that, in the 16th century, this suffix was particularly common with adverbs ending with *liga/lega* (related to the English adverbial ending *–ly*). Written sources, primarily religious texts, show that this was used at least until the 17th century.

\(^{26}\) It should also be pointed out that the saga literature is from a time span that stretches over 300 years and is written by different people from different parts of Iceland. In addition, there was no standardized writing at this point and writing *-na* as an isolated word or as a suffix could represent two different ways to write the same thing.
In this extract, the adverb *hér* ‘here’ occurs two times in a direct quote. The first instance is used without the suffix *na*, and it occurs right after the finite verb. The speaker, Barði, is trying to draw Ketil’s attention to the bloody sword in an attempt to provoke a desire for revenge. When Barði does not get an adequate response, he repeats his message even more emphatically than before and asks again if Ketil thinks he has nothing to avenge. In this instance, Barði adds the suffix *na* to the deictic *hér* ‘here,’ and, at the same time, he shakes the sword in front of Ketil. Notice also that *hérna* occurs right after the imperative of *sjá* ‘see.’

In the following extract, the suffix *na* occurs after the pronoun *þess* ‘that.GEN.’ This story is from around the beginning of the 14th century (*Medieval Scandinavia* 1993: 243):

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27 This excerpt is based on a printed version, written with standardized orthography, and, thus, it is not identical with an original manuscript. Nonetheless, this version demonstrates the kind of environment in which the suffix *na* occurs.
(2.5) Gríms saga loðinkinna (The Saga of Grimr with the Shaggy Chin)\(^ {28} \)

En er Feima kom inn í hellinn, heilsuðu þau henni, ok spurðu, hvar Kleima, systir hennar, væri; hún svarar: gettu þessna!, hún liggr dauð út með fjörum, en ek særð banasári; en þið liggið inni ok fletizt hér við eld. (cited from Fornaldarsögur Nordrlanda, annat bindi, 1829:147)

But when Feima came in to the cave, they greeted her and asked where Kleima, her sister, was. She answers: “Guess that(na), she lies dead on the shore, but I have a lethal wound. But you are lying in here by the fire.” (My translation.)

In (2.5), the suffix *na* occurs final in an imperative clause. The imperative clause is used here rhetorically to show a very strong response to a question, similar to “Guess what!” in English.

The two instances of *núna* found in medieval literature also occur in similar environments. The oldest instance occurs in the Flateyjarbók version of Ólafs saga hins helga from the 14\(^{th} \) century:

(2.6) Ólafs saga hins helga (Saga of saint Olaf)\(^ {29} \)

þa mælti Kalli vid Asmund. oft talar þu at þer se mikil foruitnne a at sia hann Asbiorn Selsbana. ek kann æigi skip at kenna ef han siglir æigi her nu. Asmundr suarar. gerdu suo vel felagi ef þu kennir hann at þu segir mer til hans. þa renduzst hia skipin. þa mælti Kalli. þar er hann selsbani núna uit styrit j blam kyrtil. (Cited from Flateyjarbók II 1860–8: 238)

‘Then Karli said to Asmundr: “You often say that you are curious to see Asbjorn the Seal-slayer. I have no idea how to recognize ships if he is not sailing over there.” Asmundr answers: “Be so kind, my companion, tell me if you recognize him.” Then the ships passed each other and Karli said: “There he is the Seal-slayer now by the rudder wearing a blue cloak.”’ (My translation.)

This instance of *núna* occurs in direct speech, precisely as the other instances I showed in excerpts (2.4) and (2.5). Karli is telling Asmundr that he thinks he sees Asbjorn the Seal-slayer, and Asmundr asks Karli to confirm when he knows for sure. When the two ships meet, Karli exclaims that it is indeed Asbjorn who sits behind the steer: *þar er hann selsbani núna uit styrit j blam kyrtil* “There he is the Seal-slayer now by the rudder wearing a blue cloak.”

\(^ {28} \) This excerpt is based on a printed version, written with standardized orthography.

\(^ {29} \) This extract is a diplomatic version which attempts, as far as is possible, to present the manuscript as it actually appears.
These observations on the usage of na in medieval literary dialogues suggest that, at the time of the writing, na was used in speech as an emphatic particle. The grammaticalization process might already have begun in the 12th century, which explains why the most common context for na is as a clitic after the adverb hér, especially with the imperative sjá. This indicates, already in the 12th century, that na in this particular environment had already begun to become routinized by frequent use (cf. Hopper and Traugott 1993: 64–5). This seems to have resulted in the emergence of the side forms mentioned above hér(na), þar(na), nú(na), and svo(na); hérna is most likely the oldest one (cf. J. H. Jónsson 1982).

Once side forms have emerged, the pairs can potentially start to develop in different directions. In the cases of þar-þarna and svo-svona, the result of the grammaticalization process is rather clear (J. H. Jónsson 1982). In modern Icelandic, these two words have different grammatical functions. The pair hér-hérna has, according to J. H. Jónsson (1982), not developed in different directions, although he points out that an in-depth analysis could show some differences.

The potential difference between nú and núna is the subject of this study, and, in Chapter 6, I will show that these two words have indeed developed in two different directions.

### 2.5 Summary

In Chapter 2, I have summarized how nú and núna are described in the literature. The overview was divided into two main parts. In the first part, I discussed how nú and núna have been defined in two editions of the Icelandic dictionary ÍO (1983; 2002). I then compared the dictionary definitions to the findings of three different studies (S. Jónsson 1976; J. H. Jónsson 1982; Wide 1998). The discussion shows that although these studies offer many valuable insights, there is a need for a more detailed study to acquire a better understanding of the difference between temporal nú and núna, as well as the systematics of the uses of non-temporal nú.

In the second part, I explored the historical roots of the suffix na. This section was mainly based on S. Jónsson’s (1976) and J. H. Jónsson’s (1982) study of na in medieval Icelandic literature. In his study, J. H. Jónsson showed that in medieval Icelandic the suffix na was mainly used as a general marker of emphasis, following not only deictic adverbs, as it does today, but also pronouns and adverbs. As well, na occurred in some cases as an independent token. Based on J. H. Jónsson’s study and
my own findings in medieval texts, I conclude that *na* can be described as a particle which adds emphasis to the utterance as a whole.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the theoretical framework for this study.
3 Time, indexicality, and particles

In this chapter, I will discuss the theoretical framework for the empirical part of this study. I will begin with a brief discussion of time, temporality, and the perception of time in Western culture (3.1). This opening discussion is then followed by a section on the nature of indexicality. A special focus will be placed on temporal deictics, especially Icelandic nú(na) and English now (3.2). In the section which follows (3.3), I will turn to non-referential indexes, or indexes which do not have a referential meaning. After a general discussion of these entities, I will give an overview of the theoretical framework for particles (3.4). I start with a general discussion of the concept of particles, followed by a brief summary of the ways particles have been categorized. In the remainder of the chapter, I will focus on the three categories which are most relevant for the study of nú: tone particles (3.4.1), utterance particles (3.4.2), and dialogue particles (3.4.3).

3.1 Time and temporality

Time is a complex notion which is expressed in many ways: for example, with tense, aspect, or lexicon. We can indicate that something happened earlier than something else, or that it had a certain duration. Time, however, does not exist only as something to be referred to; utterances are also produced within time (Clark 1996: 170–1; Auer et al. 1999).

Languages can express time as basically cyclical or basically linear (cf. discussion in Viimaranta 2006: 16–7). Cyclical time is based on the repetition of events, such as the alternation between day and night, or winter and summer. As such, time is seen as something that comes back to us again and again. Although the cyclical conceptualization of time is mostly associated with pre-modern times, natural cycles clearly play an important role in modern Western languages. Linear time, as a contrast, conceptualizes time as being one-dimensional and unidirectional (cf. Fillmore 1997 [1971]: 45). According to this view, all events are sequential and the intervals between them can be measured (Clark 1996: 170–1; Fillmore 1997 [1971]: 46). Consequently, the metaphorical mapping of time is often a line on which the events are placed with intervals in a specific order.
In Western languages, there are two different temporal systems: absolute time and relative time (Fillmore 1997 [1971]; Viimaranta 2006: 18–9). Absolute time, on the one hand, refers to situation-independent cultural notions such as year, day, or a specified time measured in hours and minutes. Relative time, on the other hand, acquires its meaning in situated interaction. In other words, it is indexical.

### 3.2 Indexicality and temporal deictics

*Indexicality* or *deixis* is defined by Ochs (1988: 9) as “the property of a sign as an indicator of some aspect of the situational context in which the sign is being used.” These indexes exemplify a structure which becomes “conventionally associated with particular situational dimensions such that when that structure is used, the form invokes these situational dimensions” (Ochs 1996: 411). Within linguistics, the most heavily mined area of study has involved categories which Silverstein (1976: 30) refers to as *referential indexes*. Referential indexes are words which contribute to the referential speech event, such as personal, spatial, and temporal deictics: *who* is speaking and what is his relationship to other persons; *where* is the speaker located and what is the spatial relationship to the referred object; and *when* is the utterance produced and what is the temporal relationship to the referred moment? The temporal *nú* and *núna*, which anchor the coded message to the utterance time, are thus clearly referential.

Deictic fields are conceptualized as domains and zones. The *domains*, on the one hand, include personal, spatial, and temporal deixis. A *zone*, on the other hand, is “a portion of the deictic field based on a single participant or configuration of participants” (Hanks 1996: 242). Thus, deictics, such as *I, here,* and *now,* belong to the *proximal zone,* the sphere of the speaker, while *she,* *there,* and *then* belong to the *distal zone.*

Deictic domains that routinely co-occur in specific forms often form socially constructed frameworks of knowledge which Fillmore (1978: 165) refers to as *frames.* Each lexical item belonging to such a frame indexes a portion of the conceptual whole

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30 This is also known as calendric time (Levinson 1983:73; Fillmore 1997 [1971]: 49).
31 For more discussion of the semantics and pragmatics of deixis see, for instance, Bühler (1934), Fillmore (1997 [1971]), Lyons (1977), Levinson (1983), and Hanks (1996).
32 Utterance time refers to the time of coding and decoding, i.e., the time when an utterance is produced by a speaker and received by a co-participant.
(Fillmore 1978: 165; Hanks 1996: 243). The personal pronouns are an example of a single deictic frame; These pronouns conceptualize the participants in a conversation and other people who are being talked about. In a similar fashion, the temporal deictics nú(na) and þá form a deictic frame in Icelandic in which nú(na) belongs to the proximal zone: an unspecified stretch of time which includes the ongoing moment. þá, by comparison, refers to an unspecified time in the past or in the future which does not include the ongoing moment. Figure 3.1 is my illustration of the relationship between nú(na) and þá:

![Figure 3.1: Nú(na) and þá on the proximal and distal axis](image)

On the timeline in the figure, nú and núna are placed in the middle, in the proximal zone, while þá refers to the distal zone, to a time in the past or in the future. Nú forms the origo and the distal deictic þá is defined in relation to it (Hanks 1996).

Hanks (1996: 241) has pointed out that deictic frames have sometimes been described as “calques of objective placement in space and time.” A usage-based account of deictics must recognize that the contexts which provide for the understanding of deictics are socio-cultural in nature, and, therefore, non-static and constantly subject to negotiation (ibid.). The deictic field is thus “not an objective grid, but a social experimental one” (ibid.: 266), where the actual meaning of the deictic is negotiated and settled upon in interaction.

Fillmore (1997 [1971]: 68) defines the main function of the temporal proximal deictic category which includes words such as the English now and Icelandic nú(na) as “that of identifying a particular time as coinciding with, being close to, or being contained in the same larger time unit as, the moment of speech, or the coding time.”

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33 The origo is also known as the indexical ground (Lyons 1977) or deictic centre (Fillmore 1997 [1971]).
34 Coding time is the time when the utterance is produced (Fillmore 1997 [1971]: 67).
Schiffrin (1987: 228) refers to this function as *reference time*, which she defines as “the deictic relationship between a proposition and its speaking time.”

Fillmore’s definition reflects the indistinct nature of the temporal origo, which can refer to longer as well as shorter units and coincide with or occur close to the specified moment. In Fillmore’s (1997 [1971]: 68) example, “John lives in Chicago now,” *now* refers to a long unit which coincides with the utterance time. The utterance “I want you to turn the corner … right … now,” on the other hand, refers to a very brief moment which occurs close to the specified moment (ibid.). It can thus be said that *now* has a dynamic meaning potential and has the ability to express short moments as well as longer periods.

Fillmore points out that this ambiguity often causes speakers to specify the time frame with adverbs, such as *right now*, if something is happening in the near future, or *just now*, if something has just happened (see also Table 6.5). Fillmore (1997 [1971]: 48) refers to the longer units as *time periods* and the shorter ones as *time points*. Time periods are essentially defined by time points, or, more precisely, by beginning and ending points. Time periods can be compared with each other; one time period can be longer or shorter than another.

In addition to indexing a temporal relation between a proposition and its utterance time, the English *now* can also refer to a discourse internal time, i.e., it may index “the temporal relationships between utterances in a discourse” (Schiffrin 1987: 229). Following Schiffrin (1987), such temporal relationship is referred to as *discourse time*.

Speech is produced in real time. Thus, each time *ní* is uttered, the origo is anchored in a “new” moment. This means that the origo is a dynamic phenomena which is constantly shifting. Fillmore’s (1997 [1971]: 68) example, “now you see it, now you don’t,” shows the origo shifting with the progress of time. In addition to this constant renewing, ‘now’ can also be decentered or transpositioned (cf. Hanks 1990; Haviland 1996). The most obvious example of transpositioning is the use of deictics in direct quotation. In utterances such as *hún var bara:* “*Ní* er hingað og ekki lengra” ‘She was just: “NÚ that’s it!”’ the origo is transpositioned from the speaker’s perspective to the perspective of the person who is being quoted. The use of *ní* in judicial texts may be viewed as the result of a similar mechanism, one in which the temporal origo is transposed to a potential situation (cf. section 2.2.3).

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35 The notion of *meaning potential* is based on the idea that all expressions acquire their meaning in context. Instead of treating expressions as having a stable, unchangeable meaning, they should be viewed as vague, open, and negotiable (Rommetveit 1988, Linell 1998: 199; Allwood 2003; cf. also Silverstein 1976: 51 on referential primes).
The existence of two different forms for indexing the present moment is by no means unique to Icelandic. Some other languages have two, or even more, options. Grenoble (1998: 99–104) shows that although Russian has two words for ‘now,’ sejčas and teper’, these two words are not synonyms, and they are not interchangeable in all environments. Instead, he identifies two functions for sejčas and two for teper’. On the one hand, he describes sejčas as referring to a) a *stretch of time* coinciding or including the reference point as it is established in the discourse, or b) referring to a *point in time* which is adjacent to the temporal reference point, as it is established in the discourse: *Sejčas on zanjat* ‘He’s busy now’ (Grenoble 1998: 100–1). Teper’, on the other hand, c) indicates a given period implicitly related to what took place before the given period or d) is used as a conjunction when something is completed, and it is desirable to go on to something else. In c), the situation brought up is connected with a previous situation: *Ona ran’se vsegda vrala i teper’ sovret* ‘She has always lied in the past and she will lie now,’ but, in d), there is some kind of transition involved: *Issledovanie moe zakončeno; teper’ mne ostaetsja poblagodar’ tex, kto mne tak mnogo pomog* ‘My research is finished; now I need to thank those who helped me so much.’

In this study, I am arguing that the Icelandic nú and núna have a similar division of labour as sejčas and teper’, and that it is this functional difference which makes it possible for nú to develop its function as a non-referential index.

### 3.3 Non-referential indexes

Silverstein (1976: 30) uses the term non-referential indexes to refer to words which “signal the structure of the speech context.” Similarly, Sorjonen (2001: 17) sees them as “a *lexicalization* or *grammaticalization* of a particular aspect of the context.” The notion of non-referential indexes is, therefore, closely related to what Gumperz (1982: 131) refers to as *contextualization cues*: “any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signalling of contextual presuppositions.”

Non-referential indexes have the ability to index various dimensions: the social dimension is indexed with *social deictics* (Silverstein 1976: 30; Levinson 1983: 63; Ochs 1988), and stretches of discourse are indexed internally with *discourse deictics* (Levinson 1983: 85). Other dimensions that are regularly indexed with non-referential indexes and have become grammaticalized include indexical responses (cf. Sorjonen
2001), and affective and epistemic stance (Ochs 1996: 410). *Epistemic stance* refers to the knowledge or belief of the speakers, “including degrees of certainty of knowledge, degrees of commitment to truth of propositions, and sources of knowledge” (ibid.). *Affective stance*, by comparison, refers to “a mood, attitude, feeling, and disposition, as well as degrees of emotional intensity vis-à-vis some focus of concern” (ibid.). The range of means available to express affective stance in English include most saliently prosody and lexis (cf. Halliday 1984; Labov 1984), whereas, in Icelandic, particles form perhaps one of the most grammaticalized systems for expressing affective stance.

### 3.4 Particles

Traditionally, the term *particle* has been used as a kind of wastebasket for words or expressions which at first may seem to lack any particular meaning or function. Because of this emptiness or confusion of meaning, particles have often been treated as unnecessary and uninteresting from a linguistic point of view. Consequently, the treatment of particles in grammars and dictionaries has often been minimal or even absent (see also discussion in section 2.1). In the last few decades, however, scholars have shown an increasing interest in particles, and these studies have shown that particles are indeed meaningful components of language. Although particles do not create context, they act as a set of cues that interlocutors use to anchor utterances to an actual situation.

The formal definitions and the terminology used for particle studies have so far been rather inconsistent, and thus it has been difficult to make cross-linguistic comparisons between potentially similar particles (Foolen 1996: 4–5; Jucker and Ziv 1998: 1; ISK 2004: 769). In past research, particles have been referred to as *discourse markers* (Schiffrin 1987; Traugott 1995), *discourse particles* (Abraham 1991), *pragmatic particles* (Östman 1981; Foolen 1996), *pragmatic markers* (Fraser 1996), and *modal particles* (König 1991; Aijmer 1996). This inconsistency regarding the terminology reflects not only different methodological approaches, but also the heterogeneity of particles and the variation in function which can be found amongst them.

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36 Some scholars argue that the term itself is misleading because it can refer to not only words but also phrases (cf. discussion by Foolen 1996).
The theoretical framework of this study is mainly based on the Finnish grammar *Iso Suomen Kielioppi* (2004), abbreviated *ISK*, which offers one of the most comprehensive descriptions of particles to date, based on the analysis of this non-Indo-European language. According to *ISK* (2004: 770–1), particles can be divided into eleven categories based on their grammatical function and on their syntactic position or position in the turn. Table 3.1 shows the subcategories of particles as presented in *ISK* (2004: 770), populated with Icelandic examples found in the data. This point bears repeating: the examples listed in the table are particles occurring in my data (see Chapter 5). In other words, they do not represent direct translations of the examples listed in *ISK* (2004). The translations show the semantic meaning of each token; the situated meaning can vary to a great extent. Note, however, that the boundaries between categories are often unclear and many particles may belong to more than one category:

Table 3.1: Particle categories with examples from the data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interjections</td>
<td>Interjections: oh! ‘eh!,’ æi ‘ouch,’ ái ‘ouch’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summons</td>
<td>Summons: heyrðu ‘listen,’ halló ‘hello’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utterance particles</td>
<td>Utterance particles: nú ‘well, oh,’ ja ‘well,’ en ‘but,’ og ‘and,’ sko ‘well’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctions</td>
<td>Conjunctions: og ‘and,’ en ‘but,’ ef ‘if’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning markers</td>
<td>Planning markers: hérna ‘eh,’ en hérna ‘but eh,’ þarna ‘eh,’ semsagt ‘that is,’ ö: ‘eh’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal particles</td>
<td>Modal particles: auðvitæ ‘of course,’ örugglega ‘certainly’ kannski ‘maybe,’ einmitt ‘exactly’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone particles</td>
<td>Tone particles: nú ‘now,’ þá ‘then,’ svo ‘so,’ jú ‘yes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus particles</td>
<td>Focus particles: lika ‘also,’ bara ‘just’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensifiers</td>
<td>Intensifiers: alveg ‘totally,’ algjörlega ‘completely’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximates</td>
<td>Approximates: svona ‘like,’ sirka ‘approximately’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first set of particles listed in the table above occur as turns on their own. *Interjections* are viewed as emotional expressions signalling, for example, pain or joy (cf. Ameka 1992). *Summonses*[^37] are expressions which are designed to get someone’s attention, while *dialogue particles* are indexical words which fulfill different communicative functions such as *já* ‘yes,’ *nei* ‘yes,’ and *nú* (see Chapter 9). According to *ISK* (2004: 773), dialogue particles may also occur as a part of a longer utterance: *nú fyrirgefðu* ‘NÚ, sorry.’ In this study, however, I will treat particles which project a continuation as *utterance particles* (see below). Dialogue particles will be discussed further in section 3.4.3.

The particles in the next set in Table 3.1 occur as parts of longer utterances, but are not syntactically integrated into them. *Utterance particles* typically occur utterance-initially or at a syntactic junction. They show how the upcoming utterance relates to the previous talk and help the speakers in structuring their discourse. I will discuss utterance particles further in section 3.4.2. *Conjunctions* are words which connect two units with each other, either two words or larger parts of speech. A few conjunctions, such as *og* ‘and’ and *en* ‘but,’ may also function as utterance particles (cf. Schiffrin 1987 on *and* and *but* in English). *Planning markers* indicate that the speaker is planning further speech, and thus hold co-participants’ attention in preparation for an imminent continuation.

The next set of particles, modal particles and tone particles, are also syntactically integrated and occur as a part of longer utterances. The term tone particle will be used for what has in German literature been called *Abtönungspartikeln* or ‘shading particles,’ i.e., particles which give utterances a particular tone (Weydt 1969; Burkhardt 1994). *Modal particles*, by contrast, express some kind of modality, for example, epistemic stance. In most studies, there is no distinction made between the two categories, and they are both referred to as modal particles (cf. König 1991; Andvik 1992; Aijmer 1996). Tone particles will be discussed further in section 3.4.1.

The final three categories, focus particles, intensifiers, and approximates, relate to a single constituent or word which serves to focus, intensify, defocus, or deintensify it. They can occur in many different positions depending on which constituent they modify.

As Table 3.1 shows, several particles can have more than one function (cf. *ISK* 2004: 772 for Finnish). *Nú*, for example, can function as a tone particle, an utterance particle, and an interjection. Similar linguistic units may also occur as a first word in a longer utterance. I will in these cases regard them as *affiliative utterance particles* (see Table 3.2): for example, *heyrðu nú hætti ég að giska* ‘hey, now I’m done guessing!’

[^37]: *Summonses*, as they are described here, occur as turns of their own. Similar linguistic units may also occur as a first word in a longer utterance. I will in these cases regard them as *affiliative utterance particles* (see Table 3.2): for example, *heyrðu nú hætti ég að giska* ‘hey, now I’m done guessing!’
particle, and a dialogue particle. I will discuss these three grammatical categories in more detail in the following sections.

### 3.4.1 Tone particles

*Tone particles*\(^{38}\) are particles that do not have any semantico-referential function but instead modify the whole utterance by giving it a certain tone (Weydt 1969: 60–1; König 1991: 174; ISK 2004: 791). By using a tone particle, speakers display their subjective judgment regarding the immediate situation. The situation may involve, for instance, the knowledge and preference of the hearer or the opinions and preferences of the speaker (Burkhardt 1994: 133). It has also been observed that particles expressing a certain tone link utterances to what has been said and done earlier in the conversation, and, thus, they presuppose certain contexts (cf. Ochs 1988; Abraham 1991; Hakulinen 1998).

Studies on German tone particles have shown that they occur exclusively in the middle field,\(^{39}\) between the finite and the non-finite verb forms in an utterance (Hentschel 1986; König 1991: 174). Weydt (1969: 67), and other scholars following him have stated explicitly that such particles never occur in the front field before the finite verb. However, in this study, I will show that this statement does not hold regarding *nú* as a tone particle (see Chapter 7).

Tone particles interact with word order and prosody. Studies have shown that they have functions and achieve effects similar to those of intonation, stress patterns, word orders, tags, and sentence types. Most significantly, they embed the utterance in its conversational context (cf. Bublitz 1978; ISK 2004: 791; cf. also Gumperz 1982: 131 on contextualization cues). As Bublitz (1978) points out, however, there is no direct correspondence between one form and another, and translation of such particles relies entirely on context.

To recapitulate, we are talking about rich systems of tone particles that are placed near the verb and give the entire utterance a colouring that is difficult to explicate. These systems are not a feature of present-day standard English, or the Romance languages (cf. König 1991: 173), and some scholars argue that this is one reason they have not received as much attention as they deserve. Other Germanic languages, such

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\(^{38}\) Note that none of the studies mentioned below use the term *tone particle*. Instead they use terms such as *modal particle* (König 1991; Andvik 1992), *Abtönungspartikel* (Weydt 1969), or the general term *particle* (Hakulinen and Saari 1995; Hentchel 1986).

\(^{39}\) Syntactic fields are addressed in section 4.4.3.
as German (cf. Weydt 1969; Buckhardt 1994) and Icelandic (H. Hilmsdóttir and Wide 2000), and Slavic languages, such as Russian (cf. Vasilyeva 1972; Wierzbicka 1986: 519–20; Grenoble 1998), are, on the contrary, examples of languages that are very rich in tone particles.

As mentioned earlier, there are also other languages in which the temporal origo has a homophonous “twin,” used as a particle (cf. Andvik 1992; Hakulinen and Saari 1995; Hakulinen 1998). In addition to its temporal meaning, the Svenska Akademiens ordbok (=SAOB: nu adv. I.7) defines Swedish nu as generally unemphasized and more or less modal, in that it implies or emphasizes the speaker’s attitude or understanding. Furthermore, it is pointed out that nu gives utterances or assessments a certain tone. Although the article on nu in SAOB is detailed and offers many valuable points illustrated with textual data, it is nevertheless entirely based on examples from the written language, reproduced as isolated sentences or in very short paragraphs. These definitions do not take a larger context into consideration, nor do they give us any detailed information on the interactional aspects, such as intonation, pauses, and other significant elements employed in talk-in-interaction. Such an interaction-based study, however, has been conducted by Hakulinen and Saari (1995), who have compared the similarities between the usage of the Swedish nu as it is used by the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, and the Finnish nyt.

Hakulinen and Saari (1995: 491) point out that nu and nyt are mainly responsive in nature (cf. also Hakulinen 1998: 85). The particles nu and nyt index an utterance such that it should be interpreted as a response to something prior in the conversation (cf. also Andvik 1992: 96). Hakulinen and Saari argue that, by using nu/nyt in a turn, the speaker implies something from a previous turn and thus evokes the old context and ties the turns together. As an example of this, Hakulinen and Saari (1995: 490) mention imperative utterances such as ät nu ‘eat NU!’ and ta resten nu ‘take the rest NU!’ In these instances, Hakulinen and Saari argue, nu signals that the food has already been offered earlier in the conversation.

Regarding the context in which nu/nyt may occur, Hakulinen and Saari (1995: 492–3) point out that they are often used in negative statements (cf. also Hakulinen 1998: 87–9). They show that, in their data, around 25% of instances of nyt occur in this environment, although negative statements usually constitute only around 10% of ‘normal’ texts. These numbers suggest that a higher portion of nyt in spoken interaction occurs in negative statements. Furthermore, Haugen and Chapman (1982: 307) mention correlation with negative structures as characteristic of the non-temporal
use of nå ‘now’ in Norwegian. They point out that nå is frequently used when contradicting or objecting to another statement.

Related to this is the occurrence of nu and nyt in utterances involving the speaker’s own opinion. Hakulinen and Saari’s study shows that nu and nyt are often involved in assessments and statements of opinion. In addition, Hakulinen and Saari (1995: 494) point out that 25% of the verbs preceding nu and nyt are mental verbs such as “I think” or “I feel.”

Andvik (1992) has a different take on nå ‘now’ as a modal particle in Norwegian. In a pragmatic analysis of instances found in literary plays and personal letters, he describes the function of post-verbal nå as making a recourse to common awareness between speaker and hearer. Andvik (1992: 89) argues that the speaker employs nå strategically, and that it is irrelevant whether a common perspective exists or whether the participants believe it exists. By implying a common perspective, the speaker appeals to the recipient “to accept the force of the utterance” (Andvik 1992: 89). Furthermore, Andvik (1992: 100) argues that this ultimately makes the force of the utterance contingent upon the recipient’s “willingness to recognize this common perception and accept the force of the utterance on that basis.” Andvik (1992: 107) argues that the presence of the particle makes the utterance simultaneously easier to accept and harder to reject. When the speaker uses nå to appeal to the recipient, the particle may have the effect of weakening or softening the force of the utterance. Although the particle appears on the surface to be employed as a softener, the effect may be the reverse (Andvik 1992: 111).

The three particles discussed above, Swedish nu, Finnish nyt, and Norwegian nå, show many similarities with the Icelandic tone particle nú. These similarities will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

3.4.2 Utterance particles

Utterance particles, also referred to as discourse markers (cf. Schiffrin 1987), are words or phrases which speakers use to structure their turns and to give recipients cues as to how a message is intended to relate to the ongoing discourse (cf. ISK 2004: 776). Unlike tone particles, utterance particles are not an integrated part of the syntactic structure. They typically occur at the beginning or end of turns but may also occur at other junctures (cf. ISK 2004: 776).

40 The rest consists mostly of the verb olla ‘to be.’
As many scholars have pointed out, the beginning and end of turns are particularly important from an interactional perspective (cf. Schegloff 1996; Hakulinen 1997: 43–44; also Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 719). It is at these points that speakers may give recipients cues to ease the flow in the conversation. They may, for instance, call for their interlocutor’s attention, or they may produce signals which show how an utterance relates to the previous one with the use of connectives or other types of utterance particles. An utterance particle can signal that the upcoming turn is a return to a previous topic (Ottesjö 2005); it can signal that an upcoming turn involves reservation of some sort (Londen 2002); or it can signal that the speaker needs an extended turn to answer a question (H. Hilmisdóttir and Wide 2000).

ISK (2004: 777) divides Finnish utterance particles into five different subcategories: 1) question particles, 2) additive particles, 3) explicative particles, 4) affective particles, and, 5) the catch-all category of particles with other functions. These categories, however, do not reflect accurately the use of particles in Icelandic, and thus, in my study, I have chosen to use slightly different categories which are based on my analysis of Icelandic conversational data. These categories are presented in Table 3.2:

Table 3.2: Functions of utterance particles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particle class</th>
<th>Icelandic particles from study data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connective particles (connectives)</td>
<td>o:g: ‘and,’ og hérna: ‘and ehm,’ en: ‘but’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicative/conclusive particles</td>
<td>sko ‘you see,’ semsagt ‘that is,’ altso ‘that is’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective particles</td>
<td>vá:: ‘wow,’ he:i: ‘hey,’ ha:: ‘what’ (nú::) ‘oh’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliative particles</td>
<td>heyrðu ‘listen,’ þúveist ‘y’know,’ skiluru ‘you understand,’ ekki satt ‘isn’t it,’ sjáðu til ‘you see,’ sko ‘you see’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connective particles show how the upcoming turn relates to the previous one, for instance, by showing that the turn is a direct continuation of a previous turn or by
showing that it involves some kind of reservation or protest (cf. Londen 2002). These particles are often referred to as connectives.

Particles with explicative or conclusive functions, as their name suggests, mark some kind of explanation. These particles occur in different positions. The particle sko ‘you see,’ for instance, is often used turn-initially, projecting a long and detailed answer to a question (cf. H. Hilmsdóttir and Wide 2000). The particle semsagt ‘that is,’ by contrast, is used before or after explanations which are typically inserted in the utterance as a parenthetical comment (cf. Lehti-Eklund 1997 on alltså in Swedish).

Particles with affective functions project a strong response to a prior turn, signalling surprise, awe, or disgust. These particles have many similarities with interjections (cf. Ameka 1992). However, instead of being a self-contained responsive exclamation, the affective utterance particle introduces a longer turn, as in eei en gaman! ‘oh, how great!’ The function of the particle is to show how the upcoming turn relates to the previous turn rather than, as does an interjection, carrying the whole message itself.

Particles with a problem marking function show that the previous turn is problematic or unexpected in some way, and, thus, they show that something in a prior turn needs to be explained or confirmed, as in nú, ertu búinn að reyna mikið? ‘NÚ, have you tried a lot?’ These instances occur turn-initially and project an identification of a trouble source.

Finally, affiliative particles function as appeals to co-participants. They function as “recompleters” or turn allocation devices (cf. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974: 718). Some of these particles were originally imperatives or questions, such as the particle skilur(ð)u ‘do you understand?’ which is an example of the latter (H. Hilmsdóttir 2000). As an utterance particle, skilur(ð)u functions like a tag question.

What all utterance particles have in common is that they are used as part of a longer utterance. In other words, they do not occur as self-contained turns, and their occurrence projects a continuation. However, many of the particles which are used as utterance particles may also occur as a separate turn as dialogue particles (see section 3.4.3). Hence, the boundary between utterance particles and dialogue particles is, at times, rather blurry. In these cases, prosody plays an important role (cf. Chapter 9).

The temporal marker now is often used as an utterance particle, marking shifts between different units. This is illustrated in (3.1), borrowed from Schiffrin (1987: 52).
233). In this excerpt, the speaker uses now to construct a turn consisting of many units (see also excerpt 2.1). 41

(3.1) Schiffрин

A They aren’t brought up in the same way.
B Now Italian people are very outgoing.
   They’re very generous.
   When they put a meal on the table it’s a meal.
C Now these boys were Irish.
   They lived different.

The first statement (A) is an explicit identification of the main unit (or topic), i.e. the characteristics of people from two different cultures. Now is then used to introduce two new subtopics: Italian Americans (B) and Irish Americans (C). The two instances of now in this extract display that what is coming next in the discourse is a subpart of a larger cumulative structure and is to be interpreted accordingly.

In SAOB (nå interj.), the Swedish particle nå is described as being potentially a side form of nu ‘now.’ The following example, which is borrowed from Lehti-Eklund (1992: 179), shows clearly how nå in Swedish is used as a turn initiator, while at the same time it signals a transition from one topic to another:

(3.2) Lehti-Eklund [SAM:V2]

1 Monika: ni få- ni får kaffe å sånt på (1.3) Å te
   you ge- you get coffee and such on (1.3) and the
   you’ll get coffee and things like that (1.3) and the
   (8.5)

→ Tove: nå Asta hu mår ditt barnbarn
   NÅ FnameF how feel your grand child
   NÅ Asta how is your grandchild?

3 Asta: já riktit bra ja va just där
   PRT very well I be.PT just there
   oh very well I was just there

In (3.2), nå occurs after a long lapse in the conversation. Here, the speaker Tove uses nå in a turn-initial position, and, thus, she both initiates a new topic and appoints a new speaker. The transition therefore exists on multiple levels. This function of

41 The extracts in this chapter that are borrowed from other studies are reproduced here exactly as in the original text, and, thus, the symbols and the precision of the transcripts may vary. English glossing and translation have been added for transcripts from other languages.
transition is also mentioned in studies on similar particles in other languages, such as Finnish *no* (Raevaara 1989) and Russian *nu* (Multisilta 1995).\(^{42}\) The shift may involve a shift back to the main line of talk, or it may show transitions within different units in larger activities such as storytelling.

In addition to showing transition, as in the previous excerpt, *nå* is also used, as is Icelandic *nú*, to show some kind of reservation or objection (Lehti-Eklund 1992: 178; Londen 2002). In these cases, *nå* is comparable, although not identical, to English *well*:

(3.3) Lehti-Eklund [SAM:RS2]

1 Göran: de fanns såna riktiga såna hederliga esbo[svenskar
   it exist.3.PT such real such honest Esbo[swedes
   there were such real honest Esbo[swedes

→ Erik: [nå de finns fortfarande
   NÅ they exist.3 still
   NÅ they still exist

In (3.3), Göran states that, in the old days, there existed “real honest” Swedish-speaking people in the city of Esbo (line 1). In a terminal overlap, Erik objects to Göran’s use of the past tense by stating that they *still* exist (line 2). The objection is prefaced with *nå*.

In this section, I discussed the concept of utterance particles, or particles which show how a turn relates to the surrounding discourse. As I have shown, utterance particles have many different functions, including operating as discourse structural devices (connectives and planning markers); activity projecting particles (problem marking particles); as well as in more interpersonal functions, such as showing affiliation to the interlocutor. In the empirical part of this study, I will show that the utterance particle *nú* functions both as a discourse structurer and as a problem marking particle. The latter type has many similarities with *nú* when it occurs as a turn of its own in the form of a dialogue particle.

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\(^{42}\) Kryk-Kastovsky (1997: 323) suggests that in Polish and other Slavic languages, in which the temporal origo is indexed with *teraz*, the discourse particle *no* is a remnant of an archaic word which has the same historical roots as the Proto-Germanic *nú*. 
3.4.3 Dialogue particles

Dialogue particles,\(^{43}\) such as já ‘yes,’ nei ‘no,’ and nú, are highly conventionalized ways of expressing recipiency. They can occur as a single turn or they can be accompanied by other elements, including other dialogue particles (cf. ISK 2004: 773). By using dialogue particles, interlocutors index a response to a prior turn. In other words, these particles are intersubjective and stretch across turns. ISK (2004: 774) lists the following three classes of dialogue particles: a) dialogue particles that register the prior talk, b) dialogue particles that receive the prior talk as news, and c) dialogue particles that request a clarification. Table 3.3 shows some Icelandic dialogue particles categorized according to their basic function:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registering the prior talk</th>
<th>Receiving the prior talk as news</th>
<th>Request for clarification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>já ‘yes’</td>
<td>nú! ‘oh’</td>
<td>nú? ‘oh?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jú ‘yes’</td>
<td>nú nú ‘oh really!’</td>
<td>ha? ‘what?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm ‘mm’</td>
<td>noh ‘huh!’</td>
<td>hm? ‘huh?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nei ‘no’</td>
<td>jæja; ‘well!’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>okei ‘okay’</td>
<td>ne hei ‘No!’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>einmitt ‘precisely’</td>
<td>ó ‘oh really!’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aha ‘aha!’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When two particles from two different categories are compared, such as já ‘yes’ and nú, it is usually fairly easy to make a distinction between them. However, when it comes to explaining the difference between two particles within the same category, the task becomes harder. There are, nevertheless, some subtle differences between different dialogue particles within each category. Sorjonen (2000) suggests three different parameters for delineating the function of dialogue particles: 1) epistemic assumptions, 2) level of affiliation, and 3) who has the right or obligation to speak after the particle has been produced.

\(^{43}\) Dialogue particles are also known as response particles (Sorjonen 2001). Within backchannel studies such words are referred to as backchannel messages (Yngve 1970), listener responses (Oreström 1983), and linguistic feedback (Allwood et al. 1992). For more discussion of backchannel studies see Sorjonen (2001: 19–23).
By using a dialogue particle, speakers can display their *epistemic assumptions*. They can produce a *continuer* (Schegloff 1982; Sacks 1996b: 410; Green-Vänttinen 2001: 157–75) or an *acknowledgement token* to mark prior talk as incomplete. Furthermore, the producers can show whether the information delivered in the previous turn is new or not (cf. Heritage 1984a; Green-Vänttinen 2001).

The second parameter proposed by Sorjonen (2000) is to what extent the response is *affiliative* or *non-affiliative*. By using an affiliative response, the recipients not only show that they understand the message to which they are responding, but also that, having understood the message, they feel the same way (Sorjonen 2001: 26). Affiliation can be marked both by the choice of dialogue particle (*jä* and *mm*) and by prosodic means, such as intonation, vowel length, or loudness (cf. Müller 1996).

The third and last parameter involves the assumptions concerning the *trajectory of talk*, in other words, what should happen next and who should be the next speaker (Sorjonen 2000). An obvious example is when the recipient requests a clarification. If the recipient responds with a particle that indexes a request for clarification, the co-participant is expected to comply with that request in the next turn. Otherwise the response would be considered “noticeably absent” (cf. Sacks 1992b: 62). Other examples are dialogue particles which have *eliciting functions*. Just as with particles that request clarification, eliciting particles call for a response from the previous speaker (Linell 1998). Consider the following example borrowed from Sorjonen (2002: 172, glossing and translation in original):

(3.4) Sorjonen [FN August 1996]

1 a  **Hei mä kuul-i-n yhe-n hyvä-n jutu-n**
    PRT I hear-PST-1 one-ACC good-ACC story-ACC
    ‘Hey I heard a good story’

→ b  **No**:.

3 a  **ehkä te oo-tte kuul-lu se-n**
    maybe you(PL) be-PL2 hear-PPC it-ACC
    ‘Maybe you have heard it’

→ b  **No**.

5 a  **Se on semmonen nais-juttu.**
    it is such    woman-story
    ‘It’s like a women’s story’

In the excerpt above, speaker B uses the go-ahead marker *no* to elicit a continuation from A. *No* is used as a response to a preliminary, and it invites A to go on to the main
activity, telling the story. Similar instances can also be found regarding nå in Swedish (Lehti-Eklund 1992: 178), nu in Russian (Multisilta 1995: 386), and no in Polish (Kryk-Kastovsky 1992: 205; 1997).

In addition to eliciting functions, in some languages, such as Polish and Danish, nú/no/nå have clear non-eliciting functions. The following Danish extract is borrowed from Steensig (2001: 263):

(3.5) Steensig [EMR:99:ligekommet:1]

```
1 A Det har været så kælen: =
   It have.3. PT be.PPT so great

→ B =•tk/Nå::hf( ) Fgd.
   NÅ  ( ) Cool
```

In the extract above, nå occurs in a turn responding to an assessment. B responds to A’s positive statement by producing the particle nå, with a prolonged vowel and a smily voice. After a micro-pause, B also adds an assessment signalling that A shares B’s joy.

As I have shown in this section, dialogue particles are highly indexical words which show recipiency in conversation. As these tokens typically form a turn of their own, they often have a dynamic intonation contour. As I will show in Chapter 9 when I address the Icelandic dialogue particle nú, this prosodic feature plays an active role in conversation.

### 3.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed indexicality and how it is manifested in temporal deixics and in particles. Following Silverstein (1976), Hanks (1996), and Sorjonen (2001), I have made a distinction between referential and non-referential indexes.

The chapter began with a discussion of referential indexes. In the first section (3.1), I briefly discussed time and temporality, and how European languages typically encode these notions by metaphorically mapping them as a unidirectional line. In the next section (3.2), I introduced the notion of indexicality and deixis, with particular emphasis on the temporal origo, nú and núna. In my discussion, I emphasized that
deictics are not static and objective frameworks, but, rather, are socio-cultural in nature expressing, meanings that are jointly constructed and under constant negotiation. Thus, as I will show in the empirical part of this study, the temporal deictics nú and núna have a set of meaning potentials, ranging from brief moments to long periods of time. Their situated meanings are contextually and socially bound (see Chapter 6).

In section (3.3), I discussed non-referential indexes, that is, indexes which do not contribute to the referential meaning of an utterance, but, instead, index some aspects of the speech context. These linguistic units are also known as particles.

In the section that followed (3.4), I discussed particles and their functions. After a general overview and description of eleven different subcategories, I addressed three which are specifically relevant in the case of nú: tone particles (3.4.1), utterance particles (3.4.2), and dialogue particles (3.4.3). These three categories are distinguished according to mainly syntactic criteria. Tone particles are units which are syntactically integrated, while utterance particles are only loosely connected to the utterance, typically occurring at the beginning or end of turns. Dialogue particles, by contrast, can form turns of their own, although they are sometimes followed by other elements, in particular, other dialogue particles. These syntactic and sequential differences indicate that these types of nú have different functions, or that their different functions create syntactic differences. In the following chapter, which addresses the methodology of this study, I will take a closer look at how utterances are constructed.
4 Methods

In Chapter 4, I will outline the methodological framework of this study. I will begin by briefly discussing interactional linguistics (4.1) and one of its main sources of inspiration, ethnomethodological conversation analysis (4.2). After a brief discussion of the methodological issues, I will introduce concepts which are central to the study of talk-in-interaction. First, I will address the sequentiality of conversation (4.3), that is, the notion that utterances shape and are shaped by the environment in which they occur. Following this discussion, I will address issues regarding turn-taking and how interlocutors organize the jointly attended discourse floor (4.4). Finally, I will briefly address the role of prosody within conversational studies (4.5).

4.1 Interactional linguistics

The methodological foundations for this study are within interactional linguistics. Interactional linguistics has been described as a study which takes theoretical interest in uncontrolled and non-experimental daily speech (cf. Steensig 2001: 12). Hence, naturally occurring conversation—which structuralists have dismissed as ungrammatical and linguistically uninteresting—is the main locus of interest.

Interactional linguistics is a new and growing field that has emerged from three different disciplines: functional linguistics, theory of interaction, and anthropology. By using the strengths of each discipline, interactional linguistics provides a new, inter-disciplinary view on language and interaction (Selting and Couper-Kuhlen 2001: 1). The central methodology is borrowed from conversation analysis (see 4.2). However, as Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (2001: 5) emphasize, studies on interactional order also need linguistic generalizations, and, therefore, these studies rely on traditional linguistic terminology, as well. Hence, it can be said that interactional linguistics is a delicate balance between these two traditions. Finally, linguistic anthropologists have shown the interdependence of language and society: language is shaped by culture and culture is shaped by language. In the recent years, cross-linguistic perspectives on talk-in-interaction have shed light on how language works.

44 For further discussion of interactional linguistics, see Ford and Wagner (1996), Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (1996), Selting and Couper-Kuhlen (2001), and Steensig (2001: 12–4).
and how different cultures use their distinct linguistic resources to accomplish similar goals (cf. discussion in Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 2001: 7–9).

According to Selting and Couper-Kuhlen (2001: 3), interactional linguistics seeks to answer two fundamental questions:

(i) what linguistic resources are used to articulate particular conversational structures and fulfill interactional functions?

(ii) what interactional function or conversational structure is furthered by particular linguistic forms and ways of using them?

By focusing on two specific words in Icelandic, i.e., nú and núna, I have set out to answer the latter question. In the empirical part of this study, I will describe the recurrent formal pattern involving nú(na), and how interlocutors orient to this orderliness. In the following sections, I will discuss the methodology in more detail, beginning with a general description of how this research was conducted.

4.2 Research methodology: conversation analysis

As mentioned above, one of the main methodological foundations for interactional linguistics is conversation analysis. Conversation analysis (abbreviated CA) is an empirical and inductive research method. It is essentially data-driven, and the research questions arise when interesting details, or potential phenomena, are located in the actual data (cf. Sacks 1984: 27). When these phenomena reoccur, they are considered a part of the orderliness of conversation. The next step is to build a collection of similar instances, and to describe the interactional orderliness or mechanism in detail (cf. Schegloff 1996: 68; Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 93–98). This detailed analysis is done by showing and referring to excerpts from empirical conversational data. Thus, instead of delivering the final conclusions without any information on how the results were made, the reader is led step-by-step through the analysis.

The descriptive methodology mentioned above involves frequent use of long conversational excerpts. Several excerpts in the present study may, at first, seem excessively long. However, as the uses of nú and núna are typically part of a larger

45 For introductory literature on CA, see e.g. Heritage (1984a), ten Have (1999), and Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998).
activity, their occurrence can be explained only by referring to sequential position. In other words, the long excerpts show, on the one hand, what kind of actions lead up to the use of nú, and, on the other hand, what kind of actions a turn containing nú and núna may elicit.

The present study on nú and núna is a result of a process similar to the one described above. Nevertheless, it needs to be emphasized that, like many other studies that are primarily interested in the linguistic aspect of conversation, this study does not represent what would be considered orthodox CA. Instead, it seeks to take the interdisciplinary approach postulated by interactional linguistics. As a result, I also use some methods, concepts, and categorizations which are not standard for CA but are, nevertheless, commonly used in other fields of conversational studies (e.g. Auer 1996a; Linell 1998). First, it should be pointed out that this study takes turn structure and syntactic integration as a main point of departure, whereas traditional CA studies would begin by focusing on social actions. This categorization, however, was made after a careful analysis of the data. Furthermore, instead of only analysing the use of nú and núna qualitatively, I also support my analysis with quantitative data.

It should also be emphasized that the four empirical chapters show some methodological differences. In Chapter 6, in which I discuss the temporal meaning of nú and núna, the main point of departure is the referential meaning of the two words. Although this emphasis is reflected in the structure of the chapter, it does not mean that the sequential structure is ignored. In the analysis, I have integrated semantico-pragmatic and sequential perspectives. In Chapter 7, other problems arise. Since nú as a tone particle seems to occur in many different sequential slots, the different types are presented on a more abstract level than may be traditional within CA. The generalizations are made to give a comprehensible description of what the different types of nūs have in common. Finally, in Chapters 8 and 9, the point of departure is the sequential organization of talk as is found in more traditional CA analyses.

4.3 Sequentiality of conversation

One of the foundations of CA is understanding the sequentiality of conversation (Heritage 1984a). Participants establish relationships between turns and display in their response their understanding of what kind of turn the prior turn was intended to be (Scheglof and Sacks 1973: 290; Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 15). Conversation
analysis is essentially based on this characteristic of conversation. Thus, instead of making assumptions about the intentions of the speaker, CA uses a response as evidence of how co-participants interpret utterances. Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998: 15) describe this as a *next-turn proof procedure*.

The relationship between turns occurs on multiple levels. In this study, the sequential organization is described in terms of sequences, acts, activities, and topics. Since these categories are fuzzy by nature, conversational studies offers no final definitions for them. Instead, they must be viewed and defined locally, just as participants in conversation do themselves during their talk. In the following, I will briefly discuss how the terms are used in this study. Consider excerpt (4.1), which is drawn from a telephone conversation between a computer technician and a woman who is having problems connecting her computer to the internet:

**(4.1) FIXING THE COMPUTER: ITC 02.08.02 (←6.1)**

(C = Computer technician; E = Erna, the caller)

1 C  *Hvaða vafra erta nota erta nota Netscape eða Internet Explorer.*
    *What browser are you using Netscape or Internet Explorer?*

2  (0.7)

3 E  *Explorer*
    *Explorer*

4 C  *=Ókei=*  
    *okay*

5  (1.0)

6 C  *hérna: farðí #eh:::# Ertu meða opíð n↓úna.*
    *eh, go to, is it open NÚNA?*

7 E  *j↑á:*
    *yes*

8  (0.4)

9 C  *"Ókei."  Farðí  hérna:  Farðí  hérna#::::# T↑ools*
    *okay, Go to ahhh, Go to ahhh Tools*

Lines 1 to 4 in the excerpt above are an example of a question sequence which consists of three utterances: a question, an answer, and an acknowledgement.
Sequence is used as a technical term referring to “an independently structured phenomenon in conversation” (cf. Sacks 1992b: 23). Each utterance does sequential work, and it can only be understood based on its position in the sequence. In other words, an utterance does not have any communicative significance when it is produced in isolation (cf. Bakhtin 1986: 81; Linell 1998: 70).

Contributions in conversation are often described in terms of conversational acts. In the excerpt above, there are examples of questions (line 1 and 6), answers (line 3 and 7), acknowledgments (line 4 and 9), and a directive (line 9). Note that one utterance can contain more than one act, such as in line 9 which begins with an acknowledgement and is followed by a directive. It is part of the sequentiality of conversation that these acts occur in a specific order, that is, it would seem rather unlikely that the directive in line 9 would be produced before the acknowledgement.

The local meaning of an act is intrinsically dependent on the activity during which it occurs (cf. Linell 1998). Heritage and Sorjonen (1994: 4) define activity as “the work that is achieved across a sequence or series of sequences as a unit or course of action—meaning by this a relatively sustained topically coherent and/or goal-coherent course of action.” Activities may include things such as “telling a story,” “gossiping,” or “interviewing a presidential candidate.” In (4.1), the ongoing activity is “fixing Erna’s computer.” On a more general level, activities may represent certain activity types, such as doctors’ consultations, court interrogations, or everyday conversations (Levinson 1979; Linell 1998).

While activities describe what the interlocutors are doing, topics describe what a conversation is about. The topic in the excerpt above is “Erna’s computer problems.” Topics can stretch over many turns. Shifts in topics often occur stepwise, and, when speakers make abrupt shifts, they tend to show the break in the sequentiality by providing a topic marker such as heyrðu ‘listen’ (cf. Sacks 1992b: 254).

A special type of sequential relationship is established through utterances which usually come in pairs: greetings and greetings, questions and answers, and invitations and acceptances or rejections. These sequential pairs are known as adjacency pairs (Sacks 1992b: 521–75; Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 39–43). When a speaker utters the first part of an adjacency pair, the recipient of that turn is expected to produce a particular second part. Therefore, the anticipated response to a greeting is another greeting, and the anticipated response to a question is an answer. In some cases, an insertion sequence is produced between the two parts (cf. Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 40). However, the second part is still relevant and should ideally be produced as soon as possible. An absence of such response would be interpreted as a loaded response, in
other words, the second part of the adjacency pair would be “noticeably absent” (Sacks 1992b: 62).

Studies on adjacency pairs have shown that some second parts are more problematic and not produced as easily as others (e.g. Pomerantz 1984: 64; A. Lindström 1999: 34–36). An unproblematic second part is referred to as *preferred*. These utterances are performed without any delay, and they are direct and to the point. Problematic second parts, as in contrast, are referred to as *dispreferred*. These instances are structurally more complex and typically performed with a noticeable delay. In addition, they typically involve particles, planning markers, and accounts. Thus, the concept of preference is first and foremost characterized by the presence of certain formal features, and not based on psychological preference (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 43–4).

### 4.4 Taking turns at talk

Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson’s (1974) foundational article, “The Simplest Systematics of Turn-taking in Conversation,” starts off by pointing out two facts about everyday conversations:46 a) speaker change typically recurs (or at least occurs) with split-second precision, and b) it is rare for more than one speaker to talk at the same time. These two seemingly trivial observations have enormous implications for our understanding of people’s social and linguistic behaviour. How can participants in a conversation know when it is their turn to talk, and how are they able to time their entrance to the floor with such precision? In order to answer this question, Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) propose that interlocutors follow a socially established mechanism known as the *turn-taking system*. This system consists of a set of a few basic rules regarding how interlocutors manage “the jointly attended discourse floor” (cf. Linell 1998: 159).

There are some abstract rules which are applicable in any conversation a person may enter. Thus, turn-taking is to some extent *context-free*. At the same time, the length of the turns and the order in which the participants speak are not decided beforehand. Instead, turn allocation is locally managed on a turn-to-turn basis, taking

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46 Although Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) base their observations on everyday conversation, these rules also apply, with some modifications, to institutional conversations (cf. Drew and Heritage 1992).
into consideration the actual situation at each moment. Thus, the turn-taking system is also context sensitive (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 752). Another important aspect which shapes turn-taking is the fact that talk is produced in such a way that it displays orientation towards the recipients (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 727). Turn-shaping is, in other words, subject to recipient design.

Conversational studies have shown that, in order to achieve smooth turn-taking as described above, interlocutors use various cues to identify units of talk. These cues are based on knowledge of grammar (in particular, syntax), prosody, and pragmatics (cf. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974; Ford and Thompson 1996). In the following sections, I will define the building blocks of conversation, turns, and turn-constructional units (4.4.1). In the section that follows, I will take a closer look at the design of turns and discuss how the production of turns goes through different stages (4.4.2). The parsing of the turn, as proposed by Schegloff (1996), focuses on the actual turn-shifts, how and at what point speakers typically start showing their wish to take the floor, and what the co-participants can do to prepare their entrance to the discourse floor.\footnote{Steensig (2001: 271), in particular, has focused on what co-participants can do during the various stages in turn production.} Although Schegloff acknowledges the importance of syntax and prosody, his sociological perspective does not give a detailed account for the grammatical aspects of turn-taking, such as syntax. A syntactic discussion, however, is offered by Auer (1996a; 1996b). In the final section on turn-taking, I will discuss Auer’s ideas of the role of syntax as a tool for projecting an upcoming turn completion (4.4.3).

### 4.4.1 Turns and turn-constructional units

From early in its development, analytic work on conversation has to a large degree evolved around defining turns and how they are constructed. Studies have shown that there is no clear-cut definition for turns, and, in fact, finding the boundaries between two different turns is in many cases an interpretive issue. In line with Linell (1998: 159), a turn is defined in this study as “a continuous period when one speaker holds the floor, and the corresponding dialogue contribution is then those verbal and non-verbal actions taken by him during this period, designed to be part of the jointly attended discourse floor, and/or taken up as significant contributions to this floor.” Thus, contributions which are not designed as part of the jointly attended floor and do
not expand on the topic, such as the backchannels já ‘yes’ and mhm ‘uh huh,’ are typically not viewed as full-fledged turns (cf. Green-Väntinen 2001; Sorjonen 2001: 20).

The minimal turn consists of one turn-constructional unit, referred to as a TCU (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 702–3; Schegloff 1996: 55–6; Linell 1998: 159–61; Steensig 2001: 78–85). Speakers may use different types of units to construct TCUs: they can use lexical items, phrases, clauses, or sentential constructions (cf. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 702). The following excerpt has TCUs containing a sentential construction (line 1), a phrase (line 4), and a lexical item (line 6). The utterance in line 3, however, is cut off before it is completed and is thus not a complete TCU:

(4.2) RAINY SUMMER: Friends
(I = Jessica; S = Sunna)

1 S Já þa var [svo /ömurleg] sumar [þarna °sko°.
PRT it be.3.PT [ so awful ] summer [ there PRT
yes it was [ so awful ] the summer [ there y’know

2 J [ ( x x x )] [°.já::°
[ ( x x x )] [ PRT
[ ( x x x )] [ yes

3 S Þa var °e[::# svo-
 it be.3.PT e[hl so-
it was e[h so

4 J [i fyrра,
[ in last [ last year

5 0.2

6 S ↓á
PRT yes

At the end of a completed TCU, a speaker change becomes relevant, and a co-participant may take the floor. The moment at which a co-participant may take the floor is known as a transition relevance place, or a TRP (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 703).

The turn-taking system in everyday conversations is viewed as biased towards turns consisting of only one unit (cf. Schegloff 1996: 61). Despite the tendency to use one unit turns, some TCUs are clearly designed to project multi-unit turns consisting of two or more TCUs (cf. Schegloff 1996; cf. also Houtkoop and Mazeland 1985 on
*discourse units*). In these instances, the first TCU is treated as a pragmatically incomplete action.

Utterances may be viewed as pragmatically complete on local and on global levels. A local pragmatic completion is described by Ford and Thompson (1996: 150) as a point “at which the speaker is projecting more talk, but at which another speaker might reasonably take a minimal turn, such as offering a continuer, display of interest, or claim of understanding.” Thus, on points of local pragmatic completion, we may anticipate some kind of recipient activity but not any claim for the floor. A global pragmatic completion, in contrast, is characterized as “not projecting anything beyond itself in the way of a longer story, account, or other agenda” (Ford and Thompson 1996: 151). Consider the following stretch of talk in which a woman is telling her friends a story around the dinner table:

(4.3) **EATING WITH CHOPSTICKS: Reunion (→7.18)**

(M = Magga; B = Brynhildur; G = Guðrún; V = Vala; E = Erna; L = Lína)

1 B  
[[be-3+that]]

2 M  
[[so] embarrassing I be.1.PT in (0.2) dinner in PRT Korean dinner the other day]

3 (0.3)

4 B  
PRT yes

5 (0.3)

6 M  
(, ) atlaði nú aldeilis a: ekki a slá slóku við með prjónanað and (.) intend.1.PT NÚ certainly to not to slack VP with sticks:ACC.DEF and (.) I was NÚ certainly not going to give up using the chopsticks

7 "Ég var orðin svo klár við [a° (0.3) ]
I be.3 become.PP.F so good with [ that (0.3) ]
I had become so good at [it (0.3) ]

8 B  
[*hh j↓á↑:h*]

9 (0.3)

10 (L)  
PRT yes
The central activity in this excerpt is storytelling. Magga is telling her friends about her experience of eating with chopsticks. The story is introduced in line 2 by an utterance which is a syntactically and prosodically complete unit. On a local level, this utterance may also be viewed as pragmatically complete, and it is consequently responded to by one of the recipients with a backchannel (line 4). On the global level, however, Magga’s turn is not pragmatically complete until after she has produced the main point of the story, which is marked very clearly with her own laughter (line 14 and 17).

Multi-unit turns typically require some preparatory work from the speaker, such as story prefacing or pre-pres (see excerpt (7.16)), which occupy a TCU of their own (cf. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974; Schegloff 1980). By producing these preparatory TCUs, the speakers show that they are seeking permission from the interlocutors to violate the general rule that a speaker has the right to produce one TCU at a time.

The section above shows that turns can vary greatly in length. They can consist of a single lexical item or complex, syntactical constructions. Despite this variation, all turns go through different stages in production. These stages will be the subject of the following section.
4.4.2 Parsing the turn

Turn design and its interactional relevance have been described by Schegloff (1996) and a number of other scholars who base their discussion on Schegloff’s model (e.g. Steensig 2001; J. Lindström 2002; Karlsson 2006). These studies have shown that the production of turns goes through six different stages: pre-beginning, beginning, post-beginning, pre-possible completion, possible completion and post-possible completion.48

Schegloff (1996: 92) characterizes pre-beginnings as “elements which project the onset of talk, or the beginning of a (next) TCU or a turn, but are yet not recognizable beginnings.” In other words, they initiate the turn without initiating a TCU. Similar elements may also be found in the post-beginning, just after the beginning of a turn.

Pre-beginnings may be both visual such as lip parting or gaze, or audial such as in-breath, coughing or throat clearing. In some studies, however, the pre-beginnings are interpreted loosely and include even lexical items, such as address terms and particles (cf. Steensig 2001; J. Lindström 2002). I, however, treat these elements as the actual turn beginning, because they are certainly meaningful entities which either constitute a TCU in their own right, or are prosodically and pragmatically integrated into larger TCUs. Examples of both pre- and post-beginning may be located in the following stretch of talk. This conversation is drawn from a phone-in program in which a car owner is getting advice about his broken car from a mechanic:

(4.4) BAD TIRES: Soul 23.05.96 (→ 8.7)
(M = Mechanic; H = Hrafnkell, a caller)

1 H Ég ver(ið)að pælí: (.) Ég var að kaupa dekk á bílinn hjá mér;
   I be.PP to think+in (.) I be.1.PT to buy.INF tires on car.DEF with I.DAT
   I’ve been wondering (.) I just bought tires for my car

2 M j^â:
   PRT
   yeah

3  

4 H Og. (0.8) þa er eitthvað’ (.) Hann rá: sar svo eftir að ég fékk
   and (0.8) it be.3 something (.) he slide.3 so after that I get.1.PT
   and (0.8) there is something (.) it slides so back and forth that I got

48 As mentioned above, Schegloff is mostly focusing on turn-shifts and, thus, he does not address what happens between the post-beginning and pre-possible completion. This will be discussed in more detail in section 4.4.3 in which I address Auer’s (1996a; 1996b) ideas of syntax as a projection potential.
The caller, Hrafnkell, signals very clearly that he is planning to enter the floor by producing audible in-breath before he starts producing the actual TCU (line 9). After he has produced the connective og ‘and’ and the subject þeir ‘they,’ he produces a planning marker. The planning marker occurs at the point of “maximum grammatical control” (cf. Schegloff 1996: 93), which is before the finite verb has been produced. Thus, the mechanic can expect a continuation. After the post-beginning, Hrafnkell continues his turn by posing a question to the mechanic. The mechanic also prepares his answer with a pre-beginning, an audible in-breath followed by a click caused by parting of the lips (line 11). He begins his turn with a non-temporal nú but hesitates and produces a post-beginning. After the post-beginning, the mechanic marks the continuation of his turn by producing the particle hérna ‘here’ followed by a syntactic construction designed as a question.

Possible completion (see beginning of overlap in excerpt (4.5), line 4) is, according to Schegloff (1996: 83–92), the first point at which the TCU is viewed as complete. Speakers may also withhold the anticipated completion and yield the floor before it is ever delivered (cf. also Steensig 2001: 255–262). These endings are known as trail-offs (see excerpt (7.2), line 7) (cf. Jefferson 1983; Schegloff 1996: 87). The completion point is preceded by a point which is known as the pre-possible
completion (see the beginning of overlap in excerpt (4.5), line 2), the point at which the interlocutor is able to project the timing and the content of the closure and can thus enter the floor without waiting any further. Research has shown that interlocutors clearly orient to these points in the conversation, for example, by initiating self-repairs (Schegloff 1996: 85) or collaborative completions (Lerner 1991). Although this phenomenon has not been examined in Icelandic, I would suggest that it is often, yet not exclusively, marked with a pitch peak similar to what Schegloff (1996: 84–5) has noted on pre-possible completions in English (cf. also Steensig 2001: 255 on prosodic cues in Danish). Consider the turn-shifts in the following excerpt:

(4.5) Traditions and the Eurovision Song Contest: Soul 17.05.96 (→ 7.5)
(M = Moderator; F = Fjóla, a caller)

1 M  >Jú maður verður eiginlega að fara í keppni< með
    yes man.IMP must.3 actually to go.INF in competition with
    yes, you really must enter a competition with

→ því hugarf[ari að maður ætli að-]
    that mind-set[that man.IMP intend.3.SBJ to ]
    that in mind[that you are going to-]

3 F  [ N e i          e k k ] e r t endilega,
    [ PRT nothing especially
    [ no] particularly

→ M gera sitt besta: [og helst að vinna. ]
    do.INF his.REF best.ACC [and preferably to win. INF ]
    [ and preferably win ]

5 F  [Jájá hú h ]ú n
    [ PRT she s]he
    [yes she s]he

6 þa- [érg efast ekki um að hún gerir sitt besta.
    [ I doubt.1.MV not about that she do.3.SBJ her.REF best.ACC
    i- [ I’m sure she will do her best

7 M  [hún gerir sitt besta.
    [ she do.3 her.REF best.ACC
    [ she will do her best

Fjóla and the moderator are having an argument in the excerpt above, and this is evidenced by the large number of early on-sets which result in overlaps. In the first turn in (4.5), the moderator produces an utterance which is an objection to Fjóla’s previous turn. The moderator’s turn is potentially completed after the noun hugarf ‘mindset.’ Fjóla starts her response after the first two syllables of that word, treating the moderator’s turn as if it is coming to an end. Thus, Fjóla’s turn starts at the point
of a potential pre-possible completion. It turns out, however, that the moderator has not completed her turn, and, after Fjóla completes her own turn, the moderator continues with the turn she paused during the overlap. There is also a possible completion after besta ‘best,’ during which Fjóla takes the floor and overlaps the moderator again (lines 4 and 5).

As I mentioned above, talk-in-interaction is incrementally produced in real time. Consequently, speakers rarely plan every word they are going to utter, and sometimes they choose to modify or add items to their turns. When speakers seem to have finished a turn, for example, after a possible completion, they may choose to add other elements to these turns. These additional elements are known as post-possible completions (Schegloff 1996: 90). According to Schegloff (1996: 90), these post-possible completions can be mainly of two sorts: post-completion stance markers (cf. Karlsson 2006) or grammatically structured extensions to the preceding turn. The latter type is closely related to the notion of syntactic expansions (Auer 1996b). Expansions are syntactically symbiotic with other constructions and can be understood only in that context. Consider Magga’s turn in line 6, which is designed as a syntactic expansion to her turn in lines 1 and 2:

(4.6) **COMPOSING CLASSICAL MUSIC: Reunion (→6.7)**

(M = Magga; B = Brynhildur; V = Vala; E = Erna)

1  M  .mt þa er náttlega líka hægt að sém:ja eiththvað °i° .mt it be.3 naturally also possible to compose.INF something in .mt it’s of course also possible to compose something in

2  klassiskum stil [til dæmis,] classical style [for example]

3  (E)  [j^á:] [PRT]

4  B  j↓áj^á=

5  V  =j↓á[:

7  → M  [n^ún↓a].

(0.4)
Magg’s turn reaches a possible completion with the noun stil ‘style’ (line 2). Note how the co-participants start responding to her utterance immediately after that point. Following this turn completion, however, Magga adds the phrase til dæmis ‘for example,’ and, after backchannels from three co-participants, she adds another post-completion, the temporal marker núna (line 6). This last word is uttered as a non-beginning, and so it has a continuing intonation (cf. Schegloff 1996: 73–7).

Continuations, by contrast, are produced as new units, and, consequently, they are often prosodically marked as turn beginnings. They are often initiated with connectives such as og ‘and’ or en ‘but,’ but their dependency on a previous TCU is usually merely pro-forma. In (4.7), the caller, Bjargey, produces a continuation:

(4.7) IT’S NICE THAT IT IS YOU: Soul 03.06.96 (→9.10)
(M = Moderator; B = Bjargey, a caller)

1 B Gaman að það skulir vera þú (.). #â# (.). #ö-# (.). ##
   fun that it shall.3.SUBJ be-INF you (.). on (.). eh (.). eh
   Great that it’s you (.). on (.). eh (.). eh

2 þessum tíma núna,
   this time now

3 (0.2)

4 M N↓

→ B En maðurinn þarna með &#e# (.). með matið hann ætti að minnka
   but man.DEF there with eh (.). with “matið” he should.3.SUBJ to reduce.INF
   the man with eh (.). with “matið” he should reduce

6 nota þetta sko líka.
   use.INF this “sko” also
   using this “sko” also

→ B En þa var ekki þa sem ég ætlöði að tala um. .hhh [...] but that be.3.PT not that which I intend.1.PT to talk.INF about .hhh [...] but that wasn’t what I was going to talk about .hhh [...]
shift. Thus, Bjargey has in fact initiated two new turns which she designs as continuations of the previous turns.

Schegloff’s model for parsing the turn is an excellent tool for understanding the interactional mechanism taking place during turn production. The model explains how speakers use breathing and gaze when they wish to take the floor, and how their co-participants may orient to these more or less subtle cues. Hence, Schegloff shows that elements which in traditional linguistics have not been considered worth mentioning actually play a crucial role in interaction.

4.4.3 Syntax and turn-taking

In order to achieve smooth turn-exchanges, interlocutors need to be able to project the exact timing of an upcoming turn-completion. As mentioned earlier, this projection is based on syntax, prosody, content of the utterance, and visual cues. Although all these different parameters are important, numerous studies have shown, that in Germanic languages, syntax plays a key role (cf. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974; Auer 1996b). In this section, I will look more closely at how syntax can be used as a projection potential in conversation.

The use of concepts such as “sentence” and “syntactic constructions” are not unproblematic in conversational studies. Merely by looking at an excerpt from an authentic conversation, it is possible to tell that talk-in-interaction is not constructed in the same manner as the sentences described in traditional grammar. Almost every turn contains planning markers, restarts, repairs, structure shifts, and syntactic constructions which could in Chomskian terms be referred to as “ungrammatical.” Thus, in order to avoid these problematic terms, Auer (1996b: 59) has coined the term syntactic gestalt.

The term syntactic gestalt refers to the notion of syntax as a contextualization cue (see section 3.3) in which syntax functions as one of the linguistic devices available for interlocutors to project possible transition relevance points. A syntactic gestalt is produced incrementally in real-time and, because the gestalt follows a certain pattern, interlocutors are able to anticipate an upcoming closure. The production of speech is thus viewed as a process rather than as a pre-packaged product. Instead of searching for grammatical entities, such as sentences, speakers look for junctures or boundaries in which syntactic gestalts can be viewed as possibly complete. Auer (1996b: 59) describes this mechanism in the following way:
During the emergence of a syntactic gestalt, the chances for predicting (correctly) the not-yet-produced remaining part (and therefore, its termination) continually increase. Thus, the production of a gestalt in time starts with a phase of minimal projectability, implying a high load of perceptual-cognitive work on the part of the speaker, and ends with a phase of maximal projectability in which the speaker profits from the quasi-automatic terminability of already activated patterns and the recipient from the low informational load of the remaining utterance. Syntax as a contextualization cue for turn-taking capitalizes on precisely this feature of the increasing predictability of gestalts in time: while turn completion itself is not predictable, gestalt closure with respect to syntax (usually) is.

The syntactic gestalt is particularly efficient as a contextualization cue in languages which have strict word order, such as German, while languages with looser word order may have to rely on other resources such as final particles (cf. Tanaka 1999). Although syntactic completion is not as clearly marked in Icelandic as in German (cf. Auer 1996b: 62–3), contemporary Icelandic has a relatively stringent word order. Consider Table 4.1 which illustrates some examples from the data. My presentation below is based on interactional relevance and therefore does not represent a traditional view of syntax as presented, for instance, by H. Práinsson (2002; 2006). The term possible syntactic closure refers to a word or a phrase which is the last necessary item in a syntactic gestalt (cf. Auer 1996b: 62 on sentence brace). Note, however, that it is difficult to identify the potential syntactic closure without also taking into consideration prosodic and pragmatic cues:49

49 In example 1, the first possible syntactic closure could occur after the verb fara ‘go.’ However, by listening to this excerpt, it becomes clear that fara is used as an aspectual marker which requires another verb.
Table 4.1: Typical structure of syntactic gestalts

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Front field</td>
<td>Verb (b)</td>
<td>Middle field</td>
<td>Possible syntactic closure</td>
<td>End field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ég</td>
<td>er be.1</td>
<td>að fara</td>
<td>hip hop kvöld</td>
<td>á Tunglinu Lækjargödu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>að halda to go.INF to hold.INF</td>
<td>hip hop evening</td>
<td>on Moon.DEF Lækjargata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>nú</td>
<td>er be.3</td>
<td>Pallí</td>
<td>hættur</td>
<td>að syngja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NÚ</td>
<td></td>
<td>lnameM</td>
<td>stop.PP</td>
<td>to sing.INF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>mar</td>
<td>harf need.3</td>
<td>nú stundum að</td>
<td>slaka á</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>man</td>
<td></td>
<td>NÚ sometimes to relax.INF VP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>það</td>
<td>get can.1</td>
<td>ég nú ekki</td>
<td>gert do.PP</td>
<td>Núna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that</td>
<td></td>
<td>I NÚ not</td>
<td></td>
<td>NÚNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ég</td>
<td>held think.1</td>
<td>það nú</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I.nom</td>
<td></td>
<td>that NÚ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. ‘I’m going to organize a hip-hop evening in The Moon, Lækjargata.’
2. ‘NÚ Pallí stopped singing.’
3. ‘One needs NÚ to relax sometimes!’
4. ‘I can’t do that NÚNA.’
5. ‘That’s what I think.’

Declaratives typically begin with an initial constituent, for instance, a subject, an object, or an adverbial (a). This is one of the typical positions of nú (see ex. 2). The initial constituent is then followed by the finite verb (b). When the initial constituent consists of an adverbial, such as nú (ex. 2), or an object, such as það ‘that (it)’ (ex. 4), the subject is uttered after the verb, initially in the middle field (c). The middle field is another typical place for nú. Generally, nú occurs right after the verb (ex. 3), but, when there is a personal pronoun in the middle field, the pronoun is typically produced first (ex. 5). The middle field is then followed by the final item needed to complete the gestalt syntactically (d). There is great variation in terms of which items are needed to bring a gestalt to a syntactic completion. If an utterance contains an intransitive verb, for instance, the verb itself is the last necessary item. Similarly, if the object consists of a pronoun, the particle nú may also function as the last necessary item (ex. 5). However, a syntactic gestalt may have other constituents following the possible syntactic closure, such as temporal and spatial adverbials (e). In fact, this is the typical place for núna.

In addition to the “core syntactic gestalt,” Auer (1996a) has coined the terms pre-front field and post-end field, which are placed on both sides of the core syntactic gestalt. The pre-front field is a typical place for interactionally sensitive items, such
as address terms and utterance particles. Likewise, the post-end field often contains particles, especially those seeking affiliation or orientation to the recipient. Auer’s structure reflects the turn’s organization as it is described by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974: 722):

Turns display gross organizational features that reflect their occurrence in a series. They regularly have a three-part structure: one which addresses the relation of a turn to a prior, one involved with what is occupying the turn, and one which addresses the relation of the turn to a succeeding one. These parts regularly occur in that order, an obviously rational ordering for an organization that latches a turn to the turns on either side of it.

Table 4.2 shows examples from the data:

**Table 4.2:** Expanded syntactic gestalt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-front field</th>
<th>Core syntactic gestalt</th>
<th>Post-end field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 já yes</td>
<td>þa var so ómurlegt sumar þarna it be.3 so terrible summer there</td>
<td>sko PRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 nú NÚ</td>
<td>þau reykja öll tóbak they smoke.3.PL all-NEU.PL tobacco</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Erna nú kem ég við hjá þér á eftir og kref þig um diskinn NÚ come.1 I VP with you later and demand.1 you about CD.DEF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>þetta er nú orðið nóg this be.3 nú be.MM enough</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. ‘Yes, the summer there was so terrible, y’know.’
2. ‘NÚ, they all smoke tobacco’
3. ‘Erna, NÚ I will come by your place and demand the CD!’
4. ‘That’s NÚ enough!’

As Table 4.2 illustrates, nú may occur both in the pre-front field and in the core syntactic gestalt. It may occur in the pre-front field in initial position, such as in (2), before the finite verb, such as in (3), or after the finite verb, such as in (4). In other words, nú may occur syntactically integrated or non-integrated. In the second example, nú is not an integral part of the syntactic gestalt. Therefore, this instance does not affect the word order in the same way that it does in the third example in
which the syntactic integration of nú has the effect that the subject is not uttered until after the finite verb.

The pre-front field should, however, not be confused with the interactional points described in the previous section. The pre-beginning and the pre-front field function on different levels. Thus, while the pre-beginning is an interactionally relevant point at which the speaker displays his or her wish to enter the floor, the pre-front field is a part of the actual turn which shows how the upcoming turn relates to a previous one. Moreover, the item found in the pre-front field is often part of the same prosodic unit as the core gestalt, and, thus, it is often perceived as an integrated part of the same TCU. Consider, for example, the following turn, taken from excerpt (4.4), lines 10 and 11:

→ M .hhhhhh .mt #Nú hv-e e# hérna voru þau ekki ballanseruð
   .hhhhhh .mt NÚ wh-e eh PRT be.3.PT they not balance.PP.N.PL
   .hhhhhh .mt NÚ wh- e eh ehm they were balanced

12 og annað sli/kt,−
   and other such
   and such things weren’t they?

In this turn, the inbreath and the parting of the lips signal to the interlocutor that the mechanic (M) is planning on taking the floor: these signals belong to the pre-beginning. When the mechanic then utters the particle and planning markers #Nú hv-e e# ‘NÚ wh-e eh,’ he has already taken the floor, and he has already signalled to his interlocutor that he is planning on posing a question. The particles are thus a part of the pre-front field, and they prepare for the production of the core syntactic gestalt.

### 4.5 Prosody

One of the most salient features of spoken language is prosody. Utterances are produced and received by the interlocutors through sounds that contain specific acoustic features. For instance, speakers can change their pitch, speak louder or softer, emphasize different words, or use a specific intonation contour, and all these cues are potentially meaningful in interaction. Many conversation analysts, for instance Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (1996) and Local (1996), have criticized the structuralist view of prosody which treats intonation as a grammatical category by which a specific intonation contour can be decontextualized and assigned a particular meaning (e.g.
Instead, Couper-Kuhlen and Selting offer an interactional approach to prosody in which prosodic features such as intonation are viewed as *members’ devices* which speakers use to organize talk-in-interaction. Thus, intonation is viewed as “part of a signalling system which—together with syntax, lexico-semantics, kinesics, and other contextualization cues—is used to construct and interpret turn-constructional units and turns-at-talk” (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 1996: 25). In Gumperz’s (1982) terms, intonation has a *contextualizing function* which frames the particular context in which the utterance should be interpreted. In other words, intonation and prosody “constitute how something is said, not what is said, and they ultimately influence only what participants infer is the meaning” (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 1996: 21).

Prosody, as a member’s device, is an important analytic tool that should be included in an analysis of a multi-functional word such as *nú*, no less than syntactic or semantico-pragmatic factors. In the present study, as in other conversation analytic studies, I include prosodic cues, such as rhythm and tempo, pauses, intonation contours, and voice quality (cf. section 5.2 on transcriptions).50

### 4.6 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the methodological foundation for this study. I began the discussion with a general description of CA as a research method, specifically, the importance of working inductively, basing the research on empirical data, and describing the interaction in detail instead of using *a priori* concepts.

In the section which followed, I discussed the foundations of CA as a method and the sequentiality of conversation (4.2). All turns are produced as turns-in-a-series, and, thus, they have to be interpreted in the context in which they occur.

The sections that followed were devoted to a discussion about the turn-taking system. First, I defined central concepts, such as turns, TCUs, TRPs, and multi-unit turns (4.4.1). In connection to that, I discussed three different levels of turn completion: syntactic, prosodic, and pragmatic. Following this, I took a closer look at the turn and discussed how it has been divided into six interactionally relevant stages, from pre-beginning to post-possible completion (4.4.2). Then, I looked closely at how syntax can be used as a projection potential in turn-taking (4.4.3). I described how *nú*...
can have different syntactic positions, either in the pre-front field or as a first word in the core syntactic gestalt. I will later show how such integration or non-integration plays a crucial role in interaction. Finally, I discussed briefly the interactional perspective on prosody, and how prosodic cues are used as interactionally meaningful devices.

As in any study on interaction, this one is highly data-driven. The data used in the present study will be discussed in the following chapter.
5 Data

CA is an empirical and descriptive method in which naturally occurring conversations\(^{51}\) are recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. The present study is based on 14 hours and 11 minutes of data.\(^{52}\) The selection of the data was made with the intention of getting a broad representation of spoken interaction, including informal everyday conversations as well as moderated debates. The result is a collection of seven different corpora recorded between 1996 and 2003. All the transcriptions used in the empirical study were done by me.\(^{53}\) Table 5.1 shows an overview of the data:

Table 5.1: Conversations included in the empirical data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Form of interaction</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reunion (1998)</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>Evening gathering (Audio recording)</td>
<td>Six young women in their early twenties</td>
<td>approx. 90 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends (1996)</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>Evening gathering (Audio recording)</td>
<td>Four young women in their mid or late twenties</td>
<td>approx. 146 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTC (2003)</td>
<td>Telephone calls</td>
<td>Private telephone conversations (Audio recording)</td>
<td>One woman in her early thirties and various other participants</td>
<td>approx. 78 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC (2003)</td>
<td>Telephone calls</td>
<td>Institutional telephone conversations (Audio recording)</td>
<td>One woman in her early thirties calling different institutions</td>
<td>approx. 17 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens (1996, 1998)</td>
<td>Face-to-face and telephone calls</td>
<td>Radio show for teenagers: Radio talk, interviews, film critique, etc. (Audio recording)</td>
<td>Several young adults</td>
<td>approx. 100 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Soul of the Nation (1998)</td>
<td>Telephone calls</td>
<td>Phone-in-program on radio (Audio recording)</td>
<td>Moderator, studio guests and various callers phoning the program</td>
<td>approx. 310 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections (1996)</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>Political television debate (Audio-visual recording)</td>
<td>Five Candidates for the presidency, six invited reporters, and one moderator</td>
<td>approx. 110 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL DURATION approx. 14 h. 11 min.

\(^{51}\) The term naturally occurring conversation refers to non-arranged conversations which would take place with or without the interference of a researcher and in which the researcher has not assigned a particular topic for discussion.

\(^{52}\) When I started studying Icelandic particles (e.g., Hilmsdóttir 1999), there were no detailed transcriptions of Icelandic, non-arranged conversations. Today, the corpus Ístal is used by researchers at The University of Iceland and the Teachers College in Reykjavik (cf. Þ. Blöndal 2005).

\(^{53}\) The corpus The Soul of The Nation was transcribed originally in 1996, although the original transcriptions were not very detailed and were not done with a CA analysis in mind.
As illustrated in Table 5.1, the data consist of seven different corpora. These corpora represent different settings and means of communication, including dialogues as well as multi-party conversations, face-to-face interactions as well as telephone conversations, informal everyday conversation and conversations on radio and television. In this chapter, I will give a short outline of the data (5.1). In addition, I will discuss transcription conventions (5.2) as well as the ethical aspects of this study (5.3).

5.1 Presentation of the data

In the following sections, I will give a brief description of each corpus and discuss how the means of communication and number of participants shape the conversations. In the first section, I discuss face-to-face, everyday conversations which are represented by two dinner gatherings: *Friends* and *Reunion* (5.1.1). This is followed by a description of two different sets of telephone conversations which include private conversations (*PTC*) and conversations in service encounters (*ITC*) (5.1.2). In the third section, I discuss radio conversations and the program *The Soul of The Nation* (5.1.3), and, finally, in the television debate *Elections* (5.1.4), I discuss data which represent a more formal register.

5.1.1 Dinner gatherings (everyday conversations)

According to Heritage (1984a: 238), the study of everyday conversation is not only the “richest available research domain,” but also a necessary ground for understanding the activity-specific features of institutional conversation. In an everyday conversation, the participants have symmetric roles or “equal participation” (Drew and Heritage 1992: 47–53). This means that the interlocutors enter the conversation on an equal basis and not as specialists or professionals. Therefore, both parties have an equal right to choose topics and take initiatives during the course of the conversation. In addition, an everyday conversation does not have a specific agenda that has to be completed; the interlocutors often enter the conversation for no particular reason. The data used in this study include two everyday conversations: *Friends* and *Reunion*.

The data *Reunion* consist of an informal multi-party conversation with six female participants aged between 24 and 26. The women have been friends since childhood,
and, at the time of the recording, the women are meeting as a group for the first time in two years. The conversation is affected by the non-verbal activities the women engage in while talking, such as preparing and eating dinner and taking photographs of one another. The women frequently comment on these activities and on the immediate surroundings, for example, on what they are wearing and on different items in the room (cf. Sacks 1992b: 90 on “noticings”; Bergmann 1990 and Londen 1993 on “local sensitivity”).

In a multi-party conversation such as Reunion, the conversation can easily split into two or more parallel dialogues (cf. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 713; Schegloff 1995: 32; Egbert 1997; Londen 1997). Such schimming happens frequently in Reunion, and, since only one tape recorder was used for this occasion, it was not possible to get a good recording of all the episodes. In addition, the microphone was stationed in one spot, while the participants moved freely around the apartment, in the kitchen–living room area, and out onto the balcony. The conversation consists of 90 minutes of spoken language, but, due to these technical reasons, some parts of the conversation are not comprehensible.54

Friends is the second informal multi-party conversation included in the data. This conversation, which was recorded in 1996, is an informal conversation amongst three to four55 women in their mid or late twenties. One participant has a near native knowledge of Icelandic. As in the former conversation, Reunion, these women have not met as a group in a long time. During the recording, the women are sitting and chatting with each other. In contrast to Reunion, which to a large extent evolves around non-verbal activities such as cooking, eating, and taking photos, these interlocutors are mainly sitting in one place and chatting. As a result, longer episodes on specific topics evolve and stories stretch over many turns. Most of these episodes and stories are dominated by one speaker, while the other participants contribute frequently with backchannels, questions, and comments.

5.1.2 Telephone conversations

Unlike face-to-face conversations, telephone conversations rely entirely on the voice and voice quality. Thus, while working with telephone conversations as data, non-

54 I am one of the participants in the conversation. This turned out to be inevitable, as I had great difficulties collecting data without participating myself (see discussion in 5.3).
55 One party joined late in the conversation.
verbal behaviour, such as gaze (cf. Goodwin 1981) and gestures (cf. Schegloff 1984), need not be considered. Instead, the lack of visual cues may result in telephone-specific activities such as “voice recognition tests” (Sacks 1992b:161; Hutchby 2001:108).

The telephone as a medium has several other implications for talk-in-interaction (cf. Hutchby 2001: 101–122). The participants take on the roles of ‘caller’ and ‘called,’ and this more or less shapes the whole conversation (cf. Sacks 1992b: 360–6). The caller should, for example, have ‘a-reason-for-the-call’ (ibid.), and, subsequently, the topical power lies mostly in his or her hands (Hutchby 2001: 112–3). Similarly, as Schegloff and Sacks (1973) have pointed out, it is usually the caller’s task to move into a closing sequence. This study includes two sets of telephone conversations, one corpus of private telephone conversations between friends, and one corpus of phone calls to institutions.

The data Private telephone conversation, abbreviated as PTC, consist of recordings from the summer of 2003. The data include thirteen dialogues between a woman and her friends and family. Table 5.2 shows the corpus PTC and the duration of each phone call.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.06.03</td>
<td>8 min. 7 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and Lárus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.07.03</td>
<td>10 min. 13 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and Hrafnhildur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.07.03</td>
<td>1 min. 10 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and Arnar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.07.03</td>
<td>1 min. 44 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and Anna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.07.03</td>
<td>1 min. 42 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and Gussi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.07.03</td>
<td>1 min. 52 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and Anna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.07.03</td>
<td>11 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and an unknown caller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.07.03</td>
<td>6 min. 27 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and Sigrún</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.07.03</td>
<td>12 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and an unknown caller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.08.03</td>
<td>5 min. 56 sec.</td>
<td>Erna, Sigrún and Gro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.08.03</td>
<td>6 min. 31 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and Anna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.07.03</td>
<td>12 min. 53 sec.</td>
<td>Erna, Sigrún and Lárus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.08.03</td>
<td>20 min. 53 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and Arnar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>77 min. 51 sec.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2: Recordings, duration, and participants of PTC

56 Just as in the data Reunion, I am one of the participants in the conversation (see discussion in 5.3).
The data *Institutional telephone conversation*, abbreviated as *ITC*, were also recorded in the summer of 2003. The data include seven short telephone conversations between a woman and representatives of different institutions and private companies, for example, a service representative for the telephone company and a receptionist in a hair salon.

The conversations in this corpus represent institutional conversations in the sense that they are task-related and include one participant who represents a formal organization or institution (cf. Drew & Heritage 1992: 3). Thus, as a contrast to the participants in *PTC*, the participants in these conversations are not participating on an equal basis. One participant has information or access to something that the other participant needs. Table 5.3 shows information about the conversations included in the data: 57

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.08.03</td>
<td>1 min. 24 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and a receptionist at a hair salon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.08.03</td>
<td>43 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and a telephone receptionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.07.03</td>
<td>4 min. 10 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and a customer service representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.08.03</td>
<td>4 min. 05 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and a computer technician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.07.03</td>
<td>1 min. 52 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and a receptionist in a health clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.07.03</td>
<td>2 min. 38 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and a mechanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.08.03</td>
<td>1 min. 53 sec.</td>
<td>Erna and a customer service representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>16 min. 45 sec.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.1.3 Radio talk

Radio talk is a form of mediated public discourse which Hutchby (2001: 55) describes as “a form of unscripted talk that can be recorded in the safe knowledge that the same talk would have been produced even if the researcher had not switched on his or her tape recorder.” Thus, studying largely spontaneous radio talk has its advantages. Nonetheless, the fact that these conversations are broadcast on radio imposes certain constraints. During these conversations, interlocutors are not only talking with their co-participant, they are also overheard by an unknown audience. This double communication has wide implications for the recipient design of the conversation in

57 Just as in the data *Reunion* and *PTC*, I am one of the participants in the conversation (see discussion in 5.3).
question (cf. Auer et al. 1999: 174; Vagle 1990). This study includes two corpora involving talk-radio programs which occur in quite varied settings.

**Corpus of spoken Icelandic: The Soul of the Nation** (in Icelandic Íslenskur talmálsgrunnur: Pjóðarsálin), abbreviated as Soul, is the name of a corpus collected in 1996 by the Institute of Linguistics at the University of Iceland. The complete corpus consists of 15 transcribed episodes of a popular phone-in program broadcast in May and June of 1996. In the present study, I use ten of the episodes.

During the 1990s, *The Soul of the Nation* was a widely known program among Icelanders. It was broadcast on the Icelandic state radio, Radio 2, five days a week. Each show is half an hour to forty minutes long, including a short break in the middle for commercials. During the show, listeners are encouraged to call in and tell the ‘Nation’ what is on their mind. In this way, the program is supposed to reflect ‘the soul’ of the Icelandic people.

In each episode, the moderator talks with approximately twelve to thirteen different callers. The callers choose a particular topic before they go on the air, and the moderator knows both their names and their topics in advance. In other words, the moderator is prepared for each caller.

In most of these episodes, the topic is chosen by the callers. The conversations are generally short—usually lasting only a few minutes—and the caller is, in most cases, allowed to bring up only one topic for discussion. As a result, the conversations in the program are often direct and to the point. After the introduction and greeting, the callers typically announce their topic. Often these topics involve complaints and critiques of some sort, and, thus, the discourse is often quite argumentative. The callers can at times be both personal and emotional, and some callers try to establish personal contact with the moderator, either by referring to their earlier conversations or by mentioning mutual friends. The moderators, by contrast, usually try to be neutral and to keep a (politically) objective point of view. It is in their interest to develop an interesting discussion with the caller, and, therefore, they often play devil’s advocate. On some occasions, the moderators show a more private side, for instance, by mentioning mutual friends or by expressing their personal opinion.

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**Footnotes:**

58 I would like to thank the project leader, Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, for giving me permission to use the data. I would also like to thank the coordinator, Camilla Wide, for introducing the data to me. The data was used by Wide (1998) in a study on *nú* and inspired me to deepen the analysis on a broader selection of data (see the discussion of Wide’s results in chapter 2).

59 Three different radio personalities took turns moderating the show during the time of these recordings.
In two of the episodes, the discussion is limited to posing questions to a visitor in the studio. In episode 10.06.96, a presidential candidate is visiting the studio, and, in episode 23.06.96, a mechanic is answering questions regarding the repair of cars. In these episodes, the callers are supposed to ask the guests one question, and no other topics are accepted.

Table 5.4 gives an overview of the different episodes used in the present study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17.05.96</td>
<td>approx. 30 min.</td>
<td>Female moderator 1 and various callers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.05.96</td>
<td>approx. 30 min.</td>
<td>Male moderator, a guest in the studio and various callers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.05.98</td>
<td>approx. 30 min.</td>
<td>Female moderator 2 and various callers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.05.98</td>
<td>approx. 30 min.</td>
<td>Female moderator 1 and various callers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.06.96</td>
<td>approx. 30 min.</td>
<td>Female moderator 1 and various callers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.06.96</td>
<td>approx. 30 min.</td>
<td>Female moderator 2 and various callers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.06.96</td>
<td>approx. 30 min.</td>
<td>Female moderator 2 and various callers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.06.96</td>
<td>approx. 30 min.</td>
<td>Female moderator 1 and various callers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.06.96</td>
<td>approx. 40 min.</td>
<td>Female moderator 1, a guest in the studio and various callers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.06.96</td>
<td>approx. 30 min.</td>
<td>Female moderator 1 and various callers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**    approx. 310 min

The other radio data I use in this study are rather different from the phone-in program mentioned above. The corpus *Teens* consists of three radio programs hosted by teenagers, for teenagers. The three programs are quite different from one another in their topics and type of interaction. In spite of these differences, however, they have many features in common that, according to Nordberg (1984), Kotsinas (1994), and Stenström, Andersen, and Hasund (2002), are typical for teenagers’ language, such as the use of slang and loan words and the use of certain particles (cf. H. Hilmisdóttir and Wide 2000, H. Hilmisdóttir 2000).

The first show, *Lovísa 1*, was broadcast in November, 1997. The program consists of 41 minutes of speech. There are two hosts in the studio, a young woman and a young man. During the broadcast, the two hosts chat with each other, interview teenagers on the streets of Reykjavik, and invite visitors to the studio. They visit record companies and ask their managers about upcoming releases, discuss a film with a movie enthusiast, and chat with listeners who call in to participate in quizzes. Laughter and word-play are frequent, along with phrases and words in English (cf. H.
The program has a playful character, and the small talk between the two hosts is the main activity throughout.

The second show, *Lovísa 2*, was broadcast the following summer, in July, 1998. The program consists of 21 minutes of speech. Again, there are two hosts, a young man and a young woman. This show has a slower tempo than the first one. The hosts chat with each other between songs, and one guest visits the studio and is interviewed.

The third show, *Ó hve glöð er vor æska* ‘Oh, how happy is our youth,’ (*ÓHG*) was broadcast in October, 1997. Only the first half of the program, which consists of 38 minutes of speech, has been transcribed. The hosts of this program are young men, and the theme is love. In this episode, the hosts have invited two guests to the studio, a man and a woman, probably in their early twenties. Although the conversation has many features which are typical for institutional conversations (for example, it is moderated), it resembles everyday conversations in many ways. For example, the guests at times pose questions to the hosts about personal matters. Table 5.5 gives an overview of the data *Teens*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lovísa 1</td>
<td>approx.41 min.</td>
<td>Two radio hosts, listeners calling in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovísa 2</td>
<td>approx.21 min.</td>
<td>Two radio hosts and a studio guest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ÓHG</td>
<td>approx.38 min.</td>
<td>Two radio hosts, two guests in the studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>approx. 100 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.4 Political debate on television

To represent more formal spoken language, I have also included a televised political debate in my data. *Elections* is a television debate, approximately 110 minutes long, and it was broadcast live a few days before the Icelandic presidential election in 1996. The participants are a moderator from the state television, five presidential candidates, and six journalists. The debate is set up in a studio with five candidates in a row on one side of the room, and the six journalists on the other side. The moderator is placed between the two groups.

---

60 For a discussion of media debates and interviews on television news, see Heritage and Roth (1995) and Nylund (2000).
Political debates on television are typically highly moderated conversations in which specific turn allocation rules and the length of turns are to some extent pre-specified (cf. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 701). In this particular program, the moderator does not pose questions to the candidates directly herself. She gives the floor to one reporter at a time who then poses a question, either to all candidates or to a specific one. After the question has been posed, the candidate who was appointed as the next speaker takes the floor. If the reporter has not appointed a next speaker, the moderator appoints a speaker. If the question was meant for all candidates, the moderator allocates the turns to one candidate at a time until they have all answered the question. The moderator then appoints another reporter to pose a new question.

This turn-taking system results in a conversation which involves many long monologues during which the candidates perform well-rehearsed speeches on topics on which they have probably commented several times before. Of course, there are limits as to how long each candidate can hold the floor, and there is a general pressure to answer the questions quickly and succinctly. The reporters are expected to ask their questions succinctly as well.

From the beginning, the reporters take an aggressive approach. They are constantly confronting the candidates with politically sensitive questions, for example, questions regarding the funding of their campaigns. Usually one person speaks at a time, with the exception of a few heated sequences. The debate takes place during the peak of the presidential campaign, only a few days before the elections in 1996, and, therefore, the tension and frustration that has been accumulating is reflected. The six candidates are all competing against each other for votes, and the program is loaded with tension.

5.2 Transcriptions

Although the original conversations are always regarded as the actual data, in this case by audio and video recordings, they have to be reproduced in visual form as transcriptions. As I mentioned earlier, there were no CA transcriptions available in Icelandic when I started the transcription process. Therefore, my first task was to study how the transcription process has been approached in other languages, and then to formulate my own guidelines for transcribing Icelandic conversation. The transcription conventions used in this study are first and foremost based on a system
which was developed by Gail Jefferson for American-English (cf. e.g. Ochs, Schegloff, and Thompson 1996: 461–5, Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 73–92).

According to Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974: 734), the primary purpose of a CA transcription is “to get as much of the actual sound as possible into the transcripts, while still making them accessible to linguistically unsophisticated readers.” By this, Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson are probably referring to the fact that CA transcriptions are not based on IPA or other phonological transcription systems. This popularization of the transcription conventions and the attempt to make them available to the general reader have been criticized by Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (1996: 40). However, the transcription is always a selective representation of the primary data, the conversation itself. Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998: 88) point out that a good CA transcription is designed to “highlight analytically relevant features of talk-in-interaction.” My goal, therefore, has not been to do phonetically accurate transcriptions. Instead, I have considered each extract separately and aimed to transcribe it in such a way that it is comprehensible without leaving out anything that could be of importance for the analysis. Hence, I have focused on aspects which I consider especially important for the interaction. I notate pauses, overlapping talk, laughter, voice quality, hesitation, restarts, and terminal contours. Stress is marked when I perceive the stress pattern to be particularly prominent and potentially meaningful. Similarly, I note the soft pronunciation particular to speakers from Reykjavik (e.g., strætó ‘bus’ pronounced as strædó) only when I perceive it to be particularly prominent in the context.

When transforming spoken interaction into written characters, it can be difficult to assess the degree to which traditional spelling may be changed. In talk-in-interaction, speakers often use verbal contractions (maður > mar ‘man’) or utter two or more words without any clear prosodic boundaries. It is not always clear if these units should be considered as one or two words (cf. Ottesjö 2005: 21–2 on transcription of Swedish). This is particularly striking with respect to pronouns as objects, for example, in phrases such as ég sáann ‘I saw him,’ which in proper writing would be ég sá hann.

To show the layout of the examples in the following chapters, I will revisit section (1.1), here referred to as (5.1). The first line provides the Icelandic original, the second
a gloss in English, and the third a free translation into English. A key for transcription and glossing\(^{61}\) conventions is provided in Appendices A and B:

(5.1) I’M GETTING FED UP: Soul 07.05.96 (←1.1)
(M = Moderator; A = Arngrímur, a caller)

1 M Og Arngrímur Guðmundsson fyrrstur í dag komdu sæll.
   and first.M in day GREET
   And Arngrímur Guðmundsson is first today hello

2 A Já komdu blessuð.
   PRT GREET
   Yes hello

→ A >Vi (h)öfum nú talað saman áður?<
   we have.3.PL NÚ talk.PP together before
   we have NÚ talked before

4 M J↓ā:↑āj↓ā: Hvort við ekki höfum,
   PRT whether we not have.3.PL
   Yes yes yes we certainly have

5 A Ég skal segja þér eitt eh:: e- Eva- Eva Marie.
   I shall.I tell.INF you.DAT one eh- e- 1nameF 1nameF 1nameF
   Let me tell you one thing eh- e- Eva- Eva Marie.

6 A <NÚ: fer mér að leiðast svolítið hvernig að mýnd eh:::
   NÚ go.3 I.ĐAT to bore.MV little bit how that shape eh-
   NÚ I’m getting a bit fed up with that shape eh

7 forsetafram- forsetakosningarnar eru að taka á sig °núna°.
   president- presidential elections.DEF be.3.PL to take.INF on it.REF NÚNA
   the president- the presidential elections are taking NÚNA

→ M N↑ū:::

9 A J↓ā:↑ā: móð finnst þetta nú orðið ansi .hhh ansi
   PRT Í.ĐAT think.IMP.MV this NÚ become.PP.N quite .hhh quite
   Yeah I think this has NÚ become quite like

10 á:þekkt e:: (. ) bara sona: *eh .h* hörku: alþingiskosningum?
   similar eh- (. ) PRT PRT ((Chuckle)) tough parliament elections.DAT
   eh (. ) just like eh .h real parliamentary elections

The extract above has ten numbered lines. I use these numbers in my analysis when I refer to something in the conversation. The instances of nú and núna which will be discussed are boldfaced and marked with an arrow in the margin (lines 3 and 8). All instances of nú and núna are left untranslated, cited in uppercase. Each numbered line has three lines of text. When an excerpt occurs more than once, the numbers of the

\(^{61}\) Due to the richness of Icelandic grammar, the gloss is not grammatically complete. Only those grammatical features that are potentially important for the interaction are noted.
other examples are given after an arrow, and after the identification line (for example ←1.1).

Of particular importance is the prosodic realization of nú and other particles. Thus, \( \text{N} \uparrow \text{ú}::: \) in line 8 represents an instance which is produced with: a) beginning intonation symbolized by a capital \( N \), b) a prolonged vowel symbolized by four colons (one for each 0.1 seconds), and c) a rising intonation contour symbolized with the arrow pointing upwards. \( N \text{ú} \) in line 3, by contrast, is prosodically non-prominent.

As I will show in Chapter 9, the intonation contour is particularly important in the case of the syntactically non-integrated \( n \text{ú} \), such as \( \text{N} \uparrow \text{ú}::: \) in line 8. The speakers treat the different contours as meaningful cues, and, therefore, they are important factors in my analysis.

To further support my analysis, I will use figures generated by the computer program Praat. These figures illustrate the different kinds of intonation contours and intensity patterns which the transcription symbols mentioned above represent. Figure 5.1 represents \( \text{N} \uparrow \text{ú}::: \) in line 8 given with frequency in Hertz (Hz) displayed logarithmically on the vertical axis. Time in seconds is displayed on the horizontal axis:

![Figure 5.1: Fundamental frequency (f₀) in line 8, excerpt (5.1)](img)

As I mentioned earlier, \( n \text{ú} \) in line 3 is prosodically non-prominent, and it sounds as though it is cliticized to the preceding verb. In such cases, no arrows are used to show the intonation contour of \( n \text{ú} \). However, a question mark at the end of the utterance represents a rising terminal contour. Figure 5.2 shows the fundamental frequency for the TCU in line 3:
As Figure 5.2 illustrates, the particle nú is produced as a prosodically integrated part of við (h)öfum nú ‘we have NÚ,’ while the rest of the TCU, talað saman áður ‘talked (together) before,’ has vague boundaries between each word.

In addition to using prolonged vowels and recognizable intonation contours, speakers may also use intensity. Figure 5.3 shows the intensity of the utterance in line 3 given with frequency in decibels (dB) on the vertical axis and time on the horizontal axis:

The discussion above shows that transcribing data is by no means an easy task. The transcriptions which appear here are a product of my own work, done with the study
of particles in mind. Other conversation analysts may choose other solutions, in particular, if they are focusing on other phenomena.

5.3 Ethical aspects

Parts of the data on which this study are based consist of conversations between friends and family. By agreeing to give a researcher access to private conversations, the participants are giving away private and potentially sensitive information. In a small country, such as Iceland, with around 300,000 inhabitants, privacy is possibly a more sensitive issue than in countries with larger populations. It is more difficult to hide the identities of participants, and it is not unlikely that some readers will know them personally. Thus, it was difficult to approach people and ask them to record their private conversations or telephone calls. This is the main reason that I participated in some conversations myself. Participating personally in parts of the data made it easier to convince other participants to give their permission to use their conversations for research purposes. My involvement, however, is, of course, not totally unproblematic (cf. also discussion by Ottesjö 2005). Some critics may point out that I could, as a participant, manipulate the conversation and embed in it the linguistic elements which I would like to study. This is obviously not the case regarding the data Reunion, as this conversation was recorded before I started working on the present study. Even the telephone conversations PTC and ITC were not recorded with a study on nú and núna in mind, although I did later decide to use them in order to have a more varied collection of data. Furthermore, talk-in-interaction is typically produced at a very fast pace, and there is not much time to think between turns. Anyone who has been engaged in analyzing talk-in-interaction knows that conversation is a complicated, multi-layered, and jointly constructed activity, and it is, therefore, in my opinion, usually not possible for one participant to ‘manipulate’ a conversation.

The data Friends and Reunion were recorded with the oral consent of the participants. The participants were also aware that the recordings would be used for linguistic analysis. They did not know, however, what aspects would be looked at specifically. Most of the participants in the telephone conversations were informed before the recording that they might be recorded in the near future. I contacted all participants that could be identified after the recording had taken place, and they all gave their oral consent to use the data for research purposes.
To keep the identities of those involved private, all names of people have been changed. In some cases, I have also changed names of places or other facts that could reveal the identities of people involved. In choosing new names, I have, however, chosen names with the same number of syllables and in the same stylistic categories as the original names (e.g. traditional Icelandic names, nicknames, foreign names).

The media conversations were broadcast on Icelandic State Radio and Television. The participants entered the conversations knowing that they were taking part in a public conversation or debate to which anyone interested could listen. I have, nevertheless, changed their names as well. I have chosen to do so to emphasize that it is not important who says what, but rather how the interaction is accomplished.

5.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed issues regarding the data used in the empirical part of this study. I started by giving a general overview of the data, followed by a more detailed description of each sub-corpus (5.1). I began by describing everyday conversations and ended with those which represent more formal and institutionalized conversations. These descriptions were followed by a discussion of the transcription of data (5.2). Since this is one of the first studies based on Icelandic conversation, one of the more difficult tasks was to set a standard for the transcription, which involved deciding how to find the balance between readability and precision. In the final section, I included a brief discussion of the ethical aspects of this study (5.3).

In the following chapter, I will start the empirical analysis based on the data discussed above.
6 Nú and núna as temporal markers

This chapter concerns the meanings and functions of the temporal nú and núna. In the first section (6.1), I will address the distribution of nú and núna, as well as their syntactic positions. This discussion is followed by an in-depth analysis in which I will show how nú and núna are employed in conversation. I will begin the analysis by looking at núna as a temporal marker (6.2). First, I will discuss how the time period indexed as núna is co-constructed and established in conversation (6.2.1), and, second, I will show that núna functions as an independent lexical item which can occur disjunctly from the finite verb (6.2.2). Following the discussion on núna, I will present three different functional categories of nú (6.3): nú in utterances containing temporal comparisons (6.3.1); nú in utterances expressing transitions (6.3.2); and, finally, instances of nú which will be referred to as temporal-affective (6.3.3).

6.1 Distribution of nú and núna

In the present data, there are 254 instances referring to the temporal origo, ‘now’: 174 instances of núna and 82 instances of nú. The distribution is displayed in Table 6.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Temporal núna</th>
<th>Temporal nú</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>90 min.</td>
<td>6 50%</td>
<td>6 50%</td>
<td>12 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>146 min.</td>
<td>26 90%</td>
<td>3 10%</td>
<td>29 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>78 min.</td>
<td>18 64%</td>
<td>10 36%</td>
<td>28 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>17 min.</td>
<td>5 100%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>100 min.</td>
<td>24 86%</td>
<td>4 14%</td>
<td>28 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul</td>
<td>310 min.</td>
<td>73 59%</td>
<td>51 41%</td>
<td>124 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>110 min.</td>
<td>22 73%</td>
<td>8 27%</td>
<td>30 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14 h. 11 min.</td>
<td>174 68%</td>
<td>82 32%</td>
<td>256 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 6.1 indicates, núna occurs more frequently than the temporal nú. In fact, núna is more frequent in all the different subdata, with the exception of Reunion in
which the ratio is equal. Note that this distribution of *nú* and *núna* is dramatically different from the distribution in the Icelandic family sagas, which have 7,627 instances of *nú* (E. Rögnvaldsson, B. Kristjánsdóttir, and Ö. Thorsson 1996: 20), but only three instances of *núna* (see section 2.4). Although it is not without reservation that one can compare contemporary dialogue to written sagas, it is fairly safe to say that the usage of *nú* and *núna* has gone through a dramatic shift in the course of the last seven centuries (cf. also discussion by J. H. Jónsson 1982).

I will start by looking more closely at the temporal *nú*, which occurs almost exclusively in syntactic gestalts, right before or right after the finite verb. It is worth noting that *nú* in this syntactic position is often non-temporal and is used as a tone particle (see Chapter 7). In fact, *nú* functions more often as a tone particle than as a temporal marker. Table 6.2 shows the functions of the syntactically integrated *nú*:

**Table 6.2: Functions of syntactically integrated *nú***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Dur.</th>
<th><em>Nú</em> as a temporal marker</th>
<th><em>Nú</em> as a tone particle</th>
<th>Unknown (repairs)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>90 min.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>146 min.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>77 min.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>17 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>100 min.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul</td>
<td>310 min.</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>110 min.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14 h. 10 min.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 6.2 illustrates, only 12% of syntactically integrated *nú*s have clear temporal functions and therefore function as referential indexes. However, besides these temporal functions, referential indexes often have other non-referential functions, and the line between the temporal and non-temporal use of *nú* is not always easy to draw (cf. discussion by Wide 1998: 248).
Although temporal and non-temporal nú may both occur in the same syntactic positions, there is a striking difference between how they are distributed in authentic conversations. Table 6.3 shows how these two types are distributed in my data:

**Table 6.3:** Syntactic distribution of temporal and non-temporal nú

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nú as a temporal marker</th>
<th>Nú as a tone particle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-verbal</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-verbal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without a verb</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Conventionalized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrases)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 6.3 shows, the temporal nú has a clear preference for occurring pre-verbally, while the non-temporal nú has a preference for occurring post-verbally. The difference is striking: 93% of pre-verbal nú are temporal, and 93% of post-verbal nú are non-temporal. In addition, the temporal nú occurs in one instance without a verb, in the conventionalized phrase hvað nú ‘what now?’ The different syntactic positions of the temporal nú are illustrated in the following three examples which are simplified utterances from the main data: (i) is an example of a pre-verbal nú, (ii) shows a post-verbal nú, and (iii) shows a syntactically non-integrated nú:

(i) Nú er Palli hættur að syngja. ‘NÚ Palli stopped singing’ (Soul)

(ii) Sem heitir nú Heaven. ‘Which is NÚ called Heaven’ (Teens, see excerpt (6.4))

(iii) Hva nú? ‘What NÚ?’ (PTC, see excerpt (6.24))

As Table 6.3 illustrates, only a small minority of temporal nú occurs post-verbally. Looking more closely at these instances, it becomes clear that they exist only in specific contexts: i) utterances with interrogative syntax; (ii) utterances with subordinate syntax; and (iii) as a part of conventionalized phrases, such as nú fyrst ‘not until now’ and hér og nú ‘here and now’.
(i) Á ég nú bara að klikka áðetta ‘Should I just click on this?’ (PTC)

(ii) Sem að heitir nú Heaven ekki satt? ‘Which is called Heaven isn’t it?’ (Teens, see (6.4))

(iii) Ég er nú fyrst að heyra þessar tölur ‘I’m hearing these numbers first.’ (Elections)

This limited possibility that a temporal nú will occur in a post-verbal position shows that there is a clear tendency for it to occur pre-verbally.

The difference in syntactic distribution is not only restricted to the temporal and non-temporal nú. The syntactic distribution of nú and núna is shown in Table 6.4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Núna</th>
<th>Nú</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i Pre-verbal, in the front field</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii Post-verbal, in the middle field</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii Final, in the end field</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv Non-integrated (without a finite verb)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 6.4 illustrates, núna has a clear preference for occurring in the end field. (cf. also J. H. Jónsson 1982: 257–8). My data show that 88% of núna occur in this position and that there are no instances of final nú. Most instances of temporal nú occur before the finite verb. The only exception to this rule is the conventionalized phrase hvað nú ‘what now?’ which was mentioned above.

A few instances of núna occur in the front field, and a few instances occur syntactically non-integrated, either as an independent turn or in an utterance without any finite verb. The utterances below are examples of all the syntactic categories mentioned in Table 6.4:
A comparison of the syntactic positions of the temporal núa and núna shows that there are fundamental differences in the ways in which the two words correlate with other parts of speech. This analysis indicates that there might be functional differences between them as well. To find out what these differences involve, in the remainder of this chapter, I will offer a sequential analysis of núa and núna. My aim is to investigate the environments in which temporal núa and núna occur, and to describe what communicative work these two words may accomplish. I will begin my analysis by looking at instances in which the temporal meaning is clear and then work my way through to the other end of the spectrum, in which the temporal function is accompanied by non-temporal functions. I will begin this discussion by looking at núna as a time period.

6.2 Núna as a temporal marker

As seen in Table 6.1, there are 174 occurrences of núna in my data, and the aim of the following section is to describe the time relationships that these instances index.

6.2.1 Duration of núna and its relation to the focal event

The temporal marker núna refers to an unspecified time period which can vary from short moments to several decades. The meaning of each occurrence depends on the situated context in which the word is used. In (6.1), which is drawn from the data ITC,
Erna is talking to a computer technician. Erna has had problems with her Internet settings, and she has told the technician that she cannot visit external websites. The technician starts helping her to fix the problem by asking her what kind of browser she is using (line 1):

(6.1) FIXING THE COMPUTER: ITC 02.08.02 (→ 4.1)
(C = Computer technician; E = Erna, the caller)

1 C Hvaða vafra erta nota erta nota Netscape eða Internet Explorer.
   What browser are you using Netscape or Internet Explorer?

2 (0.7)

3 E Explorer=
   Explorer

4 C =Ókei.
   okay

5 (1.0)

→ C hérna: farðí #eh::=# Ertu meða opíð núná.
   go.2+in eh::: be.2+you with+it open.PP.N NÚNA
   Eh, go to, is it open NÚNA?

7 E J↑Δ:
   yes

8 (0.4)

9 C °Ókei° Farðí hérna: Êrðí hérna#:::=# T→tools.
   okay, Go to ahhh, Go to ahhh Tools

After hearing Erna’s answer, the computer technician moves to the next step which is to guide Erna through the actions she needs to perform to fix her problem (line 6). He initiates his turn with the planning marker hérna which here has the function of ‘doing thinking’: it shows overtly that the computer technician is considering what he should say next. At the same time, it gives him more time to plan his speech. The particle is followed by the imperative farðí ‘go to’ which signals to Erna that he is now going to tell her what to click on next. However, he does not produce his anticipated instructions immediately, and, instead, he inserts a new question in order to verify that the browser is actually open at the present moment, núna ‘now’ (also in line 6). It is only after the computer technician has received a positive answer from Erna (line 7)
that he continues by repairing the utterance he cut off earlier. After a pause (line 8), he acknowledges Erna’s positive answer with the particle òkei ‘okay,’ repeats the same words he cut off earlier, the imperative farði ‘go to,’ and continues with further instructions regarding what to click on next (line 9).

The occurrence in (6.1) has the formal characteristics typical for núna which are found in my data: it occurs in the end field, and it is not prosodically integrated with the preceding word. A pitch analysis for the relevant TCU is shown in Figure 6.1:

![Figure 6.1: Fundamental frequency (f0) of line 9, excerpt (6.1)](image)

As Figure 6.1 illustrates, temporal núna is uttered after a brief pause and with falling intonation. In other words, núna is produced as a prosodically independent unit.

The focus in (6.1) is whether the Internet program is running. The computer technician makes this situation explicitly relevant during the conversation by using núna. In other words, it is important that the program is open “now,” during the process of guiding Erna through the settings. It is not important to the technician if Erna has just opened the browser or if she has had it open for a while, nor is it important whether she is going to have it open after they have gone through the settings. It is only relevant “now.”

The time frame in (6.1) is rather narrow and may represent what the Icelandic dictionary presents as a prototypical use of núna, that is to mean “exactly in this moment” (see section 2.1). My data, however, show that these kinds of instances are not particularly common. In fact, the majority of instances of núna have a broader time frame than “exactly in this moment,” and they also refer to events taking place in the past or in the future (see discussion in section 3.2). Consider (6.2), which is drawn
from the data *Reunion*. In this excerpt, Guðrún realizes that two of her friends have not seen the photos from her and Vala’s new home in Spain. She then states to Valgerður (or Vala) that they have to go home and fetch the photos (line 1):

(6.2) I DON’T FEEL LIKE IT: *Reunion*¹³

(G = Guðrún; V = Vala)

1 G Valgerður, (0.4) við verðum a fara heim að ná í °myndirnar°, lnameF (0.4) we have.1.PL to go.INF home to get.INF in photos.ACC.DEF

Valgerður (0.4) we have to go home and get the photos

((5 turns omitted when Vala offers to take the photos with her to Reykjavík and show them to Magga on the airplane))

2 G Allar myndirnar hans /Veturliða, all photos.DEF he.GEN lnameM

All of Veturliði’s photos?

3  (1.0)

4 V .mt Já ÞÆ:R allar, PRT they.F all.F.PL

oh those all

5  (1.2)

6 V °J á:::↓::: ° ((softly)) PRT yeah

7  (1.3)

8 V j↑á::↓:: PRT yeah

→ V Æi é N:ENN::Ikki afara #é# (.ná í°ær núnah. PRT I want.1+not to+go.INF eh () get.INF in +they.F NÚNA

Oh I don’t want to go eh () and get them NÚNA

10  (0.5)

11 G Bara rétt á Eftir kannsk[i, PRT right on after mayb[e

just a bit later mayb[e

12 V [U::h INT [eww

13  (0.4)

¹³ Due to parallel dialogues, this excerpt is slightly simplified. The lines which are omitted are very short comments regarding cooking, which is the ongoing activity.
It becomes rather clear from the beginning that Vala is not very keen on leaving the party, and, therefore, she does not want to drive Guðrún home to get the photos (turns omitted). Instead, Vala offers another solution to the problem. Since Vala has misunderstood which pictures she is talking about, Guðrún clearly displays that Vala’s suggestion seems strange to her (line 2). After a considerable pause (line 3), Vala displays that she has now understood to which photos Guðrún is referring (line 4). Again, there is a long pause, stretching over 1.2 seconds (line 5). The pause is then followed by an acknowledgement token with a prolonged vowel and a rising-falling intonation contour (line 6). After another long pause (line 7), Valgerður produces a second acknowledgement token (line 8). This token is followed by a statement in which Vala rejects Guðrún’s request by saying that she does not feel like going “now” (line 9), using mína in the end field. Vala’s utterance is shown in Figure 6.2:

![Pitch (Hz)](image)

**Figure 6.2:** Fundamental frequency ($f_0$) of line 9, excerpt (6.2)

As seen in the figure above, mína is produced with a rising-falling intonation contour. Notice that there is a micro pause after the finite verb. At that point, the TCU could be treated as syntactically complete, but the intonation and the creaky sound that follows...
project a continuation. In other words, núna occurs in an intonation contour which is separate from the contour containing the finite verb.

After a 0.5 second pause, Guðrún makes another suggestion: they can go “a bit later,” and she hedges this with the modal adverb kannski ‘maybe’ (line 11). This obviously does not interest Vala, who produces an interjection, uː:h, showing her disapproval again (line 12). In spite of this overt disapproval, Guðrún suggests that they keep the possibility open (line 14). Again, Vala rejects this by suggesting sarcastically that they can go when she has had some wine (line 16).

The temporal adverb núna is slightly ambiguous in the excerpt above. When Vala, on the one hand, states that she does not want to go núna, she is most likely referring to the whole evening: she does not want to leave the party at all. Guðrún, on the other hand, is obviously quite eager to show the pictures, and she treats Vala’s use of núna as though it refers to a shorter stretch of time. Guðrún accepts the fact that they are not going “now,” and instead she suggests that they can go “just a bit later.” The two interlocutors do not have the same understanding of what the temporal marker núna encompasses in this context, and, therefore, they need to negotiate and settle upon what Vala is saying, and what she is willing to do.

The event of “getting the photos” was supposed to take place in the near future, anywhere from the next few minutes to the next hour. But núna may also refer to an event in the past. Consider the instance in (6.3). When the excerpt begins, Hólmfríður is explaining to the other women why she was reading “The Wedding Paper,” which is an annual supplementary to one of the newspapers in Iceland:

(6.3) THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY: Friends
(S = Sunna; N = Nanna; H= Hólmfríður )

1 H Skóð málið var þa að síðan- síðan- voru sesgt e-
PRT thing.DEF be.3.PT that that then- then- be.3.PL.PT PRT eh
Y’know, the thing was, that then- then- were y’know eh

2 móðursystir mín var í heimsókn um [daginn:] (0.3) þær byrja
aunt my be.3 in visit about [day.DEF ] (0.3) they.F start.3.PL
my aunt was visiting the [ other day ] (0.3) they start

3 S
[ ts:::][:]
[ INT ]
[ tsch::: ] [:]

4 H a rökræða hvað væri Þrjá tíu og fimm ára .hh [brúðkaupsafmæli
to debate.INF what be.3.PT.SUBJ thirty and five years .hh [wedding anniversary
debating what is thirty fifth .hh [ wedding anniversary

5

[{{clicking sounds}}]
In the beginning of the excerpt, Íólmfríður projects an explanation with the utterance particle *sco ‘y’see,’ followed by *málið var þa ‘the thing was’ (line 1). She then starts her explanation by saying that her aunt and her mother were debating what a 35th wedding anniversary is called (lines 2 and 4). After providing this background information, Íólmfríður produces a parenthetical insertion which is produced in a faster tempo than the surrounding talk (lines 6–7). In this insertion, Íólmfríður explains that her aunt was celebrating her 35th anniversary *núna ‘now.’ She then returns to her story and explains that the two women did not agree about what to call this anniversary (line 7).

When Íólmfríður uses *núna in excerpt (6.3), she is not providing a precise time for the anniversary. From her use of the past tense, however, we know that it took place sometime in the past, most likely during the last few weeks. The reason for this openness is that the actual day of the wedding anniversary is not important in this context. What is important, rather, is to explain why this topic is relevant for Íólmfríður’s mother and aunt. In other words, *núna refers to an unspecified time period during which the focal event took place.

Although the three instances I have looked at so far refer to time periods, they still differ in respect to the relation between *núna and the focal event. In (6.1), the focal event took place during the utterance time. The computer technician was asking Erna whether the computer program was running at the time he posed the question. In (6.2), the focal event was to go and fetch photographs, an event that would have taken place in the future. In (6.3), the focal event, the wedding anniversary, was in the past. Hence, *núna can be viewed as a period of time which encompasses a contextually relevant time within which a focal event takes place. Figure (6.3) illustrates *núna as a period of time and how events are placed within that period.

64 The interjection *ts:::::::: produced by Sunna (in line 3) is not a response to this background information, but rather to information provided just before the excerpt begins.
As the previous excerpts have shown, núa refers to an unspecified period of time, and it is to a large extent up to the interlocutors to interpret and settle upon the contextual meaning. When defining this particular meaning, interlocutors have to take various contextual considerations into account, for example, the type of event. In some cases, other factors, such as the roles of the participants, are crucial. Such is the case in the following excerpt, which is drawn from the data Teens. Elin, who is one of the presenters in this program, is interviewing DJ Sólrun. DJ Sólrun has been invited to the show to tell the listeners about an event she is organizing in a nightclub for teenagers. To prompt DJ Sólrun to talk about this event, Elin asks her what she is up to, núa (line 1):

(6.4) The hip hop evening: Teens (Lovísa 2) (→6.13)
(E = Elin, program presenter; S = Sólrun, studio guest)

1 E  en þú (0.2) hérna (0.3) segðu okkur, (.) Hvað ertu
but you (0.2) PRT (0.3) tell.2.IMPER us.DAT () what be.2+you

→  að fara að gera.
to go.INF to do.INF
going to do

3 (.)

→  E  núna.

5 (0.2)

6 S  á á: (.) Ég er að fara að halda hipphoppkvöld á
PRT () I be.1 to go.INF to hold.INF hip hop evening.ACC (0.5) on
Yes () I’m going to organize a hip hop evening (0.5) in
At the beginning of the excerpt, Elin poses a question to DJ Sólrun with which she encourages her to talk about what she is doing “now” (lines 1–2, and 4). Notice that the word núna is produced as an expansion after the speaker seems to have finished her turn. Núna is produced in a separate intonation contour but not with beginning intonation. After a short pause, DJ Sólrun takes the floor and answers the question (lines 6–7). In her response, DJ Sólrun not only tells Elin what she is going to do, but also specifies a particular time: “on Thursday next week.”

It is important to keep in mind that DJ Sólrun is answering Elin’s question in the role of a person who is organizing a hip hop evening. She has been invited to the studio to discuss exactly this topic. Her answer is thus highly constrained from the beginning, and the only relevant answer must be about this event. Hence, Elin’s question may be viewed as a formality, giving DJ Sólrun cues as to when to begin telling the overhearing audience where and when the event will take place. One can then ask what the communicative function of núna is in Elin’s turn. I would argue that núna functions as a marker which foregrounds the relevance of the focal event.

In the last four excerpts, I have shown that the temporal adverb núna may refer to a time period with varying duration, and that these periods may have different temporal relations to the focal events. In many cases, the speakers may specify what they mean by núna by adding other temporal elements to the phrase. In the present data, the temporal núna was specified in 54 instances out of 175, in other words, almost every third instance (31%). The temporal nú, by contrast, is specified in only two instances out of 83. Both instances can be seen as conventionalized phrases: nú þegar ‘right away’ and nú fyrst ‘not until now.’ Consider Table 6.4 which shows instances of núna combined with a temporal phrase:
Table 6.5: Núna combined with other temporal markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal phrase</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. núna í augnablikinu</td>
<td>‘at this moment’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. núna á þessari stundu</td>
<td>‘at this moment’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. akkúrat núna</td>
<td>‘exactly now’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. núna strax</td>
<td>‘right away’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. núna í dag (2)</td>
<td>‘today’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. núna klukkan fjögur</td>
<td>‘at four o’clock today’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. núna á þriðjudaginn í síðustu viku</td>
<td>‘Saturday last week’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. núna á fóstudaginn</td>
<td>‘this Friday’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. núna á fimmtudagskvöldið</td>
<td>‘this Thursday evening’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. núna næst</td>
<td>‘now in the following’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. núna um síðustu helgi</td>
<td>‘last weekend’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. núna um helgina</td>
<td>‘next weekend’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. núna efir nokkra daga</td>
<td>‘in a few days’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. núna um daginn</td>
<td>‘the other day’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. núna i lok þessa mánaðar</td>
<td>‘at the end of this month’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. núna nýlega</td>
<td>‘recently’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. núna ekki alls fyrir lóengu</td>
<td>‘not long ago’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. núna fyrir stattu</td>
<td>‘a short while ago’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. núna næstu daga</td>
<td>‘the following days’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. núna á lokasprettinum</td>
<td>‘in the final days of this campaign’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. núna einhverntimann um daginn</td>
<td>‘sometime the other day’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. núna þessa dagana</td>
<td>‘during these days’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. núna í vetur</td>
<td>‘this winter’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. núna undanfarin þrjú til fjögur ár</td>
<td>‘the last three to four years’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. núna bara i nokkuð mórg ár</td>
<td>‘quite a few years’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. núna undanfarna áratugi</td>
<td>‘the last decades’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 6.5 shows, these temporal elements may vary from referring to very short moments (examples 1–4) to referring to years or decades (examples 24–26).\(^{65}\) I will look at two examples in which such temporal elements are made relevant in their contexts. The first excerpt involves núna with a narrow time frame, while the second

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\(^{65}\) In addition to temporal phrases, there were three instances of adverbs signalling that something is (finally) beginning: núna loksins ‘now finally,’ núna fyrst ‘now first,’ and fyrst núna ‘first now.’
involves núna which stretches over decades. Both excerpts are drawn from the television debate in the data Elections. In (6.5), Jóhann is finishing a long turn in which he gives an extended answer to a question about how much money he has spent on his campaign thus far. Despite the long turn so far, he has not provided any concrete numbers. Instead, Jóhann has spent most of the time explaining his opinion that all election funds should be made public after elections:

(6.5) HOW MUCH MONEY HAVE YOU SPENT?: Elections (→7.16)
(M = Moderator; J = Jóhann, a candidate for the presidency; S = Sveinn, a journalist)

1 J (…) (0.9) o:g (0.7) ég tel raunar að það sé orðið tímabært
(…) (0.9) and (0.7) I consider. I actually that it become.PP timeliness
(…) (0.9) and (0.7) I think it’s actually timely

2 að setja reglur (1.0) um um fjármál framboð af þessu tagi (.)
to put.INF rules (1.0) about about finance candidacy this kind (.)
to apply some rules (1.0) about about the finances of candidacies of this kind (.)

3 fyrst og fremst upplýsingaskyldu (0.6) o:g (.) hámark framlaga
first and foremost obligation (.6) and (.) a maximum contribution
first and foremost a obligation to inform (0.6) and (.) a maximum amount

→M En getur þú upplýst núna á þessari stundu hversu
but can.1 you inform.PP NÚNA on this moment how
but can you inform us NÚNA at this moment how

5 miklum peningum um- hefur veriðvarið í þína bar[áttu,
much money eh have.3 be.PP spend.PP in your campaign.ACC
much money has been spent on your campaign?

6 J [.mt .hhh

7 Nei: það get ég nú ekki gert núnahh, (.) [...]
No that can.1 I NÚ not do.PP NÚNA (.) [...]
No I can’t NÚ do that NÚNA (.) [...]

After Jóhann has completed his turn (line 3), the moderator asks him again whether he can tell her “now” how much he has spent during his campaign (lines 4–5). This time the moderator emphasizes the fact that she wants to hear it “at this moment” by adding a temporal phrase after núna. By using this temporal phrase, the moderator narrows down the possible time frame, and it is now impossible for Jóhann to interpret the moderator’s wish in any other way. The moderator’s plea for an answer is made stronger or more intense by the combination of the two temporal markers (cf. Labov 1984 on intensity).

The following excerpt offers an example of a temporal phrase which refers to a long duration. Before the sequence illustrated in (6.6) begins, the presidential candidate, Bergsveinn, is trying to ask two of the other candidates a question. The
right to ask questions in this debate, however, is institutionally limited to the moderator and the five journalists. Hence, Smári, one of the journalists, is able to ignore Bergsveinn’s question and pose instead his own question to Bergsveinn (lines 1–2 and 4):

(6.6) POLITICAL PAST: Elections

(S = Smári, a journalist; B = Bergsveinn, a presidential candidate)

1 S #e:::# Pólítisk fortíð, #e:::::::::# Er ún /kostur eða /löstur,
   eh political past eh be.3 she asset or fault
   eh a political past eh would it be an asset or a fault

2 (.) Held- Heldurða hún hún sé /löstu[r #e::::#
   (. ) thin- think.2+you+that she she be.3.SUBJ fault[t eh
   (. ) d- do you think it it a fault[t eh

3 B [ja
   [ PRT
   [well

4 S [Dégar menn fara á]/Bessastað[i#,
   [when one.IMP go.INF on] Bessastaðir
   [ when one gets to] Bessastaðir

5 B [mér finns- ] [já Mér finnst hún aðalaega löstur
   [I thin- ] [ PRT I.DAT find.MV she mainly fault
   [I thin- ] [yes, I think it mainly a fault

6 efa fólk ætlara a- /breyta um /skoðun eins og /veðrið, .hhh og
   if+that people intend.3+to to- change.INF about opinion as weather.DEF .hhh and
   if people are going to change their opinion just like the weather .hhh and

7 það er #e::# því /miður hefur verið þa sem hefur einkentó
   that be.3 eh unfortunately have.3 be.PP that which have.3 characterized
   that eh unfortunately has characterized

8 stjórnmalamenn í gegn #e:i::# #e::::# yfirleitt #í í í::::# í þessum
   politicians through- eh in eh usually in in in in this
   politicians through- eh in eh usually in in in in

→ veðstræna heimi okkarí .hhhhh núna#::# undanfarna áratugið
   western world our .hhhhh NÚNA last decades
   western world of ours .hhhhh NÚNA the last decades

10 .hhh að þeir eru ekki sjálftum sér /samkvæmir,.hhh og #og:::# og
   .hhh that they be.3.PL not self.DAT they.REF consistent.M.PL .hhh and and and
   .hhh that they aren’t consistent .hhh and and and

11 þeir breyta um um skoðun [#e:# efti- eftir eftir því sem
   they change.3.PL about about opinion [ eh aft- after after after that which
   they change their opinion [ eh as as as it

12 (?) [ehm ((clears his throat))
Bergsveinn responds to Smári’s question by expressing his views on this matter: he thinks that having a “political past” is a negative asset if “people” (the elected president) are going to change their opinions regularly (lines 5–6). This is followed by a claim that this instability is a characteristic of western politicians “NÚNA the last decades” (lines 7–9). This claim is anchored in time with núna, followed by the temporal phrase “the last decades.” In other words, the time period referred to as núna is very long, stretching over an unspecified number of years. However, despite this vague formulation, it is clear that Bergsveinn has an approximate time period in mind. These things are happening “now,” and they have been going on for a few decades. The description of politicians is made relevant as an ongoing characteristic of the present moment.

In this excerpt, núna follows a potentially complete syntactic gestalt which is produced with a half-rising end contour and audible in-breath. The temporal phrase is produced as prosodically non-integrated, although it is clearly produced as an expansion of the previous TCU. It is worth noting that núi does not seem to occur in this position, and there is a clear functional difference between the two temporal markers in this respect. In the following section, I will look more closely at similar expansions.

In the section above, I discussed núna as a period of time. I have shown that núna has a very wide meaning potential, ranging from a short moment to decades. This openness, however, does not mean that any event can be described as taking place núna. On the contrary, the event or situation must be current or relevant in relation to the speaker during the utterance time. Thus, the relevant situation can include brief moments such as in (6.1), in which the computer technician asks whether the computer program is running, or very long periods, such as in (6.6), in which the presidential candidate accuses politicians of being unreliable. As these examples show, the duration of núna becomes more precise in situated interaction, although núna always remains somewhat open and unspecified. This openness often results in the use of other temporal entities to describe the relevant time (see Table 6.5).
6.2.2 Núna as an expansion and independent turn

One of the most striking differences between the temporal nú and núna involves syntactic integration. While nú occurs typically in the front field, núna is typically placed in the end-field, after the object(s) and the second part of the verb. In many cases, núna is added to the turn after a possible completion, that is, as a syntactic expansion (see Chapter 4.4.3), or even as a turn of its own.

Consider (6.7), drawn from the everyday conversation Reunion. Here, the women are discussing classical music. Earlier in the conversation, Brynhildur, one of the participants, referred to a modern minimalistic composition as a piece of “classical music.” Lína objected to this loose definition and pointed out that “classical” is a very specific term which refers to a well-defined style of music. Brynhildur starts to defend herself, and there seems to be a dispute coming up. Magga makes a compromise:

(6.7) COMPOSING CLASSICAL MUSIC: Reunion (←4.6)
(M = Magga; B = Brynhildur; V = Vala; E = Erna)

1 M .mt þa er náttlega líka hægt að segja eiththvað *i*
   .mt it be.3 naturally also possible to compose.INF something in
   .mt it’s of course also possible to compose something in

2 klasískum stil [til dæmis,]
classical style [for example ]
   classical style [for example ]

3 (E) [j↑á: ]
   [PRT ]
   [yes ]

4 B j↓á=j↑á=
PRT yes

5 V =j↓á[:
PRT]
   yea[h]

→ M [n↑úna.

7 (0.4)

8 (E) Er þá [ (. ) veriða-
   be.3 then [ (. ) be.PP+to ]
   Are then [ (. ) people ]

9 M [Bara a þessi við]u’ (0.8) svon formúla (. ) fyrrir því
   [just that these cérta[ln (0.8) PRT formula ( .) for that.DAT
   [just that these particula]r (0.8) like formula ( .) for that

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Magga points out in the beginning of the excerpt that the term “classical music” is a stylistic term which can be used when composing music (lines 1–2). Notice her use of *til deëmis* ‘for instance,’ which Magga uses here to display that she is now giving an example of another way to define classical music. After backchannels from Erna, Brynhildur, and Vala (lines 3–5), Magga produces a post-possible completion formed as a syntactic expansion (line 6). This expansion consists only of the temporal marker *núna*, produced as a prosodically independent utterance, with a rising-falling contour.

*Núna* in (6.7) is syntactically and prosodically non-integrated, although it has a clear continuing intonation, and this suggests that Magga is expanding her previous turn. Hence, *núna* is produced as an afterthought linked to Magga’s turn in lines 1 and 2. It is as though Magga in retrospect has realized that her statement does not make clear that she is talking about present day compositions. By adding *núna*, she makes it explicit that she is talking about compositions which are composed *nowadays*. The temporal marker anchors the proposition in time and makes it more clear that this statement is relevant for the present day situation. Note that the temporal *nú* probably could not have appeared in the same position.

In excerpt (6.7), *núna* was produced by the same speaker who produced the mother utterance. Thus, *núna* is what could be described as a self-completed increment (cf. Lerner 2004). In the following excerpt, by contrast, *núna* is produced as a turn of its own. The excerpt is drawn from the phone-in program *The soul of the nation*. Brynjólfur is giving some background information before he starts complaining about how the government spends the taxpayers’ money:

(6.8) **WATCHING THE TELEVISION: Soul 31.05.96**
(M = Moderator; B = Brynjólfur, a caller)

1 B #e:::# Ég hríngi núna vegna þess að ég sat fyrir framan

#e:::# I call.NUNA because that I sit1.PT for front

2 sjónvarpið og horfði á (0.2) tvær frættir /ðær komu hvo
television.DEF and watch1.PT on (0.2) two news they come3.PT each

the television and watched the (0.2) news, they came one

3 á eftir annarri,
on after other.F.DAT

after the other

4 (0.3)

5 M m↓n

6 (0.3)
Brynjólfur introduces his topic by explaining why he is making this phone-call now: he just saw two news stories on the television news (lines 1–3). After a brief pause, the moderator provides a continuer indexed as *mm*, giving Brynjólfur permission to continue his story (line 5). Instead of continuing, however, Brynjólfur only produces an affirmation which is followed by a pause (lines 7–8). The lack of uptake from Brynjólfur seems slightly odd here, but it is perhaps caused by an attempt to create suspense (cf. Auer, Couper-Kuhlen, and Müller 1999: 180). At this point, however, the moderator takes the floor before Brynjólfur and produces a turn which functions as a question consisting only of the temporal marker *núna* (line 9). The marker is produced as a turn beginning, and it has a falling intonation, shown in Figure 6.4:

![Figure 6.4: Fundamental frequency ($f_0$) of line 11, excerpt (6.8)](chart.png)
By uttering *núna* in this sequential slot, the moderator is requesting that Brynjólfur either confirm that he saw the news “now,” or else specify when it happened. *Núna* is thus used here as a referential index which functions as a turn of its own.

The independent nature of *núna* is also very clear in the following excerpt, in which the speaker adds a turn-internal increment (cf. Lerner 2004: 153) before she adds the temporal phrase which anchors an event in time. In (6.9), Steingerður, the caller, is talking about the declension of the noun *peningapvottur* ‘money laundering,’ which she heard a reporter use, in her opinion, ungrammatically:

(6.9) DECLINING “MONEY LAUNDERING”: Soul 07.06.96
(M = Moderator; G = Steingerður, a caller)

1 S ðannig er að ég heyrði í (.) #í:# onum Guðna ess Halldórssyni
    so be.3 that I hear.1.PT VP(.) in he.DAT lnamEM PatrM
    When I heard Guðni S Halldórsson

2 frá MAdr:Íd¿
-from Madrid
from Madrid,

3 (0.4)

4 M m↓: ↑hm:

5 S [Af því mér finnst alveg óskap°lega
    [because 1DAT think.MV totally extremely
    [because I think is very much

→ skemmtilegur,° (1.1) núna einhvern tímann um daginn; (0.2)
    fun.M (1.1) NÚNA some.ACC time.ACC about day.ACC.DET (0.2)
    fun (1.1) NÚNA sometime the other day (0.2)

7 M m↑:

8 S Og hann var að fjargviðrast soldið útaf (.)útaf
    and he be.3.PT to fuss.MV a little out of (.PPT out of
    he was fussing a bit about (.PPT about

9 /p e n i n g a /p v æ t t i>, Á að beygja þetta orð svona,
    money laundering ought.3 to conjugate.INF this word that way
    “money laundering,” are you supposed to conjugate this word like that?

10 Ég baraː. hhhh Nú þori ég ekkert að koma með neina
    I PRT .hhhhh NÚ dare.1 I nothing to come with any
    I just-.hhhhh NÚ I don’t dare to make any

11 fullyrðingar þvía þá verða allir svo vondir út í mig?
    statements because that then become.3.PL everybody.M.PL so angry.M.PL out in IACC
    assertions, because then everybody gets so angry at me
Steingerður introduces her topic by identifying the event she wants to comment on: she was listening to a particular radio personality give a report from abroad (lines 1–2). After an acknowledgement token from the moderator (line 4), this background information is followed by a positive assessment: “because I think [he] is very much fun” (lines 5–6). The assessment is followed by a 1.1 second pause and a temporal phrase containing núna einhverntíman um daginn ‘sometime the other day.’ This phrase anchors the act of listening to this reporter in the recent past.

After providing the relevant background information, Steingerður continues by bringing up her actual topic, which is to ask the moderator a grammatical question (lines 8–9). Directly after posing the question, Steingerður begins a new TCU with which she shows uncertainty and hesitation and thus immediately undermines her own ability to make comments about grammar (lines 9–11). Notice also how Steingerður formulates her critique: instead of stating that the reporter was speaking ungrammatically, she poses a question about the correct form of peningabvottur. Directly following this question, Steingerður uses the particle, bara ‘just,’ as a hedging device. She then follows with a statement which indicates that she does not want to say anything that would cause a negative reaction from other listeners. The last comment is initiated by the tone particle nú which functions as a foregrounding device (see Chapter 7).

The hesitation and uncertainty in Steingerður’s turn may explain why she inserted the positive assessment in lines 5 and 6 before the temporal phrase containing núna. By looking at her turn production in retrospect, it becomes apparent that the purpose of her call is to criticize the reporter, or at least to question his grammatical skills. Thus, it seems that it is important for Steingerður to make known as early as possible her appreciation of him. This results in the temporal phrase núna einhvern timann um daginn ‘NÚNA sometime the other day,’ which is produced disjunctly from the proposition it anchors in time.

In some cases, the turn involving an independent núna may include other grammatical categories such as adjectives. In the following excerpt, which is drawn from the everyday conversation Friends, the three women are comparing the weather in Iceland during the two previous years. Just before the excerpt begins, Sunna, who was working in northern Iceland the summer before, has been talking about the weather there and describing it as exceptionally bad.
In the beginning of the excerpt, Jessica produces a duplicated já, displaying that she also recollects that the weather was bad (line 1). The particle is then followed by a statement which illustrates how Jessica remembers the weather. Jessica’s statement is overlapped by an interjection by Nanna and a backchannel from Sunna (lines 4–5), both of which show that the women are all of the same opinion. After a brief pause (line 6), Nanna begins an utterance but abandons it when she is overlapped by Jessica. In this turn, Jessica reaches a conclusion which echoes Sunna’s earlier statement: “it
was just terrible last year” (line 8). The women seem, therefore, to have reached a common conclusion about the ongoing topic. After a 0.4 second pause, however, Jessica moves the focus to the present time: *núna fínt* ‘now fine’ (line 10).

By using the phrase *núna fínt*, Jessica changes the topic from last summer to this summer. Notice that the turn which involves *núna* is a turn with no finite verb. It consists only of the temporal adverb, *núna*, followed by the adjective, *fínt* ‘fine.’ The speaker is comparing this summer to the summer last year, and she is comparing two time periods with one another, describing their qualities.

As I have shown in the section above, *núna* may function as an independent lexical item. As the excerpts illustrate, *núna* may occur as a syntactic expansion (6.7), as an independent turn (6.8), as an adverbial phrase disjunctive from the finite verb (6.9), and in an utterance with adjectives (6.10). The two temporal markers, *nú* and *núna*, clearly differ, as *nú* seems to occur almost exclusively with a finite verb. The temporal *nú* will be looked at in section 6.3 after a summary of *núna* as a temporal marker.

### 6.2.3 Summary of *núna* as a temporal marker

In the previous two sections, I discussed the temporal marker *núna*. By analysing ten conversational excerpts, I showed that *núna* indexes an unspecified period of time which includes the utterance time and some time in the past and in the future. In some cases, this period of time is rather short, while in other cases it may stretch over decades. In other words, *núna* has a wide meaning potential. The actual duration in each case depends on the situated context.

Furthermore, I showed that the focal events described as taking place *núna* can have different temporal relations to the utterance time. In some cases, the focal event takes place during the utterance time, such as in (6.1), while other events may take place in the future (6.2), or in the past (6.3). In all cases, however, *núna* makes the focal event relevant to or within the current context.

In section 6.2.2, I looked at four instances in which *núna* is syntactically independent, either as a syntactic expansion, such as in (6.7); as an independent turn, such as in (6.8); as disjoint from the core syntax, such as in (6.9); or in verb-free phrases, such as in (6.10). I argue that these four instances show that *núna* functions as a referential index referring to the real-world utterance time (cf. Grenoble 1998: 103). Furthermore, I argue that this characteristic is fundamental when comparing the
difference between nú and núna in contemporary Icelandic. In the following section, I will discuss the temporal functions of nú.

6.3 Nú as a temporal marker

As I showed in the beginning of this chapter, there are 82 instances of nú as a temporal marker in my data. I also showed that the vast majority of these instances occur pre-verbally, and, therefore, that nú has a different syntactical position than núna (see Table 6.4). In the following three sections, I will discuss the functions of the temporal nú.

6.3.1 Nú in temporal comparisons

Nú as a temporal marker is often used to present a current event or situation as different or opposite to another event located in the past or in the future. Consider the following excerpt, drawn from the data Reunion. Here, six women are gathered in a kitchen, cooking dinner and chatting with each other. One of the women, Brynhildur, has just mentioned that Guðrún is wearing a very nice dress. Magga picks up the proffered topic and asks Guðrún a question:

(6.11) NICE DRESS: Reunion

(M = Magga; B = Brynhildur; G = Guðrún; L = Lína)

1 M ertu í kjól eð heretta pils,
    be.2+you in dress or be.3+(th)is skirt
    Are you wearing a dress or is that a skirt?

2 G Ég er í kjól?
    I be.1 in dress
    I am wearing a dress

((15 turns omitted))

3 L [[já hérna (.)) Dú notaðir þennan kjól aldrei,
    [ [ PRT PRT (.)) you use.2.PT this.ACC dress.ACC never
    [ [ yes eh (.)) you never wore this dress before

4 G [[Ég notaði hann aldrei (.)) áður,]
    [ [ I use.1.PT he.ACC never (.)) before ]
    [ [ I never wore it (.)) before ]

5 (?) m↑↓↓
Apart from some short exchanges about cooking, the ongoing topic in this excerpt is Guðrún’s dress. Right after the first exchange (lines 1–2), the other women give Guðrún compliments regarding the dress she is wearing, and she explains that it used to be too large for her (lines omitted). In the following turn, Vala comments that Guðrún has to wear the dress, and so implies that she has not worn it until now. Lína and Guðrún then take the floor simultaneously. In her turn, Guðrún acknowledges that she has never worn the dress before (line 4), and, after Lína has finished her turn, Guðrún takes the floor again and gives an explanation: “no because it was too big for me” (line 6). This explanation is accepted by Lína who produces a backchannel signal in a terminal overlap (line 7). After a 1.2 second pause, Brynhildur adds a final assessment on the dress which marks the end of this topic: “NÚ it really looks cool” (line 9).

Brynhildur’s comment, initiated with a temporal nú, functions as a comparison between how the dress was before and how it is “now.” The two words nú and flottur ‘cool’ are stressed, and they represent the two aspects in Brynhildur’s comment which are different from Guðrún’s. Note, however, that the comparison in this instance is different from the comparison in (6.10), in which núna indexes two time periods which are described as “terrible” and “good” respectively. In (6.10), there is no finite verb. In the comment about the dress, by contrast, nú is produced before the finite verb, almost as though it is an aspectual marker defining the verb.

In (6.11), the situation “now” is marked as different from a situation in the past. In the following excerpt, however, nú is compared with a situation in the future. In this excerpt, drawn from The soul of the nation, Steinn is complaining about the negative media discourse regarding the presidential candidates. When the excerpt begins, the
moderator is telling him what other listeners phoning the program have been saying about the same topic:

(6.12) IT’S NOW OR NEVER: Soul 11.06.98
(M = Moderator; S = Steinn, a caller)

1 M Einmitt. hhhhh og þa einmitt e[h: hringdu nokkrir ]
exactly hhhhh and it exactly e[h call.3.PL PT several ]
exactly hhhhh and there were e[h a few people that called ]

2 S [En þbetter (. ) Þetter þa ] sem
[but this+be.3 (. ) this+be.3 that ] which
[ But this is (. ) this is ] what

3 mig langaði til að segja,
I.ACC want.1.PT VP to say.INF
I wanted to say

4 (. )

5 M þa hringdu einmitt nokkrir hérna í gær sem voru að segja að
there call.3.PT exactly several here in yesterday which be.3.PT to say.INF that
We got a few phone calls yesterday during which people were saying that

6 þa væri#:::# einkennileg aðstaða; NÚ: virtist mega segja
it be.3.SUBJ+eh strange situation NÚ seem.MV.SUBJ,PT may.INF say.INF
there is a strange situation NÚ people seem to be able to say

7 hvað sem er um þessar fimn manneskjur? .hhhhh
anything which be.3 about these.F.PL five people .hhhhh
anything about these five people .hhhhh

8 o helst að finna þeim sem flest til vansa; (0.2)
and preferably to find.INF they.DAT as most to fault (0.2)
and preferably to find as many faults as possible (0.2)

9 S j↓á:::
PRT yes

10 (0.3)

11 M o svo eftir fyrsta ágúst þegar būið er að setja viðkomandi
and then after first.M.ACC August when finish.PP be.3 to put.INF relevant
and then after August the first when the particular

12 manneskju inní embætti forseta íslands þá megum við ekki
person.ACC into+in office president.GEN Iceland.GEN then may.3.PL we not
person has been appointed to the office of the president of Iceland, then we can’t

13 segja eitt einasta orð.
say.INF one.N only word
say a single word

14 S n↓ei:
PRT yeah
The moderator shows that she agrees strongly with Steinn by using the response *einmitt ‘exactly’* (line 1). After a deep breath, the moderator starts telling him that he is not the only one of this opinion, since other callers have been saying similar things on *The soul of the nation*. Before she is able to complete her utterance, however, Steinn overlaps her turn, stating that this is “the reason” for his phone call. Thus, he explicitly tells the moderator that his comment is not just an introductory comment (lines 2–3). When Steinn has finished his turn, the moderator takes the floor again and partially repeats the background information she delivered before she was overlapped and cut-off (line 5). She then continues and points out the fact that people seem to be able to say “anything about these five people now” (line 6–7). After a backchannel device from Steinn and a 0.3 second pause, the moderator continues her turn, and states that, once a president is elected after the first of August, no one will be able to say anything about that person (lines 11–13). Thus, the temporal marker *nú* highlights the differences between two situations. This time, however, the comparison is not between the past and the present, but, rather, between the present and the future.

As Table 6.4 showed, *nú* with temporal meaning is typically placed in a pre-verbal position. Furthermore, the few exceptions to this rule seem, at least in the current data, to occur in very specific contexts (see section 6.1). One of these contexts is syntactically subordinate utterances. Consider again excerpt (6.4) (here referred to as (6.13)), in which DJ Sólún is being interviewed about her upcoming hip hop evening:

(6.13) It’s called Heaven: Teens (←6.4)
(E = Elin, program presenter; B = Björn, program presenter; S = Sólún, studio guest)

1 E E
en þú (0.2) hérna (0.3) segðu okkur, (. Hvað ertu
but you (0.2) PRT (0.3) tel2.1PER us.DAT () what be.2+you
but you (0.2) um (0.3) tell us () what are you
→ að fara að gerða.
to go.INF to do.INF
         going to do
3 ()

4 E núna.

5 (0.2)

6 S Já::: (. Ég er að fara að halda hipphoppkvöld) (0.5) á
PRT () I be.1 to go.INF to hold.INF hip hop evening.ACC (0.5) on
Yes () I’m going to organize a hip hop evening (0.5) in
DJ Sólrun responds to Elin’s question by saying that she is going to organize a hip hop evening, and she then specifies a time and place (lines 6–7). The place is called Tunglið ‘The Moon.’ In the following turn, Bjössi, the other program leader, takes the floor and makes a repair by stating that the club is “now” called Heaven (line 8). His repair involves the temporal marker nú, which is stressed and has a slightly prolonged vowel. The turn is designed as a continuation of Sólrun’s turn, and as an other-initiated expansion introduced with the increment initiator sem ‘which’ (cf. Lerner 2004). Hence, Bjössi’s repair is produced as a natural continuation of DJ Sólrun’s turn and, therefore, may not seem as face-threatening as a normal other-initiated repair. Notice also the affiliation-seeking tag question produced as a post-possible completion: °ekki satt° ‘isn’t it?’ Yet, Sólrun’s response is quite marked; she laughs (line 11) and tells Björn that the name does not make any difference to her (not shown in the excerpt). In this turn, the temporal marker nú is used to emphasize two different names: once the club was called Tunglið, and now it goes by the name Heaven.

The last three last excerpts show how nú is used in comparisons. Nú contrasts two possibilities so that a present situation is compared either with the past, as in (6.11) and (6.13), or with the future, as in (6.12). The two possibilities which are compared are not placed on the same time-line, such as shown in Figure 6.3, but, rather, they are juxtaposed as two separate situations. Figure 6.5 illustrates a present situation compared with a situation in the past:
This function of *nú* has some similarities to the Russian *teper’* as it is described by Grenoble (1998: 101). According to Grenoble, *teper’* refers to a period implicitly related to what took place before a given period. However, instead of viewing *nú* as a temporal marker comparing two time periods, I will argue that *nú* functions more as an aspectual marker, emphasizing the contrast between a current and a non-current situation. This may explain why *nú* occurs almost exclusively adjacent to a finite verb.

### 6.3.2 Nú marking transitions

The temporal *nú* is routinely used when a transition takes place. In these cases, the speaker explicitly points out important changes (cf. Andvik 1992: 87; Grenoble 1998: 101–2). A typical environment for this kind of *nú* is shown in (6.14), drawn from *The soul of the nation*. During this span of talk, the moderator is addressing the radio listeners before she takes the next call. At the beginning of the episode, the moderator explained that all the lines were busy, and that it may, therefore, be difficult to get on air. At this moment, however, many lines are opening up:

**(6.14) THE LINES ARE OPENING UP: Soul 11.06.96**

(M = Moderator; R = Rósa, a caller)

```
1 M .hh O: siminn hjá okkur er fimm sextiu og átta sextiu nítiu og .hh and telephone.DEF with we.DAT be.3 five sixty and eight sixty ninety and .hh and the telephone here is five sixty eight sixty ninety and

→ nú eru er ykkur òhatt að hringja því nú eru línurnar fárnar að NÚ be.3 you.DAT safe to call.INF because NÚ be.3.PL lines.DEF go.PP.F.PL to NÚ it is okay for you to start calling because NÚ the lines are starting to

3 løsna hér hver á fætur annarri ég held að .hhhh fólk hafi loose.INF here each on feet another I think.1 that .hhhh people have.3.SUBJ open up one after another, I think that .hhhh people have given
```
At the beginning of (6.14), the moderator gives out the telephone number to the studio and thus implicitly encourages the listeners to call in (line 1). Following this information, the moderator makes the statement that the listeners can “now” start calling because the lines are starting to open up (lines 2–3). Thus, a new situation has emerged from the earlier one, and the temporal marker nú highlights and emphasizes this transition. The moderator uses the temporal nú twice in this turn. In the first instance, nú is stressed and delivered with a rising intonation, whereas the second instance is not prosodically prominent. In both instances, the marker is prosodically integrated with the finite verb. Figure 6.6 shows a pitch analysis of the former instance:

![Pitch Analysis](image)

**Figure 6.6**: Fundamental frequency (f₀) of line 2, excerpt (6.14).

As Figure 6.6 illustrates, nú is prosodically integrated both with the connective og ‘and,’ and the finite verb er ‘is.’ Note the distinct rise in pitch on nú where the transition is introduced.
The moderator has information which is unavailable to the listeners since she can tell by looking at her studio equipment exactly how many lines are busy. Therefore, she is able to make this information explicit when she wants to encourage more people to call, or when she wants to warn them that it might be very difficult to get through. Thus, in (6.14), she is sharing information with her audience to which only she has access. She uses nú to draw their attention to this new situation. This function of nú is similar to the nú used in comparisons, except the comparison made in this case is implicit. This nú functions almost as an aspectual marker signalling a newly begun situation, and this new beginning is emphasized with the pitch step-up illustrated in Figure 6.6.

In (6.15), nú has similar functions. In this excerpt, which is drawn from a telephone conversation between two close friends, Erna is trying to help Arnar remove a computer virus which has infected his computer. Earlier in the conversation, Erna has told Arnar about two websites on which he can download programs that solve this particular problem. She then promises that she will find the site for him and send him the link by e-mail. While Erna is waiting for her computer to start, Arnar continues to describe his problem:

(6.15) **FROZEN COMPUTER: PTC 03.08.03**

(E = Erna, the caller; A = Arnar, the called)

1 A .hh En þetta- þetta gerist bara sko ef ég e te- ef ég er sst.
   .hh but this this happen.MV PRT PRT if I e- ta- if I be.1 PRT
   .hh but this this only happens if I’m co- if I’m like

2 A tengdur Netinu.
   connected.PP.M Net.DAT.DEF
   connected to the net

3 E m↓::[:]

4 A [Ég get alveg unnið skiluru (2.0) þúst við tölvuna án
   [ I can.1 PRT work.PP PRT (2.0) PRT by computer.ACC.DEF without
   [ I can work y’know (2.0) y’know on the computer without

5 þessa vera tengdur þa er ekkert- ekkert mál sko.
   that+to be.INF connect.PP.M that be.3 nothing nothing problem PRT
   being connected that’s no- no problem y’know

6 E m↓ei:
   PRT
   no

7 (4.3)
Arnar continues to describe the problems he is having with his computer (lines 1–2 and 4–5), and this new information is acknowledged by Erna (lines 3 and 6). After a long lapse in the conversation, which stretches over 4.3 seconds, Erna announces that it seems that her computer is frozen (line 8). Her utterance involves a temporal * nú*. Figure 6.7 shows a pitch analysis of Erna’s turn in line 8:

![Pitch Analysis](image)

**Figure 6.7**: Fundamental frequency ($f_0$) of line 8, excerpt (6.15)

Figure 6.7 shows that * nú* is produced as prosodically integrated with the finite verb * er* ‘is’ in excerpt (6.15).
Here, the function of *nú* is to introduce information which Arnar cannot know. This new situation is of significant importance in this conversation since Arnar is waiting for Erna to turn on her computer and give him the information he needs. *Nú* brings the current situation into focus and emphasizes something which is new or different from before. Notice that, a few turns later, Erna confirms that her thoughts are right—her computer *is* frozen (line 17). This time, however, there is no temporal *nú* in the utterance. The frozen computer has already been brought to Arnar’s attention as a new situation, and thus it cannot be introduced again as new.

In the last two excerpts, *nú* was involved in utterances that call attention to a new situation in a speaker’s physical context. Speakers can also use temporal *nú* as a device to display a transition in their mental state. Consider (6.16) drawn from the data *Reunion*. Here, the women are taking turns taking photos of the group. The excerpt begins in the middle of the photo session:

(6.16) PHOTO SESSION: *Reunion*  
(M = Magga; B = Brynhildur; G = Guðrún; V = Vala; E = Erna; L = Lína)  

1  (2.9)  
2  B he he  
3  L hehhh he he he [ he he he  
4  M [hhheehh he he  
→ G  Nú   er nórg kom[íð,  
PRT  NÚ be.3 enough come.PP  
Well, *NÚ* this is enough  
6  B [NEI Ég á eftir [( x x )  
  [PRT I have.1 left [( x x )  
  [no, I’m not done [( x x )  
7  L [o Ég líka,  
  [and I also  
  [and me neither  
8  E ehh [he  
9  L [ eh he [he  
10  M [he he he he he he [.hhhh  
11  G [hm hm hm*  

In (6.16), the main activity is taking photos of the group, and the verbal interaction is centered on organizing this activity. At the beginning of the excerpt, Vala is taking photos, and the only sounds that can be heard are quiet laughter and clicking sounds
from cameras (lines 1–4). After a few seconds of posing for the camera, Guðrún takes the floor and utters the particle *jaega* ‘well,’ which strongly suggests a move out of the present activity. This particle is then followed by an idiom, *nú er nóg komið* ‘NÚ this is enough’ (line 5). The idiom includes a pre-verbal *nú*.

The temporal *nú* is used by Guðrún to give the other women the signal that she is moving out of the joint activity of taking a group photo. As Clark (1996: 28–58) has pointed out, joint activities need coordination. Participants have to *enter* the activity, *perform* it, and *exit* from it. By announcing to the other women that she has had “enough,” Guðrún warns them that she is going to exit. Therefore, she gives them a chance to respond, which they also do. Brynhildur responds to Guðrún’s statement by protesting, claiming that she has not taken the photos yet (line 6). Thus, she claims her turn as the next photographer. This is backed up by Lína in an overlap, who also claims her turn after Brynhildur (line 7). As a result, Guðrún has to pose for a few more seconds while Brynhildur and Lína take their photos.

Just as in (6.14) and (6.15), *nú* foregrounds a new situation in (6.16), and signals that a transition has taken place. However, in this case, the new situation involves a state of mind rather than something in the physical context. Just as in the previous excerpts, *nú* functions as an aspecual marker instead of referring to a period of time.

In this section, I have shown how temporal *nú* is employed to mark transitions. In all these examples, it is evident that the situation was different previously, and there is a clear sense of transition to be noted. In other contexts, the transition can be made stronger by employing *nú* as a temporal-affective marker. This is the subject of the next section.

### 6.3.3 *Nú* as a temporal-affective marker

In addition to the basic temporal functions accounted for in the previous sections, the temporal *nú* may index an affective stance. This affective stance marker indexes emotional intensity (cf. Ochs 1996: 410). Consider the following excerpt, drawn from *The soul of the nation*. The moderator and Silla Kristín are talking about an Icelandic woman, María, who is fighting for the custody of her children in a Turkish court. At the time of the conversation, this legal dispute had been going on for several years, and, during that time, it was covered intensely in the media. In the same week that this conversation takes place, María is scheduled to meet her ex-husband with their daughters in court. As María has not seen her daughters for some years, this is, indeed,
a very difficult situation for her. Before the excerpt begins, Silla Kristín asks everybody to “think warmly” of María during the upcoming trial. After a short comment from the moderator, Silla Kristín expresses her wish that María get her daughters back (line 1):

(6.17) SENDING GOOD THOUGHTS: Soul 11.06.96
(M = Moderator; S = Silla Kristín, a caller)

1 S  Ég vō[na að hún fái  dætur  sínar.
     I  ho[pe.1 that she  get.3.SUBJ  daughters  her.REF
     ho[pe  that she get  her daughters

2 M  [(x)]

3 M  j↓á:  það voðnar það öll þj/óðin Silla Kristín mín.
     that  hope.3 it  all.F  nation.DEF  my
     yes, that’s what the whole nation is hoping for dear Silla Kristin

4 S  j↑ájá
     yes

5  (0.5) ((someone talking in the background))

→ M  o  nú:  þurfum við að húgsa hlýlega til Maríu =
     and  NÚ  we  need.3.PL to  think.INF warmly  to  nameF
     and  NÚ [we need to think warmly of Maria

7 S  [(þett-)]
     [(this-)]
     [(this-)]

→ M  =Nú:  þarf hún aldeilis a’  ] (0.3) öllum  sínum  =
     NÚ  [she  certainly needs  ] (0.3) all.M.PL  her.REF
     NÚ [she certainly needs her]

9 S  [Já við skulum gera  það.]
     [PRT we  shall.3.PL  do.INF  that  ]
     [yes, let’s do that  ]

10  =kröftum að halda. (0.2)
    energy  to  hold.INF (0.2)
    energy (0.2)

11 S  j↓ájá
     yes

12 M  h↓m[:]
     hm[:]
     hm[:]

((3 turns omitted))
At the beginning of (6.17), Silla Kristín states that she is hoping María will get her daughters back (line 1). The moderator shows alignment by using a dialogue particle, and points out that the whole nation is supporting María in this case (line 3). This comment functions as an upgrader, shifting the focus from Silla Kristín’s private wishes and emphasizing that the whole nation is hoping that everything goes well. Note the step-up on þjóðin ‘nation,’ and the strong emphasis on that word. Silla Kristín acknowledges this shift in focus with a duplicated já with a rising contour, suggesting that she accepts this last comment as an obvious fact (line 4). After a 0.5 second pause, the moderator takes the floor again. This time, she makes a strong assertion that “now” we need to think warmly of María (line 6). This is immediately followed by another assertion that “now” she certainly needs all her strength (line 8). The latter TCU is overlapped by Silla Kristín. In this turn, Silla Kristín shows strong affiliation and promises María her support (line 9). Silla Kristín claims affiliation again with a dialogue particle after the moderator has yielded the floor. The moderator
responds by producing a post-completion, *hmm*, with which she passes the right to the floor, redirecting it back to Silla Kristín (line 12).

I will now look more closely at the utterances in line 6 and 8. In these utterances, the speaker makes the claim that María needs “our” support. By initiating this gestalt with *nú*, the need is presented as especially relevant “right now.” Thus, the moderator implicitly encourages people to give María their support. As mentioned earlier, María’s battle for the custody of her daughters had, at this point, been going on for several years. Nevertheless, the moderator treats the upcoming trial as particularly important, and, therefore, everybody should be focusing on María “now.” In these cases, the temporal *nú* has an affective function; it is almost as though *nú* could be reworded as “it’s now or never.”

After a short insertion by María’s boyfriend (turns omitted), Silla Kristín echoes the statement made earlier by the moderator: “we” should think warmly for María (line 14). Note, however, that Silla Kristín does not employ the temporal marker *nú* here. The moderator responds by initiating a repair which signals that she did not hear what Silla Kristín was saying (line 15). Silla Kristín then repeats her previous statement verbatim, thus echoing the moderator’s turn again, and again without the temporal *nú*. This time, however, she produces the utterance with a rising final contour, displaying an orientation towards the listener (line 16). Following this repair, the moderator produces a turn which upgrades María’s statement (lines 17–18 and 20). Just as in line 6, the moderator uses a syntactically initial *nú* to focus on the idea that it is “now” that María needs support. Moreover, she also uses the auxiliary verb *skulu* ‘shall’ which is often used as an affective marker adding weight to a promise or an encouragement (cf. *ÍO* 2002).

The temporal *nú* in (6.17) refers to a broader time-frame than in some of the previous instances I have been looking at. The moderator is saying that María needs our support “now,” in other words, during the days or weeks of the trial in Istanbul. Here, *nú* is used in order to show an affective stance and to give the utterance added weight. The result is that the moderator presents this as a matter of “now or never.” Thus, the moderator encourages everybody to give María their moral support.

Temporal-affective markers are often employed when a speaker is producing encouragements. In (6.18), drawn from *The soul of the nation*, the caller, Freyr, is discussing a newspaper article he has just read. In this article, a well known lawyer in Iceland makes the claim that no one can testify in court without either swearing on the bible or denying their religious beliefs. The lawyer uses this law as an argument to prove that one of the presidential candidates does not believe in God, and, therefore,
he cannot run for the presidency. Freyr, however, claims that he once testified in court and was able to give his word of honour only, without being forced to deny his belief in God. In the beginning of the excerpt, the moderator follows up on this topic (line 1):

(6.18) INFORMING THE PEOPLE: Soul 11.06.96
(M = Moderator; F = Freyr, the caller)

1 M Nei og þú varst ekkert spø:ður að því hvort þú tr/y:ðir,
PRT and you be.2 PT nothing ask.PP.M about that whether you believe.2.BIG
No, and you were not asked whether you believed?

2 (1.2)

3 F Ég var sp/Urður að því,
I be.1 PT ask.PP.M about that
I was asked about that

4 M Þú varst spUrður að því já:,
you be.2 PT ask.PP.M about that PRT
you were asked about that yes

5 F =#J↓á: #
PRT yes

6 F en [ég var ekkert (.)/BÆðinn um æ# æ# afneita trú minni,
but [I be.1 PT nothing () ask.PP.M about to eh deny.INF belief.ACC my
but [ I was not () asked to eh deny my belief

7 M [j↓á: ]
[PRT ]
[jes ]

8 M n↓einēei: 
PRT
no

→ F [NÚ: langar mig til að þið upplýsið þjóðina umðað¿ (0.5)
[NÚ want.3.I.ACC to that you.PL inform.2.PL nation.DEF about+that (0.5)
[Nú I would like you to inform the people about (0.5)

10 Hvort það sé rétt sem Sveinn Ragnar sagði¿ (1.2) Í dag,
whether it be.3.SUBJ right which InNameM InNameM say.3 PT (1.2) in day
whether it is true what Sveinn Ragnar said (1.2) today

11 (1.8)

12 Dið hljótið að geta spurst fyrir um þ/að,
you must.2.PL to be able.INF ask.MV VP about that
you must be able to ask about that

The moderator’s statement in line 1 is designed as a B-event inquiry, a declarative turn construction that describes experiences primarily known to the interlocutor (cf.
Labov and Fanshel 1977). Accordingly, this statement is designed to prompt Freyr to confirm that he was not asked whether he believed in God. As the subsequent talk shows, this is not an unproblematic question for Freyr. Note the long pause (line 2) and the full-form answer, both of which indicate that the speaker has problems responding (cf. Lerner 1995: 124). When the two interlocutors have agreed that Freyr was asked about his belief (line 3), Freyr re-emphasizes that he was not asked to deny it (line 6). When these facts have been cleared up, and the moderator has produced an acknowledgement token (line 8), Freyr makes another statement with which he claims that it is his wish that the program *The soul of the nation* inform the listeners about whether the lawyer was telling the truth (lines 9–10). This utterance involves a syntactically initial *nú*, emphasized and preformed with a slightly prolonged vowel. Freyr has moved from giving necessary background information towards expressing his wish at this moment. Thus, his wish may be seen as a consequence of what has happened before. Following Freyr’s wish, there is a 1.8 second pause (line 11). Freyr treats this extended pause as a signal of a potential problem with his request, and therefore he makes the assertion that informing the listeners should not be a problem (line 12).

In (6.18), *nú* occurs in a TCU with which the speaker is encouraging the moderator to take some action. By making the wish relevant “now,” the utterance indexes an affective stance. *Nú* is used in a similar sequential slot in (6.19), which is drawn from the same episode of *The soul of the nation*. The two interlocutors in this excerpt are discussing the same issue as above:

**6.19 The importance of believing: Soul 31.05.96 (→ 7.29)**

(M = Moderator; H = Holla, the caller)

1 H Þa var grein í Morgunblaðinu í gær;
   there be.3.PT article in Morgunblaðið.DAT.DEF in yesterday
   there was an article in Morgunblaðið yesterday

2 M m↑;

3 (0.2)

4 H (*"nú") bar yfirskriftina (0.6) /Trúir Sigurður Helgi á Guð,
   (she) carry.3.PT title.ACC.DEF (0.6) believe.3.İnameM 1nameM on God
   it had the title (0.6) “Does Sigurður Helgi believe in God?”

5 (1.4)

→ H NÚ vil ég hvE:tíja sem flesta til að lesa þessa grein,
   NÚ want.1 I encourage.INF as most to to read.INF this article
   NÚ I would like to encourage as many people as possible to read this article
At the beginning of the excerpt, Holla is telling the moderator about the same article that Freyr was discussing in (6.18) (lines 1 and 3). The first statement is followed by a long lapse (1.4 seconds). During this lapse, Holla may be waiting for a backchannel signal which for some reason is not provided (line 5). Following the lapse, Holla recommends that as many listeners as possible read the article (line 6). This utterance is initiated with a syntactically integrated \textit{nú}.

Just as in (6.18), \textit{nú} occurs in (6.19) in a slot in which there is a transition from background information to the main reason for the call: encouraging all listeners to read a particular article. By anchoring her wish in the present moment, Holla makes it more intense and takes an affective stance. She changes her utterance from a narration in the past tense to one that describes what she would like to do “now.”

Interestingly, the initial \textit{nú} is often followed by mental verbs such as \textit{vilja} ‘want,’ \textit{langa} ‘want,’ \textit{skulu} ‘shall,’ and \textit{ætla} ‘intend.’ In the data, \textit{nú} repeatedly occurs in the construction \textit{nú ætla ég} ‘now I am going to’ + verb. In these cases, \textit{nú} marks the speaker’s strong intention to do something. Often, these utterances function to inform the interlocutor about what the speaker is going to do immediately after he or she has produced the utterance, and this gives the interlocutor time to prepare for what is going to happen and to react accordingly. In some instances, the strong intentions are more salient; in other instances, these utterances simply bring the recipient’s attention to a transition or a new situation (as discussed in 6.3.2). In (6.20), which is drawn from the data \textit{Reunion}, the women are taking turns photographing each other. When this excerpt begins, Vala is behind the camera, while the other five are posing. This is a continuation of (6.16):

(6.20) \textbf{PHOTO SESSION: Reunion}

(M = Magga; B = Brynhildur; G = Guðrún; V = Vala; E = Erna; L = Lína)
[Veriði þarna allar í einhverri klessu] (bc.IMPER.PL+you.PL over there all.F.PL in some.DAT blot.DAT)

[yes, be there like in a chaos]

3 bara,
PRT=

4 (0.2)

5 Ekki vera að horfa samt hingað endilega,
not be.INF to look.INF still to here necessarily
don’t look here necessarily

6 nei
PRT no

7 (0.6)

8 *mhm*

9 (0.6)

10 *jájá allar [samt að [horfa [hinga*]
yes everybody still to looking this way

11 V [*he[ he heh hh*]

12 [*he he [ he [ he he*=

13 [*he he [ he he* =

14 [ he he [ he

15 G = *hallar (í eina átt)*
lean.3 (in one direction)

lean (in one direction)

16(M) = .hhhhhh

17 E [[ofsalega óeðli][legar
[[ extremely unnat][ural.F.PL
[[ Extremely unnat][ural

→ B [[Heyrðu ég ætla-][ Nú ætla ég að taka:- (.) mynd→ ]
[[ PRT I intend.1][ NÚ intend.1 I to take.INF (.) photo ]
[[ listen I’ going to-][ NÚ I’m going to take (.) a photo ]

19 M [*ehh he he he hmmm* ]
[[ (laughter))
[[ ehh he he he hmmm

20 (0.8)

21 B Stopp
stop-IMPER stop-IMPER
Stop stop
Brynhildur asserts that she is also going to take a photo (line 1). At this moment, she is one of the women posing while Vala is taking photos. Vala gives the women instructions to behave “normally” (lines 2–3 and 5), and this is acknowledged by Lína (line 6). Brynhildur chuckles (line 8), and Lína comments with laughter in her voice that everybody is still looking into the camera, despite Vala’s request (line 10). This provokes laughter from the other participants, followed by short comments on what is happening (lines 11–14). This is then followed by a long and audible in-breath from Magga with which she displays that she is getting tired of this extended photo session (line 16). Immediately following Magga’s in-breath, both Erna and Brynhildur take the floor. Erna makes a further comment on how “unnaturally” they are posing, and Brynhildur states that she also intends to take a photo (lines 17–18). Brynhildur’s utterance starts with the summons heyrðu ‘listen,’ which signals that she is about to introduce a new angle in the conversation (cf. Wide 2002: 121–2). She then begins verbalizing her intentions but breaks off after she has uttered the finite verb ætla ‘intend’ at a point of maximum grammatical control. A probable reason for this cut-off is the parallel talk with Erna. Brynhildur, however, makes an immediate restart even before Erna yields the floor, this time expressing her intentions by beginning with the temporal adverb nú. At this moment, the group, which has been posing for Vala, is probably breaking up, and Brynhildur’s statement is thus an indirect request that everybody stay in place until she has taken her photos as well. After a 0.8 second pause, Brynhildur takes the floor again. This time, she utters only a reduplicated imperative “stop-stop” (line 21), again ordering the women to stay in their places. Magga responds to this with an exclamation which shows her impatience (line 22).

The temporal nú in line 18 occurs in an utterance in which the speaker is verbalizing her intentions so that the interlocutors can respond accordingly. By doing so, Brynhildur informs the women of an upcoming situation, something they otherwise could not have known. By drawing the women’s attention to the fact that she is going to take pictures, Brynhildur implicitly tells them to stay still. Notice also that the stress is on nú and not on the verb. This stressed nú draws the attention to the present moment and indicates that something important or some sort of transition or

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66 This is one of many excerpts in which a video camera is necessary to make a better analysis of the sequence. Non-verbal behaviour plays an important role here.
change is coming up. This attention or emphasis is even more salient in the following excerpt, also drawn from *Reunion*. Here, Vala and Guðrún stage a short drama in which Vala addresses her wine—probably a Spanish *Santa Rita*—by calling it “Dear Rita”:

(6.21) **TALKING TO WINE: Reunion**

(G = Guðrún; V = Vala)

1 (1.8)

→ V @Ja:jā Rīta mīn (0.6) nū:: /ætla ēg að drekkaðig,@

PRT nameF my.F (0.6) NÚ intend.1 I to drink.INF+you.ACC

well well dear Rita (0.6) NÚ I’m going to drink you

3 (0.7)

4 G @/nehehehehehehe,@

((sounding scared))

noooo

5 (1.5)

6 V @sːa::ma hvaðú se::gir,@

same what+you say.2

No matter what you say

Vala has poured herself a glass of wine and is preparing to take the first sip. Before she begins, however, she addresses the wine as an animate being and threatens to drink it (line 2). Guðrún plays along with Vala and pretends to talk for the wine by responding with @/nehehehehehehe@ ‘no,’ delivered in such way that it displays fear (line 4). After a relatively long pause which stretches over 0.7 seconds, Vala continues to address Rita (the wine) and threatens to drink it regardless of what it says (line 6).

The strong intentionality expressed in this excerpt is made explicit by Guðrún’s reaction in line 4. In addition, Vala uses prosodic contextualization cues which are reminiscent of dramatic representations of threats used in theatre for children. *Nú* is stressed and has a slightly falling intonation contour, and the ú-vowel is somewhat prolonged. After *nú*, there is a pitch step-up to the verb *ætla*, followed by falling intonation till the end of the turn. The determination encoded in this turn is further emphasized with a follow-up statement in which Vala confirms that her intentions are not negotiable (line 6).

In the two last instances involving the construction *nú + ætla ēg að*, both occurrences refer to events in the immediate future. In (6.22), Brynhildur announces that she intends to take a photo just before she begins to do so. In the same fashion, Vala announces that she is going to drink the wine just as she is lifting the glass. In
some cases, however, *nú* may refer to a point in time further away in the future. Such is the case in (6.22), also drawn from *Reunion*. When this excerpt begins, the women have just sat down at the dinner table and started to eat. They are passing things around, and music can be heard in the background. After a relatively long lapse, Magga takes the floor and proffers a new topic:

(6.22) I WANT THE CD: *Reunion*\(^{67}\)

(M = Magga; B = Brynhildur; G = Guðrún; E = Erna)

1  (2.5)

→ M Erna *nú* kem ég við hjá þér á eftir og (.)/kref þig
  nameF NÚ come.1 I VP with you.DAT on after and (.) demand.1 you.ACC
  Erna NÚ I’ll come by your place later and (.) ask

3 um [Diskinn
  about [CD.DEF
  for (the CD

4 E [..hu::h j↑á↓:
  [ INTER PRT
  [Oh no!

5 ((2.0 seconds of general laughter, not possible to transcribe accurately))

6 M [við erum búnar að vera að [tala um þetta síðan ég kom ]
  [ we be.1.PL finish.PP.PL to be.INF to [talk.INF about this since I came.1.PT]
  [ We have been [talking about this since I came ]

7 G [*he he he*

8 (E) *ehh j↓á*
  ((laughter)) PRT
  ehh yes

9 o svo alltaf /gleyum við þessu hóðar [aftur þegar
  and then always forget.1.PL we this both.F [again when
  and then we always forget it again the both of us when

10 (B) [*he he jáh*
  ((laughter)) PRT
  [hehe yes

11 <t æ k i f æ r í h e f u r g e f i s t,>
  chance have.3 give.MV
  we have had the chance

At the beginning of the excerpt, Magga firmly states that she will “now” stop by Erna’s place after the dinner and demand that Erna lend her the CD. Erna responds with the interjection *hu::h* followed by *j↑á↓*: ‘yes,’ expressing exasperation (line 4).

\(^{67}\) This excerpt has also been analyzed in Wide (2002: 141).
By doing so, Erna displays that she considers her forgetfulness a serious problem. In the next few seconds, this short exchange and the exaggerated response cause all the women in the group to laugh (line 5). When the laughter dissipates, Magga explains the story behind these strong reactions: she and Erna have been talking about this CD since she got back home to Iceland.

Magga’s strong intentions are not only encoded in the temporal-affective núa. Notice also the choice of verb kref ‘demand,’ and the emphasis with which this verb is delivered. Note, too, the combination of temporal deictics in this excerpt. The first part of Magga’s turn involves both a syntactically initial temporal núa and the temporal phrase á eftir ‘later’ in the final position.

All the instances we have looked at so far refer to the ongoing moment or to a time in the near future. The temporal-affective núa, however, may also occur in reported speech in which the temporal origo is transpositioned to the time of the reported speaker (see section 3.2). The following excerpt is drawn from the data Friends. The women are talking about family photos when Sunna begins a new story:

(6.23) TAKING THE FAMILY TO THE PHOTOGRAPHER: Friends
(S = Sunna; N = Nanna; J = Jessica)

1 S Hĕeyrðu #e:e:# sko: [begar ↑Ég var stúdent:] PRT eh PRT [when ↑ be.1.PT student ]

Listen eh y’see [when I graduated from high school]

2 J [þa var (x x)] upp [svona þúveist] [it be.3.PT (x x)] up [like this PRT ] [it was (x x)] up [like this y’know ]

3 N [j↓â:] [PRT ] [yes ]

4 S [(þá vildi mamma láta taka myndir (;)o[gg ég sagði bara n:↓êí] [(then want.3.PT mom let.INF take.INF photos (;) a[nd I say.1.PT PRT “no” ] [(then my mom wanted to take us to the photographer (;) a[nd I just said “no” ]

5 N [(°.já°] [PRT ] [yes ]

6 J [(°.já°] [PRT ] [yes ]

7 J j↓â PRT yes
At the beginning of the story, Sunna gives the other women important background information: her family did not go to the photographer when she graduated from secondary school (lines 1 and 4). After backchannel signals from Jessica and Nanna, Sunna states that her mother had been “gathering strength for five years” (line 8), and, this time, there was no way to talk her out of going to the photographer (lines 10 and 12). Thus far, Sunna’s turns have already shown that her mother was very determined to take her family to the photographer. In a terminal overlap with Sunna, Nanna takes the floor and utters words which she presents as being the thoughts of Sunna’s mother: 

*nú er hingað og ekki lengra* ‘NÚ that’s it!’ (line 13). Sunna accepts Nanna’s interpretation by producing the particle *þúveist* ‘yes’ (line 14). After the particle *þúveist*
‘y’know,’ Sunna adds a metaphorical description of her mother’s determination by saying that her mother was stamping her feet to emphasize her words. The metaphor is followed by more reported speech initiated by nú (lines 16–17).

The two occurrences of nú in (6.23) are both employed in utterances which are presented as reported speech, although they are probably not verbatim reproductions of the mother’s actual words (cf. Tannen 1989: 98–133). Instead, the function of these utterances is to describe how determined the mother was to go to the photographer. The speakers, Nanna and Sunna, both employ a temporal nú in their representations. In these cases, nú does not anchor the utterances in time. Instead, these utterances display affective stance and show determination and firm commitment.

In section 6.3, I have been looking at excerpts in which the instances of nú have occurred syntactically integrated, either right before or after a finite verb. The final excerpt in this chapter, however, is an instance in which nú occurs without a verb. This is the only instance of temporal nú in the entire data which occurs syntactically non-integrated. Excerpt (6.24) is drawn from the data PTC, and it is a continuation of the conversation in (6.15) in which Erna is helping Arnar to remove a computer virus. A few seconds earlier, Erna had sent Arnar an e-mail with a link to a website which has the proper software to get rid of the virus. As the excerpt begins, Arnar is trying to log into his e-mail account without much success. A message written in English pops up on the screen which he reads out loud for Erna:

**(6.24) PROBLEMS WITH LOGGING IN: PTC 03.08.03**

(E = Erna, the caller; A = Arnar, the called)

1 A #ahhh# You have made too many unsuccessful sign-in attempts with an ahhh You have made too many unsuccessful sign-in attempts with an You have made too many unsuccessful sign-in attempts with an

2 incorrect password incorrect password ((in English)) incorrect password

3 (0.2)

4 A °Fókk jú °°sko°° Fuck you PRT Fuck man!

5 (12.0)

6 A .hnf ehhhh

7 A þá er- þá kemur ún með hérna sko (.). Biddu hvað er þetta er then be.3 then come.3 she with PRT PRT () wait.IMPER what be.3 this be.3

then is- Then it pops up with eh y’know () Just a moment what is this is
Both Erna and Arnar are working on their computers while they are talking on the phone, and this explains some of the long pauses which occur in this excerpt (lines 5, 10, 12, 14). At the beginning of the excerpt, Arnar reads a message from the screen out loud which tells him why he is not able to log in to his e-mail account (lines 1–2). After a brief pause, Arnar reacts, using an English swear word followed by the particle sko, which here has an affective function (line 4). This strong and negative reaction is followed by an extended pause which stretches over 12 seconds (line 5). After the pause, Arnar takes a deep breath through his nose and lets out a big sigh, displaying that he is annoyed with something. After the sigh, he takes the floor and starts telling Erna what the computer is doing, perhaps hoping that she has an explanation for the message. Before Arnar explains what is happening, he briefly pauses, then restarts (line 7). In this restart, Arnar asks himself a rhetorical question: he wonders what is happening to his computer (lines 7–8). Erna, however, does not know what is going on because she cannot see Arnar’s screen. Notice also that Arnar’s question seems to be cut off before completion. It ends with a planning marker, a pause, and, finally, another loud sigh. Arnar is obviously not pleased with what is happening, and there is something that greatly annoys him which he has not yet shared with Erna. Erna treats
these sounds as in need of explanation, and, in the following turn, she produces the interrogative particle *hva* ‘what.’ The particle is delivered with a falling contour. In spite of Erna’s attempt here to prompt an explanation, Arnar does not answer: the explanation is noticeably absent. In fact, the particle is followed by another long lapse in the conversation. This time, the lapse lasts for 5.2 seconds. After this extended delay, Erna makes a second attempt to prompt Arnar to explain what is going on. She repeats the same interrogative particle *hva*. However, this time the interrogative *hva* is followed by *nú* (line 11). Also, this invitation is followed by an extended pause which stretches over 1.2 seconds. Following this pause, Arnar finally responds to Erna’s request and explains what has happened (lines 13–15).

In this excerpt, *nú* is used as a temporal-affective marker. It is temporal because the speaker is referring to the ongoing moment: “what is happening now?” At the same time, *nú* may also be viewed as an affective stance marker. It functions as an affective marker which focuses the interlocutor’s attention on the present moment.

As my analysis above shows, in addition to the temporal meanings, *nú* may have non-referential functions, for example, as affective stance marker.

### 6.3.4 Summary of *nú* as a temporal marker

I have now shown that temporal *nú* can have three different functions. I began my discussion by looking at instances in which *nú* occurs in utterances which compare a current situation to a previous one. I showed that the current situation, or *nú*, can be contrasted with a past situation, such as in (6.11) and (6.13), or a future situation such as (6.12).

In the next section, I discussed *nú* marking transitions. In these cases, *nú* introduced events or actions which changed a previous situation. These instances of *nú* do not describe static situations, such as the instances of *mína* described in section 6.2, but, instead, highlight changes. Often, these utterances are used to introduce new situations which were unknown to the co-participants, either because the interlocutors were not located in the same area, such as in (6.14) and (6.15), or because the change of state involved something happening in the mind of the speaker, such as in (6.16).

In the final section, I discussed instances which I called temporal-affective *nú*. In my discussion, I show that these instances do not only anchor the event in the temporal origo, but they also have affective functions. In other words, these instances show degrees of emotional intensity. I also pointed out that some instances have a
more salient affective function, and that these instances have, to some degree, lost their temporal meaning.

As I demonstrated in my discussion, it is often difficult to show that an instance is solely temporal. The temporal and affective functions are closely connected, and it is the temporal meaning of nú that gives rise to an affective interpretation. The affective functions are particularly clear in instances in which speakers are encouraging recipients, such as in (6.17) to (6.19), and when speakers are verbalizing strong intentions, such as in (6.20) and (6.21). In some cases, the temporal meaning may disappear, and such instances will be the subject of Chapter 7. I will now summarize the present chapter.

6.4 Summary of nú and núna as temporal markers

In Chapter 2, I pointed out that temporal nú and núna have traditionally been viewed as synonymous, and in most cases, interchangeable. Therefore, in the present chapter, I investigate whether this assumption is true. To pin down the function of nú and núna, a sequential analysis was done on 24 conversational excerpts. The analysis shows that there are distinct formal and functional differences between the two temporal markers, including differences regarding syntactic positions, syntactic integration, prosodic realization, temporal relation to the finite verb, meaning, and, finally, function. These differences are summarized in Table 6.6:
Table 6.6: Formal and functional comparison between nú and núna

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Núna</th>
<th>Nú</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syntactic position</strong></td>
<td>Tends to occur in the end field</td>
<td>Tends to occur in the front field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syntactic integration</strong></td>
<td>Can occur as a turn of its own</td>
<td>Occurs only with a finite verb or in the conventionalized phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hvað nú ‘what now?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prosodic realization</strong></td>
<td>Non-integrated</td>
<td>Integrated with the finite verb (or the verb and the object)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relation to the verb</strong></td>
<td>The verb (or the focal event) takes place somewhere within the period referred to as núna</td>
<td>Nú functions as an aspectual marker of the verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td>Period of time</td>
<td>Non-referential or aspectual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Function</strong></td>
<td>Presents the focal event or a situation as relevant in the current context</td>
<td>• Comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Affective stance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The differences between the temporal nú and núna are quite striking. In my data, the vast majority of núna occur in the end field, while the temporal nú is mainly used pre-verbally, in the front field. In fact, this tendency is so strong that the only instances of post-verbal nú are instances which occur in conventionalized phrases and in utterances designed as a subordinate or as a question.

This detailed study of the sequential placement of nú and núna shows that the two words do not have the same relation to core syntax. While nú almost exclusively occurs syntactically integrated, that is, with a finite verb, núna does not necessarily occur as part of a syntactic gestalt. There is only one exception to this in my data. This is when nú follows the interrogative hva ‘what,’ and there may be considered a conventionalized phrase. Núna, by contrast, occurs frequently as a turn of its own and with other parts of speech, such as attributes and other adverbials (cf. section 6.2.2).

In addition to the syntactic differences between nú and núna, I show that the two words also differ on the prosodic level. On the one hand, a pitch analysis of the turns (or parts of turns) in which nú and núna occur shows that the pre-verbal nú is often delivered as a prosodically integrated part of the verb. It is often rather difficult therefore to locate nú on the pitch-curve (see Fig. 6.7). Núna, on the other hand, is typically produced after a short pause (see Fig. 6.1). In some cases, however, there is no pause before núna (see Fig. 6.2), but even in these cases it is easy to locate it on the pitch-curve since núna is typically delivered with a distinct contour, either falling or rising-falling. These differences may to some extent be explained by the number of
syllables, but I would also suggest that this prosodic variation reflects other differences, such as the relationship between the temporal marker and the verb.

My analysis of nú and núna shows that the two temporal markers have different relationships to the focal event. In the case of núna, the focal event is presented first (ertu meða opið ‘is it open’), before it is anchored in time (núna). The focal event takes place sometime during the time period which is indexed by núna, either in the past, the present, or the future (see Fig. 6.3). In other words, the period known as núna is only used as a time-frame which is made relevant within the current situation. This period varies greatly in duration, and, thus, it is interpreted and negotiated by the interlocutors in the local context. In other words, núna has an open meaning potential.

In the case of nú, the temporal marker is produced first (nú), before the event or situation is presented (er tölvan mín frosin ‘is my computer frozen’). As I have shown, nú and the verb are typically delivered as one word, and the temporal marker is therefore directly linked to the focal event. In a way, nú is used as an aspectual marker which shows a change of state or a beginning.

The summary above suggests that the two temporal markers nú and núna do not have only formal differences; they also have some clear functional differences. According to these findings, núna is employed as a purely referential index, one which indexes a period of time. Nú, by contrast, is regarded as mainly a functional word, and its referential function is not as prominent as it is in the case of núna. This loss of referential functionality is manifest in nú’s strong relation to the finite verb and in its prosodic integration. Nú often has the function of focusing on a transition or a comparison between different situations. This focus is generated in order to make a comparison between the present situation and the past or the future, such as described in section 6.3.1. In other cases, it may be used to introduce, or bring attention to, new situations, such as the instances in 6.3.2. This call for attention can then be strengthened to such an extent that the function of nú can be described as being temporal-affective. In these cases, as I described in 6.3.3, nú acquires a new, affective function through the intensity of the temporal reference. It gives the utterance a new tone, suggesting that “it’s now or never.” When nú acquires more affective functionality, the temporal meaning can lessen. In this study, such occurrences are referred to as tone particles, and they will be analyzed in Chapter 7.
7 Nú as a tone particle

In Chapter 1, I discussed the temporal functions of nú and núna. In my analysis, I pointed out that nú occurs almost exclusively in syntactic gestalts, before or after the finite verb. I also showed that, in this position, nú is often used as a tone particle (see Table 6.2), that is, a particle that does not have propositional content but gives the utterance a certain tone (see section 3.4.1). Nú as a temporal marker, (a) and (b), and nú as a tone particle, (c) and (d), are illustrated in the examples below, which are simplified utterances from the conversation data:

(a) Nú er hann nefnilega rosalega flottur ‘NÚ it really looks good’ (see excerpt (6.11))
(b) Sem heitir nú Heaven ‘Which is NÚ called Heaven’ (see excerpts (6.4) and (6.13))
(c) Mar þarf nú að slaka á ‘One needs NÚ to relax sometimes’ (see excerpt (7.11))
(d) Já nú veit þa ekki eins vel ‘Well, NÚ I don’t know that as well’ (see excerpt (7.10))

As these examples show, nú as a tone particle is positioned pre-verbally or post-verbally. Pre-verbal nú is uttered in the front field, before the finite verb (see section 4.4.3). These instances are sometimes preceded by syntactically non-integrated items, such as dialogue particles and address terms (see (d) above).

The post-verbal nú typically occurs in the middle field, directly after the finite verb. However, when the direct object is a pronoun, the post-verbal nú is placed after the object. Since the difference between these two post-verbal nús does not seem to have any interactional relevance, I will treat both as a single category of post-verbal nú. The two different types of post-verbal nú are shown in (e) and (f):

(e) Mar þarf nú stundum að slaka á
  man.IMP need.3 NÚ sometimes to relax.INF VP
  you need.NÚ sometimes to relax

(f) Já Ég veit þa nú eiginlega ekki (…)
  PRT I know.1 that NÚ actually not (…)
  well, I actually don’t NÚ know (…)

Since nú as a tone particle is a syntactically integrated part of speech, it is rather difficult to give a detailed and accurate description of its interactional function. In any utterance, it is difficult to identify the work which is done by the particle and the work which is done by other lexical items, intonation, or word order. Thus, in order to describe the function of nú as a tone particle, I collected examples from the data based
on their syntactic and sequential placement. Following this, I divided the instances into pre-verbal and post-verbal nú. In addition to this basic distinction, the collections were based on questions such as:

1. Does nú occur in utterances which are mainly responsive or mainly projective in nature?
2. Does nú occur in one-unit turns or in multi-unit turns?
3. If nú occurs in multi-unit turns, does it occur at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the turn?
4. Does nú occur at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of topics?
5. Is there anything else going on in the conversation which could explain the use of nú?

In the first section in this chapter, I will look at the frequency and the syntactic distribution of the tone particle nú (7.1). Following this, I will look at the pre-verbal nú (7.2), and then discuss the post-verbal nú (7.3).

## 7.1 Distribution

In the 14 hours and 11 minutes of data, there are 574 instances of the tone particle nú, or approximately 0.67 instances per minute.68 As a comparison, the total number of temporal nú in the same data is 82 (cf. Chapter 6). Table 7.1 shows the distribution of the tone particle nú in the different sets of data:

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68 This is a considerably larger number than was found in studies of nu and nyt in Finland-Swedish and Finnish (cf. Hakulinen and Saari 1995; Wide 1998).
Table 7.1: Distribution of nú as a tone particle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Occurrences per minute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>90 min.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>146 min.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>78 min.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>17 min.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>100 min.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul</td>
<td>310 min.</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>110 min.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14 h. 11 min.</strong></td>
<td><strong>574</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.67</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 7.1, the tone particle nú has a rather uneven distribution. The call-in program, *The soul of the nation*, has the most instances, with 1.48 instances per minute, while the everyday conversations, *Friends, Reunion*, and *PTC* have only between 0.16 and 0.17 instances per minute. The reasons behind these differences are most likely found in the activities in which the interlocutors are engaged. As I will show in the analysis, argumentative discourse is one of the main environments in which the tone particle nú is employed.

A quantitative analysis of the pre-verbal and post-verbal nú in the different sets of data is shown in Table 7.2:

Table 7.2: The syntactic distribution of the tone particle nú

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Pre-verbal</th>
<th>Post-verbal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td><strong>536</strong></td>
<td><strong>574</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 7.2, the syntactic distribution of nú indicates its frequency and position in the different sets of data.
As seen in Table 7.2, the tone particle *nú* has a clear tendency to occur in a post-verbal position. In the data, pre-verbal *nú* seems to be limited mostly to the moderated media conversations, with the exception of one instance in the institutional data *ITC*. Notice that no instance of the pre-verbal *nú* occurs in the informal conversations *Reunion, Friends, or PTC*. The post-verbal *nú*, by contrast, occurs in all data.

The reason for the total absence of pre-verbal *nú* in the everyday conversations may again be explained by the activities in which the interlocutors are engaged during each conversation. However, instead of speculating now on what these differences might involve, in the remainder of this chapter, I will do an in-depth analysis of instances of the tone particle *nú*. My aim in this analysis is to describe the environments in which the tone particle *nú* occurs. I will begin my discussion with instances of pre-verbal *nú* (7.2).

### 7.2 Pre-verbal *nú*

Although most instances of the pre-verbal *nú* have temporal meaning (see Chapter 6), there are 38 instances of pre-verbal *nú* as a tone particle in the data. Table 7.3 shows the distribution between the two functions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Temporal marker</th>
<th>Tone particle</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Reunion</em></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Friends</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>PTC</em></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ITC</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Teens</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Soul</em></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Elections</em></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 7.3, all 38 instances of the pre-verbal tone particle *nú* occur in institutional conversations; in the media conversations, *Teens, Soul, and Elections*; and in the institutional telephone conversations, *ITC*. This distribution shows that the
pre-verbal nú is not used frequently in everyday conversations. In the following three sections, I will take a closer look at how pre-verbal nú is employed in my data. First, I will discuss instances which occur in utterances that introduce a new aspect of an ongoing topic (7.2.1). Second, I will focus on utterances that occur in multi-unit questions (7.2.2). Finally, I will discuss instances that occur in non-aligning utterances (7.2.3).

7.2.1 Nú in utterances that introduce a new aspect of an ongoing topic

The pre-verbal nú routinely occurs in utterances that introduce new aspects of ongoing topics. In (7.1), Vignir is discussing the negative discourse around one of the presidential candidates, and the fact that some people are defaming this candidate in order to generate support for their own candidate. Before the excerpt begins, Vignir has mentioned a recent newspaper article which was written by a well known lawyer in Iceland. In this article, the lawyer accused one of the candidates of not being a true believer in God. Since the president of Iceland is also the head of the state church, this would disqualify the candidate, according to the lawyer. The moderator, who needs to keep a neutral stance and be careful not to take sides in these kinds of political debates (see section 5.1.3), explains that she has not read the article (lines 1–2):

(7.1) ONE OF THEM IS GOING TO WIN: Soul 04.06.96
(M = Moderator; V = Vignir, a caller)

1 M Já ég ætlaði mér nú að lesa þessa grein var alveg (.) búin
PRT I intend.1.PT DAT NÚ to read.INF this article be.1.PT completely (.) finish.PP.F
Yes, I was NÚ going to read this article had even (.)

2 að taka hana frá .h en en en komôvi síðan ekki í v/erk. .hhh
to take.INF she.ACC VP .h but but but come.1.PT+that then not in work .hhh
reserved it .h but but but didn't then do that .hhh

3 (0.2)

4 V níei
PRT no

5 M Því miður #é [ö::#: ]
unfortunately 1 [eh
unfortunately]1] [eh

6 V [better] þetta fólk sko þett- þa hri:stir úr
[this+be.3 this people PRT this- they shake.3 of
[this+is ] these people you see they- they shake
saurugum klaufum sínun skít↓eh: (0.8) yfir alþjóð.
dirty.DAT hooves.DAT their-REF dirt- eh (0.8) over whole nation
their dirty hooves shit- eh (0.8) over the whole nation

já þot[ter
PRT thi[is+be.3
yes thi[is is

[o etter lá:kúra bara og aumingjaskapur.
[ and (th)is+be.3 banality just and gutlessness
and this is just banality and gutlessness

[["finnst] mér.°
[[ find.MV] LDAT
[[ I] find

[[j:::- ]

#j↓↓:á:# það er náttúrulega alltaf #ö:::h# hffhhh #ö# ømurlegt
PRT it be.3 of course always e:::h hffhhh eh awful
yes, it’s of course always eh hfh eh awful

þegar að:::þegar að: .hhhhh menn þurfa að beita (.)
when that when that .hhhhh men need.3.PL to go.INF to use.INF (.)
when when .hhhh people have to use (.)

skítkast↓i [til þess að].
dirt throwing.DAT [ to that.GEN to ]
throw dirt [ to ]

→ V
[ Já nú vita- ] nú vita menn að einn af þessum
[ PRT NÚ know.3.PL ] NÚ know.3.PL men that one.M of these
[ yes, NÚ know ] NÚ people know that one of these

frambjóðendum hann á ettir að verða (0.6) fíors↓eti.
candidates he have.3 Left to become (0.6) president
candidates is going to become (0.6) president

([Dað hlýtur] að verða.
[[ that must.3 ] to become.INF
[[ that is bound ] to happen

[[nei menn- ]
[[ PRT men ]
[[ no people- ]

.jh↓↓: á:
.jh PRT
.jh yes

ó og: þá held ég að að sé better ósögd (0.3) orð (1.0) af af
a- and then think.1 I that that be.3.SUBJ better unsaid.PP.N (0.3) words (1.0) of of
a- and then I think it is better not to say (0.3) words (1.0) of of
By saying that she has not read yet the article, the moderator is implicitly telling Vignir that she is not able to make any judgments about its content. Vignir responds to this lack of support by restating his criticism. This time, he describes “these people” metaphorically, as dirt-throwers (lines 6–7). The moderator does not align with Vignir on this point either. Following Vignir’s assessments, there are long pauses (lines 8 and 11), and the moderator has obvious problems formulating her statements (lines 13 and 15–16). Vignir orients towards the moderator’s hesitations by producing a post-completion stance marker, finnst mér ‘I think’ (line 12) which softens his assertion in line 10 by characterizing it as his personal opinion (cf. Karlsson 2006: 160–5 on tror jag ‘I think’ in Swedish). It may be the moderator’s hesitation and her unwillingness to fully support Vignir’s assessment that triggers Vignir to make another attempt to convince the moderator. Hence, in an overlap, Vignir points out that people who slander the candidates should know that one of them is going to become president (line 17). The turn contains the tone particle nú which is also repeated when Vignir makes a restart. Despite Vignir’s new argument, there is no immediate response from the moderator (line 19). However, after a 0.7 second delay, both Vignir and the moderator take the floor simultaneously. The moderator yields the floor to Vignir. He then re-emphasizes his previous comment by pointing out that people must know that one of the candidates is going to win. In this way, he is making another attempt to convince the moderator and to prompt an acknowledgement token from her (line 20). When the moderator has finally acknowledged that one of the candidates will become president (line 22), Vignir concludes that, due to this reason, slandering should be avoided (lines 23–24).

By employing the pre-verbal nú in line 17, Vignir signals that his turn is not a direct response to the moderator’s turn. Instead, he signals that the turn introduces a new angle on the ongoing topic. He is foregrounding a new argument which should convince the moderator that people should be careful not to slander the presidential candidates. Vignir’s turn contains a firm statement which is presented in such way that he seems to have no doubt about its truthfulness. Therefore, the function of nú is similar to the function Andvik (1992: 107) attributes to the Norwegian particle nå: it makes the utterance easier to accept and harder to reject. Andvik (1992) is describing a post-verbal nå, but, as I will show, the pre-verbal and post-verbal nú in Icelandic have similar functions.
In (7.1), the utterance containing nú foregrounds a generally known fact that it is a part of the interlocutors’ common ground. In some cases, nú is employed to foreground facts which are not shared by the interlocutors and have not yet been established as common ground. These facts may involve information which the recipient cannot possibly know or information which the speaker believes that the recipient does not know. Consider the following excerpt in which a mechanic is giving advice to Guðbjörn who has problems with his car. Guðbjörn has just told the mechanic that he had an accident a while ago. According to Guðbjörn, the accident was followed by the total collapse of the car’s transmission. At the beginning of the extract, the mechanic is finishing his explanation to Guðbjörn about what he thinks is causing the problem:

(7.2) THE CAR THAT BROKE DOWN: Soul 23.05.96
(M = Mechanic; G = Guðbjörn, a caller)

1 M Og þá geraðær þa að verkuma #e:h e:h# girkassinn er alltaf í spennu.
   and then do+they that to work+that eh eh transmission.DEF be.3 always in tension
   and that causes eh eh tension in the transmission
2 (0.7)
3 G Já já hefur hrunið [út frá því °sko°.
   PRT have.3 collapse.PP [ out from that PRT
   yes, has collapsed [ because of that I see
4 M [.hh
5 M Já hanna geður hafa hrunið út frá því sko.
   PRT he can.3 have.INF collapse.PP out from that you see
   yes it may have collapsed because of that you see
6 (0.9)
→ G En nú er ekki farið illa með þennan bil sk/ðò þ-annig#→a:#
   But NÚ be.3 not gone.PP badly with this car.ACC PRT so that
   But NÚ this car was not treated badly so
8 (0.2)
9 M Nú það þarf ekki að vera þa fyrir því sko en .hhh En þegara
   PRT that need.3 not to be.INF that for that PRT but .hhh but when+that
   no it doesn’t have to be like that you see but .hhh but when
10 #e:···:·:h# höggið kemur á: (0.3)[.hhh að þa myndast viss
    e:···:·:h hitt.DEF come.3 on (0.3) [.hhh that then form.MV certain
    e:···:·:h you got into the accident (0.3) [.hhh then it creates a certain

69 Clark (1996: 93) defines common ground in the following way: “Two people’s common ground is, in effect, the sum of their mutual, common, or joint knowledge, beliefs, and suppositions.” See also Stalnaker (1978).
Following the mechanic’s explanation, there is a 0.7 second pause (line 2). After the pause, Guðbjörn reformulates the mechanic’s turn, displaying that he understands and accepts the diagnosis (line 3). In the subsequent turn, the mechanic repeats Guðbjörn’s formulation (line 5). Notice, however, how the mechanic uses getur hafa hrundið ‘may have collapsed’ instead of hefur hrundið ‘collapsed,’ and thereby makes the statement less determined. Consequently, the diagnosis changes from being absolutely certain to being only a possibility. This shift allows for other possible diagnoses. After a 0.9 second delay, Guðbjörn takes the floor, initiating his turn with the connective en ‘but,’ followed by a syntactic gestalt containing a pre-verbal nú (line 7). In this case, nú is not stressed and has a short vowel and rising intonation. It is prosodically integrated with the finite verb. Figure 7.1 shows a pitch analysis of the utterance containing nú, and Figure 7.2 shows the intensity:

**Figure 7.1:** Fundamental frequency ($f_0$) of line 7, excerpt (7.2)
In this utterance, Guðbjörn states that his car is well-cared for. Notice that the turn trails off at the end, leaving the new information open to comment. This is indexed with the conjunction *þannig að* ‘so that,’ which projects a continuation. After a short pause, the mechanic takes the floor, acknowledges the new information and explains that this fact does not change his diagnosis (lines 9–10 and 12).

In (7.2), *nú* occurs in an utterance in which the speaker is establishing important background information which, prior to this point, is unknown to the mechanic. The tone particle *nú* contributes to marking this information as important new information. The foregrounding function of *nú* is strengthened by the particle *sko* which has a strong appeal to the interlocutor (cf. H. Hilmsdóttir and Wide 2000). By using a preverbal *nú*, Guðbjörn signals that the turn in progress is not a direct response to the mechanic’s previous turn. Instead, it introduces a new angle on the same topic (cf. also Hakulinen and Saari 1995: 486). Furthermore, the utterance is designed to prompt a comment from the mechanic in which he will evaluate the new information and inform Guðbjörn whether or not his diagnosis will change. In other cases, *nú* may occur in turns which prompt only acknowledgement tokens. Consider the following excerpt, also drawn from *The soul of the nation*. In this excerpt, Arngrímur is praising the employers of a certain store for being extraordinarily helpful and knowledgeable:

**(7.3) LOVELY PEOPLE: Soul 07.06.96**

(M = Moderator; A = Arngrímur, a caller)

1 A O:g mér þykir afskaplega vamt um etta fólk það er
   and 1.DAT think.3 very good about (th)is people it be.3
   And I care a lot for this people they are
After complimenting the employers, Arngrímur makes a 0.4 second turn-internal pause (line 2). Before he finally yields the floor, Arngrímur produces a concluding remark which ends with a falling end contour. His positive assessment receives no immediate response from the moderator. Instead, the turn is followed by a 0.8 second pause before Arngrímur takes the floor himself. His new turn begins with a planning marker which is immediately followed by the pronoun ‘I’ followed by a restart (line 6). The restart begins with a pre-verbal nú. Arngrímur makes a comment on his previous turn, foregrounding the fact that, by giving this compliment, he is not complaining about other stores (lines 6–7 and 9). The moderator responds to Arngrímur’s comment with a duplicated nei ‘no’ (line 8). Here, the duplicated nei implies that the moderator not only acknowledges Arngrímur’s statement, but also that it is self-evident. Thus, the moderator is providing a strong response to a fact which the speaker marked as particularly important with the use of an initial nú. After the
moderator acknowledges Arngrímur’s statement, Arngrímur expands his turn. The first part of the continuation, *í svipaðri stöðu* ‘in similar position,’ is immediately followed by a new TCU which is not particularly marked as a new beginning (lines 9–10). Finally, after a 0.4 second pause, Arngrímur adds the post-completion stance marker *skiluru mig* “you see” (line 12), in which he shows orientation towards the moderator.

In (7.3), the tone particle *nú* occurs in an utterance in which the speaker is foregrounding important facts which may prevent a potential misunderstanding. It seems as though Arngrímur understands that his praise might be misinterpreted. By introducing his comment with a pre-verbal *nú*, Arngrímur presents the new information as obvious and definite—the speaker stands firmly behind his statement. The particle is stressed and delivered with a slightly prolonged vowel and a rising intonation contour.

In (7.3), the utterance containing the pre-verbal *nú* is produced as a new turn, prosodically marked as a new beginning. Although Arngrímur was also the producer of the previous turn, he is taking the floor again after a 0.8 second lapse in line 6. In the following excerpt, which also contains a pre-verbal *nú*, the pre-verbal *nú* occurs in the middle of a turn. In this case, *nú* is inserted directly after the speaker cuts herself off and makes a restart. The excerpt is drawn from the television debate *Elections*. In the episode in question, the candidates have been asked about their views on the tax exemptions given to the president of Iceland. Sigrún, who is the first candidate to answer this question, has expressed her opinion: she thinks that these exemptions should be abolished. Sigrún explains that the income of the president is not particularly high, and, thus, she is of the opinion that the net salary should be raised accordingly. Before Sigrún is able to finish her turn, she is overlapped by Freyr and Jón, who both show strong disalignment. In the subsequent talk, the two journalists focus on Sigrún’s statement that the salary is “not particularly high,” while Sigrún continues answering the original question. As this excerpt begins, Freyr is criticizing the president’s high salary (line 1):

**THE PRESIDENT’S SALARY: Elections**
(S = Sigrún, a presidential candidate; F = Freyr, a journalist)

1 F [(við) höfum reiknað það út ] að að [að:: þessi laun með [ (we) have.3 calculate.PP that VP ] that that [ that this salary with [ (we) have calculated ] that that [ that this salary including}
After Freyr has commented on the president’s monthly income (lines 1 and 3), Sigrún shifts the topic by reminding the two journalists what the original question was (line 5). Thus, she is showing that the conversation is getting off track. After an acknowledgement from Freyr (line 7), Sigrún repeats her opinion that the president should keep her net salary (lines 6 and 9). In the subsequent talk, Sigrún produces the connective ef að ‘if’ but cuts herself off before she reaches a TRP (line 9). Instead,
Sigrún starts a new TCU which begins with the tone particle *nú* in a pre-verbal position. In that TCU, Sigrún inserts a comment which changes her answer: she points out that it is actually not the president who makes the decisions regarding her own income.

Sigrún’s *nú* in (7.4) is another example of a firm statement which introduces a new angle on an ongoing topic. By stating that it is the parliament which makes the decisions regarding the president’s income, Sigrún claims that her own opinion is irrelevant. The reporters cannot easily deny this, and, therefore, their arguments lose ground. Sigrún’s comment receives no response from the journalists. It is followed by a short pause (line 11), after which she is able to make a topic shift (line 12).

In the examples thus far, I have shown that pre-verbal *nú* is routinely employed in utterances which introduce new angles on ongoing topics. The introductions foreground relevant background information, and, as a result, certain responses are made relevant. So far, I have shown examples in which *nú* occurs in utterances in which a speaker is correcting something or avoiding a potential misinterpretation. However, this is not the case in (7.5), which is also drawn from *The soul of the nation*. Here, the moderator and a caller are discussing the Eurovision song contest and this year’s contribution from Iceland. Just before the excerpt begins, the caller, Fjóla, has stated that it is not as important to win, as it is to participate. The moderator does not fully agree (lines 1–2):

(7.5) **TRADITIONS AND THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST: Soul 17.05.96 (←4.5)**

(M = Moderator; F = Fjóla, a caller)

1 M  >Jú  maður  verður eiginlega að fara í keppni<  með
   PRT man.IMP must.3  actually  to  go.INF  in  competition  with
   yes, you really must enter a competition with

2 því hugarf[ari að maður ætli  að-]
   that  in  mind  [  that  man.IMP  intend.3.SUBJ to ]
   that in mind  [  that you are going to-

3 F  [  N  e  i  e  k  k  ]  e  r  t  endilega,
   [  PRT nothing especially
   [  no particularly

4 M  gera sitt  bes:ta: [ og  helst  að  vinna.]
   do  his.REF best  [  and  preferably  to  win.INF  ]
   do one’s best  [  and preferably win  ]

5 F  [Jáhún hún  h]ú
   [PRT she s]he
   [yes she s]he
At the beginning of the excerpt, Fjóla and the moderator debate whether it is important to aim to win the song contest (lines 1–10). When Fjóla and the moderator have both agreed that this year’s singer will do the best that she can, there is a 0.5 second pause, and the topic seems to be exhausted. When the moderator takes the floor again, she introduces a new angle on the topic. She signals the topic shift with a pre-sequence formed as a directive: “tell me one thing, Fjóla” (line 12). This TCU is pragmatically incomplete, and it projects a continuation. The moderator then delivers a declarative utterance in which she states that she has been talking about traditions surrounding the Eurovision song contest with previous callers (lines 12–13). This part of the turn is initiated with the tone particle nú, and it begins with a slight pitch step-up. Immediately after the moderator has finished her turn, Fjóla takes the floor and starts explaining the traditions within her family (line 14).

The turn containing the tone particle nú in (7.5) foregrounds the fact that the moderator has been talking with previous callers about traditions surrounding the
European song contest. The combination of the two TCUs in line 12; the imperative “tell me one thing, Fjóla”; and the statement that she has been talking with other listeners about their traditions, prompt Fjóla to talk about her own traditions. In other words, nú occurs in an utterance which foregrounds a statement that requires a comment. Note that there is no significant pause between the moderator’s statement in line 13 and Fjóla’s answer in line 14. The intonation in the moderator’s turn is ambiguous, and it is not possible to determine whether she completes her turn or not. It is clear, however, that Fjóla treats the turn as complete, and that the appropriate response would be to talk about her traditions.

In this section, I have been analyzing nú in utterances that introduce new aspects of ongoing topics. When occurring in this environment, the function of nú is similar to the function of the temporal nú when it marks transitions (see 6.3.2). In both cases, nú is used to foreground something new in the context. The tone particle nú, however, does not anchor events in time: it does not index a reference time. Furthermore, my analysis shows that instances occurring in such environments may introduce information already shared by the speaker and the co-participant, such as in (7.1), (7.4), and (7.5), as well as information which is new to the recipient, such as in (7.2) and (7.3). The occurrence of nú, therefore, is not necessary based on common ground. In each case, however, a pre-verbal nú signals that the speakers stand firmly behind their statements, and that this message cannot easily be doubted. In the following section, I will discuss how this foregrounding function is used as a communicative strategy in multi-unit questions.

7.2.2 Nú in multi-unit questions

The term multi-unit question refers to questions which consist of more than one TCU, that is, a turn in which at least one TCU functions as a question (cf. Lindholm 2003). In contemporary Icelandic, such structures are sometimes initiated with a pre-verbal nú. In excerpt (7.6), which is drawn from the television debate Elections, Sigrún is discussing her opinion on the president’s right to veto the decisions of the parliament. Sigrún is the last candidate to answer the question, and the excerpt begins at the end of her turn (lines 1–4). So far, she has not given a straight answer to the question, and the journalists are starting to lose patience.
1 S .Hetta er e::: mál sem hefur komið til umræðu ítrekað á fundum .H this be.3 case which have.3 come.PP to discussion repeatedly on meetings .H this is an issue which has been discussed repeatedly in the candidates’ meetings

2 frambjóðendanna .hhh og það hafa allir frambjóðendur tekið undir candidates.GEN .hhh and it have.3.PL all.M candidates take.PP VP .hhh and and all the candidates have supported

3 þessa hugmynd,.hh það er ákveðinn áfangi¿ (0.5).hhh fyrir hugmyndina¿ this idea .hh that be.3 certain.M milestone (0.5) .hhh for idea.ACC.DEF this idea .hh that’s a certain milestone (0.5) .hhh for this idea

4 (0.2) sem [vonandi skilar sér til Alþingis. .hhh which [hopefully return.3 itself to Alþingi.GEN ]
(0.2) which [ hopefully will get it self across to the parliament ]

→ F [en þú sjálf allmorg ár á Alþingi af hverju]
[ but NÚ sit.2.PT you self.F several years on Alþingi why ]
[ but NÚ you sat yourself for several years in the parliament why ]

6 F ((lowers his voice)) lagðiru þessa tillögu aldrei fram þar. lay.2+you this suggestion never forward there didn’t you made that motion there

7 S gerði það þar.
dó.1.PT that there did it there

8 (0.2)

9 F þú gerðir það þ[a].
you do.2.PT that t[here you did that t[here

10 S [já:: en því *miður* [var hún ekki*
[PRT but unfortunately be.3.PT she not
[ yes but unfortunately it wasn’t

11 M [en
[ but
[ but

12 S samþykkt.
agreed.PP
passed

Freyr interrupts Sigrún by asking her a question before there is any sign of an upcoming turn-completion (line 5). In fact, Sigrún has just uttered the connective sem ‘which,’ which clearly projects a continuation. Note also that Freyr alters the volume of his voice, showing that he is competing with Sigrún for the floor (at the beginning of line 6). Freyr begins his interruption with the connective en ‘but,’ which already suggests that he wants to object to her statement or at least bring up a new perspective
This connective is immediately followed by a statement initiated with a pre-verbal \textit{nú} which foregrounds the fact that Sigrún herself was a member of the parliament. Without delay, this statement is followed up with a question requesting Sigrún to explain why she did not address the issue she is raising when she was in parliament (lines 5–6). In other words, Freyr is implying that Sigrún has already had the chance to make a difference and did not do so. In the subsequent turn, Sigrún points out that Freyr’s presuppositions are wrong: she did in fact make such a motion (line 7).

The question in (7.6) is designed as a challenge, or as a provoking element (cf. Nylund 2000: 132). The statement contains a strong critique against Sigrún, and it overlaps her turn. By initiating the overlap with \textit{nú}, Freyr signals that he is introducing a new argument. Just as in section 7.2.1, the utterance containing \textit{nú} is presented in a firm and decisive tone, and it establishes the relevant background for Freyr’s question.

Multi-unit turns containing a pre-verbal \textit{nú} consist of at least one declarative TCU with which the speaker provides the recipient of the question with appropriate background before the question is posed (cf. Schegloff 1996: 61; Nylund 2000: 131). Figure 7.3 shows the structure of multi-unit questions containing a pre-verbal \textit{nú}:

![Figure 7.3: Structure of multi-unit questions initiated by \textit{nú}](image)

Speakers typically present the background information as something that is generally known and agreed upon; consequently, their statements cannot easily be challenged. Furthermore, by producing the declarative and the question without any prosodic boundaries, such as in (7.6), the recipient is not given an opportunity to respond to the background information.

Sometimes, however, the recipient is given time to provide feedback before the question is produced. The following excerpt is drawn from the data ITC. Here, Erna is talking with a service representative from a telephone company. Erna has explained that she has just signed up for high speed internet service (ADSL) through her workplace, and she is calling to find out how to cancel her old agreement. Just before the
excerpt begins, Erna has asked the service representative if she can cancel the old agreement, since she still needs to use the telephone line to use the new internet service:

(7.7) CANCELLING THE INTERNET ACCOUNT: ITC 05.07.03
(E = Erna; S = Service representative)

1 S .h jú ef þú ert þá komin með eitthvað annað frá þeim, (0.4)
   .h PRT if you be.2 then come.PP.F with something other from them (0.4)
   .h yes if you have received something else from them (0.4)

2 [sem áa vera aðgangurinnðinn inn á á á dé ess ðlíð þá (0.4)
   [ which ought.3+to be.INF entrance.DEF+your in on å å å dec ess ðlí.DEF then (0.4)
   [which is supposed to be your login to the ADSL then (0.4)

3 E [já
   [PRT
   [yes

4 S verðuru bara að segja þessari upp→
   have.2+you just to say.INF this up
   you just have to cancel this (0.4)

5 (0.4)

6 E ók†ei:
   PRT
   okay (0.5)

→ E .hh (0.2) hérna: ehe::: Hvornig erða’ Nú er ég með (0.3)
   .hh (0.2) PRT ((clearing her throat)) how be.3+that NÚ be.3 I with (0.3)
   .hh (0.2) ehm how is it NÚ I have (0.3)

9 #e::# heimasiðu og sona sema .hh (0.5) #e# hjá Alnet::
   e::: home page.ACC and PRT which+that .hh (0.5) eh with Alnet
   eh home page and things like that which .hh (0.5) eh with Alnet

10 (0.2)

11 S j↓á
   PRT
   yes (0.3)

12 (0.3)

13 E "hjá ykkur" Fellur þa þá niður.
   with you.DAT fall.3 that then down
   with you, is that then cancelled?

14 S ejá
   PRT
   yes
The service representative advises Erna to cancel her old ADSL account (lines 1–2 and 3). Erna responds with the particle ók ʰɛi: ‘okay’ and thus acknowledges and accepts the instructions provided (line 6). By using rising intonation, Erna signals that the topic is not yet exhausted. After a 0.5 second pause, Erna poses another question to the representative (lines 8–9 and 13). This question is constructed as a multi-unit question which consists of several different parts. After a pre-beginning (.hhh) and a brief pause, Erna produces a floor holder, hérna:. She then clears her throat and produces a TCU which projects an upcoming question: Hvernig erða’ ‘How is it?’ (line 8). Despite the question projector, Erna does not immediately produce the actual question. Instead she lets the representative know that she has “a homepage and things like that.” In other words, Erna gives the representative information which she will need to answer the upcoming question (lines 8–9). When the information has been acknowledged by the service representative (line 11), Erna produces a continuation to her previous turn, specifying that the homepage is “with you” (line 13). This last part is produced in sotto voce. Immediately following this continuation, Erna produces the actual question: “is that then cancelled?” This part of the turn is produced with a louder voice than the previous TCU. The service representative gives a positive answer without delay (line 14).

The multi-unit question in excerpt (7.7) consists of three parts: a) the pre-sequence hvernig erða’ ‘how is it,’ which projects an upcoming question, b) a statement initiated by nú, and, c) the actual question. After the statement, the service representative is given the opportunity to respond to background information. Erna does not pose the actual question until after the representative has registered this new information.

As I have shown thus far, the declarative parts initiated with nú present background information as factual and true. In some cases, however, the interlocutors may want to show reservation. Consider excerpt (7.8), drawn from the data Teens, in which Haraldur is interviewing a music band. The interview takes place just after the band has played one of their new songs live. Consequently, the band members are spread around the studio and cannot all participate in the interview. When the excerpt begins, Haraldur has already introduced the band members. One of the members, Kristján, is sitting by the keyboard a bit further away. Haraldur, the host, tries to include him in the conversation and asks him to interrupt if he has something to say (line 1):
THE SLOW BAND: Teens

(H = Haraldr, the host; K = Kristján; B = Björn; and S = Sverrir, band members)

1 H Þú- þú bara kallar inn í ef það er eiththvað: you just call2 in in if that be3 something
   You just interrupt us if there is something

2 (0.5)

3 K Ókeið: ((heard from a distance))
   okay

4 (0.6)

5 B *hhh .hh[hh hhhh* [Jú við (.) notum K- (.) ætluma
   PRT we () use3.pl K- () intend3.PL+to
   yeah, we () will use K- () we are going to

→ H [hérna (.)] [N↓ú:
   PRT () [NÚ
   [ehm () [NÚ

7 B notann Kristján svolítið: Síðan ætlum við a (0.2) látann
   use+he.ACC InameM a bit then intend1.PL we to (0.2) let+he.ACC
   use Kristján a bit Then we are going to (0.2) let him

8 útsetja fyrir okkur og svona: arrange.INF for we.ACC and PRT
   arrange for us and such

9 (1.1)

10 B strengja[útsetnin]gar og (0.4) .hhh köra o lúðrasveitir
   string [arrangeme ]nts and (0.4) .hhh choirs and brass bands
   for st[ r i n g ]s and (0.4) .hhh choirs and brass bands

11 [( x x ) ]

12 B ºog svonaº
   and such
   and such

13 (0.4)

14 B [(XX) finerí ]
   [(xx) fine things]
   [(xx) fine things ]

15 H [*hhhh heh heh*]
   [((laughter)) ]
   [ hhhh heh heh ]

16 (0.4)

→ H [N↓á: .hh #N:::#↓ú: eru þið óskaplega sona (0.2) h::ægt og ()
   PRT .hh NÚ be2.PL you.PL extremely like (0.2) slow3.N and ()
   yes, NÚ you are an extremely like (0.2) slow and ()
After Haraldur has suggested to Kristján that he may interrupt the conversation, he turns back to his agenda: interviewing the band members (line 6). Here, there is a clear transition from arranging the interview to posing questions. This transition is clearly marked with the particle hérna ‘here’ and with the pre-verbal tone particle nú (line 6). Nú is delivered with a prolonged vowel and slowly falling intonation. Despite the projection of a statement, Haraldur is cut off by Björn who simultaneously inserts a comment about Kristján, the new member in the band (lines 5, 7–8, 10, 12, and 14). A possible reason for this overlap is that Björn knows that Haraldur is moving on to the next question (projected by nú), and he therefore realizes that this is his last chance to explain why Kristján joined the band. After Björn’s explanation, there is a 0.4 second pause (line 16). After the pause, Haraldur makes another attempt to ask the band members a question (lines 17–18 and 22–23). Again, he initiates the question with nú, this time produced with a prolonged consonant and a slightly rising vowel with creaky voice (line 17). Haraldur’s turn has two components: first, an assertion containing a pre-verbal nú, and, second, a polar question. The assertion constituting
the first part is an evaluative description which Haraldur presents as matter-of-fact. However, before he is able to complete the question, Björn starts laughing (line 19). Björn then repeats Haraldur’s assertion partially with laughter in his voice, and focuses on Haraldur’s description of them as “a slow band” (lines 19–20). Haraldur and Sverrir respond to this comment simultaneously with laughter (lines 21–22), and Haraldur then abandons his question. By using laughter, the interlocutors establish that Haraldur’s description is funny. The comic side of the description may be a play on words, since being hægur ‘slow’ can, in some contexts, mean that someone is vitlaus ‘stupid’ (see Björn’s ironic answer in line 25). After a short sequence of laughter, Haraldur makes another attempt to ask the question (line 22). The second attempt is initiated with the particle hérna ‘here.’ After a deep breath, he stops laughing and produces hérna again. This time, it is followed by other planning markers (a- a-) and a short pause. Finally, Haraldur is able to complete his question by wording it slightly differently (lines 22–23).

In (7.8), the recipient to a multi-unit question comments on the assessment made in the first part, before the question is completed. Although Björn does not deny that his music is “slow and beautiful,” his response shows that he questions this description. Björn’s response has at least two important effects. First, it causes Haraldur to hesitate and to rephrase his question. Second, it suggests to both Haraldur and the listeners that it is not totally unproblematic for Björn to accept Haraldur’s description.

In excerpts (7.6) to (7.8), I have shown examples of how the tone particle nú is employed to construct multi-unit questions. I have argued that the construction nú + facts + interrogative is a communicative strategy commonly used in conversations, in particular in institutional conversations and in mediated discourse. In the three excerpts that I provide, nú is used to initiate assertions in which speakers present facts as though they are generally known and accepted to be true. By foregrounding the facts before the actual question, the speaker is able to establish common ground on which he or she later bases the upcoming question. In addition, sometimes speakers have an opportunity to respond before the actual question is posed.

The assertions containing pre-verbal nú have many similarities with the instances presented in section 7.2.1. The assertions preceding the questions are presented as new angles on ongoing topics. In (7.7), for example, Erna tells the representative that she has a homepage with her company. Similarly, in (7.8), the program host brings the band members’ attention to the fact that their band plays very “slow and beautiful” music. These utterances are initiatives rather than responses. In the following section,
I will take a look at instances in which such initiatives are used when a speaker seems to be expecting a more responsive turn. Such turns are used to show disalignment.

### 7.2.3 Nú in disaligning utterances

The pre-verbal tone particle *nú* occurs routinely in utterances in which a speaker is showing disalignment. These responses can be prompted by assertions and by questions as well. In (7.9), the moderator is talking to a caller, Steingrímir, who is complaining about one of the presidential candidates. Before the excerpt begins, Steingrímir has explained that he and his friends, “the old people,” as he calls them, cannot understand why this particular candidate seems to have wide support amongst voters. According to Steingrímir, the candidate has been “around the world on a red light,” that is, he considers him to be too radical and too left-wing. At the beginning of the excerpt, Steingrímir claims that the candidate is pretending to have no political past and that he is behaving like “a peace dove” (lines 1–3):

### (7.9) LIKE A PEACE DOVE: Soul 07.06.96

(M = Moderator; S = Steingrímir)

1 S .hhhhhhh o svo sko,(.) .hh #e:::# allt í einu er e- maðurinn .hhhhhhh and then PRT (.) .hh eh suddenly be.3 eh man.DEF .hhhhhhh and then y’know (.) .hh eh suddenly the man is eh

2 kominn með </ get > bara og hann er come.PP with halo PRT and he be.3 has got a halo and he is

3 eins og </ fríðað úf a > .hhh as peace dove .hhh like a peace dove

4 M *eins og < f r íðað úf a >* like pe[ace dove ]
   like a pe[ace dove ]

5 S [ætlann ætlekki bara ]flögra til /Paki[stan [suppose.3.SUBJ+he intend +not PRT ] fly.INF to Paki[stan
   [ I suppose he is just going to ] fly to Paki[stan

6 M [*hehhh*

7 S = og stoppa /stríðið [bar and stop.INF war.DEF [there
   and stop the war [ there

8 M [*mhm*

9 (0.6)
The moderator responds to Steingrímur’s description by repeating his last word with laughter in her voice (line 4). Despite the moderator’s disalignment, Steingrímur continues his criticism (lines 5, 7, 10–11), and the moderator continues chuckling quietly in the background (lines 6 and 8). After a 0.6 second pause, Steingrímur finishes his project by claiming ironically that the candidate is capable of stopping the war in Pakistan (lines 10–11). Following Steingrímur’s turn, there is a pause in the conversation which stretches over 0.9 seconds (line 12). During this pause, Steingrímur is probably expecting a response from the moderator. However, as there is no immediate response from her, he takes the floor himself and recompletes the turn by asking the moderator explicitly whether she does not agree with him (line 13). Steingrímur’s last turn is partially overlapped by the moderator who produces a prolonged j ũː;ː ‘yes,’ displaying a reservation or a problem with the last turn. The particle is followed by a cut off nú (line 14). When Steingrímur has yielded the floor,
the moderator initiates a turn with a pre-verbal nú. The particle is unstressed and prosodically integrated in the turn. It does not have dynamic pitch movement.

In the turn initiated with pre-verbal nú, the moderator states that nobody knows the outcome of the elections. In other words, she introduces a new angle on an ongoing topic, and, thus, she does not respond to Steingrímur’s appeal for support. Note also that the moderator probably intended to respond in a similar way in the earlier attempt to take the floor. This shows that the moderator is not constructing her turn (in line 15) as a direct response to Steingrímur’s last turn (line 13). By designing the response in this way, the moderator shows strong disalignment with Steingrímur.

In some cases, the disaligning utterances are preceded and followed by pauses. In (7.10), which is also drawn from The soul of the nation, Guðrún is talking about the elections. At the beginning of the conversation, Guðrún has been criticizing callers who have been saying that Iceland needs a man as a president and not a woman. Guðrún is making these comments as an introduction to a text she reads out loud, and she recommends that the listeners vote for a particular female candidate (lines 1–2):

**POLITICAL PROPAGANDA: Soul 07.06.96**

(M = Moderator; G = Guðrún, a caller)

1 G Mig langar að benda á Sigrúnu /Sveins því henni við getum við
I.ACC want.3 to point.INF on 1nameF PatrF because she.DAT we can.1.PL we
I want to suggest Sigrún Sveins because we can

2 treyst í jafnréttismálum sem öðrum málum.
trust in equal right issues.DAT as other.DAT issues.DAT
trust her in equal rights issues as well as in other issues

3 M J↑á↓ á Þeim báðum ábyggilega.
PRT they.DAT both certainly
yes, both of them for sure

4 (0.9)

→ G Já nú veit ég þa ekki eins vel?
PRT NÚ know.1 I that not as well
yes, NÚ I don’t know about that as well

6 (0.3)

7 N↑ei::
PRT
No

8 (0.7)
Guðrún begins by making a statement in which she mentions the candidate’s name and why people should vote for her (lines 1–2). Her turn is produced with reading intonation, as if she is reading a written text. After the first TCU, the moderator interrupts Guðrún’s reading by inserting a comment that both candidates can be trusted (line 3). By using the pronoun “both,” the moderator seems to be referring to the two female candidates. This perhaps unexpected comment is followed by a 0.9 second delay in the conversation (line 4). After the pause, Guðrún takes the floor again and asserts that she is not able to make a judgement about the second female candidate (line 5). This turn contains a pre-verbal nú. After a short pause, the moderator acknowledges Guðrún’s statement with the response particle nei ‘no.’ The particle is delivered with a rising terminal contour which suggests that the moderator does not align herself with Guðrún (see a similar pattern in excerpt (9.24)). After a 0.7 second pause, Guðrún takes the floor again and continues reading her text (lines 9, 11–12).

The pre-verbal nú in line 5 is unstressed and has a non-dynamic pitch curve. This is further evidence that tone particles are generally prosodically non-prominent. The pitch and intensity are illustrated in Figure 7.4 and 7.5:
In (7.10), the pre-verbal nú occurs in a slot in which a speaker neither accepts nor denies a previous statement. She simply dismisses this comment on the grounds that she does not know, and, therefore, she displays herself as not being accountable for this opinion. Aside from the 0.9 second pause in line 4, Guðrún’s turn is produced without any hesitation or signs of dispreference. Note, however, that the turn has a rising terminal contour which suggests an orientation towards the co-participant. Thus, it seems as though she is giving the moderator a chance to comment further on the other candidate.

In excerpts (7.9) and (7.10), I showed how pre-verbal nú is employed in utterances in which speakers display disalignment. These utterances were produced as firm statements and showed no signs of dispreference such as hesitations or pauses.
Instead, the speakers made statements which gave them legitimate reasons not to align with their co-participants.

### 7.2.4 Summary of pre-verbal nú

In the previous three sections, I have been looking at the tone particle nú in a pre-verbal position. The pre-verbal nú occurs mainly in three different environments: 1) in utterances which introduce a new aspect of an ongoing topic, 2) in multi-unit questions, and 3) in disaligning utterances. In my analysis, I emphasize that the three different categories are closely connected. In all cases, nú occurs in statements in which the speaker is expressing a firm belief or opinion. In each utterance, the speaker presented the message as true and important in the immediate context.

The utterances containing nú describe situations, circumstances, or opinions. This descriptive function of utterances is well-reflected by the verbs which follow nú. As the excerpts show, the majority of the verbs are static such as vera ‘be’ and vita ‘know.’ In some cases, the verb vera is used as an auxiliary and marks progressive tense. Also, in these cases, the focus is on describing a situation and not on the action per se. In addition, all instances of the tone particle nú are in the indicative mode. They describe facts and reality, not something that is merely a thought or a possibility. Interestingly, this is quite different from the conditional function of initial nú in Old Icelandic and in judicial texts in which the propositions involving nú describe potential situations (see section 2.2.3). Naumann (1979) points out, however, that these judicial texts are highly genre specific.

Although some researchers (cf. Bublitz 1978; Andvik 1992: 9) claim that particles that give a certain tone cannot occur initially in syntactic constructions, it is fairly safe to say that this is not true in respect to the Icelandic particle nú. In my data, there are 38 instances of pre-verbal nú which have clear non-temporal functions. Instead of anchoring the propositions in time, these instances give a tone of determination and certainty (cf. Andvik 1992 on the Norwegian nå). This function is similar in many ways to the function of post-verbal nú which will be the subject of the following section.

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70 As well, Práinsson (2005: 130) claims that it is “ungrammatical” to use non-temporal nú in a pre-verbal position.
Table 7.4 shows the distribution between the temporal *nú* and the non-temporal functions of post-verbal *nú* in the different subdata:

Table 7.4: *Nú* as a temporal marker and as a tone particle in post-verbal position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Temporal</th>
<th>Tone particle</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>99.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>95.4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>99.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table (7.4), 99.1% of post-verbal *nús* function as tone particles, while the number of temporal *nús* in post-verbal position is insignificant and limited to certain contexts (see Chapter 6).

As mentioned above, *nú* as a tone particle in pre-verbal position tends to occur with certain verbs, in particular with the verb *vera* ‘be.’ Such is also the case regarding post-verbal instances of *nú*. The most frequent verbs\(^{71}\) that occur with non-temporal post-verbal *nú* are shown in table 7.5:

\(^{71}\) These are verbs that occur ten times or more.
Table 7.5: The most frequent verbs that occur with the tone particle nú in post-verbal position

| Infinitive | English translation | Occurrences | %  
|------------|---------------------|-------------|------
| að vera    | ‘to be’             | 214         | 45.3% |
| að hafa    | ‘to have’           | 43          | 9.1%  |
| að eiga    | ‘to have, to own, to be supposed to’ | 21 | 4.4% |
| að ætla    | ‘to intend to’      | 20          | 4.2%  |
| að geta    | ‘to be able to’     | 18          | 3.8%  |
| að finnast | ‘to find’           | 17          | 3.6%  |
| að vilja   | ‘to want’           | 13          | 2.8%  |
| að bíða    | ‘to wait’           | 10          | 2.1%  |
| að fara    | ‘to go’             | 10          | 2.1%  |
| að muna    | ‘to remember’       | 10          | 2.1%  |
| að þurfa   | ‘must, to have to’  | 10          | 2.1%  |

As Table 7.5 shows, the verb vera ‘be’ is by far the most common verb to co-occur with the post-verbal nú. It occurs in a total of 45.3% of the instances. Different from the pre-verbal instances, the post-verbal instances also include verbs in subjunctive and imperative moods.

In the following sections, I will discuss the typical environments in which the post-verbal nú occurs. I will begin the discussion by looking at nú in turns linking backwards (7.3.1). In the sections that follow, I will look at nú in communicative projects (7.3.2); nú in meta-comments (7.3.3); nú in assessments (7.3.4); nú in questions initiating topic-shifts (7.3.5); nú in TCUs in directives (7.3.6); and, finally, nú in repeats (7.3.7).

### 7.3.1 Nú in turns linking backwards

As many researchers, such as Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) and Heritage (1984a), point out, each turn-at-talk is a response to a prior turn, and, at the same time it shapes the turn that follows. One of the most typical environments for nú as a tone particle is in turns which link backwards in the conversation, that is, turns which clearly respond to, or build upon, the interlocutor’s prior turns. In addition to making a clear reference backwards in the conversation, many of these turns have clear

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72 The percentage is based on a total of 472 instances.
73 All these instances are employed in the imperative: bíðu ‘wait’
projective functions. Therefore, these utterances may have links both backwards and forwards in the conversation.

In (7.11), which is drawn from a radio show for teenagers, two program hosts, Dísa and Gunni, are talking to Hulda who called in and has won a CD. When the excerpt begins, Dísa is writing down Hulda’s full name and Gunni asks her whether she lives in the Reykjavik area (line 1):

(7.11) NO PROBLEM: Teens
(D = Dísa, a female program host; G = Gunni, a male program host; H = Hulda)

1 G Býrðu hérna (0.8) á hofuðborgarsvæðinu, live.2+you here (0.8) on capital area.DAT.DEF
Do you live here (0.8) in the capital area?

2 H Ëg býi::(.)/Kópavogi→ live.1+in () Kópavogur.DAT
I live in () Kópavogur

3 (0.4)

4 G Býr i Kópavogi: lives in Kópavogur

→ D Þá ætti nú ekki að vera mikið mál fyrir þig >að koma then should.3.SUBJ NÚ not to be much problem for you.ACC to come.INF
then it should’NÚ be a problem for you to come

6 hingað uppá <Efstaleiti: here up+on Efstaleiti

7 H y↓á
PRT
yes

8 D Með nafnskírteini: with identification card.ACC
with ID

Hulda responds to Gunni’s question by saying that she lives in Kópavogur, which is a town that neighbours Reykjavik (line 2). After a brief pause, Gunni registers Hulda’s answer by repeating it partially. Gunni’s turn, however, seems to be directed towards his co-host, since he changes the verb from second to third person (line 4). The reason for this repeat could be that Dísa and Gunni are hosting the program together, and, correspondingly, they both make decisions regarding how to deliver prizes to the winners. In the subsequent talk, Dísa takes the floor and asserts that it should not be
any problem for Hulda to come to the radio station (lines 5–6). The turn contains the
tone particle nú.

The turn in which nú occurs contains a new initiative, based on Hulda’s answer in
line 2. Notice also the adverb þá ‘then,’ which signals that the upcoming turn contains
a result of some kind. In other words, Dísa’s statement has clear links both backwards
and forwards in the conversation. It is designed as a response or an elaboration on
Dísa and Hulda’s previous exchange, and it calls for an acknowledgement from
Hulda.

Dísa’s statement is delivered in a decisive tone. The finite verb ætti ‘should’ is
stressed, while nú is prosodically non-prominent. Disa is making a firm statement and
presenting facts as though they were obvious and certain (cf. Haugen 1977: 196–7 on
nå in Norwegian). The tone particle nú contributes to this meaning. Notice, however,
that the verb ætti ‘should’ is in the subjunctive mood. By choosing this form of the
verb, Dísa does not exclude the possibility that it could be a problem for Hulda to
come to the radio station. In other words, Disa makes the assertion in a very decisive
tone but not without taking into consideration the co-participant’s point of view. The
appeal to the co-participant is also indexed in the rising terminal contour in lines 6 and
8.

The decisiveness is even more salient in the following excerpt, which is also
drawn from a conversation between the two program hosts and a caller trying to win a
CD. In (7.12), it is Disa’s turn to pose a question to the caller (line 1):

(7.12) PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW!: Teens
(D = Dísa, a female program host; G = Gunni, a male program host; S = Sigurlína)

1 D Getur þú sagt mér hva eru ti margar skordýrategundir í heiminum,
can.3 you tell.PP I.DAT how be.3 VP many insects species in world.DAT.DEF
   Can you tell me how many types of insects there are in the world?

2 (0.6)

3 S N^ei: eiginlega "ekki"
PRT actually not
   No, actually not

4 (0.4)

5 G H^eyðu. (0.9) ðú (h)efur- (0.2) N^ei:
PRT (0.9) you have- (0.2) PRT
   Hey (0.9) you have (0.2) no

6 (1.8)
Sigurlína responds to Dísa’s question by admitting that she does not know the answer (line 3). After a 0.4 second pause, Gunni takes the floor and positions himself as being utterly surprised by Sigurlína’s poor knowledge of insects (lines 5, 7, and 10). He also positions himself as almost speechless by the use of frequent pauses and the use of the particles heyrðu ‘hey!’ and ne ŋː ‘no’ (line 5). Gunni’s first turn is followed by a 1.8 second pause which is rather long for a broadcast conversation (line 6). After the pause, he makes another attempt to formulate his thoughts but breaks off before reaching a possible TRP (line 7). Notice that the last element in this turn before the planning markers is the particle nú. Overlapping Gunni’s turn, Dísa produces the interjection °tss° which signals disappointment (line 8). After another 0.5 second pause, Gunni states that “people should know this.” Also, this turn contains the tone particle nú. Following this statement, Gunni thanks Sigurlína for trying and hangs up on her (line 12).

In (7.12), the two turns containing nú are produced in a slot following a question-answer pair. These two turns are produced in response to Sigurlína’s answer in line 3 in which she states that she is not able to provide an answer to Dísa’s question. The two turns containing nú (lines 7 and 10) show clear links back to the question-answer pair (lines 1 and 3), particularly in the use of the demonstrative pronoun þetta ‘this.’

Since it is very unlikely that a caller knows how many types of insects there are in the world, Dísa seems not to take the quiz very seriously. It is almost as if the question is posed without expecting the right answer. This may be planned in advance by the two presenters or a spontaneous decision by Dísa. Gunni plays along with Dísa’s ironic question and treats Sigurlína’s inability to answer correctly as a serious deficiency. The tone in Gunni’s response in line 10 is determined, and there is heavy stress on the subject, fólk ‘people,’ the tone particle nú, the infinite part of the verb,
vita ‘know,’ and the object, petta ‘this.’ On top of the heavy stress on these elements, Gunni produces the utterance with dynamic pitch. The pitch contour is illustrated in Figure 7.6 and the intensity in Figure 7.7:

![Figure 7.6: Fundamental frequency (f₀) of line 10, excerpt (7.12)](image1)

![Figure 7.7: Intensity of line 10, excerpt (7.12)](image2)

Figure 7.7 shows that nú can be stressed. By using stress, dynamic pitch movement, and the tone particle nú, Gunni states firmly that people should know how many types of insects there are in the world. By making the statement with a decisive tone, Gunni shows that this is something that cannot be negotiated. Neither Sigurlína nor Disa show any response and, after a short pause, Gunni ends the conversation.
In (7.11) and (7.12), I have shown instances of nú which occur in turns that show links backwards and forwards in the conversation. In both cases, the speakers showed firm commitment to their statements. The statements were presented as true and certain.

Some turns containing a post-verbal nú express strong objection to a previous speaker’s turn. Consider (7.13) which is drawn from the data Friends. Just before the excerpt begins, Jessica prompts an explanation for Nanna’s and Hugrún’s laughter, and, in the subsequent talk, Nanna and Sunna take the floor simultaneously (lines 1–2):

(7.13) **PARTYING DURING EXAMS: Friends**

(J = Jessica; S = Sunna; H = Hugrún; N = Nanna)

1 N  [[við Hugrún vorum ekkert ( x x ).hh úti að skemmtokkur .hnf]
    [[ we InameF be.1.PL.PT not ( x x ) hh out to party+we.ACC .hnf ]
    [[ we Hugrún we weren’t ( x x ) .hh out partying .hnf ]

2 S  [[ D æ :r t v æ : r skoh. .h Meðan ég var í prófum¿ ]
    [[ they.F two.F PRT .h while I be.1.PL in exams.DAT ]
    [[ the two of them y’know .h while I was having my exams ]

3  (0.3) þá fóru þær út að skemmta sér, (0.4) hverja helgi, (1.6) (0.3) then go.3.PT they.F out to party.INF they.REF (0.4) every weekend (1.6) (0.3) then they would go out to party (0.4) every weekend (1.6)

4  ðö::::::::látandi eins og fífl utan í einhverjum strákur o: o #svo#
   eh acting as idiot around in some.DAT guys.DAT and and then
   eh acting like idiots with some guys and and then

5  sögðu mér so söguna á sunnudegínnum¿(0.2) so þegar [ég er búin =
   told.3.PL.PT I.DAT then story.DEF on Sunday.DAT.DEF (0.2) then when [ I be.1 finish.PP.F
told me then the story on the Sunday (0.2) then when [ I was done

6 H  [* h h h =

7 S  = í prófum /þá eru allir ornir þreyttir?] in exams then be.3 everybody.M become.PP.M.PL tired.M.PL ]
   with the exams, then everybody was tired

8 H  = h h h h *

9 S  ðö:[:+o::,# búin að vera að djamma svo mikis undanfarið.] o: [:+o:: finish.PP.N.PL to be.INF to party.INF so much recently ]
   o+ [ o been partying so hard recently ]

10 J  [*heh he he::: he::: he:::* .hh heh=*
11  = heh heh [heh .hh ahj:he:[hhhh
12 N  [hhhhhe:::
In (7.13), Sunna explains that everybody, including Nanna and Hugrún, had been going out so frequently during the exam period that nobody was interested in going out with her when she finally finished her last exam (lines 2–5 and 7). Notice that Hugrún starts laughing quietly in the background before Sunna finishes her story which indicates that this is not the first time the women have discussed these events (lines 6 and 8). Sunna’s comment that “everybody was tired” has an accusatory tone, which is indexed with a clear pitch step-up, high pitch-level, and a rising terminal contour (line 7). Even the following comment, with which Sunna explains the reason that everybody was tired, has an accusatory or complaining tone, indexed with a prolonged o-sound (line 9). Nanna responds to these accusations by stating firmly that everybody has to relax sometimes (line 13). Nanna’s comment contains nú in a post-verbal position. This comment receives a response from Hugrún, who shows strong affiliation with Nanna. The affiliation is indexed with the particle J↓Á:↑:: and followed by a teasing sound, indexed as a prolonged e-sound, probably directed towards Sunna (line 17).

The particle nú in line 13 is unstressed but has a higher pitch level than the surrounding talk. It is therefore not prosodically integrated with the verb. Figure 7.8 shows the intonation contour in line 13 before the overlapping talk begins, and Figure 7.9 shows the intensity:
Just as in excerpt (7.12), this utterance is produced with heavy stress on more than one word. In this case, however, it is the different constituents of the verb phrase which are stressed: the finite verb þarf ‘need,’ the infinitive slaka ‘relax,’ and the verb particle á. By using the repeated stress pattern, and by using the tone particle nú, the utterance is given a tone of decisiveness. Nanna presents her argument as something that cannot be denied or challenged. Notice also that she uses the impersonal pronoun mar (< maður) ‘man,’ which makes her argument less personal and more general. My
study shows that utterances containing nú as a tone particle are often formed with such impersonal constructions.

In the following excerpt, by contrast, the speaker repeatedly uses the first person pronoun ég ‘I.’ The excerpt is drawn from an episode of The soul of the nation in which Bergsveinn, a candidate for the presidency, is answering questions from the callers. In this particular excerpt, Bergsveinn is talking with Anna about the debate on television the night before (that is, the debate in Elections). During that debate, Bergsveinn claimed that two of the candidates were insincere in their opposition to nuclear weapons. When this excerpt begins, Bergsveinn starts talking about nuclear weapons (lines 1–5), and Anna interprets this as a critique against Sigrún:

(7.14) NUCLEAR WEAPONS: Soul 10.06.96

(B = Bergsveinn, a presidential candidate; A = Anna, a caller)

1 B Vegna þess að ég: #á# það til þegar ég er á fundum með fólk? because that I have.1 that VP when I be.1 on meetings with people
because I sometimes do that when I have meetings with people

2 .hhh að þá spyri ég gjarnan .hhh er einfær hér inni sem .hhh that then ask.1 I readily .hhh be.3 someone here inside who .hhh then I often ask .hhh is there someone in here

3 aðhyllist kjarnorkuvopn o e− er er s/a:mmála stefnu endorse.MV nuclear weapons and b− be.3 be.3 agree policy endorses nuclear weapons and is is supporting the policy

4 ríkisstjórnarinnar í því máli eins o é hef veriða→ .hh að kynna government.GEN.DEF in that issue as I have.1 be.PP+t .hh to present.INF of the government on that issue, as I have been .hh presenting

5 ykkur .hhh hvernig hvernig það máli st/en[dur. .hh õg− you.DAT .hhh how how that issue stand[s.3 .hh and to you how how that issue is hand[led .hh and

6 A [fyrirgefðu Bergsveinn að [excuse.IMPER+you nameM that [excuse me Bergsveinn for

→ Hérna ég grip nú frammí fyrir[ðér þú þarf nú ekkert að (.) að PRT I interrupt.1 NÚ VP for+you.DAT you need.2 NÚ nothing to () to ehm, interrupting NÚ ]you you don't NÚ need to () to

8 B [já:
PRT [yes

→ A #e:# að fræða mig [um (þettÍa) .hhhh vegna þess] að ég er nú: eh to inform.INF I.ACC [about (this) .hhhh because ] that I be.3 NÚ eh to inform me [about (this) .hhhh because ] I'm NÚ
10
[ nei ég atla bara eh]  
[PRT I intend.1 just eh ]  
[ no, I was just going to eh ]  

→ A #a# það vill nú svo til að ég gekk / nú með Sigrúnu Sveinsdóttur  
ah it happen.3 NÚ so VP that I walk.1.PT NÚ with InameF PatrF  
ah it so happens NÚ that I walked NÚ with Sigrún Sveinsdóttir  

12 A [persónulega fjór- fjögurhundruð *kilóm|etra* fyrir friði .hhhh  
[ personally four- four hundred kilom|eters for peace [.hhhh  
[ personally four- four hundred kilom|eters for peace [.hhhh  

13 B [já]  
[PRT]  
[yes]  

14 A og gagn eh kjarnorkuvop|num fyrir þrettán árum [.hhhh svo ég  
and against eh nuclear weap|ons for thirteen years [.hhhh so I  
and against nuclear weap|ons thirteen years ago [.hhhh so I  

15 B [já]  
[PRT]  
[yes]  

→ A veit nú eiginlega (.) tal|svert um um [hennar sko|ðanir á  
know.1 NÚ actually (.) con|siderable amount about about [her opinions on  
know NÚ actually (.) considerable amount about about [her opinions on  

17 B [já]  
[PRT]  
[yes]  

18 A [kjarnorkuvop|num .hhhh (.) þa sem ég atla|ði bara að [segja er =  
[nuclear weapons .hhhh (.) it which I intend.1.PT just to [say.INF be.3  
[nuclear weapons .hhhh (.) what I was just going to [say is  

19 B [já:]  
[PRT]  
[yes]  

20 A = þa að ég er mjög óánægð ] með að þú skyldir ekki og aðrir  
it that I be.3 very displeased ] with that you shall.2.SUBJ not and others.M.PL  
that I am very displeased ] that you didn’t and other  

21 B = langar mig lungaði bar#a:# ]  
[ but I.ACC want.1.PT  
[ but I  

22 A frambjóðendur¿ .hhhh fá: #e:h# meiri (.) tima i gær #e# og tækifæri  
candidates [ .hhhh get.3 eh more (.) time yesterday eh and chance  
candidates [ .hhhh get eh more (.) time yesterday eh and chances  

23 B [já::  
[PRT]  
[yes]  

24 A ti þessa #a# koma þinum .hh sjónarmiðum á framfæri¿  
to that to come.INF yours .hh views on forward  
so as to present your views
Anna interrupts Bergsveinn in the middle of his argument and stops him from discussing his and others’ views on nuclear weapons (line 6). The interruption is initiated with an overt apology *fyrirgefðu* ‘sorry,’ followed by Bergsveinn’s name, and a meta-comment with which Anna explicitly points out that she is interrupting Bergsveinn. After an acknowledgement token from Bergsveinn (line 8), Anna asserts that there is no need for him to inform her about other people’s opinions on nuclear weapons (line 7). This is a rather strong statement and potentially face-threatening. Notice how Bergsveinn responds immediately when he can project the nature of Anna’s turn (line 9). His response looks like the beginning of a justification for his argument, but he abandons his turn since Anna does not yield the floor. In the subsequent talk, Anna argues that Sigrún Sveinsdóttir is a strong believer in the abolishment of nuclear weapons (starting in line 11). Her argument is based on the fact that she and Sigrún walked together many hundreds of kilometers to protest nuclear weapons, and, therefore, she considers herself as having first-hand experience of Sigrún’s dedication to the issue. Her argument contains six instances of the post-verbal *nú* (lines 7, 9,11, and 16).

When Anna has made her argument, she signals with a meta-comment that she is going back to her original point: expressing her disappointment with the debate program on television from the night before (line 18). When Bergsveinn is able to project a topic-shift, he overlaps Anna’s talk and makes another attempt to explain why he got off track and brought up the issue of nuclear weapons (lines 19 and 21). Anna, however, does not yield the floor, and Bergsveinn abandons his turn again (line 21). In other words, throughout this excerpt Anna is able to stop Bergsveinn from making the argument that he is the only one that would pursue a strict anti-nuclear weapons policy.

The post-verbal *nús* show Anna’s strong commitment to her statements. Anna is defending Sigrún and firmly rejecting Bergsveinn’s accusations. Her statements are strong, and she clearly stresses words which highlight her objections, words such as *ekkert* ‘nothing’ (line 7), *persónulega* ‘personally’ (line 12), and *talsvert* ‘considerable’ (line 16). The number of continuers provided by Bergsveinn during Anna’s turn also suggests that he finds himself in a face-threatening situation. He has just been interrupted by Anna who is strongly questioning his assertion that politicians are not sincere in their politics against nuclear weapons. Notice also that when Anna has explained that she walked with Sigrún for peace, Bergsveinn reacts with the particle *jaeja* ‘well,’ uttered with laughter in his voice (line 13). Here, he seems to be partially admitting that she has at least done something positive, although he is by no
means admitting fully that he is wrong in his judgement of the sincerity of the two politicians.

So far, I have shown how the tone particle *nú* is used in firm responses which are designed as declaratives. In some cases, the response is designed as a question, such as in (7.15). In this excerpt, which is drawn from *The soul of the nation*, Örn, a truck driver, is making a complaint about amendments of regulations regarding the transportation of chemicals. A few days earlier, there had been an accident in Iceland in which a truck driver transporting dangerous chemicals drove off the road, and, as a result, there was an increased demand by the media to require a special license for the transportations of this kind of cargo. Örn does not want to lose the right to transport chemicals and claims that it must be illegal to take these rights away from drivers after they have acquired a full license to drive trucks. The moderator responds by asking Örn whether he has the right to transport anything he wants (lines 1–2):

(7.15) **DANGEROUS CARGO: Soul 04.06.96**

(M = Moderator; Ö = Örn, a caller)

1 M .h N-ei¹:: ja ég #u: hv- hvu-# þ- Dú þ- ert með réttindi uppá a
   .h PRT PRT I eh h- ho- y- you y- be.2 with licence up+to to
   .h no, well, I eh h, ho- y-you y- have licence to

2 keyra #e::s#: Farm ö- Hvaða farm sem /er.
   drive.INF eh cargo eh any cargo which be.3
   drive eh any cargo at all

3 Ö ja’ (.) bara [vörubifrēið,  
   PRT () just [truck  
   well, () just [a truck

4 M  

→ M Já en væður nú ekki viðhafa alveg sérstakt öryggi:::  
   PRT but need.3 NÚ not employ.INF totally special safety  
   yes, but isn’t it NÚ necessary to have very special safety

5 M [sérstakar umgengnisreglur og svo framvegis] þegar um: (.)  
   eh [special rules and so forth ] when about (.)  
   eh [special rules for how to handle these things and so forth ] when (.)

6 Ö [J ú < v í s s : : u l e g a > viss-]  
   [PRT certainly cert- ]
   [yes certainly cert- ]

7 M /hættuleg efni: [umhverfinu er að]ræða=  
   dangerous chemicals environment.DAT.DEF be.3 to ] discuss  
   dangerous chemicals [ the environment that we are ] talking about

8 Ö  
   [vissulega- ]
   [certainly- ]
   [certainly- ]
After some hesitation and several restarts, the moderator asks Örn to explain what kind of license he has (lines 1–2). She particularly emphasizes the last TCU, perhaps implying some kind of surprise or reservation towards the fact that he can transport just any cargo he wants. Örn answers the question, initiating his turn with the dialogue particle ja ‘well’ (line 3). The particle suggests that the question is slightly problematic, perhaps because, from his point of view, it is not the type of cargo that should be the focus, but rather the type of vehicle. In his answer, Örn states that he can drive trucks. The moderator responds to this reasoning by defending the view that the transportation of chemicals needs to be better regulated. This opposing argument is constructed as a second position question containing a post-verbal nú (lines 5–6 and 7). The particle has a slightly prolonged vowel and is not unstressed, although the main stress is on the verb verður ‘must.’

Örn accepts the moderator’s argument twice before she has completed her question (lines 6 and 8). The moderator, however, does not yield the floor. When she finally completes her turn, Örn produces another agreement, admitting that it is
certainly true that drivers have to be very careful (lines 9–10). The moderator follows up on her argument by posing another question based on the same argument (lines 11–12). This time, however, the question is produced without the modifying nú. Örn responds again by agreeing strongly with the moderator (line 13). The moderator produces a continuer which overlaps this agreement, and this is followed by Örn’s second agreement (line 16). Finally, the moderator follows up on her question for the third time, challenging Örn’s opinion that all truck drivers know how to handle dangerous cargo (line 17). Thus, the moderator has followed up on her arguments by asking three different questions. Only the first one is introduced with the tone particle nú.

The post-verbal nú in excerpt (7.15) is employed in a turn in which the moderator is strongly questioning the caller’s point of view. This function of the post-verbal nú, to index intensity and make a response more firm, is therefore similar to nú in excerpts (7.11) to (7.14). It is, therefore, no coincidence that most instances of the tone particle nú occur in argumentative discourse when interlocutors do not share the same opinion.

Another environment in which the tone particle nú routinely occurs is in turns which claim a lack of knowledge or ability to respond. Consider (7.16), in which Jóhann, a candidate for the presidency, claims that he does not know how much money he has spent on his election campaign. The funding of the campaigns was controversial during these elections, and some of the candidates were heavily criticized for advertising excessively without informing anyone about the source of their funding. Jóhann is the second of the candidates to discuss how much he has spent, how much he intends to spend, and where the money comes from. At this point, Jóhann has already answered the question but has not given any concrete numbers. This prompts the moderator to repeat one of the questions and to ask him to give more precise information:

(7.16) HOW MUCH MONEY HAVE YOU SPENT?: Elections (6.5)
(M = Moderator; J = Jóhann, a candidate for the presidency; S = Sveinn, a journalist)

1 M En getur þú upplýst núna á þessari stundu hversu
   but can.1 you inform.PP NÚNA on this moment how
   but can you inform us NÚNA at this moment how

2 míklum peningum um- hefur verið varið í þína ba[ráttu,
   much money eh have.3 be.PP spenden.PP in your camp[aign.ACC
   much money has been spent on your camp[aign?

3 J [.mt .hhh
Nei: það get ég nú ekki gert núnahh,(.)

No that can.1 I NÚ not do.PP NÚNA () it be.3 certain
No I can’t NÚ do that NÚNA () there is a certain

5 höpur stuðningsmanna minna sem- sem tók að sér: fjármál
group supporters.GEN my who- who take.3.PT to they.REF finances
group of my supporters who who took over of the financial planning

6 framboðsins í upphafi (.).hhhh o::g: þæði fjárðrelun o::g: .hhh
candidacy.DEF in beginning () .hhhh and both fund-raising and .hhhh
for the candidacy from the beginning () .hhhh and both fund-raising and

7 o::g: ræðstöfun á þeim fjármunum sem (0.2) um era ræðaž .hhhh
and disposition on that funds which (0.2) VP be.3+to discuss.INF .hhhh
and disposition of the funds (0.2) in question .hhhh

8 o::g::kosningabarúttan fram að þessa(.).h hefur hefur #e:::#
and campaign.DEF until to this () .h have.3 have.3 eh
and so far, the campaign () .h has has eh

9 markast af því (.).hhhh en hvernig sú staða er nákvæmlega það
mark.MV of that () .hhhh but how that situation be.3 exactly that
been shaped by that () .hhhh but how the situation is exactly that

10 #e:::# veit ég [ekki,
   eh know.1 I [not
   eh I don’t]know

11 S [en he- hefur enga hugmynd umða hversu mikið: ().]
   [but ha- have.1+you no idea about+that how much ()
   [but d- don’t you have any idea how much ()

12 þetta kost[ar.
   this cost[s.3
   this cost[s

13 J [ekki hugmynd- Ekki#:::## s- #u# sílíka hugmynd(.). að ég:
   [not idea not s- eh such idea () that I
   [not a clue, Not th- that good idea () that I

14 J vilji nefna hér #e:::# nokkrar tölur,
want.1.SUBJ mention.INF here eh any number
want to mention eh any numbers

The moderator takes the floor and poses a question to Jóhann, asking him if he is able
to tell núna ‘now’ how much he has spent on the campaign (lines 1–2). After a pre-
beginning with lip-parting sounds and an in-breath, Jóhann begins the actual turn with
the dialogue particle nei ‘no.’ He then asserts that he cannot comply with this request
núna. Núna is heavily stressed, suggesting that Jóhann will perhaps be able to tell how
much he spent later. This TCU contains a post-verbal nú and is followed by an
account in which Jóhann explains why he is not able to tell how much money he has
spent (lines 3–10). When Jóhann’s turn is coming to an end, one of the journalists,
Sveinn, takes the floor and asks Jóhann again if he has any idea how much this
campaign will cost, emphasizing the negation *enga* ‘no’ (lines 11–12). Here, Sveinn is following up on the moderator’s question by implying that he should at least be able to make some kind of guess as to what range the costs will be. Although Jóhann admits that he has inquired about the funding, he asserts again that he cannot mention any numbers (lines 13–14).

In this excerpt, despite the reporter’s and moderator’s insistence, Jóhann is determined not to mention any numbers. The determination is already indexed in line 4 with the tone particle *nú* when Jóhann initially rejects the journalist’s idea to reveal the cost of his candidacy. The dispreferred answer is initiated without any delay or hedging, but it is followed by a detailed account as to why he cannot provide this information. The detailed account shows that Jóhann’s answer is not totally unproblematic and cannot be considered the preferred response to the moderator’s question.

In some instances of dispreferred answers, the turn containing *nú* is initiated with the utterance particle *ja* which signals some kind of problem or reservation similar to the curled *ja* in Swedish (cf. A. Lindström 1999). In excerpt (7.17), the moderator is talking with Steingerður about a parrot which she had just heard singing in the background:

(7.17) **The parrot:** Soul 07.06.96
(M = Moderator; B = Steingerður, a caller)

1 M þa [verða kvöldtónleikar ]
   it [ become.3 evening concert ]
   there[ will be an evening concert ]

2 S [uppáhaldslaðið hans er hérna X-files lagið]
   [ favourite song.DEF he.GEN be.3 PRT x-files song.DEF
   [ his favourite song] is the X-files song

3 M *ehhh[ he he he he he he he he he .hhhhh he =

4 S [elskarða útaf lifinu og kann það utanað kemur með ýmsar- =
   [ love.3+it out+of life and know.3 it VP come.3 with various
   [ loves it so much and knows it by heart with various-

5 M = he he ] .hhh* hvað erðetta gamall páfagaukur.
   he he ] .hhh what be.3+this old parrot

6 S = finnur ýmislegt viða ]
   find.3 various VP+it ]
   find various things about it ]
At the beginning of the excerpt, Steingerður makes a joking comment about the parrot’s favourite song, which is the theme from the *X-Files* whistled in different versions. The moderator reacts to this by laughing (lines 3 and 5). When Steingerður has finished her turn, the moderator poses a question regarding the age of the parrot (line 5). Steingerður initiates her reply with the particle *ja* ‘well’ which suggests that she may have a problem responding to the question (line 7). The problem turns out to be that Steingerður does not know for sure how old her parrot is. Her turn consists of two syntactic gestalts. In the first gestalt, which contains the tone particle *nú*, Steingerður informs the moderator that she does not know the age of the parrot, and, in the second part, she makes a guess that it is around five or six years old (lines 7–8).

By using the tone particle *nú*, Steingerður foregrounds the fact that she does not know the age of the parrot. Notice how Steingerður uses hedging devices such as *eiginlega* ‘actually,’ *ég held* ‘I think,’ and *svona* ‘like’ which index a weak epistemic stance. The weak stance, however, does not weaken Steingerður’s commitment to her answer; it just shows that she is sure about not knowing.

In (7.16) and (7.17), the particle *nú* occurs in dispreferred answers in which speakers claim that they are not able to give the right answer to a question they were asked. Such use of *nú* has some similarities with the pre-verbal *nú* described in section 7.2.3. In both cases, the utterance in which *nú* occurs contains an argument for why the question cannot be answered. Furthermore, I would like to propose that these instances of *nú* give the statements a tone of determination. In the case of post-verbal *nú*, the utterances are responsive in character, while the pre-verbal instances occur in utterances which are designed as new initiatives.

In section 7.3.1, I discussed three types of turns in which the post-verbal tone particle *nú* occurs: 1) in firm responses, 2) in counter-arguments and objections, and 3) in dispreferred answers. The firm responses may include instances that are employed to present something as self-evident and generally agreed upon. In (7.11),
the program host draws the conclusion that it should certainly not be a problem for a caller to “drop in” and pick up a CD she has won, since she lives rather close to the radio station. In (7.12), nú occurs in a turn in which the radio host is exclaiming that everybody should certainly know how many types of insects there are in the world. Instances of nú in counter-arguments may occur both in statements, such as in (7.14), in which the caller is defending one of the presidential candidates, and in questions, such as in (7.15), in which a speaker is asking the caller whether truck drivers should not be especially careful while handling chemical cargo. When nú occurs in dispreferred answers, such as in (7.16) and (7.17), the answer is produced without a delay. Both excerpts showed characteristics of dispreference, such as the use of hedging devices and the use of accounts.

A common feature of the instances above is a link to a prior turn. These instances fit nicely into the characterization of tone particles since they tie turns to previous ones or presuppose certain contexts (see section 3.4.1). In the following section, however, I will take a closer look at instances which show no obvious links to a previous turn but instead are used to establish a relevant background within a speaker’s own turn.

7.3.2 nú in communicative projects

The post verbal nú is often used within sequences during which interlocutors are carrying out communicative projects (cf. Linell 1998: 207–213). As Linell (1998: 218) points out, one of the most important features of communicative projects is that they evolve around speakers’ intentions and goals. These goals, however, can only be reached collectively. Through interaction, interlocutors establish communicative facts, and, thus, they plan some of their actions ahead to some degree. In such projects, the post-verbal nú is often used to establish important background information. In the following excerpt, drawn from the everyday conversation Reunion, six women are sitting around the dinner table eating Chinese food. Magga has been talking for a while about her newly acquired skills in eating with chopsticks and her experience with Korean cuisine. When the excerpt begins, Magga begins a short story on the same topic (line 1):
EATING WITH CHOPSTICKS: Reunion (→4.3)

(M = Magga; B = Brynhildur; G = Guðrún; V = Vala; E = Erna; L = Lína)

1 B
[[eþa:]]
[[ be-3+that]]
[[ Really]]

2 M
[[[svo] pinlegt é var í (0.2) mat í svona köreönskum mat um daginn→]]
[[ (so) embarrassing I be.1.PT in (0.2) dinner in PRT Korean dinner the other day]]

3 (0.3)

4 B
[j↓á:]
PRT yes

5 (0.3)

6 M
o’ () ætlaði nú aldeilis a: ekki a slá slóku við með prjónana; and () intend.1.PT NÚ certainly to not to slack → VP with sticks.ACC.DEF and () I was NÚ certainly not going to give up using the chopsticks

7 "Ég var orðin svo klár við [a° (0.3) ] I be.3 become.PP.F so good with [ that (0.3) ] I had become so good at [ it (0.3) ]

8 B
[[*hh j↓á↑:h*]]
[ hh PRT h ]
[ hh yeah h ]

9 (0.3)

10 (L) j↓á::
PRT yes

11 (0.3)

12 (E) já
PRT yes

13 M
o So’ var so pinlegt $So efir þa fundust alveg (0.6) fullt and then be.3.PT so embarrassing then after it find.PT.MV totally (0.6) lot and then it was so embarrassing, then later we found just (0.6) lots

14 [af sona bitum á [g/ólfínu [(held.1 ég) við] minn stól.$ *hmm = [ of PRT pie]ces on [floor.DEF [ (think I ) by ] my chair hmm [ of like pie]ces on [the floor [ (I think) by ] my chair hmm

15 V
[afgöngum ] *[he he he h[e
[leftovers.DAT ] [ he he he h[e
[leftovers ] [ he he he h[e

16 B
[*HE HE HE HE* ]

17 M = [ he he he he he ]hhhh .hhfff*
Magga initiates a new story by making a short assessment: *(svo)* *pínlegt* ‘so embarrassing’ (line 2). The assessment is directly followed by an orientation to the story in which she explains that she was recently invited to a Korean dinner. Magga’s turn has level-final contour which signals that there is more to come. After short pauses (lines 3 and 5) and a continuer from Brynhildur (line 4), Magga makes the claim that she had strong intentions not to give up using chopsticks during the dinner. In this statement, Magga uses *nú* directly after the finite verb, and the particle is followed by the intensifier *aldeilis* ‘totally’ (line 6) which also contributes to the decisive tone. Following this assertion, Magga explains the reason for her determination which she utters in a more quiet voice than the surrounding talk (line 6). After a brief pause and continuers from Brynhildur, Lína and Erna (lines 8, 10, and 12), Magga uses the word *pínlegt* ‘embarrassing’ again, hinting to the co-participants that the point of the story is coming up (line 13). Finally, Magga reveals the source of her embarrassment: a great deal of food was found under her chair after the meal (lines 13–14).

In (7.18), the utterance containing *nú* establishes the fact that Magga did not want to give up using chopsticks. In this environment, *nú* functions to highlight one important factor in the story, and, therefore, it provides the co-participants with information which is necessary to understand the point she will be making in the subsequent talk. In this case, it is the fact that Magga was being proud and stubborn which led to the embarrassing moment when bits of food were found on the floor around her chair.

The instance in (7.18) was a part of a story. However, the tone particle *nú* is also used to foreground important background in other types of projects, such as in multi-unit questions. The following excerpt is drawn from the radio interview with one of the presidential candidates, Bergsveinn. The excerpt starts just after an introduction and a greeting sequence:

(7.19) AGAINST NUCLEAR WEAPONS: Soul 10.06.96
(B = Bergsveinn, a presidential candidate; V = Védís, a caller)

1 V .mt .hhhhhh Já heyrðu mér langaði nú að bera fram hérna
    .mt .hhhhhh PRT PRT 1.DAT want.3 PT NÚ to bring.INF forward here
    .mt .hhhhhh yes, well, I wanted NÚ to ask you
At the beginning of (7.19), Védís prepares her question by producing a preliminary to a preliminary, that is, she states that she wants to pose a question (lines 1–2). As Schegloff (1980) has pointed out, however, such pre-pres are usually not followed by the announced act. Thus, instead of posing a question in the subsequent turn, Védís
starts giving some background information. Védís continues by producing an introductory phrase: *Það er í sambandi við* → ‘it’s regarding’ (line 5). The TCU ends with level intonation, which signals that the turn is still in progress. At this point, however, Védís takes a 0.6 second pause, after which she makes a repair and starts a new TCU. This time, Védís makes the assertion that *Við erum nú öll á móti kjarnorkuvopnum?* ‘we are NÚ all against nuclear weapons,’ which contains *nú* as a tone particle. The turn has a rising final contour which again signals that it is still in progress (line 5). In the rest of the excerpt, Védís continues her communicative project, which is to pose a question to Bergsveinn (lines 8, 10–11, and 14–15).

In the statement containing *nú*, Védís makes a claim about Bergsveinn’s and other people’s opinion on nuclear weapons. She presents this opinion as a commonly known fact, and, thus, she is establishing a common ground or the premises for the subsequent argument. As several excerpts have illustrated, the abolishment of nuclear weapons is one of the main political issues for Bergsveinn, and nuclear weapons have already been mentioned several times in this particular episode of *The soul of the nation*. Bergsveinn has already discussed his strong views against them. When Védís asserts that “we are all against nuclear weapons,” she signals to Bersveinn that she does not want to hear more about his opinion regarding that issue. The utterance contains a post-verbal *nú* which firmly establishes this important background and therefore sets constraints on the potential responses to Védís’ upcoming question.

In some communicative projects, there is more than one instance of *nú* as a tone particle. Such is the case in (7.20) in which Óli introduces a new topic, the president of Iceland:

(7.20) **BORN IN ANOTHER COUNTRY: Soul 05.06.96**

(M = Moderator; Ó = Óli, a caller)

1 Ó en' e::: >Ég: vildi koma einu öðruþ but eh I want.1.SUBJ come.INF one more
   but eh I would like to mention one more thing

2 (0.2)

3 M ~Á:
PRT
   yes

→ Ó Að ég var að skoða veraldarvefinn; (0.2) og var nú
   that I be.1.PT to examine.INF world wide web.DEF (0.2) and be.1.PT NÚ
   that I was checking out the world wide web (0.2) and I was NÚ
Óli announces that he is going to bring up another topic and receives a go-ahead marker from the moderator (lines 1 and 3). He then continues his turn by providing the relevant background about his surfing the internet. After a 0.2 second pause, Óli continues by specifying what he was reading (lines 4–5). This utterance contains a post-verbal nú. Óli’s utterance is delivered with a half-rising terminal contour, which signals that the turn is not yet complete. Following a backchannel from the moderator (line 7), Óli mentions his actual topic: “our nation’s pride, the president of Iceland.” This utterance contains a post-verbal nú. After an in-breath, Óli finally gets to his main point, which is to call for a discussion on whether the Icelandic president should be born in Iceland (lines 8–10). This part of the turn does not contain nú.

In (7.20), Óli prepares his question rather carefully by explaining its context. By foregrounding the fact that he was visiting a website, Óli signals that he wants to talk about something he found on that page. Notice also how he describes the president as “our nation’s pride,” which also prepares his question and promotes the argument that the president should be born in Iceland. Therefore, nú references forward. It occurs in utterances which establish important facts before a question is posed (cf. Wide 1998: 253).

In this section, I showed how the tone particle nú is employed in communicative projects. The function of these instances is to establish important background information in story-telling and in multi-unit questions. The instance in (7.18) is an example of the former. In this excerpt, Magga foregrounds the fact that she was certainly going to do her best using the chopsticks. However, as we find out at the end
of her story, she was not as good at using them as she thought she would be. In (7.19), the speaker foregrounds the fact that everybody is against nuclear weapons, and, thus, the speaker signals that she does not want Bergsveinn to discuss his opinion on nuclear weapons in his answer. In (7.20), the speaker foregrounds the fact that he was surfing the internet. This information proves to be important for the upcoming question, since it was through the internet that the speaker discovered that one of the presidential candidates was born in another country. Although the excerpts discussed in section 7.3.2 occur in different conversational acts, that is, in multi-unit questions and in a story, it is plausible to say that nú has the same communicative function in the excerpt: to foreground background information.

In the following section, I will look at nú in the slightly different environment of meta-comments.

### 7.3.3 Nú in meta-comments

The post-verbal tone particle nú is often employed in meta-comments in which speakers and co-participants comment on the discourse itself. Consider excerpt (7.21), which is drawn from *The soul of the nation*:

#### (7.21) GETTING A WORD IN EDGEWISE: Soul 07.06.96

(M = Moderator; S = Sigríður, caller)

1 M Sigriður Ólafsson,

2 (0.4)  

3 S j↓á:: sæl vertu¿

4 M komdu sæl,  

→ S Mig langar nú aðeins að skjóta þarna *inn? he he he [.hhh um I.ACC want.3 NÚ little to shoot.INF there in he he [.hhh about I just wanted NÚ to get this in here he he [.hhh about

6 M [j↑â::  

[PRT [yes
This excerpt begins like most conversations in *The soul of the nation*, with an introduction (line 1) followed by a greeting sequence (lines 3–4). After a greeting, callers usually introduce a topic they want to discuss. In this particular excerpt, however, the greeting is followed by a meta-comment in which the caller informs the moderator that she has something she wants to “get in here” (line 5). This turn contains a post-verbal *nú*.

The function of Sigríður’s comment in line 5 is to seek permission to mention something outside of the agenda. In other words, Sigríður is making an appeal to the moderator. The moderator responds with the particle *já*, which accepts Sigríður’s request and gives her permission to go ahead (line 6). Later, when Sigríður has made her point, she finally brings up the reason for her phone call (not shown in the excerpt).

As I showed in (7.21), meta-comments containing the tone particle *nú* contain an appeal to the interlocutor. Such is also the case in (7.22), in which *nú* occurs in a meta-comment in which the speaker is seeking assistance recalling a name. Sigurdís has called *The soul of the nation* to complain about a civil servant who she claims has shown disrespect to the temperance movement during their annual meeting. Before the excerpt begins, Sigurdís explained that all ministers of Iceland were invited to this event, but nobody had the time to attend. However, the minister of health sent an official to the meeting (lines 1–2):

**(7.22) FORGETTING NAMES: 11.06. 96 Soul**

(M = Moderator; S = Sigurdís, the caller)

1 S Og svo sendi jú .hhh u::: Sigurbjörg Öskarsdóttir #e::::::::# and then send.3.PT PRT .hhh eh 1nameF PatrF eh and then Sigurbjörg Öskarsdóttir did in fact .hhh send

2 hérna #e::::::::# erún ekki heil[brigði- ] PRT eh be.3+she not heal[th- ] eh eh isn’t she heal[th minister
Sigurdís explains with the help of the moderator that the minister of health sent her permanent secretary (lines 1–4). This information is followed by a meta-comment with which Sigurdís points out explicitly that she does not know the name of the official. Directly following this comment, she makes a guess (lines 4–5). This part of Sigurdís’s turn is prosodically different than the surrounding talk: it is produced with a faster tempo and with lower volume. Moreover, it contains a post-verbal nú. The moderator responds to Sigurdís’s comment by uttering the name she was looking for in a terminal overlap (lines 6–7), and the name is then acknowledged by Sigurdís (line 9). Again, there is a short pause, which is then followed by a continuer from the moderator (line 11). This signals that Sigurdís can continue her story. After a 0.3 second delay, Sigurdís is finally able to go back to her project (line 13).

In (7.22), nú occurs in a TCU in which the speaker is searching for help remembering a name. By changing speed and volume, Sigurdís marks this part of her turn as a parenthetic insertion designed to solve a problem.
The meta-comment in excerpt (7.22) is an example of a successful request for assistance. In the following excerpt, in contrast, we will see an example of a request which does not receive any immediate response. In (7.23), the two program hosts, Disa and Gunni, are interviewing Siggi Kalli, their colleague, over the phone. After a greeting sequence, Gunni begins the interview by posing the first question (line 1):

(7.23) I DIDN’T HEAR WHAT YOU SAID: Teens
(G = Gunni, program presenter; D = Disa, program presenter; S = Siggi Kalli)

1 G Erett ekki rétt hjá mér aðú ætlar að vera með speis þátt
be.3+this not right by I.DAT that+you intend.2 to be.INF with special program.ACC
isn’t that right that you are going to have a special program

2 um hátíðina,
about festival.ACC.DEF

about the festival?

3 (0.7)

4 S Jôôû::
PRT

yes

5 (1.1)

6 S Þa er alveg hárétt hjá þér
it be.3 absolutely right by you.DAT
yes, you are absolutely right

7 (0.5)

8 G Jôôû:: (.) atlarða segja okkur eitthvað frá því,
PRT (.) intend.2+to say.INF we.DAT something from that.DAT
yes (.) are you going to tell us something about that?

9 S Jôôû: (0.3) > s : k ↑ o : ↓ : > (0.5) þetta fór #e::::::::#
PRT (0.3) PRT (0.5) this go.3 PT eh-

#dessi:::::::::: Ég heyrði nú ekkert hvað þi voru segja
this I hear.1 PT NÚ nothing what you.PL be.2 PL say.INF

this I didn’t hear NÚ what you were saying

→ #dessi:::::::::: Ég heyrði nú ekkert hvað þi voru segja

this I hear.1 PT NÚ nothing what you.PL be.2 PL say.INF

this I didn’t hear NÚ what you were saying

11 þarna áðan?
there before

12 (0.3)

13 S Voruði ekkja s/egja eitthvað,
be.1 PL+you.PL not+to say.INF something
weren’t you saying something?

14 (0.5)
Gunni’s first question is designed as a polar question which asks Siggi Kalli to confirm that he is planning to have a special radio program about the rock festival. This opening is probably supposed to generate more talk from Siggi Kalli. After a 0.7 second delay, however, Siggi Kalli confirms the statement without commenting any further (line 4). The confirmation is followed by a 1.1 second pause, and then Siggi Kalli takes the floor again. This time, his confirmation is formulated as a full answer which signals clearly that he is giving the floor to Disa and Gunni (line 6). After a 0.5 second pause, Gunni makes another attempt to invite Siggi Kalli to say more about the festival (line 8). Siggi Kalli responds with a turn initiated with the particles já ‘yes,’ and sko ‘well,’ both delivered with prolonged vowels (line 9). Such delivery of the particle sko typically occurs at the beginnings of multi-unit turns, for example, at the beginning of long answers that have narrative structure (Hilmisdóttir 1999). This instance, however, is not followed by a story. Instead, Siggi Kalli shows with numerous restarts, planning markers, and pauses that he has serious difficulties formulating his turn. Finally, after another failed attempt to start his story, Siggi Kalli announces that he did not hear what the program hosts were saying before (lines 10–11). This comment contains a post-verbal nú.

The function of the meta-comment in line 10 is to invite Disa or Gunni to provide Siggi Kalli with more context. However, in spite of Siggi Kalli’s invitation, neither Disa nor Gunni respond. After a 0.3 second delay without any response from Disa and
Gunni (line 12), Siggi Kalli makes this request again (line 13). After a few ironic comments from Disa and Gunni, Siggi Kalli explains why he is having these problems: “I didn’t hear anything because of the song y’see” (line 20).

In this section, I have shown how the tone particle nú is used in meta-comments. In (7.21), the speaker is negotiating the status of the first topic she is bringing up. In (7.22), the speaker produced a meta-comment which invited the moderator to help her remember a name. Finally, in (7.23), the speaker requested more information on the ongoing topic. In all three cases, the meta-textual comment foregrounded a potential problem which needed to be addressed and negotiated with the co-participant.

In the following section, I will take a look at nú in assessments.

### 7.3.4 Nú in assessments

The post-verbal nú is often employed in assessments. Often, these assessments are disjoined from other turns, such as in the following excerpt in which an assessment occurs after a long lapse. Brynhildur and Erna are talking with each other in the kitchen, while the other four women seem to be located in another room. Erna suddenly announces that she is thinking about getting herself another drink (line 1):

(7.24) **GETTING INTO THE PARTY MOOD: Reunion**

(B = Brynhildur; V = Vala; E = Erna)

1 E ég era hugsa um að draða fram annan bjórn,
   I be.1+to think.INF about to pull.INF forward another beer
   I’m thinking about pulling out another beer

2   (0.7)

3 B jú:
   PRT
   yes

4   (0.2)

5 E Mágga,
   nameF
   Magga

6   (4.5)

7 B Ég er að hugsa um að (0.8) fylla hvítvinsglasið mitt á
   I be.3 to think.INF about to (0.8) fill+on white wine glass.DEF my
   I’m thinking about (0.8) topping up my glass of white wine

8   (1.4)
Brynhildur, who seems to be the only other person in the kitchen, responds to Erna’s announcement by producing an acknowledgement token, which signals that she has no objections to Erna’s plans (line 3). In the subsequent turn, Erna calls Magga’s name in a loud voice, trying to get her attention. Magga, however, who is located in another room, does not respond to Erna’s call. After a 4.5 second lapse in the conversation, Brynhildur announces that she is also going to top up her glass (line 7). This announcement is followed by another lapse which stretches over 1.4 seconds. In the subsequent turn, Erna makes an assessment of the current situation. She states that she does not like the fact that she is getting into a party mood (line 9). The assessment contains a post-verbal nú. Brynhildur treats Erna’s assessment as ironic or humourous and responds with laughter (line 12). After a 1.2 second pause, Brynhildur herself produces an assessment contradicting Erna and claiming that she is happy about being in a party mood (line 14). Also, this assessment contains nú as a post-verbal tone particle.

In (7.24), there are two assessments produced by two different speakers. Both assessments contain the tone particle nú. The assessment in line 9 functions to foreground the fact that Erna is worried about being in the mood to party. Erna seems to presuppose that Brynhildur realizes that the following morning is a normal work day.

74 Vala’s comment in lines 10 to 11 seems to be part of a parallel dialogue and thus not directed towards Brynhildur or Erna.
day. However, when Brynhildur has echoed Erna’s turn and expressed the opposite opinion, Erna explains that she has to start working early the following morning (line 16). In other words, although the assessment in line 9 is not co-textually tied to the previous turn, it does respond to a presupposed context and the contradiction that Erna is in the mood to party even though she should go home early. Brynhildur’s assessment in line 14 is also produced after a long pause. As mentioned above, this turn is an echo of Erna’s turn and expresses the opposite opinion to her turn (see section 7.3.1 on ní in counter-arguments).

As I showed in (7.24), assessments are sometimes disjointed from the previous turn, and they are often preceded by pauses. In some cases, however, assessments are produced as direct responses to the previous turn, and they can latch onto or overlap the previous turn. Consider the following excerpt, also drawn from the data *Reunion*. Here, the women are discussing Asian restaurants in Reykjavik. So far, they have agreed that there is one restaurant in particular which is worse than any other:

(7.25) **AWFUL RESTAURANT: Reunion**

(B = Brynhildur; V = Vala; L = Lína)

1 L  allt [kjöt þarna er (<g sic> g e s l e g t, >
   all.N [ meat there be disgust
   all the [ meat they have is disgust

2 B  [pa eru-
   [it be.3.PL
   [ there is

3 V  [já:
   [PRT yes

4 (0.2)

5 B  já: =
   PRT yes

6 L  = hreinn viððóður
   clean disgust
   simply disgusting

7 B  [ég hef borðað þarna einu sinni með
   [ I have.1 eat.PP there one time with
   [ I have eaten there once with

8 (.) (x x x )

9 (0.6)
At the beginning of the excerpt, Lína gives a very negative assessment of a Chinese restaurant the women have been talking about (line 1). Vala and Brynhildur respond with acknowledgement tokens and show their alignment with Lína (lines 3 and 5). Then, Lína produces an extension of her previous turn and upgrades her assessment by describing the food in even more negative terms (line 6). In the subsequent turn, Brynhildur tells the other women that she has experienced this restaurant herself (lines 7–8), and, after a short pause, she explains what she ordered (line 10). Notice that this TCU is produced with a half-rising final contour, suggesting that her turn may still be in progress. Nonetheless, Lína latches onto Brynhildur’s final words. Lína’s turn begins with oj ‘eww,’ which displays disgust towards the idea of the lunch special at this restaurant (line 11). This emotive interjection (cf. Ameka 1992: 113) is followed by a micro-pause and another assessment describing the lunch special as “the worst of all.” The assessment contains a post-verbal nú. In the subsequent turn, Brynhildur acknowledges Lína’s description (line 12), and, after a short pause, she gives her own assessment of the restaurant. In the assessment, she shows alignment with Lína by admitting that the food is awful (line 15).

The assessment in line 11 is formulated as an extreme case formulation. An extreme case formulation is a rhetorical device which speakers use to convince listeners (Pomerantz 1986; Potter 1996). In such formulations, speakers maximize or minimize certain aspects of the object which is being described. In line 11, Lína describes the food as being “the worst of all.” The description contains a superlative form verst ‘worst,’ and the pronoun öllu ‘all’ both of which maximize the negative aspects of the food. In addition to the extreme case formulation, Lína uses the tone
particle *nú* which contributes to the decisive tone and makes it very difficult for Brynhildur to disagree with her.

The two instances in (7.24) and (7.25) occur in short turns containing only one TCU. The last instance of non-temporal *nú* is slightly different, since it is uttered in a TCU which occurs as part of a longer project in story-telling. In (7.26), the women are still gathered around the dinner table discussing Asian food:

(7.26) **KOREAN SEAWEED SOUP: Reunion**
(M = Magga; B = Brynhildur; G = Guðrún; V = Vala; E = Erna; L = Lína)

1 M  Ég hef nokkrum sinn[um verið boðin í svona alveg /Ekta
    I have.1 a few times be.PP invite.PF in PRT totally authentic
    *I have a few times been invited to have totally authentic*

2 B  [já
    [PRT
    [yes

3 M  (0.4) kóreansk mat svona sem er alveg eldaður af (0.3)=
    (0.4) Korean food PRT which be.3 completely cook.PP.M of (0.3)
    (0.4) Korean food which is cooked by (0.3)

4  = [(.)kóreðnaskú fólki,
    [(.) Korean people

5 B  [m

6 (0.3)

7 B  m[:

8 M  [ða er allt annar mat°ur°
    [that be.3 totally another food
    [that's totally different food

9 (0.5)

10 E  já =
    PRT
    yes

11 = þúveist [Svo hef ég séð allskonar, (0.9) ótrulega þangsúpu =
    PRT [then have.1I see.PP all kinds (0.9) unbelievable seaweed.ACC
    y'know [then I have seen all kinds of (0.9) unbelievable seaweed soup

12 L  [já
    [PRT
    [yes

→ M  = >sem mér fannst *nú* að visu ekki mjög góð,<
    which 1.DAT find.MV.PT NÚ however not very good
    which I didn’t NÚ actually like

14 B  ↓m:
Magga is again telling the other women about her experience with Korean food. She starts her story by making an announcement that she has actually experienced eating “authentic Korean food” (lines 1 and 3–4), and, thus, she positions herself as an expert on the topic. After two backchannelling signals from Brynhildur (lines 5 and 7), Magga assesses the food and asserts that the authentic food is “totally different” from the Korean food which the women have been eating in restaurants (line 8). After a 0.5 second pause, Erna provides another backchannel signal (line 10) which Magga latches onto by producing the particle þúveist ‘y’know’ (line 11). The particle is followed by another TCU, in which Magga gives an example of the dishes she has tried (line 11). This part of Magga’s turn is immediately followed by another TCU, in which she makes a negative assessment of seaweed soup and claims that she does not actually like it (line 13). The negative assessment is uttered with faster speed than the surrounding discourse, and it contains a post-verbal nú.

In the excerpt above, Magga is contradicting herself, in a way, by claiming that she does not like the soup she has mentioned as an example of great Korean food. By making this comment, she shows reservation towards her previous statement about liking authentic Korean food. Notice that she uses the phrase að vísu ‘actually,’ which projects an opposing argument. It may be due to these contradictions that Magga employs the tone particle nú. Later in the excerpt, Magga justifies this contradiction by pointing out that the soup is “supposedly very good for you” (line 18).

In this section, I have shown how the tone particle nú is used in assessments. In some cases, such as in (7.24), the assessment was not co-textually bound to the previous turns. The assessment occurred in a turn following a long lapse in the conversation. However, as I showed, these assessments may be responding to other
contextual factors such as presuppositions. Other instances are produced as strong responses to previous turns. This was the case in (7.25), in which a speaker produced an assessment in a terminal overlap with a co-participant. The assessment in question was an upgrade of an ongoing assessment, and it was formed as an extreme case formulation. Finally, assessments containing nú may occur as comments in multi-unit turns, such as in (7.26). In that case, nú occurred in a TCU which was produced with a faster pace than the surrounding talk. The assessment expressed reservation to a previous assessment produced by the same speaker by claiming an opposing opinion. I compared this instance with some of the instances discussed in section 7.3.1.

In the following section, I will discuss nú in questions initiating topic-shifts.

### 7.3.5 Nú in questions initiating topic-shifts

Although the majority of the occurrences of nú as a tone particle occur in declarative utterances, there are a few instances in the data which occur in questions. In excerpt (7.15), I showed an example of a question containing nú which functioned as a strong counter-argument. In this section, I will focus on the tone particle nú when it occurs in questions which initiate topic-shifts. Consider the following excerpt, in which the moderator is talking with Þór about the Eurovision Song Contest. The contest is one of the main topics discussed in this particular episode of *The soul of the nation*, and, so far, every caller has addressed this topic and guessed as to in what place the Icelandic contribution will end up. At the beginning of this conversation, Þór tells the moderator that he is also going to make a guess (line 1):

**(7.27) SOMEWHERE BETWEEN TEN AND FIFTEEN: Soul 17.05.96**

(M = Moderator; Þ = Þór, a caller)

1 Þ  
Héyrðu Ég ætlaði a spá:  
PRT listen, I was going to guess

2 M  
Já: Þú ætlaðu að spá:  
PRT yes, you are going to guess

3  
(0.5)

4 Þ  
Ég held við verðum í tí:unda til fimmtánda sæti.  
I think, we become, in tenth to fifteenth place

5  
(0.2)
Þór announces that the reason for his call is to give a prediction about the Icelandic song (line 1), and the moderator accepts the topic by producing an acknowledgement token and by partially repeating his turn (line 2). After a 0.5 second pause, Þór guesses that the song is going to place between tenth and fifteenth (line 4). After a confirmation from the moderator, Þór treats his guess as in need of explanation and justifies it by stating that the song is not good enough (line 7). Þór’s negative assessment prompts a lively discussion about what musician Iceland should send next year (turns omitted). Finally, after discussing various alternatives, the moderator brings the conversation back to this year’s contest by repeating Þór’s prediction: “between tenth and fifteenth” (line 9). The repetition is followed directly by another TCU in which the moderator poses a question about Þór’s plans for the evening of the contest (line 9). The question contains a post-verbal nú.

In (7.27), the tone particle nú occurs in a slot in which the moderator is making a topical shift. The utterance introducing the new topic is delivered with beginning intonation, and, to further emphasize the shift, the moderator employs the tone particle nú. The fundamental frequency of line 9 is shown in Figure 7.10:
As Figure 7.10 shows, the speaker makes a distinct pitch step-up when she shifts topics. Notice that the connective *og* ‘and’ is also produced as a separate intonation contour. The post-verbal *nú*, by contrast, is not prosodically prominent.

The topic-shifting question described above occurs during a radio interview in which the interlocutors are talking *with* each other and *for* an overhearing audience. In media conversations, time is limited and topic-shifts are often more abrupt than in everyday conversations. It is the moderator’s task to keep the conversation going, and, therefore, the topic-shifting questions are typically found in the moderator’s turn, which is the case in the excerpt above. By employing *nú*, the question is anchored in utterance time, and, thus, it marks a progression from one topic to another.

A similar pattern is found in excerpt (7.28), in which the program leaders, Gunni and Disa, are interviewing a film critic by the name of Filli. Filli is giving a critique of a new film which takes place in the underworld of Copenhagen. Just before the excerpt begins, Filli explains that he hopes that Copenhagen is not as terrible as it is portrayed in the movie, since he used to live there himself. In the following turns, the conversation digresses into a discussion about Copenhagen. At the beginning of the excerpt, Filli signals a return back to his role as a critic with the connective *en* ‘but’ (line 1). However, Filli is overlapped by Gunni who continues talking about Copenhagen (line 2):
**FILM CRITIQUE: Teens**

(G = Gunni, program host; D = Disa, program host; F = Filli, a film critic)

1 F

[[ PRT ]]

[[ but ]]

2 G

[[Kannsk] efuretta bara orðið sona eftir að þú hefur [[ maybe ] have.3 this PRT become.PP so after that you have.2 [[ maybe ] this has just become like this after you have

3 veriðar,
been there

4 F #e#/j↓â↑:: eimmitt

eh PRT precisely

5 (0.9)

6 G þa er sjéns

that be.3 chance

7 (0.2)

8 G þa er alltaf möguleiki.

that be.3 always chance

9 (1.2)

10 F J↓â

PRT

yes

11 (0.2)

12 G Hva veit °maður.°

what know.3 man

13 (0.8)

→ D en /Hvað [viltu nú gefa myndinni::: margar:=

but how [want+you NÚ give.INF film.DAT.DEF many.F.PL

but how [ many would you NÚ like to give the film, how many

15 G

[#e:]

16 F =Hvað vil ég.

what want.1 I

what would I like

17 D J↓â

PRT

yes

216
The repetitive phrases (lines 6, 8, 12) and long pauses (lines 5, 9, 13) in excerpt (7.28) signal that the ongoing topic has been exhausted. Finally, after a 0.8 second pause (line 13), Dísa takes the floor and poses a new question, asking Filli to continue discussing the film itself and to rate it (line 14). Dísa’s question contains the tone particle nú. Note, however, that Dísa hesitates before she reaches a TRP. Filli uses the opportunity to take the floor. He produces a question repeat which focuses on Dísa’s choice of verb, vilja ‘want’ (line 16). When Dísa has confirmed her choice, Filli completes Dísa’s turn by providing the object, Lovísur ‘Lovísas’77 (line 18).

In this example, the post-verbal nú occurs in a turn in which the speaker is bringing the discussion back on track. In other words, the question is not a direct continuation of the previous turns, but, instead, it marks a shift in topical development. Note also that this instance occurs during a movie critique. Movie critiques in the media generally seem to follow this pattern: they begin with a summary of the plot, follow with assessments on the production, and, finally, give the film a rating using stars. Thus, when Dísa is prompting Filli to rate the film, she clearly signals her wish to go to the final item on a predetermined agenda. By using the particle nú, she foregrounds her question and marks progression.

As the two previous excerpts have shown, the tone particle nú is sometimes used in questions which introduce topic-shifts. In these cases, nú functions to give a question a firmer tone and to make a stronger appeal to the co-participant. In both cases, the utterances containing the particle mark a clear progression in the conversation.

7.3.6 Nú in directives

The tone particle nú is often employed in TCUs in which a speaker is giving directives (cf. also Hakulinen and Saari 1995: 490). In the following two excerpts, which are both drawn from the same conversation in The soul of the nation, Holla is talking about the importance of finding out whether Sigurður Helgi, one of the presidential candidates, is a true believer in God. Holla encourages all the listeners to read a recently published newspaper article in which the writer argues that Sigurður Helgi

77 Instead of giving stars, Filli calls his rating Lovísas.
does not believe in God. Just before the excerpt begins, the moderator has asked about the author of the article. There are two instances of nú as a tone particle in the excerpt, one in line 7 and one in line 19:

(7.29) **THE IMPORTANCE OF BELIEVING:** Soul 31.05.96 (←6.19)
(M = Moderator; H = Holla, the caller)

1 M ðað skrifaði ana ann Magnú:s:::: ó::: Einarsson hestaréttarlógmaður.
   it write.3.PT she.ACC he InameM eh PatrM high court judge
   Judge Magnús Einarsson wrote it

2 (1.4)

3 M j↓á::↓::[:
   yes

4 H [o /Efða er rétt sem höfundurinn heldur fram;
   [and íf+that be.3 right which author.DEF claim.3 forward
   [and if what the author is claiming is true

5 M °.já°
   PRT
   yes

6 (0.3)

   → H og taktu nú eftir. (0.6) Ég segi //E.
   and take.3+you NÚ after (0.6) I say.1 if
   and note NÚ (0.6) I say if

8 M j↓á↑:::
   PRT
   yes

9 (0.2)

10 H <Efða er skjalfest og segul bands =
    if +it be.3 document.PP.N and tape
    if that is documented and tape

11 upp tókur u.m>¿ (0.5) Að Sigurður Helgi hafi skýrt rangt recordings
    about (0.5) that InameM InameM have.3.SUBJ explain.PP wrong
    recorded (0.5) that Sigurður Helgi lied

12 frá fyrir dómi um trú sínan;
   VP for court.DAT about belief his.REF
   before the court about his religion

((2 turns omitted))

13 H ða bEr fjölmíslum að leiða þessa tvok herrarinn s/aman
    then ought.3 mass media to lead.INF these two gentlemen together
    then the mass media has to let these two gentlemen meet

14 (0.3)
After Holla has informed the moderator that Magnús Einarsson wrote the article, she starts a long argument in favour of inviting Magnús Einarsson and the candidate to debate the issue. The first part of Holla’s turn states the premises of her argument (line 4). Notice the stress is on the connective ef ‘if,’ which Holla uses to emphasize that she is not taking sides. After a backchanneling signal from the moderator (line 5), Holla inserts a comment by which she tells the moderator to pay special attention to what she is saying right now (line 7). The verb in this TCU is in the imperative singular, and it is followed by the tone particle nú. The comment signals that Holla intends to say something that she sees as particularly important. After a 0.6 second pause, Holla points out that the moderator should pay special attention to the fact that she actually used the conjunction ef ‘if.’

The moderator acknowledges that she noticed Holla’s use of ef (line 8), and Holla continues her project. In the subsequent talk, she gives the premises of her argument again in a slightly different version (lines 10–12). When Holla has completed describing the premises, and after the moderator has added some comments on the
topic (turns omitted), Holla states that the media must let the two men meet to discuss these matters (lines 13, 15, and 17). When Holla has completed the turn, the moderator provides a weak acknowledgement token with a half-rising terminal contour (line 18). Here, the half-rising intonation contour seems to signal that the moderator is not totally aligning with Holla. This may be the reason that Holla takes the floor at this point and makes another attempt to convince the moderator (line 19). Again, she uses an imperative, gerðu ‘do,’ followed by nú and the address term Anna mín ‘dear Anna.’ In the subsequent turn, Holla and the moderator take the floor simultaneously. The moderator begins a non-aligning utterance which she abandons, and Holla explains the importance of finding out who is telling the truth (lines 22–24).

The two instances of the tone particle nú occur in interactionally important slots. In line 7, the speaker uses the imperative to draw attention to the fact that she is using the conjunction ef ‘if’ which shows that she is not making any judgments about who is right or wrong. One of Holla’s main arguments is that voters do not know who is telling the truth, and therefore the two men should be invited to a debate. The TCU in line 7 strongly requests the moderator to pay attention “at this moment,” that is, Holla wants the moderator to listen to the TCU that follows. Thus, in this instance, nú could be interpreted as having temporal functions. However, I suggest that the main function of nú following imperatives is to make a plea stronger. This non-temporal function is more obvious in line 19. That instance occurs in a slot in which Holla has finished presenting her case (line 17), but then only received a weak non-affiliative acknowledgement from the moderator (line 18). Thus, Holla makes another attempt to convince the moderator by making another plea. In the second plea, Holla addresses the moderator by her first name and uses an imperative followed by the particle nú.

Despite the strong appeals, Holla does not seem convinced that the moderator has given a promise to invite the two men to a debate. In (7.30), which is a continuation of the previous excerpt, Holla makes a final attempt to convince the moderator:

(7.30) IF HE IS INNOCENT: Soul 31.05.96
(M = Moderator; H = Holla, the caller)
1 H Mér finnst að Sigurður Helgi Hrafnsson veðrði (.) að fá að
I.DAT find.MV that 1nameM 1nameM PatrM must.3.SUBJ (.) to get.INF to
I think that Sigurður Helgi has (.) to get the chance to
hreinsa sig.
clear.INF he.REF
clear himself
3 (0.2)
At the beginning of the excerpt, Holla re-emphasizes her opinion that the presidential candidate must get the chance to clear his name (lines 1–2 and 4). The moderator, however, does not seem to be convinced. Again, she responds with a minimal response delivered with rising intonation which suggests disalignment (line 6). In the subsequent turn, Holla makes a final attempt to plea for a debate between the two men. She initiates the utterance with og Þessvegna ‘and therefore,’ which projects a conclusion. This turn beginning is followed by an address term, Anna mín ‘dear Anna,’ and by a 0.3 second pause. After the pause, Holla asks the moderator one more time to invite the two men to a debate (lines 8–9 and 11). The TCU contains another imperative followed by the tone particle nú, and the turn is produced in a slower tempo than the surrounding talk. Holla’s last plea is followed by a 0.8 second pause, and this again suggests disalignment on the moderator’s side. Holla responds by producing a continuation and mentions the names of the two men she wants the moderator to invite for a debate (line 11). After a 0.6 second pause, the moderator finally takes the floor and produces a pro-forma agreement which still implies disalignment, “we will try to do that” (line 13). The disalignment is indexed by the verb reyna ‘try.’
In this excerpt, the tone particle *nú* occurs in a turn which makes a strong appeal to the co-participant. The turn in which it occurs is made up of two TCUs. The first TCU is pragmatically incomplete and projects a continuation in the form of a conclusion. The second TCU contains an imperative followed by *nú*. It is produced in a slower tempo and with slightly louder volume than the surrounding talk, and there is heavy stress on *leyfðu* ‘let,’ *heyra* ‘hear,’ and *saman* ‘together.’ The pitch contour of the TCU containing *nú* is shown in Figure 7.11 and the intensity is shown in Figure 7.12:

**Figure 7.11:** Fundamental frequency (\(f_0\)) of line 8, excerpt (7.30)

**Figure 7.12:** Intensity of line 13, excerpt (7.30)
As Figures 7.11 and 7.12 show, the post-verbal *nú* is prosodically non-prominent. The figures show that *nú* is short, has low intensity, and that it is prosodically integrated with the latter part of the personal pronoun *okkur* ‘us’ and the infinitive marker.

In sum, the tone particle *nú* is sometimes used to give imperatives added strength. In the first instance, in excerpt (7.29), Holla used an imperative followed by *nú* when she was asking the moderator to listen carefully to her words. In such cases, I argued that *nú* may have a temporal meaning. Despite the temporality, however, the main function of *nú* when it follows imperatives is not to anchor an utterance in time, but rather to make a plea even stronger. These utterances often have a strong appeal to the co-participant which is indexed by the use of address terms.

Hakulinen and Saari (1995: 490) point out in their discussion on *nu/*nyt in Swedish and Finnish that when these particles follow imperatives they signal that speakers are repeating an earlier conversational move. The Icelandic post-verbal *nú* seems also to occur in such environments, and *nú* in repeats is the last category which I will address in this chapter.

### 7.3.7 *Nú* in repeats

*Nú* is sometimes used in repeats, elicited either by a repair initiator or by lack of response. In some cases, such as in (6.24), *nú* has a temporal function, while in other instances *nú* is non-temporal and is used as a tone particle. Consider excerpt (7.31), in which Lárus is asking Erna about payments for a book she translated. Earlier in the conversation, Erna told Lárus that she is yet to receive any payment for the work. When the excerpt begins, Lárus shows his concerns by asking Erna questions regarding the book:

**7.31) DOES THE BOOK SELL?: PTC 01.07.03**

(L = Lárus, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 L bíðu hvað heldurðu að hérnam: → (1.5) selst ún ekkert <eða h v a >
   PRT what think.2+you that here+mm (1.5) sell.3.MV she nothing or PRT
   wait, what do you think (1.5) doesn’t it sell or

2 Erún komin í b/úðir,
   be.3+she come.PP.F in stores
   is it in stores yet?

3 (0.3)
Lárus is seeking to find possible reasons that the publisher has not paid Erna for the work she has done. During the conversation, someone on the other end is talking to
Lárus which explains the long lapses (line 5, 7, and 9). This parallel conversation also explains why Lárus has difficulties hearing Erna’s responses (lines 6 and 18). After a few exchanges, Lárus asks Erna whether the book is selling at all. This is actually the same question Lárus abandoned in line 1. This time, Erna responds without a delay and states that she *thinks* the book is selling (line 16). Lárus seems to have problems hearing again, and, after a 0.5 second pause, he initiates a repair. The request for repair is displayed with the particle *ha* ‘what’ with a falling intonation contour (line 18). After a slight delay, Erna takes the floor and partially repeats her earlier answer. This time, however, she adds a turn-initial dialogue particle, *já:::* ‘yes,’ and uses a different word order (line 20). The change in word order is probably caused by the change in sequential environments. While the former answer is produced right after the question, the second attempt is produced after a repair initiator. After a short pause, Lárus acknowledges this answer with a minimal *m:* sound (line 21), which shows that he has received this new information.

In line 20, *nú* occurs finally in a syntactic gestalt. It occurs after a pronoun object, *þa* ‘it.’ The pitch is illustrated in Figure 7.13 and the intensity in Figure 7.14:

![Pitch Amplitude](image)

**Figure 7.13:** Fundamental frequency (f₀) of line 20, excerpt (7.31)
As Figure 7.13 shows, the post-verbal nú is prosodically integrated with the object þa ‘that.’ Further, it shows that there is a clear pitch step-up on the object, and that nú is produced with falling intonation which indicates that the turn is coming to an end. The intensity curve illustrated in 7.14 shows that nú is clearly unstressed.

In (7.31), the tone particle nú occurs in a slot in which the speaker is making a second attempt to answer a question she has been asked. Speakers tend to either simplify the repairable or to speak louder and enunciate the turn better (cf. Sacks 1992b: 413). As the excerpt above shows, speakers of Icelandic may also add the tone particle nú.

In (7.31), the tone particle nú occurs in a slot that is similar to the slot of the temporal-affective nú in excerpt (6.24). In both excerpts, the speakers are repeating their preceding turns and adding nú turn finally. In (6.24), nú seems to have an affective as well as a temporal function, while the instance in (7.31) has only an affective function.

### 7.3.8 Summary of post-verbal nú

In section 7.3, I discussed nú as a tone particle in the post-verbal position. My point of departure was the environments in which the particle occurs. Thus, I divided nú into seven different categories: nú in turns linking backwards (7.3.1), nú in communicative projects (7.3.2), nú in meta-comments (7.3.3), nú in assessments (7.3.4), nú in
questions initiating topic-shifts (7.3.5), nú in directives (7.3.6), and, finally, nú in repeats (7.3.7).

In the first section, I discussed how the tone particle nú functions in turns linking backwards. Such instances occur in slots in which speakers may want to show a firm response or to present something as certain, such as in (7.11) and (7.12). The post-verbal nú is particularly frequent when speakers are of different opinions, such as in (7.13) to (7.15), and in dispreferred answers, such as in (7.16) and (7.17).

In 7.3.2, I discussed instances of nú in communicative projects, such as storytelling and long arguments. The projects usually require several TCUs, and, therefore, the function of nú is to foreground important information. In (7.18), the tone particle nú occurred in a TCU which prepared the main point in a story, while nú in (7.19) occurred in a TCU which established important information in a multi-unit question. In (7.20), the speaker used nú to establish background information in a longer argument in order to make that argument convincing to the co-participant.

In section 7.3.3, I discussed nú in meta-comments. I showed that such utterances typically function to appeal to the interlocutor, either to negotiate with him or her about the topic, such as in (7.21), or to search for help remembering, such as in (7.22) and (7.23).

In section 7.3.4, I addressed nú in assessments. Assessments are often produced as disjoint from the preceding turn, such as in (7.24). However, such assessments are often occasioned by presupposed contexts. In (7.25), I showed that some assessments are designed as extreme case formulations and used to upgrade a previous assessment. In (7.26), I showed how an assessment may contain a comment on a speaker’s own turn.

In section 7.3.5, I addressed nú in questions initiating topic-shifts. Such instances occur mainly in mediated discourse in which time is limited and turn allocation is limited to a moderator or a program host. In (7.27) and (7.28), the program hosts get the conversations back on track by posing questions containing the tone particle nú.

In section 7.3.6, I discussed instances of nú in directives. In (7.29) and (7.30), I showed that nú following imperatives occurs with or without temporal meaning, and that its main function is to reinforce directives or pleas. I also pointed out that nú and directives often co-occur with address terms, and, thus, such utterances make strong appeals to the interlocutor.

Finally, in section 7.3.7, I addressed the function of nú in repeats of prior turns. Such repeats are either prompted by repair initiators, such as in (7.31), or by lack of
uptake. In the final section of this chapter, I will summarize and compare the pre-verbal and post-verbal instances of nú as a tone particle.

7.4 Summary of nú as a tone particle

My aim in this chapter was to describe the various environments in which the tone particle nú occurs. In my data, there are 574 instances of nú as a tone particle; therefore, this function category is larger than any other. Not only is the tone particle nú very frequent in my data, it also occurs in many different environments: in statements and in questions; with or without negations; with verbs in the past tense and the present tense, and in indicative, subjunctive, and imperative moods. In addition to the different sequential environments, the tone particle nú is used in two syntactically different slots: pre-verbally and post-verbally. As I show in my analysis, these two syntactic positions have clear interactional relevance, and, therefore, the syntactic positions are treated as two different categories. However, both types give the utterances in which they occur a decisive tone and mark them as providers of important information. Table 7.6 shows an overview of the environments in which nú occurs and its prosodic realization:

Table 7.6: Summary of the tone particle nú

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Pre-verbal nú</th>
<th>Post-verbal nú</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introducing new aspects</td>
<td>• Generally unstressed</td>
<td>• Generally unstressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-unit questions</td>
<td>• Sometimes stressed (7.3)</td>
<td>• Sometimes stressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaligning utterances</td>
<td>• Prosodically integrated with the finite verb</td>
<td>• Generally prosodically integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sometimes prosodically non-integrated (7.13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prosody</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsive utterances</td>
<td>• Generally unstressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative projects</td>
<td>• Sometimes stressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-comments</td>
<td>• Generally prosodically integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>• Sometimes prosodically non-integrated (7.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions initiating topic-shifts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The pre-verbal *nú* typically occurs in descriptive utterances in which speakers are describing situations or circumstances, or introducing a new aspect of an ongoing topic. By using *nú*, speakers are able to foreground important information, and the information is presented as though it is certain from the speakers’ point of view.

Similarly, the post-verbal *nú* is also used in utterances in which speakers have a reason to make firm statements. These instances typically occur in argumentative discourse or when speakers are presenting facts or opinions which they would like the co-participant to support or pay special attention to. Such instances include *nú* in firm responses and utterances which present important background information in communicative projects. The post-verbal *nú* is also used when the speaker is trying to make a particularly strong appeal to the interlocutor, for instance, in meta-comments, directives, and repeats.

The prosody of the tone particle *nú* is, in most cases, unstressed and the particle is prosodically integrated with the surrounding discourse. However, there are some instances in which *nú* is stressed, such as excerpt (7.3), or is produced as an independent pitch contour, such as (7.13). The particle is typically delivered with a rather short vowel but may sometimes be slightly prolonged, such as in (7.3).

In the previous two chapters, I discussed instances of *nú* which are integrated in the syntactic gestalt. In the following chapter, I will move to the syntactically non-integrated instances.
8 Nú and núnú as utterance particles

In Chapters 6 and 7, I examined instances of nú which acted as integrated parts of syntactic gestalts. These instances functioned either as temporal markers or as tone particles. In this chapter, I turn to cases which are syntactically non-integrated in the pre-front field of the gestalt. Compare the following two examples: a) represents nú as a pre-verbal tone particle as described in Chapter 7, and b) is an example of a syntactically non-integrated nú:

a) Já nú veit ég þa ekki eins velj.
   PRT NÚ know.1 I that not as well
   yes, NÚ I don’t know that as well

b) Nú’ þau reykja tóbak,
   NÚ’ they smoke.3.PL tobacco
   NÚ’ they smoke tobacco

On the one hand, the turn in a) begins with a non-integrated particle, já ‘yes,’ but is followed by a nú in the front field. Notice that the subject, ég ‘I,’ is demoted by nú and is not uttered until after the finite verb. In b), on the other hand, nú is syntactically non-integrated and, therefore, the subject, þau ‘they,’ takes the first position after the turn-initial particle. In this study, such turn initial and syntactically independent nús are referred to as utterance particles (see section 3.4.2). In the first section of this chapter, I will discuss the distribution of nú 78 (8.1). Following this general overview, I will do a sequential analysis based on the environments in which nú occurs. First, I will address instances of nú which initiate continuations (8.2), and, second, I will address instances of nú which occur after a speaker-change has occurred (8.3).

8.1 Distribution

In the present data, there are 32 instances of nú which function as an utterance particle. These instances occur in two different slots: either at the beginning of turn

78 As is the case with many other utterance particles, nú is sometimes used in reduplicated form: núnú. A detailed comparison of nú and nína might very well show some functional difference between the two types. However, since my data offers only three instances of núnú, I am not able to do any detailed analysis on the relationship between nú and núnú.
continuations or in the beginning of turns when a speaker-change has taken place. Table 8.1 shows their distributions in the different set of data:

Table 8.1: Distribution of nú as an utterance particle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>nú initiating a continuation</th>
<th>nú following a speaker-change</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>90 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>146 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>78 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>17 min</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>100 min.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul</td>
<td>310 min.</td>
<td>11(^{79})</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>110 min.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14 h. 11 min.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I will show in the following sections, these two types of nú are employed in different types of environments. Table 8.1 shows that the instances which initiate continuations occur only in mediated discourse. A plausible explanation for this is that these instances typically occur in communicative projects which require long multi-unit turns consisting of several different TCUs (see section below). The instances which occur directly after a speaker change, by contrast, are absent in the more formal conversations, that is in the mediated television debate, Elections, and in the institutional telephone conversations, ITC. In the following sections, I will do a more detailed analysis of the environments in which the two types of nú occur. I will begin by looking at nú initiating continuations.

8.2 nú initiating continuations

In their foundational study on turn-taking, Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974: 703) pointed out that a speaker is usually entitled to only one TCU at a time. After the first TCU, a speaker change is made relevant. However, if no other speaker is appointed, and, if no other speaker appoints himself, the current speaker may continue talking. In

\(^{79}\)Three of these instances are reduplicated as núnú.
the following sections, I will show how speakers employ \textit{nú} to construct continuity in such multi-unit turns. Hence, the utterance particle \textit{nú} is similar in many respects to the English particle \textit{now}.	extsuperscript{80} In other words, \textit{nú} is not placed in random places within the turn: it is carefully positioned where it may serve the interaction. In the sections that follow, I will investigate what those places are. I will begin by discussing \textit{nú} signalling cumulative structure (8.2.1), and continue by discussing \textit{nú} which foregrounds a main point (8.2.2).

\textbf{8.2.1 \textit{Nú} signalling cumulative structure}

In turn continuations, the utterance particle \textit{nú} is used to introduce a new idea. In some of these cases, \textit{nú} is repeated throughout the discourse, marking shifts between different subtopics. The following excerpt is drawn from the data \textit{The soul of the nation}. When the excerpt begins, Ragnhildur has introduced a topic she wants to discuss: a television debate from the night before (the debate in the data \textit{Elections}). In the subsequent talk, Ragnhildur accuses the moderator of the television debate of distributing the discourse floor unevenly. This is potentially a problematic situation for the moderator as she cannot take sides with any of the candidates, nor can she easily criticize her colleagues at the state broadcasting company. Ragnhildur’s critique is followed by a pause that signals lack of acknowledgement on the moderator’s part. Ragnhildur then begins assessing each candidate and their performance during the debate (line 1). The excerpt has two occurrences of \textit{nú}, one in line 9 and one in line 22:

\textbf{(8.1) CANDIDATES THAT TALK TOO MUCH: Soul 11.06.96}
(M = Moderator; R = Ragnhildur, the caller)

\begin{verbatim}
1 R  Sigurður Helgi með sama raulið eins og vanalega? 
    InameM InameM with same song.DEF as and usual
    Sigurður Helgi with the same song as usual

2 (0.5)

3 R  og hann var alltaf öðru (.) hverju kon- eh kominn á Alþingi 
    and he be.3.PT always once (.) in a while com- eh come.PP.M on Parliament
    and he was all the (.) time acting as if he was a member of the parliament and h-
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{80} According to Schiffrin (1987: 230), \textit{now} marks a speaker’s progression through \textit{discourse time} (see section 3.2) by “displaying attention to an upcoming idea unit, orientation, and/or participation framework.”
I have heard him enough

so I don't want to continue that

and she had the longest, i-

der to get the floor, I don’t think it is NÚ polite
In the beginning of the excerpt, Ragnhildur comments on the first candidate by producing four TCUs (lines 1, 3, 5 and 7). Each TCU has either rising or half-rising intonation, and they are all followed by considerably long pauses ranging from 0.5 to 1.0 seconds. By using rising or half-rising intonation, Ragnhildur seems to be showing an orientation towards the co-participant (the moderator), perhaps in an attempt to get feedback or support. As the moderator shows no response in any of these cases (notice pauses in lines 2, 4, 6 and 8), Ragnhildur continues talking and adding to her argument. Ragnhildur maintains the continuity between the different TCUs by using devices such as the connectives og ‘and’ and svo ‘so’ in the pre-front field. After Ragnhildur finishes talking about the first candidate without any response from the moderator, there is 0.8 second pause (line 8). After the pause, Ragnhildur takes the floor again and utters the particle n↑↓ú:#e::#. Following another pause, Ragnhildur takes a breath and introduces a new subtopic, the second candidate about whom she is going to comment. Ragnhildur further emphasizes the transition between the subtopics with the connective svo ‘then’ (see also excerpt (8.2)).

At this point, the particle nú is delivered as a separate prosodic unit, preceded and followed by a pause. It is produced with a prolonged vowel (ca 0.4 seconds), creaky voice, and a rising-falling intonation contour. Furthermore, it is immediately followed by creaky glottal sounds. Figure (8.1) shows a pitch analysis of the utterance in line 9:

![Pitch Analysis Graph](image_url)

**Figure 8.1**: Fundamental frequency of line 9, excerpt (8.1)
In (8.1), the particle \( n^{\uparrow\acute{\text{u}}:\#} \) projects a continuation of the preceding turn. Therefore, \( n\acute{\text{u}} \) functions as floor-holder. In fact, this floor-holding function may explain the creaky voice and prolonged vowel, which are also a significant characteristic of planning markers. Thus, the utterance particle \( n\acute{\text{u}} \) has many similarities with the planning marker \( \text{hérna} \), which is also often produced with creaky voice and a prolonged final vowel (see, e.g., excerpt (7.19), line 10). However, my data show that the two particles occur in different sequential slots. While \( n\acute{\text{u}} \) links a continuation to a previous turn (produced by the same speaker), \( \text{hérna} \) has a clear reference forward, signalling a new beginning or a restart.

When Ragnhildur has introduced her next subtopic (the candidate Sigrún), there is a short pause again. During this pause, the moderator provides the first backchannel item since Ragnhildur began producing her complaint (line 11). It is interesting to consider why the moderator withholds feedback until this point in the conversation. A plausible explanation is that this TCU is the only one that does not contain a negative assessment of the candidates, and therefore it is a safe place to produce a backchannel. By producing a continuer at this moment, the moderator simply acknowledges the transition between two subtopics, and does not show Ragnhildur any support.

After Ragnhildur’s introduction, there is a 0.6 second pause (line 12), followed by a TCU in which Ragnhildur asserts that this candidate talked more than the rest of the candidates (lines 13–14). Again, this negative statement gets no response at all from the moderator. After a 0.7 second gap, Ragnhildur takes the floor again and adds to her argument by describing how the candidate was constantly interrupting the others because the moderator was not doing her job properly (lines 16–20). This critique again results in no response from the moderator. Although the TCU preceding the pause ends with rising intonation (line 20), the moderator does not show any intention of taking the floor, nor does she respond to what Ragnhildur has been saying. After a 1.2 second gap (line 21), Ragnhildur introduces the third candidate, Bergsveinn. This time she signals the move between subtopics with the particle \( n\acute{\text{u}} \). The name of the candidate is stressed, and \( n\acute{\text{u}} \) is unstressed and short. \( N\acute{\text{u}} \) has a rising intonation, and there is a pitch step-up between it and the TCU that follows. This time, however, there is no pause after the particle. The pitch contour is shown in Figure 8.2:
In the excerpt above, there are two instances of the particle n ú. Both instances signal a shift between two different subtopics: the different presidential candidates. In both cases, the particle is preceded by long pauses and, in both cases, there is audible in-breath in the immediate surroundings. However, the two instances differ considerably regarding vowel length and prosodic realization. The first instance is an independent prosodic unit with a distinct intonation, while the second instance lacks prosodic prominence. Throughout this excerpt, Ragnhildur seems to experience a lack of response from the moderator. Hence, the obligation to continue talking goes back to her, and, instead of having a dialogue with an exchange of turns, Ragnhildur finds herself in a situation in which she has to produce turn continuations. The use of nú is an attempt to construct continuity between different subtopics and to show that they are all part of the same project.

The excerpt above shows how the utterance particle nú signals a progress in discourse time, and that it provides “a temporal index for utterances within the emerging world of talk” (Schiffrin 1987: 245 on now). Thus, although such instances do not index propositions in time, they do display attention to the present moment and thereby signal progress in time.

The progress in time is even more evident in the following excerpt in which a mechanic is answering questions about cars. In (8.2), the caller, Ingi, is telling the mechanic a story about a woman who bought a car from a car dealer. Before the excerpt begins, Ingi explains that the car has always had problems, and when he decided to help the old woman and to take a look at the car, he noticed that all the

![Figure 8.2: Fundamental frequency (f_o) of line 22, excerpt (8.1)](image)
wiring was damaged. In this excerpt, there are two instances of the reduplicated form *núnú* (lines 5 and 20):

(8.2) **THE NEW CAR: Soul 23.05.96**

(M = Mechanic; I = Ingi, the caller)

1. I ég er að tala um allar tingar bæði í varaljósum
   I am talking about all wires, both in spare lights.

2. og öðru.
   and other

3. (0.3)

4. M jájá þetta er [alveg- ]
   PRT this [completely- ]
   yes, this is [just- ]

→ I [ NÚ NÚ svo ég (0.6)tök það nú að mér fyrir
   [ NÚ NÚ so (0.6) take.1.PT it NÚ to 1.DAT for
   [ NÚ NÚ so I (0.6) said NÚ I would take care of this for

5. ana hún er g- ett+er gömul kona?
   she.ACC she be.3 o- this+be.3 old woman
   her she is o- this is an old woman

6. (0.3)

7. (0.3)

8. M jía:
   PRT
   yes

9. (0.3)

10. I og ég fór með hann og (0.5) jújújú (0.8) þá klikkaði
    and I go.1.PT with he.ACC and (0.5) PRT (0.8) then fail.3.PT
    and I took it there and (0.5) yeah sure (0.8) then failed

11. fyrsti startarinn þá sendu þeir einn startara nýjan.
    first starter.DEF then send.3.PL.PT they one starter.ACC new.ACC
    the first starter, then they sent a starter, a new one

12. M já.
    PRT
    yes

13. (0.6)

14. I <HANN DUGÐI Í NÍ Ú STÖRT.>
    he last.3.PT in nine starts
    it lasted for nine starts

15. (0.3)
In the beginning of (8.2), Ingi is describing for the mechanic a problem he has with his car (lines 1–2). This turn has a continuously falling intonation, and it is followed by a 0.3 second pause. At this point, the turn seems to be completed. Yet, when the mechanic has taken the floor and begun producing an assessment (which seems to be designed to claim strong affiliation with the speaker), Ingi violates the turn-taking rules and starts an overlap at a point of maximum grammatical control (line 5). Ingi seems to be ignoring the response from the mechanic, and, consequently, the mechanic yields the floor before he is able to complete his TCU. Ingi’s overlap begins with the utterance particle n ûnú (line 5).
The particle $n \overset{\text{unú}}{\Uparrow}$ in line 5 is produced as a separate intonation unit with a rising intonation, uttered in a very determined tone of voice. It is directly followed by the consecutive conjunction $\overset{\text{evo}}{\text{so}},$ followed by a syntactic gestalt. The particle links the turn in progress to Ingi’s own turn in line 2. Thus, the particle signals a progress in the linear story and creates a link between what happened previously to the current situation now. In a way, Ingi is ignoring the mechanic’s turn and focusing on his own story. Similarly, Schiffrin (1987: 245) points out that the particle now “focuses on what the speaker him/herself is about to say, rather than on what the hearer says.” According to Schiffrin (ibid.), this is related to the fact that the temporal deictic now is part of the proximal zone (see section 3.2), and that it is therefore egocentric in nature.

Ingi continues his story and tells the mechanic about his problems with the car starter, and how the dealer sent him a new one (lines 10–11). After this statement, there is a brief pause, and the mechanic registers the information and gives Ingi a signal to continue (line 12). After a 0.6 second suspension-making pause, Ingi exclaims with a louder, irritated voice that the second starter only lasted for nine starts (line 14). Notice that this utterance is produced in a slower tempo and with a rhythmically regular pattern that suggests that it contains important information (cf. Auer, Couper-Kuhlen, and Müller 1999: 152). After this utterance, there is a short pause, and the mechanic responds to this information with the particle noh which displays a strong response to Ingi’s turn (line 16). In the following turn, Ingi explains that he knows how long the starter lasted because he marked the time on the dashboard (line 18). This account is then followed by an exclamatory utterance which functions as a backchannel (line 19).

After the backchannel, Ingi takes the floor again (line 20). The first TCU in his turn consists only of the particle $n \overset{\text{unú} \downarrow}{\Uparrow},$ again produced as a separate intonation unit and with a rising-falling contour. The pitch is shown in Figure 8.3:
As in the previous instance, núnú projects a move forward in the story. Due to this projective nature, Ingi is able to take a 0.5 second turn-internal pause before he produces the anticipated continuation.

Núnú is used as a particle which focuses on the speaker (Ingi) and links the projected turn to his previous utterance. In the subsequent talk, Ingi tells the mechanic that the third starter arrived (line 20). After an acknowledgement token from the mechanic, Ingi takes the floor again and talks about other parts of the car which broke down (line 23). Finally, after a continuer from the mechanic, Ingi re-emphasizes what he said in the beginning of the conversation: this was actually a new car (line 25). This last assertion is produced with a falling intonation contour which marks the end of Ingi’s communicative project.

The two instances of núnú in the excerpt above have many similarities. The most obvious similarity is their prosodic realization: both instances have a rising intonation contour. Furthermore, in both instances, Ingi seems to be initiating his turn without responding in any way to the mechanic’s previous turn. Instead, he initiates his continuation with the particle núnú, which provides the temporal index in the discourse time. There are several contributing reasons for this sense of temporal progression in this sequence. Both instances are directly followed by svo, which has a consecutive function. The strong emphasis on þríðji ‘third’ in line 20 also contributes to creating the sense of a step forward on the temporal axis.

In sum, the caller Ingi is the primary speaker in this excerpt, and the mechanic adds a few short comments without ever taking the floor. Ingi is telling a story, and he uses the utterance particle núnú twice. In both cases, núnú is preceded by a side-
comment which is not part of the temporal development in the story. Nú
ú is thus employed strategically to index a progression in the story and to give the recipient a cue that the different parts of the story belong to one coherent narrative.

So far, I have looked at excerpts in which the particle nú has occurred twice, signalling progress in a cumulative structure. In both excerpts, both instances of nú occur in environments with clear similarities and show shifts between two different parallel parts. In (8.1), there is a shift between two different subtopics which are equally important to the argument, and, in (8.2), there is a shift between two events in a story, which are both equally important to the narrative as a whole. Therefore, the usage of nú is similar to the usage of the English now which Schiffrin (1987: 238) describes as being “a resource with which a speaker can emphasize the sequential nature of a discourse whose cumulative nature is important for the establishment of a particular point.” In the following section, I will look at a different usage of nú. This usage does not show parallel parts but, rather, displays attention to important points in larger projects.

### 8.2.2 Nú foregrounding a main point

The initial nú often begins turns which present a main point in larger projects. In these cases, speakers are guiding their interlocutor’s attention by showing that the utterance following the particle nú is particularly important for a story or an argument. Consider excerpt (8.3). When the excerpt begins, the greeting sequence has just finished, and the caller is bringing up the reason for his call. The particle occurs in line 21:

**Excerpt (8.3) LOST GLASSES: Soul 03.06.96**

(M = Moderator; B = Birgir, a caller)

1 B .hhhhh Heyrðu é (.). konu sem að+hh (0.2) *#* hhh ó
   .hhhh PRT I have.1 (.). wife.ACC who that+hh (0.2) # # hhh ó
   .hhhh listen, I have (.). a wife who (0.2) eh hhh eh

2 lenti í því að týna gleraugum?
   land.3.PT in it.DAT to lose.INF glasses .DAT.DEF happened to lose her glasses

3 M Já?
   PRT yeah

4 M í dag þá [væntanlega?]
   today then [presumably ]
   today I [ presume ]

241
and so that it was the other day

shall.1 I say.INF you.DAT she go.3.PT up in swimmingpool.ACC.DEF
let me tell you, she went to the pool

in Breiðholt

and had these very expensive nice titan glasses, reading glasses

and they have either fallen out of her pocket

when she went to visit her sister on Langahlið

Sóley in Langahlið eleven

if someone has accidentally

picked up glasses it would be good to have
At the beginning of the excerpt, Birgir tells the moderator the reason for his call: his wife has lost her glasses (lines 1–2). After defining when this event took place (lines 4–5), Birgir continues his story and gives the necessary details. All the TCUs have rising terminal contours (lines 5–7, 10, 12–13, 16, and 19), and they all generate feedback from the moderator (lines 9, 11, 15, 17, and 20). The backchannels function as continuers, and, by using them, the moderator encourages Birgir to go on with his story. When Birgir has provided the necessary background, and the moderator has given him feedback (line 20), Birgir moves on to the next phase in his story. He marks the shift with an audible in-breath followed by #nú::#. The particle is produced with level intonation, a prolonged vowel, and creaky voice (line 21).

The particle in (8.3) occurs after Birgir has finished providing background information, but before he explains what should be done if the glasses are found. The shift from background information to future action is further emphasized by a change of verb form from past (lines 5–19) to perfect (line 21) (cf. Wide 2002). Later, the past subjunctive (line 22) signifies that Birgir is talking about something that is only a possibility. By using the particle nú, Birgir indexes the discourse time and thus gives special attention to what is coming next.

The particle nú in (8.3) occurs in a multi-unit turn, and it is followed by more than one TCU by the same speaker. In (8.4), in contrast, the particle precedes only one TCU, and this TCU contains the central argument. (8.4) is also drawn from the data The soul of the nation. In this conversation, Örvar is complaining about an anti-smoking campaign which has been running on television. Just before the extract begins, Örvar points out that these advertisements do not mention how many people die in traffic accidents each year. He implies that smoking is not the only dangerous thing in life:
(8.4) THE SMOKING SAMIS: Soul 03.06.96
(M = Moderator; Ö = Örvar, a caller)

1 Ö Ég meina sumir þeir jafnvel+#: reykja fjörgamlir
 I mean, some they even eh smoke.3.PL very old.M.PL
 I mean some people, they smoke when they are very old

2 alveg þessvegna tvo pakka á dagː
 PRT therefore two.ACC packages.ACC on day.ACC
even two packages a day

(0.3)

3 M j↓á:j↑á
PR[T
yeah sur[e

(0.3)

5 Ö [og verða hundrað ára eins o’ (0.4) hvað samísku gamalmennin
 [and become.3.PL hundred years as and (0.4) what samí.N old people.DEF
 [and live to a hundred just as (0.4) what was it the old samis,

6 þarna fjögur um→ (1.0) hátt í fjörgurhundrað ára samtals?
 there four about (1.0) high in four hundred years.GEN together
the four of them (1.0) almost four hundred years in total

(1.0)

8 Ö Þau reykj öll?
they smoke.3.PL all.N.PL
they all smoke

(1.1)

10 M Bíddu nú víðː
wait.IMPER NÚ VP
hold NÚ on

((4 turns omitted, Ö explains where he read the article))

11 Ö .hh Þau voru samtals hátt í:: ja þau voru um hundrað ára
 .hh they be.3.PL.PT in total high in PRT they be.3.PL.PT around hundred years.GEN
 .hh they were in total, well they were about a hundred

12 hver og yfir hundrað ára.
each and over hundred years.GEN
each and over a hundred

(.

14 Ö sum þeirra.
some they.GEN
some of them

15 M °mhm:°
PRT
mhm

(0.5)
At the beginning of the extract, Örvar is arguing against showing anti-smoking propaganda on television (lines 1–2). The moderator immediately shows some reservation. This is indexed by the pauses in the conversation (lines 3, 7, 9, 16, and 18), and by the reduplicated j̄á:j̄á ‘yes’ which is delivered with a reluctant tone (line 4). Örvar expands his turn by giving the example of the four smoking Samis, people who have lived long lives despite their smoking habits (lines 5–6 and 8). Notice that this TCU is produced with a rising terminal contour. This suggests that Örvar is seeking affiliation from the moderator again. Despite this search for affiliation, Örvar’s comment is followed by another long gap, this time stretching over 1.1 seconds (line 9). The reason for this delay becomes clear in the following turn when the moderator finally initiates a repair sequence, implying that she does not know who the four smoking Samis are (line 10). Following the repair sequence (turns omitted), Örvar takes the floor again and repeats his previous comment (lines 11–12 and 14). After a backchannel from the moderator, he points out again that the Samis smoke. The comment is initiated with the particle nú and produced with level intonation and a glottal stop (line 17).

The turn containing nú delivers the same message as the turn in line 8. In other words, Örvar is repeating a fact which he presents as proof that smoking is not dangerous: the four Samis are each a hundred years old even though they all smoke. Therefore, the particle nú is employed in a slot which precedes the main point of Örvar’s argument. By using the particle, Örvar signals to the moderator and the listeners that the upcoming TCU deserves special attention. Thus, nú serves as a
focuser before a particularly important part of an argument. At the same time, the particle creates continuity by displaying that the upcoming turn is part of a larger communicative project. The fact that there is only one TCU following nú makes this foregrounding even more clear (cf. also Schiffrin 1987: 235 on now prefacing a coda).

Excerpts (8.3) and (8.4) contain instances of nú which signal transitions from background information to a main point of a story or argument. These instances differ from the instances in (8.1) and (8.2) in that they do not mark a transition between two equal parts but rather between two different phases in communicative projects. This shift between two phases of a story or argument takes place by displaying special attention to an upcoming idea. Usage of the utterance particle nú in these slots tells the co-participant that the main point is coming up, and that he or she should pay more attention.

8.2.3 Summary of nú initiating continuations

In sections 8.2.1 and 8.2.2, I have discussed instances of nú initiating turn continuations. Such occurrences function as linking devices, and they signal that an upcoming TCU is a continuation of the previous turn. Some instances signal a cumulative structure, and, thus, they may occur repeatedly in the same sequence. A particle may, for example, signal a shift between subtopics, such as in (8.1), or aid the progress through discourse time (see section 3.2), such as in (8.2). Other instances mark a shift between different phases of larger activities, such as story tellings or longer arguments. In these cases, nú displays the upcoming TCU as containing particularly important information, such as in (8.3) and (8.4).

Regarding the structural features of nú initiating a continuation, the general tendency is that the particle is preceded or followed by a pause. In the majority of instances, audible in-breath also occurs, either before or after the particle. In (8.3), the particle is preceded by in-breath, while the first instance in (8.1) is followed by in-breath and a short pause. Nú which initiates continuations is typically produced with a prolonged vowel and often with a creaky voice, similar to the instances in (8.1) and (8.3). In these cases, the particle is often produced as an independent prosodic unit within which boundaries are either marked with pauses or with a clear pitch step-up, such as the latter instance in excerpt (8.1). The pauses underline that a transition is taking place. The intonation contour can be either rising-falling, such as in (8.1), line 9; rising, such as in line 22; or level, such as in (8.3) and (8.4).
Nú initiating continuation often occurs in the environment of backchannel devices. This feature is strongly tied to the fact that these types of nú occur at points of local pragmatic completions (see section 4.4.1) when one usually would expect feedback.

As I showed in section 8.2, nú may be used as a device to create a link between two different parts of multi-unit turns. The function of such instances is to signal continuity and to show progression. Thus, these instances display attention to an utterance. They are egocentric in nature as are other deictic elements belonging to the proximal sphere (cf. Schiffrin 1987: 245). This, however, is not the case when nú occurs after a speaker-change. On the contrary, such instances display a clear orientation towards the interlocutor.

8.3 Nú initiating turns after speaker-change

Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974: 722) state in their study on turn-taking that turns go through three different phases: the first part shows how a turn relates to the previous turn, the middle part carries the proposition that the turn is meant to deliver, and the third and last part displays orientation to the incipient turn (see section 4.4.3). Utterance particles, such as nú, often occur at the beginning of turns, just after a speaker-change. I will argue that the turn-initial nú has a function similar to nú which initiates continuations: they both display attention to an upcoming turn (cf. Schiffrin 1987: 230). However, as these instances are produced directly after a speaker-change, they acquire a responsive character instead of functioning as a linking device. In this section, I will describe two different sequential slots in which nú occurs. In (8.3.1), I will discuss nú in utterances registering informings, and, in (8.3.2), I will discuss nú in turns responding to questions.

8.3.1 Nú in utterances registering informings

One of the typical environments for the utterance particle nú is in utterances which register informings (cf. Heritage 1984b: 300 on the English oh). Consider the following excerpt drawn from the data The soul of the nation. Right at the beginning of the conversation, traffic noise can be heard in the background, and this causes the moderator to ask where Karl, the caller, is located (line 1):

**The soul of the nation**

Right at the beginning of the conversation, traffic noise can be heard in the background, and this causes the moderator to ask where Karl, the caller, is located (line 1):
Karl responds to the moderator’s question by pointing out that he is not actually driving (lines 2–3). This information is delivered with two TCUs, each of which occur with a rising final contour. The moderator responds by stating that it sounds as though he is driving at “breakneck speed” (line 5). This assertion is initiated with the utterance particle nú and delivered with a rising-falling intonation contour. Figure 8.4 shows the fundamental frequency of the utterance in line 5:
The turn which contains the utterance particle *nú* displays that the information in Karl’s utterance was unexpected. Notice how the moderator chuckles while she tells him that it sounds as though he is driving. When the moderator has reached a possible completion after *fleygiferð* ‘breakneck speed,’ Karl explains why it may sound as though he is driving: he is speaking on a carphone (lines 6–7). The moderator accepts this explanation by partially repeating Karl’s utterance after his possible completion (line 8).

In the excerpt above, the utterance particle *nú* has many similarities with the change-of-state token *oh* in English (cf. Schiffrin 1987; Heritage 1984b; 1996; 2002; Local 1996 on the English *oh*). Heritage (1984b: 304) points out that, by employing the particle *oh*, speakers “confirm the presupposition, relevance, and upshot of the prior act of informing as an action that has involved the transmission of information from an informed to an uninformed party.” The environment in which the utterance particle *nú* occurs suggests that it also has a similar function. In many cases, the particle initiates a question which shows that the previous statement contains new information. In the following excerpt, drawn from the data *PTC*, Lárus is calling his daughter Erna:

*(8.6) YOU ARE NEVER AT HOME: PTC 11.06.03 (→ 9.1, → 9.24)*

(L = Lárus, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 E Halló.
    GREET
    hello
Immediately after the identification (lines 1–3), Lárus greets Erna and produces a turn which may be interpreted as an accusation that she is never at home (line 5). Erna responds with a turn in which she asks whether Lárus has been “trying a lot” to reach her (line 6). This question is initiated with the particle nú and produced with a slightly prolonged vowel as well as a rising-falling intonation contour. The intonation contour is illustrated in Figure 8.5:

![Figure 8.5: Fundamental frequency (f0) of line 6, excerpt (8.6)](image-url)
The utterance particle *nú* in excerpt (8.6) implies that it surprises Erna that her father has not been able to contact her before. If the particle were left out, Erna’s reply could have been interpreted as a confession that she is, in fact, difficult to get ahold of. Thus, the particle serves an important function: it shows that Lárus’s assertion contains, according to Erna, new and unexpected information.

In the cases I have been looking at so far, the particle *nú* responds to information that was produced in the turn immediately before it. If *nú* is integrated in a longer turn, however, it may sometimes have a more global function. It can respond to a TCU produced earlier in the turn, such as in the following excerpt in which Hrafnkell is describing a problem he has with the tires under his car. The excerpt begins just after the greeting sequence:

(8.7) **BAD TIRES: Soul 23.05.96 (←4.4)**

(M = Mechanic; H = Hrafnkell)

1 H Ég ver(ið)að pælí:(.)Ég var að kaupa dekk á bílinn hjá mér; I be.PP to think+in(.) I be.1 PT to buy.INF tires.ACC on car.ACC.DEF with I.DAT
I've been wondering(.) I just bought tires for my car

2 M j↑á:
PRT
yeah

3 (1.2)

4 Og. (0.8) þa er eitthvað’ (.) Hann rá:sar svo eftir að ég fékk and (0.8) it be.3 something(.) he slide.3 so after that I get.1 PT and (0.8) there is something(.) it slides so back and forth that I got

5 H ný dekk \og ég fór og talaði viððá þarna; new tires and I go.1 PT and speak.1 PT with+they.DAT there
new tires and I went to talk with them

6 (0.2)

7 M j↑á:
PRT
yes

8 (0.3)

9 H .hhhhh (.) Og þeir #e# vildu ekkert fyrir mig gÉra ég var .hhhhh (.) and they eh want.3 PT nothing for I.ACC do.ACC I be.1 PT .hhhhh (.) and they eh didn’t want to help me I was

10 sóna pælí hvað ég- Hvernig ég ætti að snúa mér í þessu. PRT think+in what I- how I can.1 SUBJ to turn.INF I.DAT in this.DAT like thinking what I should do about this
In the beginning of the excerpt, Hrafnkell proffers as a topic the problem which he has with his tires (line 1). The mechanic accepts the topic and produces a go-ahead signal (line 2). At this point, there is a substantial pause in Hrafnkell’s introduction, stretching over 1.2 seconds (line 3). After the pause, he continues his turn by explaining the nature of his problem and adds that he has spoken with “them” about it (line 5). This turn has a half-rising terminal contour and is designed to seek affiliation. The mechanic responds to this by producing another continuer, signalling that he is following Hrafnkell so far (line 7). After a short pause, Hrafnkell produces an audible in-breath before he continues his turn. The next part of the turn consists of two TCUs, an assertion, and an indirect question about where he should seek help with the tires (lines 9–10). After Hrafnkell’s question, it is the mechanic’s turn to take the floor. After a deep breath and a clicking sound, the mechanic asks Hrafnkell a question and initiates it with the particle combination *nú hva* ‘NÚ what’ (line 11). After this turn beginning, the mechanic produces some creaky sounds which signal some difficulties in producing the question. He then makes a restart marked with *hérna* ‘here’ and finally utters the question he projected with *nú*.

In this case, *nú* is not necessarily responding to the last TCU in which Hrafnkell is wondering where he should go for help. Instead, *nú* is produced as a response to an earlier TCU in this multi-unit turn. It responds to Hrafnkell’s statement that he is having problems with his car, and that “they” did not want to help him. To find out why “they” refused to help, the mechanic has to ask questions. The combination of *nú*
and hva signals that something in the previous turn is new and unexpected to the
mechanic, and that this prompts him to pose a question. The combination functions as
a link between the previous and the upcoming turn. It embeds the question in the
existing context by showing that the question is a response to a prior turn.

The particle nú followed by questions is also frequently used as a repair initiator.
Such repair questions are triggered by new information which the co-participant did
not expect. Consider the following excerpt drawn from the data Friends. In (8.8),
Sunna is trying to calculate when her graduation party can begin (lines 1, 4, and 6):

**(8.8) PLANNING THE GRADUATION: Friends (→9.14)**

*(S = Sunna; J = Jessica; N = Nanna)*

1 S [[ en þá er betta búið sko þetta <fjö:gard>¿
but then be.3 this finish.PP.N PRT this four.N
[[ but then this finished about four,

2 J [[ xxx xx xxx ]

3 (0.6)

4 S ég treysti þv[í ekki alveg þa er örugglega búið svo[na
I trust.1 that not completely this finish.PP.N PR[T
I don’t really trust that, this is probably finished like

5 [((click, e.g. someone breaking nuts)) [((click))

6 S meira h[álf fimm,
more h[álf five
more like h[ál past four

7 [((click))

8 N °.já [þú ert° ko min heim fimn;[PRT you be.2 come.PP.F home five
yeah you are at home at five

9 S [mt

10 S #já# nei↓ >við erum að fara að taka m-< (0.3) ég fer i
PRT PRT we be.3.PL to go.INF to take.INF ph- (0.3) I go.1 in
well no, we are going to take ph- (0.3) I will go to

11 myndatöku klukkan fimn;[photography.ACC clock.DEF five
the photographer at five o’clock

12 (0.2)

→ N NÚ: varstu ekki í myndatöku á fð[studaginn.
NÚ were.2 you not in photography.DAT on Fri[day.ACC.DEF
NÚ didn’t you go to the photographer on Fri[day?
When Sunna has made a guess about when her graduation ceremony will be over, Nanna draws the conclusion that she will be home by five o’clock (line 8). Sunna, however, immediately rejects this proposal by stating that she is going to the photographer at five (lines 10–11). This new piece of information may come as a surprise to the other participants, since Sunna has told them a long and detailed story about her family’s experience at the photographer a few minutes earlier. Hence, Nanna responds by asking Sunna whether she did not go to the photographer last Friday (line 13). The repair initiator begins with the utterance particle nú and is delivered with a rising intonation contour.

By using the particle nú, Nanna signals immediately that she has a problem understanding the new information provided in the prior turn. Nanna’s turn is designed as a negative question which gives Sunna the opportunity to accept or reject it. In this case, Sunna neither accepts nor rejects it but instead signals that Nanna is misunderstanding her: she is not going to the photographer with her family but rather with her fellow students (lines 14–15).

A similar misunderstanding also causes a problem in the following excerpt. In (8.9), Sigrún is telling her daughter Erna about a trip to Denmark she and her husband are planning to go on. In the beginning of this conversation, Sigrún announces that she is leaving on Monday (line 1):

(8.9) *Did you buy the tickets?* PTC 09.07.03
(S = Sigrún, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 S Við förum á mánuðaginn, we go.3.PL on Monday.ACC.DEF we are leaving on Monday
Sigrún’s assertion in line 1 is designed as though Erna should know that she is going to Copenhagen. Yet, Erna initiates a repair, asking Sigrún to clarify where she is going (line 2). She responds in the following turn by uttering the name “Copenhagen” (line 3). At this point, there is a 0.9 second pause in the conversation. The reason for the gap between the two turns becomes clear when Erna finally responds to Sigrún’s turn. It seems to come as a surprise to Erna that Sigrún and her husband are, in fact, going to Copenhagen. Thus, Erna requests verification (line 5). The verification question is initiated with the utterance particle nú and produced with a rising intonation contour.
It is also prosodically integrated in the utterance. The whole turn is delivered with a loud voice in a higher key than the surrounding talk, and in a tone of voice which clearly displays surprise.

Instead of answering the question, Sigrún utters only the name of the airline, Air Greenland (line 7). Again, we have a 1.0 second pause which again signals some kind of problem in the communication (line 8). After the pause, Erna initiates a repair sequence, requesting a clarification for this indirect answer (line 9). Sigrún then repeats the name of the airline, but this time she uses a prepositional phrase, *me Greenland ‘with Greenland.’* Again there is a pause, this time stretching over 1.1 seconds. After the pause, Erna responds with the particle *nú* followed by a rhetorical question which registers the new information as unexpected: *er þ↑a↓ ‘are you’* (line 12). In this case, *nú* signals that Erna is coming to an understanding of the previous information given by Sigrún, and that the misunderstanding has now been cleared up. In the subsequent turn, Sigrún confirms that they are going to go and then adds that they are going to stay for a week. After a relatively long pause, Erna finally acknowledges this new information with a closing phrase, the idiomatic phrase *ég skal segja ykkur það ‘I see,’* signalling the potential end of this repair sequence (line 15).

In the excerpts thus far, I have discussed occurrences of *nú* which display firm responses to new information. In the last two excerpts of this section, I will discuss the function of *nú* prefacing explicit apologies.\(^\text{81}\) Just as in the instances of *nú* discussed above, these instances display attention towards an upcoming apology and therefore signal the received information as somewhat new. Hence, the particle implies that the apologizers were doing something wrong unknowingly. Consider the following excerpt in which a woman calls a wrong number. By using the *nú* preface to an apology, the caller implies that her phone-call to Erna is accidental:

\begin{verbatim}
(W = Unidentified woman, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 E Halló
GREET
   hello

2 W Er Sólveig min heima,
   be.3 InameF my.F home
   is my dear Sólveig at home?
\end{verbatim}

\(^{81}\) I use the term “explicit apologies” for apologies which involve the apologetic word *fyrirgefðu ‘sorry.’* For further discussion on apologies, see Holmes (1990), and Robinson (2004).
Immediately after the greeting, the caller requests to speak with a person who is unknown to Erna (line 2). Erna initiates a repair, perhaps to make sure she is not making a mistake by not recognizing the name of the person for whom the caller is asking (line 3). When the caller is informed that Sólveig, the person with whom she wants to speak, does not live there, she apologizes (line 6) and hangs up (line 9). Her turn is initiated with a short nú which is immediately followed by the explicit apology token, fyrirgefðu ‘sorry’.

The caller produces the particle nú immediately after she has been informed that she is calling a wrong number. Thus, the particle marks a change in state of awareness. The caller now knows something she did not know before. This new information comes as a surprise to the caller, or at least she wants it to appear as such. However, as pointed out by Hakulinen and Sorjonen (1986: 52), producers of surprise tokens do not have to be sincerely surprised to use them. In cases in which the recipient is not sincerely surprised, the function of the particle might be seen as a formality rather than as a marker of genuine feelings. Calling a wrong number, however, could very well be an occasion when it may seem appropriate to be surprised.

Often, an explicit apology occurs in combination with other particles. In these cases, the particle nú occurs first, before the other particles, right when the change of
orientation or awareness has taken place. Excerpt (8.11) involves an apology prefaced with the particle combination *nú jæja þá* ‘NÚ well then’:

**(8.11) FAVOURITISM: Soul 11.06.96**

(M = Moderator; R = Ragnhildur, the caller)

1 R Já og so er annað hitt sem að ég ætla að segja að
   PRT and so be.3 another other which that I intend.1 to say.INF that
   yeah, and then the other- other thing which I was going to say that

2 (.) hhh é: bara: vil þáska þess að fólk sem erekki búin a:
   (.) hhh want.1 wish.INF that.GEN that people which be.3+not finish.PP.PL to
   (.) hhh I just wish that the people that haven’t

3 (0.2) .h búin að hugsa sig um að þa ka þósi u: Jóhann (.) .hh
   (0.2) finish.PP.PL to think.INF if.REFL VP that they elect.3.SUBJ eh- nameM (.) .hh
   (0.2) .h decided that they vote for Jóhann (.). hh

4 Svarfdal því hann er alveg #á-# alveg mjög [.hh # # # #
   LAST because he be.3 PRT a- very [.hh ((glottal sounds))
   Svarfdal because he is just a-just very [. hh

5 M [Ekki Ragnhildur vi- e-
   [ not nameF we- ar-
   [Don’t Ragnhildur, we have

   → R # # # #
   ((Glottal sounds))
   [ Nú jæja þá fyrirgefðu en ]
   [ Nú PRT PRT sorry but I ]
   find.MV
   [ Nú well then, sorry but I ]
   think

7 M búin að banna [allan áróður fyrir kosningarnar]
   finish.PP.PL to forbid.INF [all favouritism before elections.DEF ]
   forbidden [all favouritism before the elections ]

8 R hann vera #a-# aðgengileg[astur
   he be.INF a- accessible.M
   he is most accessible

In this excerpt, Ragnhildur is recommending that undecided voters should vote for a particular candidate whom she then mentions by name (lines 1–4). Before the excerpt begins, however, the moderator has explicitly asked all the callers not to pursue any political favouritism on the show. Ragnhildur is therefore violating the rules, and, as soon as the moderator realizes what is happening, she interrupts (line 5). The moderator’s turn is prefaced with the negation *ekki* ‘don’t,’ followed by the caller’s

---

82 Particles typically occur in a particular order (Hakulinen 1995; Green-Vänttinen 2001; J. Lindström 2002).
name. Here, the preface is designed to put an abrupt stop to Ragnhildur’s activity. Notice, however, that Ragnhildur does not completely yield the floor. During the moderator’s turn, Ragnhildur produces glottal sounds, suggesting that she intends to continue when the moderator is done (lines 4 and 6). She is thus hanging onto the turn. The moderator’s directive in line 5 is followed by an account which indicates why Ragnhildur has to stop (lines 5 and 7). When Ragnhildur is able to project what the moderator is going to say, she continues her turn and initiates a new TCU. In this TCU, Ragnhildur produces an apology initiated by nú, followed by the combination of jæja ‘well’ and þá ‘then’ (line 6). Ragnhildur, however, does not seem to feel any actual remorse, and she justifies her behaviour by claiming that this is her personal opinion. It is maybe this lack of remorse which causes the moderator not to acknowledge or accept Ragnhildur’s apology. Instead, she shows non-affiliation by stating that this is Ragnhildur’s view and thus implies that she does not share this opinion herself (line 9).

By using the phrase nú jæja þá followed by an apology and an account, Ragnhildur is responding to a face-threatening situation. The particle nú plays a key role in this context by signalling that the information was new. As mentioned above, however, the apologetic phrase in line 6 is not a real apology. Instead, the apologetic phrase is used as a response to a strong rejection from the moderator, and thus a very face-threatening situation. In this apologetic response, nú signals that the moderator’s move is unexpected. Nevertheless, Ragnhildur seems to be somewhat aware that political opinions are forbidden. Notice how soon she is able to project what the moderator is going to say in line 6 where the word banna ‘forbid’ is the last word she is able to hear before she starts the overlap.

To summarize, I have shown how the utterance particle nú is used to display attention towards the turn it initiates. These utterances are either designed as statements, such as in (8.5), as questions, such as in (8.6) to (8.9), or as apologetic utterances, such as in (8.10) and (8.11). By displaying attention towards these turns, nú indicates a problem with a previous turn, that something is unexpected or out of the ordinary. Thus, it is not necessary that the particle itself contain the element of surprise but rather the combination of nú and the turn that follows. A similar display of surprise can also be noted in the following section in which I will discuss nú which respond to questions.
8.3.2 Nú responding to questions

The utterance particle nú often occurs in question-answer adjacency pairs. In these instances, nú initiates the answer. Consider the following excerpt in which Arnar is asking Erna to go sunbathing. The excerpt begins right after the greetings:

(8.12) **SUNBATHING IN REYKJAVIK: 03.07.03**

(A = Arnar, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 A Eiguvað   fara í sólbað,  
shall.1.PL+to   go.INF in sunbath.ACC  
should we go sunbathing

2 E (0.5)

3 E Só:lbAð.  
sunbath.ACC  
sunbathing?

4 A j↓á  
PRT  
yes

5 E Hva(r) ætlar þú að fara í sólbað,=  
where       intend.1  you to    go.INF in sunbath.ACC  
where are you going to sunbathe?

6 A =Þa   so geggað veður,  
i(t)       so    crazy.N  
the weather is so crazy

7 (0.5)

8 E mt. Hvar ert þú eiginlega,  
mt.        where be.2  you actually  
where are you

9 (0.6)

10 A #↑E↓↓:g,# ((with surprise in the voice))  
I  
me?

11 E já.  
PRT  
yes

12 (0.8)

13 → A N↓ú, #å# /þingholtunum¿  
NÚ    on  Thíngholt.DAT.DEF  
NÚ in Thingholt

14 (1.3)
At the beginning of the excerpt, Arnar asks Erna whether she wants to go sunbathing with him (line 1). Erna shows her surprise by repeating the question, which indicates that she finds it hard to believe that he is being serious (line 3) (cf. Jefferson 1972). After a confirmation from Arnar, Erna continues showing her surprise by asking him where he intends to go sunbathing (line 5). It seems as though Erna does not understand how it is possible that the weather is nice in Arnar’s neighbourhood. Therefore, in the subsequent talk, Erna displays some doubts about where he is actually located (line 8). Arnar treats this question as utterly surprising. His surprise is indexed by a turn consisting of only the pronoun ég ‘I’ (line 10). The pronoun is delivered with heavy stress and rising-falling intonation\(^{83}\) which is typical for these kinds of question repeats (cf. Jefferson 1972). By responding in such a way, Arnar marks this question as somehow strange or out of place. After a confirmation from Erna, and a 0.8 second pause, Arnar takes the floor and answers the question (line 13). He initiates his answer with the particle nú. The particle is delivered with a short vowel, a falling intonation contour, and it is prosodically isolated from the rest of the turn. Thus, these instances have a clearly different contour from the instances which register informings. The pitch is illustrated in Figure 8.6:

\(^{83}\) See also line 3 in excerpt (8.13).
In (8.12), né displays attention to an answer to a question. By using né, Arnar displays attention to the fact that he is located in Thingholt. In such a way, Arnar presents his answer as self-evident.

A similar pattern is found in (8.13), which is also drawn from the data PTC. Sigrún has just asked her daughter Erna if she has been watching the documentary which is on television during the phone-call. Erna acknowledges that she is watching the program, and they exchange short comments about it. Sigrún then asks Erna who directed the documentary. After a response from Erna, Sigrún asks whether she knows this director (line 1):

(8.13) YOU KNOW EVERYBODY: PTC 01.07.03
(S = Sigrún, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 S eh (0.2) þekkiruana,
   eh (0.2) know.3+you+she.ACC
   eh (0.2) do you know her?

2

3 E Æ:↑:kg

4 (.)

5 Hve[rnig á ãga þekkja hana=
   hó[w shall.3 I+to know.INF she.ACC
   hó[w should I know her?

6 S [já
   [PRT [ yes

→ S =#e: NÚ↑: bvr:a:ra# "þekkiro marga"; İz
   uhun NÚ PRT know.3+so many
   uhun, NÚ just because, you know so many people

8

9 E hffhffh=
   (((laughter))
   hffhffh

10 S =Hálfan bæinn;
   half.ACC town.ACC.DEF
   half of the town

Sigrún’s question appears to come as a surprise to Erna. After a 0.6 second delay, she produces a turn consisting only of the pronoun ég ‘I,’ heavily stressed (line 3). Thus, Erna questions the fact that Sigrún is asking whether she knows this director.
Following a micro-pause, Erna asks explicitly how she is supposed to know this director (line 5). Sigrún responds by explaining to Erna that she just knows so many people (line 7). Her turn is prefaced with a planning marker followed by the particle n↓ú↑ and b↓a:r↑ ‘just,’ delivered with creaky voice. This signals that Sigrún has no particular reason for asking this question. The particle is prosodically non-integrated with the surrounding talk.

Just as in (8.12), the particle nú initiates an answer in (8.13). In this case, however, the question-answer adjacency pair is embedded within another pair. Sigrún has asked Erna whether she knows the director, and Erna, in return, has asked why she should know her. The insertion sequence initiated by Erna does not ignore the first question but instead postpones the answer until Sigrún has answered the embedded question (cf. Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 40–1). The utterance particle nú has the function of displaying attention to the fact that there is no particular reason that Erna should know this director. She is asking “just because.” This explanation is then followed by the claim that Erna knows so many people. In such a way, Sigrún trivializes Erna’s question and shows that there is no particular reason behind it.

In (8.12) and (8.13), the utterance particle nú occurs in question-answer adjacency pairs. The last excerpt in this chapter, on the other hand, shows an instance of nú in a slot in which an answer would be a relevant next action. However, as often happens in disagreements, the speaker responds to the question by a counter-question. In (8.14), which is drawn from The soul of the nation, Ingi has been making complaints about how the state radio wastes public money by producing radio shows in which nobody is interested. Among other things, he has complained about a program hosted by a lecturer at the University of Iceland. When the excerpt begins, Ingi expresses his disappointment that the state radio spends money on such “nonsense” (line 1):

(8.14) WORKING FOR NOTHING: Soul 31.05.96
(M = Moderator; I = Ingi, the caller)

1 I og #og mér finnst skrítíð að vera að kaupa: allt svona rugl?
   and I.DAT find.MV strange to be.INF to buy.INF all.N PRT nonsense.ACC
   and and I think it’s strange to buy nonsense like this

2 (0.7)

3 I .h Ef að lektorinn er á- e- illa launaður í Háskólanum
   .h if that lecturer.DEF be.3 on eh- bad pay.PP.M in University.DAT.DEF
   .h if the lecturer gets lousy pay at the university,
en ekki til /útvæpsins.
but not to radio.GEN.DEF
and not to the radio

(1.3)

7 M He[ldurðu að hann fái bara <n Q k u ð> fyrir þetta.
think.2+you that he get.3.SUBJ PRT anything for this.ACC
do you think he gets anything for this?

8 I [é-
[I-
[I-

(0.5)

→ I NÚ hvað heldurðu ö- ö-ö-ö-ö-ö vinnur nokkur þarna fyrir
what think.2+you eh- eh-eh-eh-eh work.3 anyone there for
nu, what do you think, does anyone work there for

11 ekki nleitt, ((with an angry or upset tone of voice))
not nothing
nothing?

12 (0.6)

13 M Ja það liggur við.
PRT that lie.3 VP
well, almost

14 I Ja hvurnig ste- vei [ hva- e- e- ]
PRT how co- kno [ wha- eh eh ]
well, how co- kno- [ wha- eh eh ]

15 M [Þetta er bara hug]sjón=
[this be.3 PRT mis]sion,
[ this is just a mis]sion

This issue raised by Ingi is potentially delicate for the moderator since she is an employee of the institution he is criticizing. Immediately after Ingi’s first statement, there is a relatively long pause which indicates some kind of problem (line 2). After the pause, Ingi continues and makes ironic remarks and states that the professor should receive social benefits instead of getting money from the radio station (lines 3–5). Again, there is no immediate response from the moderator (line 6). After a 1.3 second pause, the moderator finally takes the floor and challenges Ingi’s complaint by suggesting that the lecturer might be doing the work for free (line 7). The challenge is formed as a negative question, so that the recipient can either respond by admitting that the lecturer may not receive any money or respond by rejecting the possibility. In
this case, however, Ingi decides to respond with a counter-question with which he shows that he doubts that any employee of the state radio would do something for free (lines 10–11). Ingi’s turn is prefaced with the particle nú and produced with a short vowel with a falling intonation contour and a glottal stop.

The particle nú is followed by the conventional phrase hvað heldurðu ‘what do you think,’ which is routinely used in arguments. The phrase functions as a rhetorical question by which recipients are requested to ask themselves the very same question they have just asked. This response implies that the answer is self-evident, and that the question is thus somewhat out of place.

The instances of nú in (8.12), (8.13), and (8.14) occur in responses to questions. By using nú, speakers may show that they have problems with the relevance or presuppositions upon which a question is based.

### 8.3.3 Summary of nú connecting to a previous speaker’s turn

In this section, I have discussed the functions of the utterance particle nú as it initiates turns after a speaker-change. In my discussion, I suggest that the function of nú is to display attention to the turn in which it occurs. The particle occurs in two different environments in my data: i) in turns registering new information, and ii) in responses to certain types of questions.

Turns registering new information can be designed as statements, such as in (8.5), as questions, such as in (8.6) to (8.9); and as apologies, such as in (8.10) and (8.11). When nú is employed in statements, the turn simply registers an informing in a previous turn. Instances which initiate questions, by contrast, are designed to prompt a confirmation from the provider of new information. Thus, these instances may sometimes initiate repair sequences, such as in (8.8) and (8.9). Even instances with apologies occur in turns which register newly acquired information as new and unexpected.

In the section that followed, I discussed instances which initiate answers. I argue that the attention which nú displays is sometimes employed to show that an answer is self-evident, such as in (8.12). In (8.13), nú was employed to display attention to an answer in a face-threatening situation, and to show that the question was not meant to be taken seriously. I also point out that nú is often used as a strategic device in disagreements to reject arguments, such as in (8.14).
My pitch analysis of *nú* shows that the two categories have clearly different contours. When *nú* occurs in a turn which registers new information as unexpected, the intonation contour is either rising-falling (e.g., (8.5) and (8.9)), or just rising (e.g., (8.6) and (8.8)). The contours illustrated in section 8.31 are shown for comparison in Figure 8.7:

![Figure 8.7: The fundamental frequency (f₀) of *nú* registering informings](image)

The intonation contour in answers, by contrast, is either falling-rising (e.g., (8.13)), or just falling (e.g., (8.12)). In most of the instances, the particle is prosodically non-integrated with the rest of the turn, although the pause is always very short. Figure 8.8 shows the intonation contours of *nú* responding to questions:
Figure 8.8: The fundamental frequency (f₀) of nú responding to questions

The description above shows that the prosodic realization of nú after speaker-change is clearly different from nú in continuations. The prosodic differences reflect the functional differences which will be summarized below in the final section of this chapter.

8.4 Summary of nú as an utterance particle

In Chapter 8, I provided a sequential analysis of fourteen instances of syntactically non-integrated nú which occur in the pre-front field. In these slots, nú is not a complete action by itself, but, instead, it clearly points forward in the conversation and projects a sequentially meaningful contribution from the interlocutor who uttered the particle.

Nú as an utterance particle can be divided into two main categories: nú initiating continuations and nú initiating turns after a speaker-change. Table 8.2 summarizes the main features of the two types:
Table 8.2: A summary of nú in continuations and nú in turns after speaker shifts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nú in continuations</th>
<th>Nú in turns after speaker shifts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functions</strong></td>
<td>Showing continuity and progress</td>
<td>Registering informings as unexpected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intonation contours</strong></td>
<td>Rising-falling</td>
<td>Rising-falling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Rising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Falling-rising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other prosodic cues</strong></td>
<td>Prolonged vowel</td>
<td>Typically prosodically integrated in a TCU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creaky voice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often in the environment of in-breaths and/or pauses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 8.2 shows, the two categories of nú have two different functions and different prosodic realizations. At first glance, these two types seem to have little in common. The instances which occur in continuations display continuity in a speaker’s turn, while the instances which occur after a speaker-change display that the turn that they are responding to contains new information. A more detailed analysis, however, shows that both types of nú function in a way which is comparable to the function of the English now (Schiffrin 1987: 228–66). These particles display attention to the utterance which follows, and they mark a progression through discourse time. Thus, it is difficult to say whether it is nú which indexes the feeling of surprise (cf. Local 1996: 206 on the English oh). The surprise is also manifested in the turn which follows, the turn which nú is displaying attention towards.

In sum, the utterance particle nú serves as a link between different units of talk. The instances initiating continuations create a link between two turns or TCUs produced by the same speaker. The instances initiating turns after a speaker-change, by contrast, create a link between turns produced by two different speakers. In the latter case, nú is inherently responsive in nature since it is produced immediately after a speaker shift. These responsive elements are sometimes made even more prominent and function as a turn of their own, or as a dialogue particle. Such instances are the subject of the following chapter.
9 Ñú as a dialogue particle

In Chapter 8, I argued that nú as an utterance particle is sometimes used when informings\textsuperscript{84} in prior turns are new or unexpected. Further, I argued that surprise is not indexed entirely in the particle itself, and that nú also displays attention to an upcoming turn. Thus, nú does not act as a sequentially relevant action by itself. In other instances, however, the particle nú constitutes a turn of its own and thus functions as a dialogue particle.\textsuperscript{85} Excerpt (9.1) contains an instance of nú as an utterance particle, while (9.2) contains an instance of nú as a dialogue particle:

(9.1) YOU ARE NEVER AT HOME: PTC 11.06.03 (←8.6, →9.24)  
(L = Lárus, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 L  ## BlEssuð, þa er mikið að maður nær sambandi við þig.  
GREET it be.3 much that man.IMP get.3 contact.DAT with you.ACC  
Hello, finally I get ahold of you

→ E  mīgu: ertu búinn að reynia mikið.  
NÚ be.2+you finish.PP.M to try.INF much  
NÚ, have you been trying a lot?

3 L  ý:ý:ý:ý:
PRT  
yes

(9.2) GOING CAMPING: 03.08.03 (→9.6)  
(A = Arnar, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 E  >Í er að fara:< í hérna: Skátafell o: Jökulsárlón  
I be.3 to go.INF in PRT Skátafell.ACC and Jökulsárlón.ACC  
I’m going to ehm Skátafell and Jökulsárlón

2 og þa allt,  
and it all.N  
and everything

3 (0.6)

→ A  ý:ý:ý:ý:

5 E  ý:ý:ý:ý:  
PRT  
yeah

\textsuperscript{84} The term informing is from Heritage (1984b).
\textsuperscript{85} As pointed out in section 3.4.3, dialogue particles are non-referential indexes which express recipiency.
In (9.2), the dialogue particle nú functions first and foremost as a response. That is, it registers the informing delivered in the prior turn, but it does not itself request any particular response. As a result, either speaker can nominate himself or herself as the next speaker. In this study, such backward-looking instances are referred to as retrospective nú. Other instances are designed to elicit responses from co-participants, such as in (9.3):

**(9.3) UNEMPLOYED: PTC 11.06.03 (→9.17)**

(L = Lárus, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 L °.já° Ari hann er að verða örvæntingarfullur greyið.
   PRT InameM he be.3 to become.INF desperate.M poor thing.DEF
   Ari is becoming desperate the poor thing

→ E N↑u:

3 (1.4)

4 L Hann fær enga vinnu.
   he get.3 no work.ACC
   he can’t find a job

Following Lárus’s statement (line 1), Erna produces nú with rising intonation. Here, Erna has yielded the floor to Lárus and signalled that she expects an explanation for his prior turn. A lack of explanation would be “noticeably absent” (Sacks 1992b: 62). In this study, such instances are referred to as eliciting nú.

As excerpts (9.2) and (9.3) show, nú can be delivered with different types of intonation contours. The instance in (9.2) is delivered with a rising-falling intonation, while the contour in (9.3) is rising. Thus, one of the aims of this chapter is to investigate whether intonation functions as an interactionally meaningful entity. By doing a functional analysis and by comparing the intonation contours in each functional category, I will show that there is a correlation between function and contour. I will start by looking at the frequency and distribution of the different types of nú in the data (9.1). In the sections that follow, I will discuss instances which have retrospective functions (9.2) and instances with eliciting functions (9.3).
9.1 Distribution

In the present data, there are 73 instances of nú as a dialogue particle. The distribution between retrospective and eliciting nú is shown in Table 9.1:

Table 9.1: Distribution of nú as a dialogue particle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Retrospective nú</th>
<th>Eliciting nú</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>90 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>146 min.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>78 min.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>17 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>100 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul</td>
<td>310 min.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>110 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14 h. 11 min.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 9.1 illustrates, more than half of the occurrences of nú as a dialogue particle have retrospective functions. Furthermore, the table shows that the frequency cannot be fully explained by the formality or informality of the conversations: the informal multi-party conversation, Friends, has 13 occurrences of nú, while Reunion has only one. However, the table clearly indicates that nú is not used frequently in task-oriented or highly formal conversations, such as Elections and ITC.86 In the remainder of this chapter, I will analyze a number of excerpts in order to show how speakers use nú in conversation. I will begin by looking at instances with retrospective functions.

9.2 Retrospective functions

As mentioned above, the retrospective nú has a sequential role which is essentially backward looking. It responds to a prior turn without requesting, inviting, or promoting any particular response (cf. Heritage 1984b: 324 on the English oh). These retrospective instances are placed at points in a conversation when informings are

86 Heritage (1985) points out that the absence of responses such as oh in news interviews contributes to constructing institutionality.
potentially complete. In the following section, I will discuss two different functions of the retrospective *nú*. In 9.3.1, I will discuss *nú* when it registers new information, and, in 9.3.2, I will discuss *nú* when it displays a transition towards understanding.

### 9.2.1 *Nú* registering new information

The basic environment for the retrospective *nú* is located directly after informings. In (9.4), which is drawn from the data *PTC*, Arnar is asking Erna to come sunbathing with him. Erna is puzzled by Arnar’s suggestion and points out that the weather in her neighbourhood is not particularly good (line 1). In this excerpt, there are two examples of *nú* as a dialogue particle, one in line 13 and one in line 17:

(9.4) *LET’S GO SUN BATHING!*: 03.07.03

(A = Arnar, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 E Þa e sko ekkert gEggjað veður í Vesturbænum, it be.3 PRT nothing crazy.N weather in Vesturbær.DAT.DEF the weather in Vesturbær is not crazy at all

2 A Er þ/akki.
   be.3 that+not isn’t it?

3 E N↑e:i?
   PRT no

4 A eh:ehm::
   (clears his throat)
   ehm

5 (0.6)

6 E [[ Ka ]lt og skýjað
   [[ c o ]]ld.N and cloudy.N
   [[ c o ]]ld and overcast

7 A [[(x-)]

8 (0.4)

9 A $H↓a:$
   PRT what

10 (0.6)

11 E Kalt o skýjað,
   cold.N and cloudy.N
cold and overcast
At the beginning of (9.4), Erna asserts that the weather in her part of town is not good (line 1), and Arnar treats this information as unexpected (line 2). His response is produced with smily voice which suggests that it is ironic. Erna, however, does not seem to notice anything unusual with Arnar’s tone of voice, and she simply confirms her prior assertion with nei ‘no’ (line 3). Following this confirmation, Arnar makes another attempt to signal to Erna that he is being ironic by clearing his throat in a demonstrative way (line 4). However, Erna still does not understand what is going on. After a 0.6 second pause, Erna asserts that it is “cold and cloudy” in her neighbourhood (line 6), and she repeats this after a repair initiator from Arnar (lines 9 and 11). This information is followed by a 0.6 second pause (line 12) and a nú from Arnar (line 13). The particle is delivered with a short vowel and a rising-falling intonation contour with a small pitch range (see Figure 9.1 below). Further, it is uttered with low volume and with a smily voice. The pitch contour is illustrated in Figure 9.1:
The particle is followed by a 0.7 second pause (line 14). Then, Erna asks Arnar whether the sun is shining in his neighbourhood (line 15), and he responds ironically that the weather in his neighbourhood is just fantastic (line 16). At the first possible TRP and overlapping the beginning of Arnar’s second TCU, Erna responds with nú (line 17). The particle is delivered with a short vowel and with rising-falling intonation. The intonation contour for nú in line 17 is displayed in Figure 9.2:

In excerpt (9.4), both instances of nú occur after informings, and they both display a transition from not knowing to knowing. They are both produced as responses to descriptions of the weather. Remember that Arnar is being ironic by pretending that the weather in his neighbourhood is great. Hence, when Erna informs him that the
weather in her neighbourhood is not so good, he registers this information as something that forms a departure from the normal state of affairs (cf. Sorjonen 2002: 182 on the Finnish no). Since the weather is good in his neighbourhood, it should also be good in Erna’s part of town. Similarly, when Arnar claims that “the sun is shining like crazy,” Erna also registers that information as something new and extraordinary (cf. also Steensig 2001: 175–6 on the Danish nå).

Both instances are primarily retrospective in function, and they are treated as comments on prior turns. They function as news receipts, that is, they may elicit a confirmation but they do not prompt any direct continuation (cf. Jefferson 1981: 78–80; Maynard 1997: 107). In line 13, Arnar’s nú is followed by a 0.7 second pause before Erna takes the floor and poses another question. Similarly, the instance in line 17 is produced in an overlap and therefore not timed in such way that it would prompt an immediate response. It functions instead as a backchannel signal and does not have the status of a full-fledged turn.

As seen in (9.4), nú is typically produced after the delivery of one complete unit of information. In many cases, however, the co-participant adds more information after nú. Consider the following excerpt in which Gunnsteinn is talking to the moderator of The soul of the nation. Gunnsteinn is interested in buying a falcon from a woman who called earlier in the program, and, therefore, he is asking the moderator for her telephone number. Before the excerpt begins, the moderator introduces Gunnsteinn and announces the reason for his call. In the subsequent turn, Gunnsteinn responds to the introduction by greeting the moderator and the audience (line 1):

(9.5) **THE STUFFED FALCON: 05.06.96 (←2.2)**
(M = Moderator; G = Gunnsteinn, a caller)

1 G Já:: (.) Góðan daginn,
PRT (.) GREET yes(.) good afternoon

2 M Góðan dag en veistu að það var að hringja hér: GREET but know.2+you that it be.3.PT to call.INF here good afternoon but do you know that there was

3 hástaréttaðstöngmaður og segja okkur það supreme court lawyer and tell.INF we.DAT that a supreme court lawyer calling to tell us

4 að samkvæmt fuglafriðunarlögum mega einstaklingar that according to bird protection laws.DAT may.3.PL individuals according to the bird protection laws individuals
Ekki eiga erni og fálka uppstoppaða;> (0.4) eða stoppa þá upp
not own.INF eagles and falcons stuffed (0.4) or stuff.INF they.ACC VP
cannot have stuffed eagles and falcons (0.4) or stuff them

sjálfir. ((reading intonation))
self.M.PL
themselves

→ G N↑↓ú

Þeim ber að skila þeim til ríkisins
they.DAT must to return they.DAT to state.GEN
they have to return them to the state

G J↑↓á::j↓á
PRT
I see

After the greetings, the moderator tells Gunnsteinn that a lawyer has called her and
informed her that it is illegal for individuals to own stuffed falcons (lines 2–6). Notice
the problem projecting element in the beginning of the turn in which the moderator
initiates her turn with the connective en veistu ‘but do you know.’ In the subsequent
talk, the moderator utters her words more slowly than the surrounding talk, and she
uses a reading voice. The intonation and syntax suggest that she is quoting directly
from the Icelandic code of law. After the moderator has informed Gunnsteinn about
the law on stuffed eagles and falcons, there is a 0.3 second pause (line 7). After the
pause, Gunnsteinn responds with the particle nú, which is delivered with a short vowel
and rising-falling intonation. Following nú, the moderator takes the floor again and
informs Gunnsteinn about what should be done with such birds. Again, there is a
substantial pause before Gunnsteinn acknowledges the new information, this time
with the dialogue particle j ñá::jñá ‘I see’ (line 11).

Again, the particle nú occurs in a slot in which a speaker is registering
information that forms a departure from the normal state of affairs. Gunnsteinn has
called the program to learn the telephone number of a person who might sell him a
stuffed falcon. Thus far, the moderator has not shown any signs that this may be a
problem. When the moderator tells Gunnsteinn that it is illegal to own stuffed falcons,
the whole situation changes. He immediately assumes that he is not going to get the
telephone number, and, thus, he no longer has a reason to continue the conversation.
By responding with nú, Gunnsteinn foregrounds the information in the prior turn and
marks it as noteworthy (cf. Heritage 1984b: 306 on the English oh). As a response to
this, the moderator elaborates on her turn. Notice also that Gunnsteinn responds to this elaboration with the particle jā:jā ‘I see.’ Choosing jā:jā instead of nú, Gunnsteinn treats the prior turn as not forming a departure from the normal state of affairs.

The pattern (informing → nú → elaboration → jā:jā) is also apparent in (9.6) in which Arnar is asking Erna about a trip she is taking over the weekend (line 1). However, in this excerpt, the informing and the elaboration are elicited by questions:

(9.6) GOING CAMPING: 03.08.03 (←9.2)
(A = Arnar, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 A  "Hver eftir að fara,"
where be.2+you to go.INF
where are you going?
2  (0.5)
3 E    >É er að færa:< í hérna: Skjátafell o: Jökulsárlón
       I be.3 to go.INF in PRT Skjátafell.ACC and Jökulsárlón.ACC
I’m going to ehm Skjátafell and Jökulsárlón
4    og þa allt,
and it all.N
and everything
5  (0.6)
   → A nú:nú

7 E    jā:jā
PRT
yeah
8 A  Með hverjum eftir að færa,
with who.DAT be.2+you to go.INF
who are you going with?
9 E    Tónju vinkonu minni [frá Dýskalandi.
nameF girlfriend.DAT my.DAT [from Germany
Tanja, my friend [from Germany

10 A    [jā:jā
[PRT
oh yeah

Following a 0.5 second pause, Erna responds to Arnar’s question by informing him about the locations she plans to visit during the weekend (lines 3–4). After a 0.6 delay, Arnar responds to this information with the particle nú, which is delivered with a short vowel and a rising-falling intonation contour similar to the one illustrated in Figure 9.3 (line 6). Following nú, Erna takes the floor again and confirms her prior informing
with the dialogue particle já ‘yes.’ This closes the question sequence (line 7). In the subsequent turn, however, Arnar makes further inquiries about Erna’s planned weekend trip (line 8). When Erna answers that she is going with her friend Tanja (line 9), Arnar responds with the particle jájá ‘oh yeah’ (line 10).

In (9.6), Arnar uses nú to register a question-elicited informing, and Erna’s answer is treated as a complete action. The particle does not invite or request an elaboration on the same topic and, thus, Arnar can take the floor again and pose a second question. As pointed out earlier, Arnar responds to the two answers with different particles, nú and jájá ‘I see.’ Nú registers the informing and foregrounds it as new and important whereas jájá acknowledges already known information. Arnar seems to know that Erna’s friend Tanja is planning a visit to Iceland, and therefore this informing is not unexpected. Erna’s acknowledgement token after nú indicates that a response indexed as nú is more noticeable than a response indexed with jájá. Table 9.2 shows a comparison of these two question sequences:

Table 9.2: Comparison of question sequences in excerpt (9.6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question sequence with nú in third position</th>
<th>Question sequence without nú in third position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> Question</td>
<td>“Where are you going?”</td>
<td>Follow-up Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“With whom are you going?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong> Answer</td>
<td>“To Skaftafell, Jökulsárlón and everything.”</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“With Tanja, my friend from Germany”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> Newsmark</td>
<td>Nú</td>
<td>Acknowledgement token</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jájá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong> Confirmation</td>
<td>“yes”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the excerpts we have seen so far, nú is produced with falling or rising-falling intonation and with approximately the same volume as the surrounding talk. In these cases, nú registered new information as noteworthy or somewhat unexpected. The speakers can express even more surprise by using a higher volume and a more dynamic pitch contour. In (9.7), Erna is calling Anna to set up a meeting to discuss a project they are working on together. Erna has called several times before, but, since Anna is moving to another country, she has not yet found the time to meet up. After the greeting sequence, Erna asks Anna whether she is working, and Anna explains that she has not been able to work because of some errands she had to run. In the subsequent turn, Erna suggests a meeting (line 1):
Erna’s turn is prefaced with the particle okei ‘okay’ which accepts the preceding action and moves the conversation to the next stage (line 1). Erna designs this next move as an or-inquiry which raises the possibility that this may be an inconvenient time for Anna (cf. A. Lindström 1999: 79 for similar or-inquiries in Swedish). After a brief pause (line 3), Anna explains that she cannot meet up today because her partner, Gussi, was not able to leave the country as he had planned (lines 4–6). Here, Anna uses the adverb náttlega ‘of course,’ which indicates that she thinks that Erna already knows that Gussi was not able to leave (line 5). Erna, however, seems not to have heard this news before and responds with the particle NŮÛ:: (line 7). After nú, there
is 0.5 second pause followed by an explanation as to why Gussi was not able to leave (lines 9–10).

In excerpt (9.7), nú has a high set-off, is delivered with a prolonged vowel, a steep rising-falling intonation contour and produced in a loud voice. The intonation contour is illustrated in Figure 9.3:

![Figure 9.3: Fundamental frequency (f₀) of line 7, excerpt (9.7)](image)

Here, the particle nú occurs after Erna has received new information. Erna uses prosodic cues and a quick response to show that Anna’s prior turn is exceptionally important (see pauses in excerpts (9.4) to (9.6)). Notice also that, after nú, Anna hesitates (line 8) before she confirms that Gussi was not able to leave. This response suggests that it comes as a surprise to Anna that Erna does not know that Gussi had to cancel his flight.

When nú occurs in very strong responses, the particle is often followed by a new TCU or a new turn containing a rephrasing of the source of surprise. Consider the following excerpt drawn from the data Teens. In this excerpt, the two hosts, Gunní and Disa, are chatting with Bjarney, a caller who wants to participate in their quiz:

(9.8) YOU LIVE IN THE COUNTRY!: Teens
(G = Gunní, program host; D = Disa, program host; B = Bjarney, a caller)

1 G >Er skemmtilegr#a:# eiththvað jólafrí en< (0.2) um helgar
   be.3 funnier some Christmas holiday than (0.2) about weekends.ACC
   is it more fun during the Christmas holiday than (0.2) during the weekend

2 (0.7)
Bara svona venjulega um helgərar, usual about weekends.ACC

yes just like regular weekends

[[Dá getur mar skreppið svona til Reykjavíkur eða eitthvað= then can man.IMP run down.PP PRT to Reykjavík.GEN or something

[[then I can make short visits to Reykjavik or something

svoleiðis, that kind like that

s- y- l- you live.2 out+on country.DAT

s- y- l- you live in the country

[yòk/ei↓:: ]

[yòk

[[Býrðu út á landi ]

[[ live.2+you out on country.DAT

[ do you live in the country ]

→ D

[ N:↑6↓ ]::

Sv- b- þú býrð útá landi. s- y- l- you live.2 out+on country.DAT s- y- l- you live in the country

[ Býrðú út á landi. do you live in the country?

[okay

[[ [Býrð útá 1/an]↓i. 

[[ live.2 out+on count]ry.DAT

[[do you live in the count]ry?
At the beginning of (9.8), Gunni asks Bjarney to confirm her earlier statement that she considers the Christmas holiday to be more fun than normal weekends. Bjarney treats Gunni’s question as problematic by producing a planning marker followed by a brief turn-internal pause and a repair initiator designed as a question repeat (cf. Jefferson 1972) (line 3). Thus, Bjarney singles out the source of trouble which is Gunni’s use of the word *helgar* ‘weekend.’ In the subsequent turn, Gunni makes a repair by explaining that he means “regular weekends” (line 5), and Bjarney gives a positive answer to Gunni’s question (line 7). Her response is prolonged and has rising intonation which suggests that her turn is not complete. After a 1.0 second pause, both Bjarney and Gunni take the floor simultaneously (lines 9 and 10). Bjarney’s turn offers an explanation as to why she prefers weekends: she can make short trips to Reykjavik. The two radio hosts show a strong reaction to this new information. After a 0.4 delay, Gunni responds by asking Bjarney to confirm whether she lives in the country (line 14). Overlapping Gunni’s turn, Dísa produces the particle $N$: $\uparrow \hat{U} \downarrow \cdots$. Immediately when she has reached a TRP, she takes the floor again and produces another turn designed as a statement. Here, Dísa points out that Bjarney lives in the country (line 16). In the subsequent turn, Bjarney confirms that this is true. However, despite her confirmation, Gunni asks Bjarney again to confirm that she lives in the country (line 19), and, after a short pause, Bjarney produces yet another confirmation (line 21).

In (9.8), $N$: $\uparrow \hat{U} \downarrow \cdots$ is produced as a separate prosodic unit with a rising-falling intonation contour. The particle has a long duration, and it is uttered with a louder voice than the surrounding discourse. Immediately after *nú*, Dísa initiates another turn. The first sounds in the turn are hesitant, and it seems as though Dísa has problems deciding what to say. After a few beginnings, she finally produces a statement with which she shows the source of her surprise: Bjarney lives in the country. Thus, Dísa uses the dialogue particle *nú* and a rephrasing of the source of surprise to register the informing in the prior turn as highly unexpected.

In excerpts (9.7) and (9.8), I showed how duration, pitch, and volume are used to show that a prior turn contains significant information. Although these instances of *nú* do not request any particular response from the prior speaker, the dynamic pitch indicates that the producer of *nú* is willing to hear more about the topic. In some cases, however, speakers respond to informings with a non-affiliative *nú* delivered with a non-dynamic pitch. Consider the following excerpt drawn from the beginning of a phone-call:
After the introduction, Una takes the floor and produces a pre-sequence in which she warns the moderator that this topic may not be appropriate for this particular show (lines 4–5). After a short pause, the moderator responds with nú (line 7). This is followed by a brief pause after which Una takes the floor again. She initiates her turn with an acknowledgement token which confirms her previous statement. After the acknowledgement, Una gives a proper context for her main activity, which is to advertise a falcon (lines 9–11).

In (9.9), nú has a slightly prolonged vowel, and it is delivered with falling intonation. The fundamental frequency is illustrated in Figure 9.4:
As Müller (1996: 163) points out, affiliations typically show more variation in duration and in pitch contours. Therefore, the non-dynamic pitch in Figure 9.4 suggests that nú in (9.9) is a non-affiliative response.

In the excerpt above, nú occurs in a slot after a pre-sequence which consists of a problematic announcement. The moderator responds to the announcement with nú, and this allows the co-participant to continue to her main activity. However, since Una has projected potential problems with her choice of topic, the moderator does not show affiliation by using dynamic pitch contour. Instead, she gives her permission to continue by producing a non-dynamic nú.

In some cases, the non-affiliating nú is used after compliments. Consider excerpt (9.10):

(9.10) IT’S NICE THAT IT IS YOU: Soul 03.06.96 (→4.7)
(M = Moderator; B = Bjargey, a caller)

1 M Bjargey Eiriksdóttir komdu sæl. 
  nameF PatF GREET
  Bjargey Eiriksdóttir, hello

2 B =Já komdu sæl.
   PRT GREET
   yes, hello

3 B Gaman að það skulir vera þu (. ) #á# (. ) #ö-# (. ) #
   fun that it shall.3.SUBJ be.INF you (.) on (.) eh (.) eh
   Great that it’s you (.) on (.) eh (.) eh

4 þessum tíma núna,
   this.DAT time.DAT NÚNA
   at this time NÚNA
In the beginning of the conversation, Bjargey produces a positive assessment which compliments the moderator (lines 3–4). After a short pause, the moderator responds with the particle nú, which is produced with a short vowel and falling intonation (line 6).

By responding to Bjargey’s positive comment with nú, the moderator does not fully embrace the compliment, nor does she reject it. As in the instance in (9.9), the producer of nú addresses the comment without showing affiliation. She simply marks this new information as unexpected. In this case, Bjargey also decides not to elaborate any further on this topic but instead continues to the next step and starts commenting on a previous caller (lines 7–8).

The two occurrences of nú in excerpts (9.9) and (9.10) have many similarities. They both occur in slots in which it is problematic for the producer of nú to express her opinion in response to something. In the former excerpt, the caller has implied that there are some problems with her choice of topic, while in the latter the caller gives the moderator compliments. Thus, the particle nú offers an opportunity to respond to these problematic situations by keeping the subject open and giving the co-participant the chance to decide how the topic develops.

Consider the following excerpt drawn from the data PTC, in which nú has a less dynamic pitch contour than in (9.9) and (9.10):
At the beginning of (9.11), Arnar asks Erna if she went out last night (line 1). Erna gives a negative answer in the next turn. After a brief pause, Arnar produces the particle nú. After a 0.8 second delay, Erna explains to Arnar what she actually did: she stayed at home (line 6). Arnar responds with a joking comment, stating that Erna is being “hardcore.” In other words, Arnar is implying that Erna is being extreme by denying herself a night out (line 7). Notice that his assertion has a pre-verbal nú which functions as a temporal-affective marker (see section 6.3.3). After Erna accepts this interpretation (line 8), Arnar laughs and signals to her that he is making a joke.

In the excerpt above, nú has a short vowel, it ends with a glottal stop, and it is delivered with level intonation. The fundamental frequency is illustrated in Figure 9.5:

![Figure 9.5: Fundamental frequency (f0) of line 4, excerpt (9.11)](image-url)
In (9.11), *nú* occurs in a slot in which Arnar is registering a question-elicited informing similar to the instance in (9.6). In both cases, the speaker registers an informing as significant. The difference between the two instances, however, is that in (9.6) the informing is treated as new or unexpected, while in (9.11) Arnar is foregrounding the informing from the surrounding talk without treating it as unexpected. Notice also that in (9.6) Erna responds to the surprise marker *nú* with a confirmation, while in (9.11) the confirmation is not provided. Furthermore, Arnar shows the importance of the informing in his next turn when he draws the conclusion that Erna is being very strict with herself.

I have so far been looking at instances of the retrospective *nú* which occur after potentially complete informing. In these excerpts, *nú* is delivered with three types of intonation contour: a) rising-falling, b) falling, and c) level intonation. Further, I argue that these contours and other prosodic cues such as duration, volume, and glottal stops need to be considered when interpreting the function of each instance. In some instances, such as (9.7) and (9.8), *nú* is delivered with exceptionally dynamic pitch and in a louder voice than the surrounding talk. I argued that such prosodic cues show that the informing in the prior turn is unexpected and surprising. In other excerpts, such as (9.9) to (9.11), *nú* is delivered with a short vowel and a non-dynamic pitch contour. In (9.9) and (9.10), I argue that the prior turn contains problematic information to which the producer of *nú* cannot show strong affiliation. In (9.11), by contrast, *nú* is used to foreground the information from the surrounding talk without treating it as unexpected. In the following section, I will discuss instances of *nú* which display understanding.

### 9.2.2 *Nú* displaying a transition towards understanding

*Nú* as a dialogue particle is often used as an acknowledgement token to show a transition from not understanding to understanding. In these cases, *nú* can be compared with the phrase (*nú* ég skil *‘(oh,) I see.’*) Consider excerpt (9.12), in which Erna is calling Hugrún, the school secretary in the grammar school in which she is working. Erna has been on a summer holiday for a few weeks, and she is calling to find out the first official day of work. Hugrún tells her that she is calling all the teachers and letting them know when to come to work, and therefore she needs to know the names of the teachers whom Erna supervises. Just before the excerpt begins,
Hugrún has mentioned that she has to call a teacher named Stefanía, and this seems to surprise Erna (line 1):

(9.12) **NOT GOING TO WORK: PTC 01.08.03**

(E = Erna, the caller; H = Hugrún, the called)

1 E #e:#Etlaði   Stefanía að kenna sesagt,  
   eh intend.3.PT 1nameF to teach.INF PRT  
   eh was Stefanía going to teach?

2 (0.4)

3 H Ég veidakki,  
   I know.1+that+not  
   I don’t know

4 (1.0)

5 E Af því að hún er sko #e# er öh hehhh (. ) sagði Svava  
   because that she be.3 PRT eh be.3 eh ((laughter)) (. ) say.3.PT 1nameF  
   because she is, eh is eh hehhh, did Svava tell

6 ðér að að ún að ún (. ) aþú ættir að hringja  
   you.DAT that that she that she (. ) that+you shall.2.PT.SUBJ to call.INF  
   you that that she that she (. ) that you should call

7 í hana líka,  
   in she.ACC too  
   her too

8 (0.4)

9 H n+n Ekkert sérstaklega sko ég á bara að fara yfir  
   n+n not especially PRT I have.1 PRT to go.INF over  
   n+n not especially, I was just supposed to go through

10 listann?  
   list.ACC.DEF  
   the list

11 E .hh Já að því að é Hún framlengdi ekkert .hh  
   .hh PRT because that I she extend.3.PT nothing .hh  
   .hh yes because she didn’t extend .hh

12 ráðningarsamninginn sinn þannig að við  
   contract.ACC.DEF she.REF.ACC so that we  
   her contract so we

13 vi[tum ekkert umana, ]  
   kno[w.1.PL nothing about+she.ACC]  
   do[n’t know anything about her]


15 (0.7)
Erna poses a question which identifies a problem: she does not expect Stefánía to come back after the summer holiday (line 1). After a short delay following Erna’s question, Hugrún responds with a disclaimer, stating that she does not know whether Stefánía plans to come back (line 3). After a 1.0 second pause, Erna takes the floor again and starts something that seems to be an attempt to explain what she meant by her question (line 5). Erna, however, encounters a great deal of difficulty in producing a coherent turn at talk. Finally, after hesitation and restarts, there is a micro-pause followed by a new turn-beginning with which she redesigns her turn. Instead of explaining why she is asking Hugrún this question, Erna poses a second question (lines 5–7). When Erna finds out that the school principal did not specifically ask Hugrún to call Stefánía, Erna informs her that Stefánía did not renew her contract (lines 11–13). Before Stefánía is able to finish her turn, Hugrún responds with the particle *nú* (line 14). After a 0.7 second pause, Erna takes the floor again. In this turn, she downgrades the newsworthiness of the informing by pointing out that this is something Stefánía has been planning for a while (lines 16–17). After this explanation, Hugrún closes the repair sequence with an acknowledgement token (line 18).

In (9.12), *nú* is produced in *sotto voce* with a prolonged vowel and delivered with a falling-rising-falling intonation contour. It is produced in a slot in which Hugrún has received new information which clears out a misapprehension in the prior talk. Hugrún has experienced a transition from not understanding towards understanding (cf. Heritage 1984b: 309 on *oh*). In other words, *nú* not only registers the information in Erna’s prior turn but also signals that this new information changes Hugrún’s understanding of what was going on earlier in the conversation. Although I classify *nú* which displays understanding as retrospective, the particle may in some cases invite, but not require, a certain continuation. In (9.13), Sunna is talking about her younger brother. In the beginning of the excerpt, she states that he
was buying perfume in a duty-free store and implies that a girl is involved in his life (line 1):

**(9.13) KISSING IN THE GRADUATION PARTY: Friends**  
(S = Sunna; N = Nanna; J = Jessica)

1 S Hann var nú að kaupa einhvern- (.).eitthvað ílmvatn þarna→ he be.3.PT NÚ to buy.INF someone- (.). something.ACC perfume.ACC there  
he was NÚ buying some (.).some perfume there

2 (0.3)

3 N Var hAnn,  
be.3.PT he was he?

4 (0.3)

5 S “.já:::”  
PRT yes

6 J hehehe [ehheh $sex[tán ára bróðir$ (.). hehehe ]  
((laughter)) [ six[teen yearGEN brother (.).((laughter))]
hehehe [ eheheh six[teen year old brother (.). hehehe ]

7 N [.hhhhehhh [h  
[((laughter)) [  
[ hhhhe hh [h

8 S [ h e h e h e h e h eheh heh ] eheh heheh  
[((laughter)) [  
[ he he he he h hheh heh ] eheh heheh

9 S eheh=

10 N =$Á hann kærustu í dag sem sagt$,=  
have.3 he girlfriend.ACC today PRT  
does he have a girlfriend now then

11 S #$Jájá#$  
PRT yes

12 (0.5)

13 S .hh S(ú) sem hann var að kyssa í útskrifarveislunni.  
.hh the one who he be.3.PT to kiss.INF in graduation party.DAT.DEF  
.hh the one he was kissing in the graduation party

14 (2.0)

→J $SNú: ↑: :::↓: $  

16 S “.já:* Balli var að útskrifast sko: og (0.4) pabbi spurði  
PRT inameM be.3.PT to graduate.INF.MV PRT and (0.4) dad ask.3.PT  
yes, Balli was graduating y’know and (0.4) dad asked
Nanna responds to Sunna’s statement with a turn that is constructed as a polar question designed for a confirmative answer, and, thus, she treats this information as somewhat unexpected or noteworthy (line 3). At the same time, Nanna creates a possible slot for Sunna to say more about her brother’s girlfriend. At this point, however, Sunna only provides a confirmation (line 5). In the subsequent turn, Jessica starts laughing, and the other two participants join in (lines 6–9). Hence, the three women establish an agreement that this topic is something that can be laughed at and potentially something on which Sunna can elaborate. In the subsequent turn, Nanna asks Sunna whether her brother has a girlfriend now, and this creates another opportunity for Sunna to say more about the girlfriend (line 10). Sunna responds again by giving a positive answer to Nanna’s question indexed with a duplicated particle delivered with creaky voice: #jájá# ‘yes yes.’ After a 0.5 second delay, Sunna appoints herself as the next speaker and elaborates on this topic by referring to the girlfriend as “the one he was kissing in the graduation party” (line 13). The comment appears somewhat out of the blue, and it is followed by a two-second pause. After the pause, Jessica responds with $N↓∪↑↓$ (line 15), and at the next TRP Sunna takes the floor again and finally says more about how she found out about her brother’s girlfriend (beginning in line 16).

In (9.13), nú is uttered with a smily voice, and it has a prolonged vowel and a falling-rising-falling intonation contour which is illustrated in Figure 9.6:
Nú functions to show that Jessica has experienced a transition from not understanding towards understanding. Unlike in (9.12), however, there is no previous misapprehension, but, instead, nú and the smily voice signal that Jessica understands the comic situation Sunna is describing. In contrast, if she had responded with já ‘yes,’ Sunna’s comment would have been acknowledged as insignificant, and, as a consequence, Sunna may have decided not to tell the story. Nú can thus be described as a stronger response than já since it shows more interest in the prior turn.

In the following excerpt, an informing is registered both with já and nú. In (9.14), Sunna is talking about her upcoming graduation and estimating when she should ask the guests to come to her party. In the beginning of the excerpt, Nanna suggests that Sunna will be back from the ceremony around five o’clock (line 1):

*(9.14) PLANNING THE GRADUATION: Friends (--8.8)*
(S = Sunna; N = Nanna; J = Jessica)

1 N °.já [þú ert° ko min heim fimm¿ PRT [you be.2 come.PP.F home five yeah [you are at home at five

2 S [mt

3 S #já# nei↓ >við erum að fara að taka m<- (0.3) ég fer í PRT PRT we be.3.PL to go.INF to take.INF ph- (0.3) I go.1 in well no, we are going to take ph- (0.3) I will go to
As mentioned earlier, before this excerpt begins, Sunna tells a long and entertaining story about she and her family’s visit to the photographer. Thus, it is perhaps only to be expected that Jessica and Nanna are slightly puzzled when Sunna mentions again that she is going to the photographer, this time on her graduation day (lines 3–4). When Sunna has told the other two women that she is talking about a group picture arranged by her university (lines 7–8), Jessica registers the new information with \( \text{nú} \) (line 11). Just after Jessica has reached a TRP, she takes the floor again and produces a positive assessment \( \text{en skemmtilegt} \) ‘how fun.’

In (9.14), \( \text{nú} \) is prolonged and delivered with a falling-rising-falling intonation contour. Just as in the previous excerpts, \( \text{nú} \) signals that the producer is experiencing a transition towards understanding, and that she has in the prior turns been
misunderstanding Sunna. After nú, Jessica starts a new turn which contains an assessment. The assessment, \textit{en skemmtilegt} ‘how nice,’ treats Sunna’s informing as good news (cf. Heritage 1984b: 302–3 on \textit{oh} + assessments). Notice also that shortly after Jessica starts the second TCU, Nanna poses a question to Sunna regarding whether group photos are normally taken (line 13). The timing of Nanna’s comment shows that Jessica’s nú is treated as a complete TCU.

As I have shown, nú is followed either by an elaboration on the informing, such as in (9.12) and (9.13), or by an assessment, as in (9.14). In the following excerpt, however, the transition towards understanding is not acknowledged, but, instead, it is treated by the recipient as problematic. In (9.15), Erna is calling Anna to arrange a meeting. After the greetings, Anna starts a \textit{how-are-you} sequence (line 1):

\textbf{(9.15) PROBLEMS WITH THE PRINTER: PTC 07.07.03}

(E = Erna, the caller; A = Anna, the called)

1 A \textit{redda því já} /Hva segiru?\text{\footnote{The first part of her utterance is directed to someone else.}}
\textit{fix.INF that.DAT PRT what(t) say.2+you}
\textit{I’ll do that, how are you?}

2 E \textit{Allt þetta fín/Á, þú atlæðir að hringja í mig}
\textit{everything this great you intend.2.PL to call.INF in.1ACC}
\textit{just great, you were going to call me}

3 \textit{klukkan tí[u,]}
\textit{clock ten o’clock}

4 A \textit{[Ég] veiða áðu >bara< steingleymiði:}
\textit{[I] know.1+it I PRT stone-forget.1.PT}
\textit{[I] know, I just totally forgot}

5 \textit{hérna.}
\textit{PRT}

6 E \textit{Hvusslags,}
\textit{what-kind}
\textit{huh!}

7 A \textit{Já: j
\textcircled{\textit{a}} (.)
\textit{I’m here in some computer business with dad.}}
\textit{be.3 here something in computer-problem.DAT here with dad.DAT}
\textit{yeah, I’m here in some computer business with dad}

\rightarrow E \textit{N↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓↓\footnotemark}
\footnotetext{87 The first part of her utterance is directed to someone else.}
After the *how-are-you* sequence, Erna immediately points out to Anna that she did not call her at ten o’clock as she had promised (lines 2–3). Anna takes the floor in a terminal overlap and immediately admits her guilt. The confession is followed by an account: “I just totally forgot to” (lines 4–5). At this point, Anna has not apologized for her mistake, nor has she given any substantial reason for her forgetfulness. Erna responds to this lack of reason with something that seems to be an ironic use of the interrogative *hvusslags* ‘what kind of,’ which is often used as an interjection to show that speakers are displeased with something (line 6). Anna responds to this remark with a duplicated *já* ‘yes’ with rising intonation which may signal non-alignment (line 7). Anna then explains that she is working on a computer with her father, and this is why she has not called Erna earlier. Erna responds to this information with *nú* :: ::. The particle is prolonged and has a falling-rising-falling intonation contour (line 8).
In the subsequent turn, Anna tones down her assertion and claims that this is actually not a major problem (line 9). Erna responds by posing a question to Anna, inviting her to explain what is wrong with the computer (line 10). Anna, however, backs away and denies that she has a computer problem (lines 12 and 14). However, after a 1.2 second pause (line 15), Anna once again opens up the possibility that she may have a computer problem (line 16), and again Erna responds with the dialogue particle nú delivered with a falling-rising-falling contour (line 17). Anna then backs away again just as before and denies that she has any problems with her computer (lines 18 and 20).

What seems to be happening in excerpt (9.15) is that Erna’s ironic accusation causes Anna to use her computer as an excuse for not having called. Erna responds with nú which signals a transition towards understanding. It is as though Erna is showing Anna that she now understands why she has not called her earlier. Yet, Anna does not acknowledge this and withdraws her previous statement. In other words, in (9.15), a speaker signals a transition towards understanding which is not accepted by the provider of the information.

So far in this section, the instances of nú have been delivered with dynamic pitch contours, and they can be characterized as having an affiliative function. In some cases, however, nú which displays understanding may have a non-affiliative function. Consider the following excerpt in which Sigrún is talking to Erna and expressing her concerns about what Erna will do when her flatmates move out (line 1):

(9.16) MOVING IN: PTC 01.07.03
(S = Sigrún, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 S  O-hv- hva ætlar þú þá a gera, an- wh- what intend.2 you then to do.INF
   and what are you going to do then?

2   (0.3)

3 E  .hhh MAMMA HÆTTU AÐ HAFA ÁHYGGJUR AF DESSU
   .hhh PRT mom stop.IMPER to have.INF worries of this.DAT
   oh mom stop worrying about this

4  [ÉG SÉ: UM MIG SJÁLF, ] ((annoyed tone))
   [ I see.1 VP LACC self.F ]
   [ I can take care of myself ]

5 S  [Get ég fengið herbergi ] hjá þér,
   [can.1 I get_PP room.ACC ] with you.DAT
   [ can I have a room ] at your place

6   (0.4)
At the beginning of the excerpt, Sigrún asks Erna what she is going to do when her flatmates move out (line 1). This question receives a firm response from Erna. First, she takes a deep breath and prefaces her turn with a dialogue particle and an address
term, æi mamma ‘oh mom.’ This projects a strong objection (line 3). The preface and the rest of the turn are produced with a loud voice and a slightly annoyed tone of voice, which signal that Erna does not want to discuss these matters with her mother. Hence, this is a potentially face-threatening situation. Sigrún eases the situation by making a joke out of it and asks if she can move in with her daughter (line 5). By using a smily voice and giving a full answer in line 7, Erna immediately shows that she understands that Sigrún is joking. Sigrún continues her joke and insists on moving in with her (line 8). Erna refuses again, and this time she adds that the two of them cannot get along (line 9). After a few exchanges back and forth, Sigrún finally takes the floor and utters the particle nú jæja ‘NÚ well’ (line 15). Following the particle combination, Erna initiates a turn which has a clear pitch step-up and signals a topic shift (line 17).

In (9.16), nú is prosodically integrated with the particle jæja. The particle combination has a falling-rising intonation contour, illustrated in Figure 9.7:

![Figure 9.7: Fundamental frequency (f0) of line 15, excerpt (9.16)](image)

The particle combination nú jæja occurs topic-finally in a slot in which Sigrún is closing a sequence during which her wish has been rejected four times in a row. Thus, by using nú jæja, Sigrún signals that she has come to understand that she will not get a positive answer, and she is indirectly accepting the rejection and displaying that she is not going to continue making her request.

In this section, I have been looking at nú when it signals a transition from not understanding towards understanding. The transition towards understanding is signalled by the particle nú with a prolonged vowel and a falling-rising-falling intonation contour. I have argued that nú may in some cases show strong affiliation
with the informer, such as in (9.12) to (9.15). In (9.16), as a contrast, nú was non-affiliative. It was designed as a topic-final comment which closed a sequence that marked resignation.

9.2.3 Summary of retrospective nú

I have been looking at instances of nú which I have characterized as mainly retrospective in nature, that is, instances which respond to a prior turn without requesting or inviting a specific kind of continuation. In my discussion, I divided the instances into two different types: 1) nú registering new information, and 2) nú displaying a transition towards an understanding.

When analysing the retrospective nú, prosodic characteristics such as loudness, duration, and intonation play a major role. Nú which registers unexpected and new information was typically delivered with falling or rising-falling intonation. I argued that in these cases response to nú was to a large extent based on its prosodic features such as the intonation contour and the loudness of the voice compared to the surrounding talk. Figure 9.8 compares different intonation contours of nú which treat information in the prior turn as new or unexpected.

![Intonation contours](image)

(9.4) line 13 (9.4) line 17 (9.7) line 7

Figure 9.8: Nú treating informings in the prior turn as new and/or unexpected

In (9.4) to (9.8), the particle nú was used to register information and to mark it as unexpected or forming a departure from the normal state of affairs. In some cases, such as (9.7) and (9.8), the speaker used prosody, that is volume, intonation, and duration to display an even higher degree of surprise.

A non-affiliative response, as a contrast, was produced with a shorter duration and a less dynamic pitch contour, such as in (9.9) and (9.11) shown as Figure 9.9:
The non-dynamic pitch contours occurred in slots in which it may not have been appropriate for the speaker to show too much affiliation, such as in (9.9) in which the speaker claimed that there might be a problem with her choice of topic, or in (9.10) in which the speaker was giving the moderator a compliment. These instances had a slightly falling pitch curve, and they were uttered in a rather low tone of voice. In (9.11), by contrast, *nú* registered the prior informing as significant without indexing surprise. This instance was delivered with a short vowel and level intonation.

In 9.2.2, I discussed instances of *nú* which display a transition towards understanding. In these cases, *nú* was typically delivered with an exceptionally long vowel and a falling-rising-falling intonation contour.

The instances which register a transition towards understanding can have both affiliative and non-affiliative functions. The affiliative instances were produced with louder volume and with a more dynamic pitch contour, while the non-affiliative functions were shorter and more monotonous (cf. Müller 1996). In (9.16), the non-
affiliative *nú* co-occurred and was prosodically integrated with the topic terminating particle *jaeja* ‘well.’

In most cases, retrospective *nú* occurs as a freestanding particle with no other elements in the turn (see 3.4.3 on the definition of dialogue particles). In some cases, however, there are additional elements which are produced either within the same intonation unit (such as in (9.16)), or as a new turn. The additional structures in my data are of three kinds:

1. Rephrasing of the new information to which *nú* is responding (9.8)
2. Assessment formulation which displays that the producer is dealing with particular aspects or implications of the informing, in other words, treating it as carrying good or bad news (9.14)
3. The particle *jaeja* ‘well’ which signals a potential topic termination (9.16)

The elements mentioned in the list above are all clearly retrospective in nature, and they show how the previous information is treated either as surprising, as good or bad news, or as a potential topic-final comment. The occurrences of *nú* which are followed by the elements mentioned above do not put strong constraints on the turns that follow nor on the turns’ allocation. In fact, the information provider, the *nú* speaker, and the other participants are all possible speakers after a retrospective *nú*. The retrospective functions are clearly different from the functions of the eliciting *nú*, which is the subject of the next section. In these instances, the turn involving *nú* looks back on the previous turns, and, at the same time, it has strong constraints on speaker incipiency and the content of the upcoming turns.

### 9.3 Eliciting functions

In this section, I will discuss the *eliciting functions of *nú* as a dialogue particle, that is, instances which are explicitly projective in nature (cf. Linell 2005: 265). An eliciting *nú* treats the prior turn as pragmatically incomplete or needing explanation, and, consequently, it invites interlocutors to make elaborations (cf. Sorjonen 2002 on the Finnish *no*; Maynard 1997: 107 on *newsmarks*). By producing an eliciting *nú*, a speaker allocates the turn back to a prior speaker, and it is the prior speaker’s right and obligation to take the floor. A lack of response from the prior speaker would, by
contrast, be treated as noticeably absent (cf. Sacks 1992b: 62). In the following two sections, I will show two different environments in which the eliciting nú occurs. First, in 9.3.1, I will discuss instances following a hearably incomplete announcement. Then, in 9.3.2, I will address instances which elicit accounts of a prior sequence.

9.3.1 Nú eliciting an elaboration for a hearably incomplete announcement

The eliciting nú often occurs at the beginning of topics. In (9.17), which is drawn from the telephone data PTC, Lárus proffers a topic by expressing his concerns about his and Erna’s mutual friend:

(9.17) UNEMPLOYED: PTC 11.06.03 (↩9.3)
(L = Lárus, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 L °.já° Ari hann er að verða örvæntingarfullur greyið.
   PRT ÍnameM he be.3 to become.INF desperate.M poor thing.DEF
   Ari is becoming desperate the poor thing

→ E nú:

3 (1.4)

4 L Hann fær enga vinnu.
   he get.3 no work.ACC
   he can’t find a job

5 E nú
   PRT
   yes

6 (1.6)

7 L Þetta er ö:murlegt.
   this be.3 terrible.N
   it’s terrible

8 E j↓á:
   PRT
   yes

At the beginning of (9.17), Lárus begins a trouble-telling by announcing that Ari is not feeling well (line 1) (cf. Jefferson 1988). After the initial announcement, however, the telling is incomplete: Lárus has not yet explained why “Ari is becoming desperate.” Erna responds to Lárus’s turn with the particle nú (line 2) and thus elicits an elaboration in order to glean an explanation for Lárus’s prior turn. Erna’s prompting is
followed by a 1.4 second pause, which suggests that Lárus is raising an issue that is potentially very difficult for him. After the pause, Lárus explains that Ari cannot find a job (line 4).

In excerpt (9.17), the particle nú is delivered with a relatively short vowel but clearly rising intonation. The rising intonation contour, which is typical for the eliciting nú, is illustrated in Figure 9.11:

![Figure 9.11: Fundamental frequency (f0) of line 2, excerpt (9.17)](image)

By producing nú in line 2, Erna registers Lárus’s announcement as a preparation for something else: Lárus is going to tell her what is bothering Ari. Thus, in this instance, Erna commits herself as a troubles recipient (cf. Jefferson 1988; Sorjonen 2002: 181), and the particle nú signals that she is prepared to listen to Lárus’s worries. She has yielded the turn.

Although nú could be labelled as a go-ahead signal, it is clear that it has not yet been fully conventionalized in the same way as the Finnish go-ahead particle no. As Sorjonen (2002: 168) points out, no may respond to summonses and attention-getting devices and thus form a second pair part in pre-sequences (see excerpt (3.4)). Nú, however, does not occur in such environments. In order to respond with the particle nú, the prior turn has to contain information which is new to the recipient, and, therefore, referentials and address terms do not constitute proper environments.

Consider the following excerpt, also drawn from the Soul of the nation. The extract begins after the greeting sequence and a brief comment on a previous caller. Then, Sigurður moves to introduce a new, contrastive line of talk signalled with the connective en ‘but’ (line 1):
After Sigurður has mentioned the name of the presidential candidate about whom he wants to talk (line 2), the moderator provides a continuer, þá ‘yes’ (line 3). By producing þá in this slot, the moderator signals that she has identified the candidate to whom Sigurður is referring, and she accepts the candidate as the proffered topic. After a 0.6 second pause, Sigurður makes the comment that Guðrún, the candidate, was “the first on the list” (line 5), that is, she was the first candidate to visit the program Soul of the nation. The moderator produces another acknowledgement token mː, which is a weaker token than the previous one (line 7). After a 0.8 second pause, Sigurður

88 My general observations on continuers in my data are that when recipients produce more than one continuier the first one is typically þá, and the subsequent one is either °þá ° or mm.
moves from producing background information to an informing: “I was very disappointed with what she said” (line 9). The transition is prosodically marked with a beginning intonation and a pause. Sigurður has now finished his turn, which he marks with a falling terminal contour. After the announcement, there is a 0.6 second delay before the moderator responds with the particle núa, delivered with a prolonged vowel. The intonation contour is illustrated in Figure 9.12:

![Figure 9.12: Fundamental frequency (f₀) of line 11, excerpt (9.18)](image)

As Figure 9.12 illustrates, the intonation contour of nú in this excerpt is slightly different from the rising contour illustrated in excerpt (9.17). In this instance, the particle has a slightly falling-rising intonation contour, while the intonation contour in (9.17) is only rising. The falling-rising intonation may index less surprise than the rising intonation, but such subtle differences are difficult to show.

When responding with the particle nú, the moderator accomplishes several different tasks. First, she registers Sigurður’s announcement and claims that she understands him. Sigurður now knows that the moderator has understood that he was disappointed after hearing the interview. Second, the moderator passes an opportunity to produce a longer turn and contribute more to this topic herself. Instead, the moderator passes the turn to Sigurður who continues the work he started. Lastly, by using nú, the moderator foregrounds the prior informing as noteworthy and thus makes it relevant that Sigurður should explain why he was disappointed with the candidate.

As excerpts (9.17) and (9.18) have shown, the function of nú is similar to that of questions such as “what do you mean by that?” or “why?” In some cases, a speaker
even produces an actual question after the production of nú. Consider the following excerpt which is drawn from the beginning of a conversation:

**9.19 SCOLDING THE MINISTER: Soul 31.05.96**

(M = Moderator; B = Brynjar, a caller)

1  M  Brynjard Guðbergsson
   InameM  PatrM
   Brynjar Guðbergsson

2  B  Já gðan d↓a↓:g↓inn¿
   PRT  GREET
   yes, good afternoon

3  M  G↓ðan d↓a↓:g¿
   GREET
   good afternoon

4  B  Nú þarf ég að skaða#he-# SIGurveigu (0.4) u- Smáradóttur
   NÚ  need.1  I  to  scold.INF  he-  InameF  (0.4)  eh-  PatrF
   NÚ  I  have  to  scold  eh  Sigurveig  (0.4)  eh-  Smáradóttir

5  a- soldið,
   eh-  a bit
   eh,  a bit

6  (0.7)

→  M  Nú↓:↑:::

8  (0.2)

9  M  ↓A[hv↓:erj↓:u:?
   w[hy
   w[hy?

10 B  [Ég vil ta↓:la um lyfjabreytingu hjá
     [I  want.1  talk.INF  about  drug change.ACC  with
     [I  want  to  talk  about  the  change  in  drug  policy  by

11 Tryggingsastofnun ríkisins¿ [...]
    Social security institute  state:GEN  [...]
    the  social  security  office  [...]

After the greeting sequence, Brynjar produces an announcement which projects a complaint about the minister of health (lines 4–5). The announcement is hearably incomplete and functions as a preparatory sequence. Following a 0.7 second pause (line 6), the moderator produces the particle nú↑::: with rising intonation (line 7). The particle is followed by a 0.2 pause. After the pause, the moderator asks Brynjar explicitly for an explanation by producing the interrogative af hverju ‘why?’ (line 9). In an overlap with the moderator’s last turn, Brynjar specifies the reason he wants to
scold the minister (line 10). Thus, Brynjar treats nú as an invitation to elaborate on the initial announcement.

The particle nú and the interrogative of hverju seem to have similar functions in prompting accounts. Thus, when the moderator has uttered nú, it is Brynjar’s right and obligation to take the floor and explain what he meant by his prior turn. Nó functions as a first pair part in an adjacency pair and requires a second pair part provided by the co-participant. However, instead of waiting for the second pair part, the moderator produces of hverju which is another first pair part and has a similar function as nú. In other words, although the moderator has given the floor to Brynjar by producing the particle nú, she takes the floor herself and makes her prompting more explicit by using an interrogative.

In (9.18) and (9.19), there are relatively long pauses between the callers’ announcements and the moderator’s responses with the particle nú. In these cases, nú occurs when the callers have completed a presequence, and this signals that it is time to go on to the main topic. Consider, however, the following excerpt in which the moderator responds before the presequence is complete. The excerpt begins right after the greeting sequence:

(9.20) THE TELEPHONE BOOK: Soul 31.05.96
(M = Moderator; H = Halldór, a caller)

1 Ég kem sennilega með nýtt umræðuefni () tilðín?
   I come.1 probably with new.N topic () to+you.GEN
   I’m probably bringing up a new topic () for you

2 (0.3)

3 M J↑á[:
   PR[T ye]v

4 H [Ég vil nefnilega lýsa yfir ó- () óánægju minni yfir
   [I want.1 namely express.INF over dis- () disappointment.DAT my.F.DAT over
   because I want to express my dis- () disappointment with the

5 H þjónutu Póst og símþæð
   service.DAT Mail and telephone
   service of the telephone company

6 (0.5)

7 [[um ýtgáfu á súmaskránni núna.
   [[ about publishing.ACC on phone book.DAT.DEF NÚNA
   [[ about the publishing of the phone book NÚNA

→ M [[n↑ú::
At the beginning of (9.20), Halldór offers a meta-comment regarding the topic he is going to bring up (lines 1). By stating that he is bringing up a new topic, Halldór is footing himself in the line of callers, since he is a part of what Schegloff (1980) calls a “conversation-in-a-series.” This comment on the choice of topic is acknowledged by the moderator who responds with a go-ahead signal produced with a rising contour (line 3). Halldór then continues his turn in a terminal overlap by announcing the kind of activity the moderator should expect in this conversation, a complaint about the state telephone company. Just as in excerpt (9.18), there is a clear transition here from the meta-comments to the announcement. This is signalled with a pause and with intonation. Halldór’s announcement is the last part of a pre-sequence which leads up to his main activity of making a complaint.

The TCU which introduces the complaint has a half-rising intonation contour, and the main stress is on the last word (lines 4–5). After a 0.5 second pause, Halldór adds a continuation to his turn, and the moderator responds simultaneously with the particle nu↑u:: (lines 7–8).

The particle nu↑u in line 8 has a prolonged vowel and rising intonation, and it is designed to elicit a continuation from Halldór. However, since the particle is overlapped by Halldór, it gets no response at this point. Instead, Halldór elaborates on
his announcement by stating what he is going to complain about more precisely. Halldór finishes the continuation with a falling terminal contour, thus clearly marking that the turn is completed (line 7). This time, there is a 0.4 second pause (in line 9) before the moderator responds again with the particle nú:, again with a prolonged vowel and rising intonation (line 10). In this instance, however, the particle sets off with a slightly higher pitch level than before.

In sum, the two instances of the particle nú function as a request for Halldór to explain or justify why he wants to complain about the telephone company. By using nú, and not, for instance, the particle já ‘yes,’ the moderator shows that this announcement is to some extent unexpected, and, thus, she prompts Halldór to account for his opinion. When the moderator responds too quickly to Halldór’s preparatory announcement, she repeats the same action and makes another attempt to prompt an account.

Although rising intonation clearly contributes to conveying the eliciting function, the sequential placement is also a very important factor. Thus, in the last excerpt in this section, I will look at an instance of nú with rising intonation that does not elicit a continuation. As mentioned earlier, the eliciting nú typically follows a pragmatically incomplete announcement. To understand better what is meant by this, compare the incomplete announcement in (9.20), in which the caller announces that he is going to complain about the telephone company, with the topic announcement in the following excerpt. In (9.21), also drawn from the data PTC, Erna is helping Arnar to fix his computer over the phone. Suddenly, after a long pause, Erna announces a new topic:

(9.21) **GOING CAMPING: 03.08.03**

(A = Arnar, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1  (6.6) ((computer sounds heard in the background))

2 E Ég er að fara í útilegu (.) á m- fóstuginn.
   I be.l to go.INF in camping.ACC(.) on m- Friday.ACC.DEF
   I’m going camping (.) on Friday

3  (0.3)

→ A °núːːːː°

5 E .jáːː
PRT
   yeah

6  (0.5)
In the beginning of (9.21), Erna initiates a new topic by making an announcement about her plans for the weekend (line 2). This announcement is followed by a short pause after which Arnar responds with the particle nú delivered with a rising intonation contour (line 4). Despite the rising intonation, nú does not elicit an immediate elaboration in this case. Instead, Erna produces a weak acknowledgment token which gives Arnar only minimal feedback and confirms his previous utterance (line 5). After her acknowledgement, there is a 0.5 second pause, during which neither of the two participants claims the floor (line 6). It is only after this pause that Arnar takes the floor, picks up the proffered topic and inquires about Erna’s weekend plans (line 7).

In both (9.20) and (9.21), nú is produced with rising intonation. However, despite the same prosodic realization, the former instance is treated as a request for elaboration while the latter is not. I suggest that the difference lies in the nature of the announcements. As mentioned earlier, the announcement in (9.20) is pragmatically incomplete, and it informs the co-participants only about what kind of activity to expect in the following turns. Hence, the announcement accomplishes preparatory work. Erna’s announcement in (9.21), by contrast, is a potentially complete informing. Erna has given a statement about her plans for the weekend, and a continuation on this topic is optional. Although Arnar responds here with nú with rising intonation, there is nothing Erna needs to add to her statement, and, therefore, she responds with the acknowledgement token jáː ‘yes.’ Arnar, however, has displayed his interest in this statement by using nú delivered with rising intonation. He continues with the topic by asking Erna questions about her plans (line 7). Thus, he makes another attempt to prompt a continuation.

In this section, I have been looking at the particle nú when it elicits a response to hearably incomplete announcements. In most of these cases, nú responds to a negative statement or a statement that describes something that is out of the ordinary. It may be a statement about someone’s feelings, as in (9.17), or it may be a statement about someone’s disappointment, such as in (9.18) to (9.20). The use of nú in these examples can be explained by the inherent meaning of nú when it elicits response. Since something is new, surprising or unexpected, the dialogue particle nú could also be seen as having traces of temporality. By responding in this way to a negative preliminary, the producer of nú shows the complainer that he or she needs to justify
their complaint. In the following section, however, I will discuss instances in which the producers of nú take an initiative and start a new sequence by producing the particle.

9.3.2 Nú eliciting an account for a complete sequence

The particle nú may sometimes re-open sequences which have been treated as complete by the co-participant. The following excerpt is drawn from data PTC in which Arnar is seeking information about Erna’s computer (line 1). The topic is introduced after a short discussion of Erna’s flatmates and seems to come out of the blue:

(9.22) A NEW COMPUTER: PTC 03.08.03
(A = Arnar, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 A j↓á ö: e: tölvan þin þarna þessi núja: PRT ehm computer.DEF your.F PRT that new yeah, ehm your computer, this new one

2 E j↓á PRT yes

3 (0.4)

4 A er þa svona a sé e tölva. be.3 it PRT a cē e computer is it a type of an ACE computer

5 E j↑á: PRT yes

6 A .hhh sem sett saman hérna á Íslandi, .hhh which put.PP.F together here in Iceland.DAT .h which are assembled here in Iceland?

7 E j↓á PRT yes

8 (0.5)

9 A Erún búin að reynast vel. is+she finish.PP.F to work.INF.MV well has it worked well?

10 E j↑á: PRT yes
At the beginning of (9.22), Arnar begins by asking Erna for some background information (lines 1, 4, and 6). In the first part of his project, the “hanging topic” is introduced (cf. Au er 1996a: 301–2): *tölvan þín þarna þessi nýja* ‘your computer, the new one.’ At this point, Erna provides a continuer which shows that she has identified the object, and that she is anticipating a continuation from Arnar. After further questions about the computer (lines 4 and 6), Arnar starts his main activity which is to ask Erna whether her computer has been working well (line 9). The question is designed to get a yes-or-no answer, and, after receiving a positive answer, the topic seems to be exhausted. Notice the pauses in lines 11 and 13 and the acknowledgement token delivered with creaky voice in line 12. Both are typical for topic endings, yet, despite this clear topic termination, Erna produces a *nél* (line 14). Arnar treats this particle as a request for an explanation as to why he is asking the question (line 15). He initiates his turn with an in-breath followed by the dialogue particle *nei* ‘no,’ probably to downgrade the importance of his question. Then, Arnar explains the
reason for his curiosity: his father is planning on buying the same brand. At this point, the topic finally seems to be coming to an end. Pauses are long (lines 18 and 20), and Erna then adds a final comment which reconfirms that she has had a good experience with this particular computer (line 21).

In (9.22), nú is delivered with a short vowel and a falling intonation. The fundamental frequency is illustrated in Figure 9.13:

![Figure 9.13: Fundamental frequency (f0) of line 14, excerpt (9.22)](image)

In this excerpt, nú occurs after the topic seems to be exhausted, and the provider of the information treats the sequence as complete. However, by uttering nú, Erna takes a new initiative and re-opens the topic by requesting an explanation. Notice that, instead of introducing the question by explaining that his father is planning to buy a computer, Arnar poses the question in line 1 without any particular preparation. Thus, the reason for the question is provided only after a request from Erna. Table 9.3 shows the conversational acts in excerpt (9.22):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTS</th>
<th>(9.22)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Unprepared question</td>
<td>“Has it your computer been working well?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Answer</td>
<td>“Yes”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Acknowledgement token</td>
<td>“Yes”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause</td>
<td>(0.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Request for a reason for the question</td>
<td>Nú↓ú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Account</td>
<td>“Oh, my dad was thinking about getting one”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As mentioned above, nú is delivered with falling intonation in (9.22), and, therefore, this instance has a different contour than other instances of the eliciting nú that I have shown so far. In the following excerpt, however, a similar instance of nú is produced with rising intonation. Excerpt (9.23) is drawn from The soul of the nation. The excerpt begins just after the moderator and the caller have exchanged a few comments about other callers, and then Kristín introduces her topic by posing a question (lines 1–2):

(9.23) WHO IS RUNNING THE BUS COMPANY?: Soul 30.05.96
(M = Moderator; K = Kristín, a caller)

1 K .hhh en það var eitt sem ég atlaði að spurjaðig um, .h .hhh but it be.3.PT one.N which I intend.PT.1 to ask.INF+you.ACC about .h .hhh but there was one thing that I was going to ask you about .h

2 /Hver rekur Strætisvagna Reykjavíkur. who operate.3 Busses.ACC Reykjavik.GEN Who operates Reykjavik Transit?

3 (1.1)

4 M .mt. .hh Hvæð- hvað Um hvað ertu að spyrja hver re:kur .mt .hh what what about what be.2+you to ask.INF who runs.3 what what are you asking about, who operates

5 Strætisvagna [Reykjavíkur.] Busses.ACC [Reykjavik.GEN ] Reykjavik[Transit ]

6 K [Já er þa ] Er þa <bo:rgin> (0.5) eða er [PRT be.3 it ] be.3 it city.DEF (0.5) or be.3 [ yes, is it ] is it the city (0.5) or is

7 það## [Sjálfstaðislöflögurinn eða er þa ] eitthvað svoleiðis. it [ Independence part ] ity.DEF [ or be.3 it ] something like that it [ the Independence party? ] or be.3 it something like that?

8 M [ess vaff- ] [ess vaff- ] [ S ∨ ] [ S ∨ ] [ ess vee ] [ ess vee ]

9 (0.3)

→ M nðu::

11 K [.h sko Ég ferðast alltaf í strætó¿ (.) [#e# það- og við [.h PRT I travel.1.MV always in bus.DAT (.) [ eh it- and we [ .h you see I always travel by bus, (.) [it- we the

12 M [já [PRT yeah]
The moderator treats Kristín’s question as problematic, and this is indexed by the 1.1 second pause before the response (line 3). In the turn that follows, the moderator overtly shows her problems by the repetition of the interrogative hvað ‘what,’ followed by a repair and restart (line 4). Then, she finally asks Kristín to confirm that she has understood her question correctly (lines 4–5). Since the moderator is able to repeat Kristín’s question verbatim, her problem is not acoustic, but, instead, it seems to stem from the fact that Kristín’s question appears to come from nowhere. In Kristín’s subsequent turn, she explains what she means with her question by naming possible operators of the transit system (lines 6–7). Her turn is designed as a disjunctive list of three which ends with a generalized list completer (cf. Jefferson 1991: 66; Londen 1994). The moderator attempts to answer the question twice by overlapping Kristín’s turn. However, both attempts to give the answer fail, and she breaks off her turns before completion. When Kristín has yielded the floor, the moderator produces the particle núːː (line 10). As a response to the particle, Kristín initiates an extended turn in which she explains why she is asking this particular question (beginning in line 11).

The particle nú in line 11 is slightly prolonged, and it is delivered with rising intonation. The fundamental frequency is illustrated in Figure 9.14:

![Figure 9.14: Fundamental frequency (f₀) of line 11, excerpt (9.23)](image)

In this excerpt, the function of nú is to elicit an account for Kristín’s question. This is a job that the moderator started already in line 4 when she treated Kristín’s turn as
problematic. By showing her problems overtly, the moderator signals to Kristín that her question seems to be out of place and in need of further preparation. As we see later in this excerpt, Kristín’s question is not, in fact, the reason for her call, but instead, it functions as a type of preliminary action. The question is a preparation for the actual topic which is a complaint about inappropriate advertisements on the backs of buses.

In sum, Kristín treats the particle nú as a request for an explanation, and, thus, its function is similar to the instances in section 9.3.1. Nú responds to a preliminary action and triggers an account for a previous announcement or statement. However, in (9.23), nú is produced in a slot which can possibly be regarded as a complete sequence. Although the moderator abandons her answer in line 8, she has made an attempt to answer Kristín’s question. The conversational acts in (9.23) are shown in Table 9.4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTS</th>
<th>(9.23)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Unprepared question</td>
<td>“Who operates the transit system in Reykjavik?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Insertion sequence: Check-question</td>
<td>“What are you asking? Who operates Reykjavik transit?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Insertion sequence: Answer</td>
<td>“Yes, is it the city or is it the Independence party or is it something like that?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Attempted answer</td>
<td>“SV- SV-”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause</td>
<td>(0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Request for a reason for the question</td>
<td>N↑nú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Account</td>
<td>“I always travel by bus...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I have shown in (9.22) and (9.23), nú is sometimes used to show that a prior question requires explanation. In the last excerpt of this section, however, I will provide an example of the eliciting nú following a statement. In the following excerpt, Lárus is accusing his daughter Erna of never being home:
(9.24) You are never at home: PTC 11.06.03 (←8.6, ←9.1)
(L = Lárus, the caller; E = Erna, the called)

1 L  # BlEssuð, þa er mikið að maður nær sambandi við þið.  
     GREET it be.3 much that man.IMP get.3 contact.DAT with you.ACC  
     Hello, finally I get ahold of you

2 E  Nú: ertu búinn að reyna mikið.  
     NÚ be.2+you finish.PP.M to try.INF much  
     NÚ, have you been trying a lot?

3 L  Já:jájájá  
     PRT yes

4                      (0.6)

5 E  þú lý:guð þvi.=  
     you lie.2 it.DAT  
     you’re lying

6 L  alltaf að reynaða.=  
     always to try.INF+it  
     I’m always trying

7 E  .h þið bykist alltaf að vera að reyna að hringja í mig.  
     .h you.PL pretend.2.PL.MV always to be.INF to try.INF to call.INF in I.ACC  
     .h you’re always pretending that you are trying to call me

8                      (0.5)

9 L  nei: alltaf að reyna að hringja í þig.  
     PRT always to try.INF to call.INF in you.ACC  
     no, I’m always trying to call you

10 E  jíá:::  
     PRT yeah

11                      (0.3)

12 L  þú ert Áldrei heima þú ert Alltaf einhversstaðar  
     you be.2 never home you be.2 always somewhere  
     you are never home, you’re always somewhere

13 að skemmta þér,  
     to entertain.INF you.DAT  
     partying

14                      (0.6)

15 E  Hváða kjafstæði erðetta.  
     what nonsense be.3+this nonsense?

16                      (1.0)

→ L  Nú:  

After the opening, Lárus greets Erna and makes a statement which implies that he has been making previous attempts to get ahold of her (line 1). Erna responds with a polar question, initiated with the particle nú. As I showed in Chapter 8, nú signals that Lárus’s turn involves unexpected information (see excerpt (8.6)). Lárus displays impatience with a repeated use of the dialogue particle já ‘yes,’ and, thus, he signals to Erna that he is not pleased with how difficult it is to get ahold of her (line 3). In this way, Lárus has already set up a disagreement with his choice of response. After a 0.6 second pause, Erna responds to Lárus’s statement by challenging him and accusing him of lying (lines 5 and 7). Lárus denies this (line 9). After a short pause, Lárus utters an accusatory statement designed as an extreme case formulation (cf. Pomerantz 1986; Potter 1996): he claims that Erna is never at home (lines 12–13). He stresses the adverbs aldrei ‘never’ and alltaf ‘always,’ and this again reinforces his accusation. Following a 0.6 second pause, Erna dismisses the accusations (line 15). Again, we have a situation in which the two parties have displayed their disagreement, and, again, there is a substantial pause in the conversation (line 16). This time, the pause stretches over 1.0 second. After the pause, Lárus responds with the particle nú (line 17).

Just as in (9.23), nú is slightly prolonged and produced with a rising intonation. As I have pointed out in my analysis, rising intonation often seems to be used in sequences in which speakers disagree with each other (see line 10). In disagreements, the rising intonation underlines that things are not settled between the interlocutors. Similarly, the function of the particle nú in line 17 is to question or challenge Erna’s dismissal. Just as in the previous excerpts, nú signals that something in the previous turn needs to be accounted for, in this case, the challenge. By placing the particle nú after Erna’s statement, Lárus prompts Erna to make her argument. After Lárus has uttered the eliciting particle nú, there is again a pause before Erna responds. However, instead of defending herself, Erna makes a sniffing sound and thus passes on the turn (line 19). By using the sniffing sound here, it is almost as though Erna is saying “I say
this is nonsense, and I have nothing more to add.” After another 0.4 second pause, Erna takes the turn again, and this time she explicitly states that she is always at home, again dismissing Lárus’ accusations as false (line 21). Table 9.5 shows a simplified version of excerpt 9.24:

Table 9.5: Conversational acts in (9.24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTS</th>
<th>(9.24)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A  Accusation</td>
<td>“You are never home, you are always somewhere partying”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B  Challenge</td>
<td>“That’s nonsense!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause</td>
<td>(1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A  Requesting an account</td>
<td>Nū professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paúse</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B  Passing the turn</td>
<td>.ínf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paúse</td>
<td>(0.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B  Account/denial</td>
<td>“I am always at home”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, eliciting nū is sometimes used in arguments. In these cases, the particle signals that something is in need of explanation. However, unlike the instances in (9.22) and (9.23), nū does not always prompt an immediate response. Instead, the particle may be followed by pauses, sniffing sounds, and sometimes words such as bara ‘just.’

In section 9.3.2, I described the function of nū when it elicits comments on what seems to be a complete sequence. In (9.22) and (9.23), nū elicited an account for a prior question. I showed that these sequences form an adjacency pair of their own, in which nū forms the first pair part and the account the second pair part. In the last excerpt of this study, I showed how nū is used strategically in arguments. By uttering nū after a statement, the co-participants are prompted to defend their points of view.

9.3.3 Summary of eliciting nū

In 9.3, I analyzed instances of the particle nū which elicit elaborations on prior turns. In these cases, a lack of elaboration would be noticeably absent. Thus, by producing an eliciting nū, speakers pass on the opportunity to produce longer turns themselves, and, instead, they commit to being recipients. In other words, eliciting nū has strong effects on the trajectory of talk.
In my study, I make a distinction between two different sequential environments: a) nú eliciting an elaboration for a hearably incomplete announcement, and b) nú eliciting an account for a complete sequence. First, I discussed instances which occurred after hearably incomplete announcements (9.3.1). I showed that these instances typically occur when a speaker is introducing a new topic, such as in (9.17) to (9.21). In these cases, the incomplete announcement followed by nú functions as a preparatory sequence. However, I also pointed out that nú has not conventionalized as a go-ahead signal to the same degree as the Finnish particle no (Sorjonen 2002). In Icelandic, nú only responds to turns which contain new information.

Second, I discussed instances of nú which elicit elaborations after a sequence is completed (9.3.2). In these environments, nú is usually uttered as a response to a question which needs an explanation, such as in (9.22) and (9.23). It can also be a response to a strong statement which a speaker of an opposing opinion refuses to accept, such as in (9.24). In these instances of nú, it is the producer of nú who takes the initiative in prompting an elaboration. Typically, nú is preceded by clear signs of topic termination, such as in (9.22), or pauses, such as in (9.24).

Although one instance had falling intonation, the majority of eliciting nú clearly has rising or falling-rising intonation. The contours illustrated in section 9.3 are shown for comparison in Figure 9.15:
In my data, all instances of nú responding to hearably complete announcements have rising or falling-rising intonation, as seen in the first two curves in Figure 9.15. The only exception in this data was one instance of nú which followed a complete sequence shown in excerpt (9.22). Finally, it should be pointed out that although the intonation seems to play a crucial role when speakers interpret the dialogue particle nú, I emphasize that interpretation is always based on interplay between intonation and the content of the prior turn.

In the final section of this chapter, I will give a summary of nú as a dialogue particle.

**9.4 Summary of nú as a dialogue particle**

In Chapter 9, I addressed the function of nú as a dialogue particle. In my discussion, I made a distinction between instances which I characterized as having mainly
retrospective functions and instances which I characterized as having mainly eliciting functions. The retrospective **nú**, as the name suggests, has the function of displaying a response to a prior turn. Therefore, these instances do not constrain the trajectory of talk to the same extent as the eliciting **nú**. Following a retrospective **nú**, the discourse floor is open, and any participant can appoint himself as the next speaker. In some cases, the producer of **nú** may choose to add an assessment, a partial repeat of the prior turn, or another dialogue particle, such as *jaëja* ‘well.’ Such elements, however, seem to form a new turn and are thus frequently overlapped by co-participants.

As a contrast to the retrospective **nú**, the eliciting **nú** allocates the floor back to the prior speaker. Thus, after uttering **nú**, the producer of **nú** is obliged to yield the floor and wait for the response he or she has elicited. In some cases, the producer of **nú** may add a question or an interrogative, such as *af hverju* ‘why,’ which has the same function as the eliciting **nú**. A summary of the two types of **nú** is shown in Table 9.6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect on turn-allocation</th>
<th>Retrospective</th>
<th>Eliciting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open floor</td>
<td>Gives the floor to the prior speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other elements following <strong>nú</strong> produced by the same speaker (optional)</td>
<td>-Assessment (9.14)</td>
<td>Interrogatives (9.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Rephrasing of prior turn (9.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Other dialogue particles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant next action by the provider of the information</td>
<td>-Optional acknowledgement token, e.g., (9.6) and (9.7)</td>
<td>Account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Optional elaboration, e.g., (9.5) and (9.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intonation</td>
<td>-Rising-falling (9.4)–(9.8)</td>
<td>-Rising (9.17), (9.19)–(9.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Falling (9.9) and (9.10)</td>
<td>-Falling-Rising (9.18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Falling-rising-falling (9.12)–(9.15)</td>
<td>-Falling (9.23)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the particle **nú** is employed in a conversation, co-participants interpret the particle based on what was said in the prior turn and how it was delivered. Hence, the retrospective **nú** which functions as an acknowledgement token registering new information is typically delivered with rising-falling or falling intonation. Further, I demonstrate that the speaker can show a higher degree of surprise by using a louder voice and a more dynamic pitch. The instances which display transition towards understanding, by contrast, were produced with a falling-rising-falling intonation, and
the majority of instances with eliciting functions were delivered with rising or falling-rising intonation. Finally, some instances of eliciting nú which occur after complete sequences may have falling intonation, such as in (9.23).

In sum, the main function of the dialogue particle nú is to mark a prior informing as noteworthy and as a departure from the normal state of affairs. Thus, by uttering nú, the speaker foregrounds the prior turn and displays special attention towards it.

In the final chapter of this study, I will give a summary and a conclusion.
10 Summary and concluding discussion

The tenth and final chapter begins with a summary of the study (10.1). In the second section, I will put the results in a broader perspective and discuss the relevance of the study for studies of the temporal origo and for particle studies in general. I will briefly mention some challenges for future research and provide concluding remarks (10.2).

10.1 Summary

In this study, I explore how nú and núna are employed in contemporary Icelandic conversation. Before I started this project, the co-existence of these historically related words had not yet been accounted for, nor had the non-temporal functions been discussed in detail. Therefore, it was my aim to find out whether a sequential and prosodic analysis of conversational data would lead to a better understanding of the meaning or function of the two words. The aim of the study was twofold: on one hand, to pin down the distribution of labour between nú and núna, and, on the other hand, to describe nú’s non-temporal functions. Since nú has an array of non-temporal functions, more emphasis was put on the latter question.

The methodological framework for the study is interactional linguistics, which is an empirically based linguistic approach which draws mainly upon ethnomethodological conversation analysis (abbreviated CA). CA is a descriptive and qualitative research method which is based on a sequential analysis of empirical data. Correspondingly, this study is based on a detailed analysis of conversational excerpts from non-arranged, naturally occurring conversations. The data used in this particular study give a broad representation of Icelandic talk-in-interaction, including informal everyday conversations and institutional conversations represented by mediated discourse. The data consist of 14 hours and 11 minutes of speech, including two dinner gatherings (Friends and Reunion), telephone conversations among friends and family (PTC), institutional telephone conversations (ITC), three radio shows for teenagers (Teens), ten episodes of a phone-in program on the radio (Soul), and a political debate on television (Elections).

In the data, there are 935 instances of nú and núna. In each case, núna has clear temporal functions. Nú, by contrast, has non-temporal functions in addition to its
temporal functions. The non-temporal functions were grouped into three main categories according to a model for particles presented in the authoritative Finnish grammar, *Iso Suomen kieloppi* (2004: 770). This model is based mainly on sequential placement, syntactic integration, and function of particles. The first category consists of occurrences which function as *tone particles* (often referred to as modal particles). These instances are syntactically integrated and give the utterances a certain tone instead of anchoring the utterances in time. The second category consists of *utterance particles* (sometimes called discourse markers). These are syntactically non-integrated and occur either in the beginning of turns or between turn-constructional units. Finally, the third category consists of instances which function as *dialogue particles* (or response particles). These instances index recipiency, and they typically occur as a turn of their own. Table 10.1 summarizes the distribution between *núna* and the four different types of *nú*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Temporal <em>núna</em></th>
<th>Temporal <em>nú</em></th>
<th><em>Nú</em> as a tone particle</th>
<th><em>Nú</em> as an utterance particle</th>
<th><em>Nú</em> as a dialogue particle</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N/ min</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N/ min</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N/ min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reun.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elect.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 10.1 shows, the 935 instances are distributed rather unevenly in the data. The overwhelming majority of *nú* can be classified as tone particles, with 574 occurrences in total, or 0.67 per minute. In contrast, only 32 instances function as utterance particles, that is, 0.04 per minute. The two other functions of *nú, nú* as a temporal marker and *nú* as a dialogue particle, have 82 and 73 instances respectively.

Further, the table shows that the different types of *nú* have a rather uneven distribution within the different subdata. *Nú* as a dialogue particle is totally absent.
from the television debate *Elections*, while it is relatively frequent in the private telephone conversations *PTC*. Nú as a tone particle, in contrast, has the highest occurrence in the phone-in program *Soul of the nation*, with a total of 458 or 1.48 per minute.

There may be many reasons for this uneven distribution. Various factors, such as the number of participants, the means of communication, or the degree of institutionality or formality may serve as explanations. Further, the distribution may depend upon the type of conversational activities with which the interlocutors are engaged during each conversation. It is, for example, less likely that a speaker (in particular the moderator) will use nú as a dialogue particle in a formal television debate (cf. Heritage 1985 on the English *oh*). However, this study does not specifically address the uneven distribution since a much larger corpus is needed to make such arguments.

The first part of my empirical study addressed the formal and functional differences between núna and temporal nú. The first step of my analysis was to compare the syntactic distribution of both words. This comparison showed that, in most cases nú is placed in the front field, while núna typically occurs in the end field, after a possible syntactic completion. Thus, my study confirms observations previously made by J. H. Jónsson (1982) and supports them with empirical data. Furthermore, núna sometimes occurs disjointed from surrounding utterances, either as a turn of its own or as a syntactic expansion. Nú, in contrast, occurs almost exclusively in the close surrounding of a finite verb. These syntactic characteristics are not mentioned in earlier studies of nú and núna (cf. J. H. Jónsson 1982; Wide 1998). I suggested that these differences reflect subtle functional differences between the two words.

After an in-depth analysis of the data, I proposed that núna is used as a referential index that refers to an unspecified period of time which includes the utterance time and some time in the past and in the future. The focal event described as taking place núna can occur anywhere during that period of time. Consequently, the event can have different temporal relations to the actual utterance time. In some cases, the time period indexed with núna is rather short, while in other cases it can stretch over years and decades. In other words, núna has a wide meaning potential (cf. Linell 1998; Allwood 2003). The meaning of núna is therefore open and negotiable and its interpretation depends on the various contexts in which it is used. The time period is often specified by adding another word or a phrase before or after núna, such as in akkúrat núna ‘exactly now,’ or núna síðustu áratugina ‘now the last decades.’
While núna tends to occur in final position, the temporal nú has a clear tendency to occur before the finite verb. The data shows that these instances occur mainly in three types of utterances: a) in utterances containing temporal comparisons, such as nú ‘now’ versus þá ‘then’; b) in utterances which present a new situation or a transition, and c) in utterances in which a speaker shows an affective stance or intensity. In addition, I proposed that the affective function of nú may, in some cases, become dominant in such a way that the temporal function becomes less noticeable. Such occurrences are classified as tone particles.

My analysis of nú and núna suggests that the distribution of labour between the two words is similar to the distribution between the Russian temporal markers sejčas and teper’ (cf. Grenoble 1998). Like sejčas, núna refers to a stretch of time, whereas nú and teper’ are used in utterances which contain temporal comparisons or mark transitions. In other words, the results of my analysis show that the differences between nú and núna cannot be accounted for only by referring to the duration of the indexed time, such as proposed in Íslensk orðabók (1983; 2002), nor by using stylistic arguments, as suggested by J. H. Jónsson (1982: 256–7). The data clearly shows that nú and núna differ in many respects, including in their sequential and syntactic distribution.

Nú as a tone particle is the largest category in the data. The high number of instances shows that the tone particle nú is used in many different kinds of environments and in different types of conversational activities. In other words, this type of nú seems to have a rather general function which is difficult to pinpoint. Hence, my starting point was to make a distinction between nú in pre-verbal and post-verbal positions, and then to categorize the instances according to their sequential environment. The categories presented in the study were formed by asking questions, such as: is the turn in which nú occurs projective or responsive in nature? Does it occur in a one-unit turn or in a multi-unit turn? Does it occur at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of topics? Finally, is there anything else going on in the turn which is particularly relevant for the interaction?

The analysis of the pre-verbal nú shows that these instances occur in utterances in which speakers are describing situations. Typically, nú occurs in utterances in which a new aspect of an ongoing topic is presented, or in disaligning utterances. I argue that in this environment, speakers use nú to present their own opinion as a fact which cannot be doubted easily. By initiating the utterance with nú, the information is presented with a tone of certainty. In some cases, these descriptions, formed as declaratives, are followed by an interrogative question. I argue that the function of the
declarative part is to give a relevant background, and, by using nú, the facts are presented with a tone of certainty.

In my data, nú as a tone particle occurs in the following environments: 1) in turns linking backwards; 2) in communicative projects (cf. Linell 1998); 3) in meta-comments; 4) in assessments; 5) in questions initiating topic-shifts; 6) in directives; and, finally, 7) in repeats.

I show that nú in turns linking backwards tend to occur when speakers are showing firm responses to a prior turn. A high proportion of these turns functions as an objection, and, hence, the turns often includes negations (cf. also Hakulinen and Saari 1995: 491–2). Similar to the other turns linking backwards, nú shows affective stance and thus gives the objection a more decisive tone. In my discussion on communicative projects, however, I showed that nú as a tone particle often occurs in TCUs which contain important background information. I argue that a TCU containing nú has the function of establishing a fact before a main point of a story is presented or a question is posed. Instead of referring back in the conversation, these instances prepare for something that is yet to come, or they have constraining effects on the turns which follows.

Further, my study shows that nú as a tone particle is often employed in meta-comments and in assessments. I show that nú in meta-comments tend to occur when there is a potential problem in the discourse situation, such as when speakers need to negotiate the choice of topics, or when speakers are indirectly seeking help remembering. By using nú in these environments, speakers foreground their problems and appeal to their co-participants. Nú in assessments, by contrast, often co-occur with elements which contribute to making the assessment more decisive, for example, with negations and extreme cases formulations (Pomerantz 1986).

Finally, I discussed smaller subcategories and more isolated instances, such as nú in topic-shifts, directives, and repeats. In my analysis of questions initiating topic-shifts, I pointed out that these instances typically occur when the previous topic seems to be exhausted. I argue that nú’s function is to foreground a question to mark progression. A few instances of the tone particle nú occur in directives. My data suggest that some of these instances function as a temporal marker, while others show affective stance. In other cases, nú seems to have lost its temporality. Directives make a strong appeal to the co-participant, and I suggest that nú makes the plea even stronger and more difficult to reject. Similar to what Hakulinen and Saari (1995: 490) have shown, the Icelandic nú is also used in repeats, both when speakers are repeating something to which the co-participant does not respond, and when the co-participant
has acoustic problems and requests a repair. The tone particle *nú* in repeats co-occurs with a higher pitch, higher volume, and a more careful articulation. I argue that this co-occurrence indicates that even these instances of *nú* function as markers of affective stance.

The majority of the occurrences in pre-verbal and post-verbal positions are prosodically non-prominent, although some instances are stressed and some are produced with a considerably higher pitch than the surrounding discourse. Thus, this study shows that tone particles are not always prosodically non-prominent and unstressed, such as studies in German and other Nordic languages have suggested (cf. e.g. Bublitz 1978, Andvik 1992).

*Nú* as an utterance particle occurs in the pre-front field and is therefore syntactically non-integrated with the core syntactic gestalt (cf. Auer 1996a). The main function of these instances is to display attention towards an upcoming turn, and to connect different turns or TCUs. Following an in-depth analysis of the data, I divided the occurrences into two subcategories based on sequential environment: *nú* initiating continuations, and *nú* initiating turns after a speaker-change.

I argue that, when *nú* is employed in turn continuations, it displays continuity between TCUs. I show that these instances often occur at boundaries between subtopics or before important parts of multi-unit turns. Typically, these instances have a prolonged vowel and they are produced with a creaky voice. I also pointed out that they often occur in the environment of pauses and in-breaths. The utterance particle *nú* when it initiates continuations is in some ways comparable to the way Schiffrin (1987) describes the non-temporal functions of the English *now*. Both particles display attention towards the upcoming turn and mark a progression through discourse time. Interestingly, Icelandic seems to be the only Nordic language which has this similarity with English.

The utterance particle *nú*, when it occurs after a speaker change, is typically followed by a question or a statement which indicates that something in the prior turn comes as a surprise or is unexpected. This registering function has some similarities with the English *oh*, which Heritage (1984b) refers to as a change-of-state token. *Nú* as an utterance particle is short but sometimes delivered with a slightly prolonged vowel and often has a rising-falling intonation contour. In contrast to the *nú* initiating continuation, these instances are prosodically integrated with a syntactic gestalt, and they are typically not delivered with a creaky voice.

The final category discussed in this study consists of instances of *nú* which occur as a turn of their own, as a dialogue particle. By looking at the trajectory of talk, in
other words, who has the right or obligation to be the next speaker following an instance of nú, I make a distinction between two main types, retrospective and eliciting nú. The retrospective nú registers the preceding information as new or unexpected but does not necessarily require a response from the producer of the informative turn. Hence, following these instances, the discourse floor is open and a prior speaker, as well as co-participants, can appoint themselves as the next speaker. The eliciting nú, in contrast, makes an explanation or an account from the provider of the information the next relevant action, and a lack thereof would be seen as “noticeably absent” (cf. Sacks 1992b: 61). Thus, by producing an eliciting nú, speakers pass an opportunity to make a longer contribution to the discourse and, instead, they become listeners.

The analysis shows that the retrospective nú registers new and sometimes unexpected information, or displays a transition towards an understanding after receiving new information. By looking at the prosodic realization in these sequences, I show that prosody plays a major role and can be used to convey different meanings. Thus, I show that a rising-falling intonation contour delivered with a loud voice and dynamic pitch indexes a stronger response and portrays more surprise than a falling intonation contour delivered with a non-dynamic pitch and a soft voice.

The occurrences of eliciting nú are divided into nú responding to hearably incomplete announcements and nú initiating accounts for complete sequences. The former type typically occurs in the beginning of new topics when the co-participant proffers a topic by producing a preparatory sequence. These instances are produced with rising intonation. The instances following complete sequences, by contrast, have either rising or falling intonation. This variation shows that rising intonation is not the only factor which conveys an eliciting function. The sequential placement, that is the content of the prior turn, was equally important.

As I show in this study, nú may have an array of different functions. It can anchor a proposition in time; it can show affective stance; it can display attention to an upcoming turn; and it can register an informing as new or unexpected. Although some of these functions seem, at first glance, to have little in common, I propose that they all have a common denominator which is linked to the original temporal meaning of nú.

The temporal marker nú anchors the propositional content of an utterance in time. In other words, it indexes a time relationship which is known as reference time (cf. Schiffrin 1987). By employing temporal nú, speakers foreground their utterances and make them relevant in the present moment by putting focus on the here and now. In
my study, occurrences of nú which do not anchor the propositional content in time, for example, nú as a tone particle, have similar foregrounding and focusing functions. The focus in these instances is on the here and now as it appears in the interactional context, in other words, on the conversation in question rather than on the temporal relation to the propositional content. Thus, it can be argued that nú as a tone particle anchors the utterance in discourse time (cf. Schiffrin 1987).

Regarding nú as an utterance particle, my study shows that these instances have a relation to discourse time rather than to reference time. The temporal origo is constantly shifting, and each time nú is uttered, it is anchored in a new context (see section 3.2). Thus, by uttering nú, speakers display progression in time. In my study, this was more evident in instances in which nú initiated continuations. When nú initiated turns after a speaker shift, however, the reference to discourse time becomes less clear, and, instead, nú projects utterances which show surprise.

Finally, when looking at nú as a dialogue particle, it first appears as though these instances have little in common with the original temporal meaning of nú. However, the study shows that nú as a dialogue particle has a similar function as nú as an utterance particle. Both types occur in slots during which speakers treat information in a prior turn as new and unexpected. In other words, nú as an utterance particle shows the link between nú as a temporal marker and nú as a dialogue particle.

In sum, by using nú, the speaker displays attention towards the present moment. Due to nú’s sequential and syntactic position, as well as its prosody, these occurrences acquire the different functions described above.

10.2 Concluding discussion

In Icelandic, the temporal origo is a particularly interesting research subject since it is indexed with two different words, nú and núna. Although this study is based on Icelandic data, the findings are relevant for other languages as well. The detailed analysis of the two forms and their distribution of labour provides valuable insights into the nature of the temporal origo, and how time is used as an interactional resource. Instead of describing the temporal origo in terms of time points or time periods (cf. Fillmore 1992 [1971]), I have argued that the difference between the Icelandic nú and núna is based on another type of dichotomy—the distinction between static and dynamic time. Thus, núna refers to static time, in other words, long or short
periods of time, while *nú* is used in a more dynamic fashion, in comparisons, in transitions, and in utterances in which speakers show an affective stance.

Also, the non-temporal use of words which are historically related to the temporal origo seems to be a wide-spread phenomenon in European languages. In this study, I referred to studies in languages such as English (Schiffrin 1987), Norwegian (Andvik 1992), Danish (Steensig 2001), Polish (Kryk-Kastovsky (1992; 1997), Russian (Multisilta 1995; Grenoble 1998), Swedish (Lehti-Eklund 1992; Hakulinen and Saari 1995), and Finnish (Raevaara 1989; Hakulinen and Saari 1995; Sorjonen 2002). The richness and the polyfunctionality of the Icelandic particle *nú* shows the kinds of functions the temporal origo can acquire in languages. Thus, this study shows possible links between seemingly different functions in other languages. The English *now*, for example, can function only as a temporal marker and as an utterance particle, and the Swedish and Danish *nu* function only as temporal markers and as tone particles. However, Swedish and Danish have another word, *nå*, which is considered to be historically connected with the temporal origo and has parallel functions to *nú* as a dialogue particle. This study of the Icelandic *nú* shows a link between the different functions.

There are several aspects of this study which I have briefly mentioned, and which I would consider important areas for future research. First, I see a need for a more detailed cross-linguistic comparison of words indexing the temporal origo, and how different languages deal with the unspecific meaning of these words. It would be especially interesting to compare languages which use two or more words to index the temporal origo. Similarly, a comparison of the non-temporal functions of words historically related to *nú* is an interesting challenge for future research, especially between closely related languages, such as the Nordic languages. A third area I would like to mention is the grammaticalization process of *nú* and *núna*, that is, how the usage of these words has changed over the centuries. Although it is difficult to study the functions of interactive words using only written documents, the existence of the Icelandic sagas offers an excellent opportunity to explore the potential similarities and differences between *nú* in medieval and contemporary Icelandic. Also, the potential differences in more recent documents should be explored, especially any early examples of *núna*.

I introduced this work by presenting a conversational excerpt which contained a temporal *nú* and *núna*, as well as a few non-temporal *nú* which clearly had different functions. In this study, I have shown how speakers make distinct choices between the two historically related words. Furthermore, I have shown that they shape them
according to their needs by using prosodic means and by uttering them in particular sequential and syntactic slots. The co-participants, in return, orient to nú and to turns containing nú based on these same factors. The empirical part of this study was entirely based on spoken interaction, and, thus, the results presented above have emerged without taking any written data into account. My impression is that a study of nú and núna in written Icelandic would give somewhat different results, since monologist texts would not be able to show the interactional functions I have demonstrated above. Thus, this sequential study of nú and núna clearly illustrates how important it is for grammatical studies not to forget that talk-in-interaction is the primary habitat of language, and that it is mainly there that linguistic elements are shaped and molded.
Sammanfattning

Helga Hilmisdóttir

En sekventiell analys av nú och núna i isländska samtal

Syfte


Samtalsutdrag (1) visar belägg på de olika typerna av nú och núna:

(1) NU BÖRJAR JAG FÅ NOG: Soul 07.05.96
(M = programledare; A = Arngrimur, inringare)

1 M Og Arngrimur Guðmundsson fy rstur í dag komdu sæll.
och ÍnamnM PatrM förstM i dag GREET
Och Arngrimur Guðmundsson är först i dag hej

2 A Já komdu blessuð.
PRT GREET
ja hallà

→ A >Vi (h)öfum nú talað saman áður?<
vi ha.3.PL NÚ tala.PP tillsammans tidigare
vi har NÚ pratat med varandra tidigare

4 M J↓á:j↑á:á: Hvort við ekki höfum,
PRĪ om vi inte ha.3.PL
ja ja ja det har vi verkligen? gjort

5 A Ég skal segja þér eitt eh::e- Eva- Eva Marie,
 jag skall.1 berätta.INF du.DAT ett eh- e- ÍnamnF ÍnamnF ÍnamnF
Jag ska säga en sak ö- e- Eva- Eva Marie

→ A <NU: fer mér að leiðast svolitið hvernig að mYnd e::::::>
NÚ fara.3 jag.DAT att bli led/MV lite grann hur att bild eh-
Nú börjar jag bli trött på vilken form ö

→ forsetafram- forsetakosningararnar eru að taka á sig o núna°.
president- president val.DEF vara.3.PL att ta.INF på sig.ACC NÚNA
president- presidentvalet håller på att ta NÚNA
I utdraget används både *nú* och *núna* i temporal funktion (rad 6–7), och på tre ställen förekommer *nú* i icke-temporal funktion (rad 3, 8–9). Notera att de temporalan beläggen på *nú* och *núna* förekommer inom samma tur och att de icke-temporala beläggen på *nú* har klart olika funktioner. Dessutom uppträder beläggen på rad 3 och 9 inom en längre tur medan belägget på rad 8 utgör en egen tur.

**Bakgrund**


I kapitel 3 diskuteras studiens centrala begrepp: tid, indexikalitet och partiklar. I början av kapitlet diskuteras tid och deixis. Diskussionen utgår från begreppet *temporalt origo*, det vill säga det man i svenska uttrycker med tidsadverbet *nu*. Origot
är inte en noga avgränsad enhet, utan en enhet med öppen omfattning (Fillmore 1997 [1971]). Man kan därmed anta att ord som nú och núna har en dynamisk meningspotential (Allwood 2003) som manifesteras i specifika betydelser i situerade kontexter.


**Metod och material**

Studiens teoretiska och metodologiska referensram är interaktionell lingvistik (se Selting och Couper-Kuhlen 2001; Steensig 2002). Inom interaktionell lingvistik bygger all analys på autentisk interaktion, det vill säga naturligt uppkomna samtal som inte har arrangerats av forskaren. Via noggrann analys av enskilda samtalsutdrag identifieras mönster i interaktionen som sedan beskrivs och analyseras ur ett sekventiellt och deltagarorienterat perspektiv.


I kapitel 5 presenteras materialet som studien i avhandlingen bygger på. Detta består av totalt 14 timmar och 11 minuter inspelade autentiska samtal. För att materialet ska avspeglas ett så varierat språkbruk som möjligt ingår flera olika typer av

**Resultat**

De temporala och icke-temporala funktionerna hos nú och núna behandlas i fyra empiriska kapitel: nú och núnas temporala funktioner, nú som tonpartikel, nú som yttrandepartikel och nú som dialogpartikel.

I kapitel 6 diskuteras nú:s och núna:s temporala funktioner. En frekvensanalys av samtliga belägg visar en tydlig skillnad i nú:s och núna:s syntaktiska distribution. Medan 76 % av alla belägg på nú uppträder i initialfältet före det finita verbet, uppträder 88 % av alla belägg på núna i slutfältet (se exempel 1, rad 6 och 7). Den temporala markören núna kan fungera som en tur i sig eller som ett turtillägg utan direkt anknytning till ett finit verb. Följande utdrag visar hur núna används som ett turtillägg (rad 6) efter att de andra samtalsdeltagarna genom uppbackningar har visat att de uppfattar Maggas tur som avslutad:

(2) **KOMPONERA KLASSISK MUSIK: Reunion**
(M = Magga; B = Brynhildur; V = Vala; E = Erna)

1. **M.** mt þa er náttlega líka hægt að sem:ja eitthvað °i°. mt de vara.3 naturligtvis också möjligt att skriva.INF något i .mt man kan förstås också skriva något i

2. klassiskum stil [til dæmis,]  
   klassisk stil [ till exempel]  
   klassisk stil [ till exempel ]

3. (E) [j tá: ]  
   [PRT ]  
   [ja ]

4. **B.** j ál j tá=  
   PRT  
   ja

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Som tidsmarkör uppträder nú endast i närheten av ett finit verb (se exempel 1, rad 6) eller i frasen hvað nú? ’vad nu?’ I avhandlingen argumenteras att dessa syntaktiska skillnader mellan nú och núna återspeglar en funktionell skillnad mellan orden. Medan núna föranckrar yttrandet till en extern tidsperiod används nú i temporala jämförelser (nu vs. då) samt för att markera övergångar och/eller engagemang.


På samma sätt som det preverbala nú uppträder det postverbala nú i yttranden där det verkar finnas behov av att signalera bestämdhet. Dessa belägg förekommer ofta i argumentativa kontexter eller när talare presenterar fakta eller starka åsikter. Det postverbala nú uppträder även när talaren vänder starkt till samtalsparten, t.ex. i metakommentarer, direktiv och upprepningar.

Den prosodiska utformningen hos nú som tonpartikel är i de flesta fall svag och partikeln uttalas i regel utan tydliga gränser till de ord som yttras före och/eller efter. Det finns dock belägg där nú är prosodiskt prominent, t.ex. genom satsbetoning eller tonhöjd. Nú som tonpartikel har med få undantag en kort vokal.

bruken av now i engelska (Schiffrin 1987). I dessa belägg uttalas nú ofta med utdragen vokal och knarr i rösten: Nú:¬#e#: (0.2) .h Svo er þa- o svo er hún Sigrún. ’NÚ (0,2) .h sen är de- o sen är det Sigrún.’ Vid beläggen som förekommer efter talarbyte markerar talaren att samtalspartens tidigare tur innehåller något nytt eller oväntat: nú, ertu búinn að reyna mikið? ‘NÚ, har du försökt mycket?’ I beläggen har nú ofta kort vokal men partikeln kan också ha en längre vokal och en distinkt intonationskurva. Gemensamt för samtliga belägg är att talaren genom att använda nú signalerar till sin samtalspart att någon typ av övergång eller progression är att vänta.

I kapitel 9, som är avhandlingens sista empiriska kapitel, diskuteras nú som dialogpartikel. I denna funktion bildar nú i de flesta fall en egen tur och registrerar att informationen i föregående tur är oväntad eller förvånande (se exempel 1, rad 8). Beläggen indelades i två huvudkategorier: a) nú med retrospektiv funktion och b) nú med elicitiativ funktion. De retrospektiva beläggen utgör en respons till den föregående turen utan att påverka turtilldelningen såsom i följande utdrag:

(3) Festande: PTC 03.07.03  
(A = Arnar; E = Erna)

1 A Fórstá djammið í gær, gick du ut igår kväll 
2 E Nei PRT nej 
3 (0.5) → A Nú → 
5 (0.8)

Efter att en talare har yttrat ett retrospektivt nú är ordet fritt och alla samtalsparter har samma rätt att ta turen. De kan då aningen fortsätta med samma samtalsämne eller påbörja ett nytt. Genom att använda ett elicitiativt nú kastar talaren däremot bollen tillbaka till sin motpart och vänder till honom eller henne att vidareutveckla en tidigare tur (exempel 1, rad 8). Den talare som yttrar nú är således skyldig att ge över turen och invänta motpartens respons.

Dialogpartikeln nú yttras ofta med förlängd vokal och distinkt intonationskurva. En prosodisk analys av materialet visar att det finns ett klart samband mellan intonation och respons. En tydligt stigande ton kan t.ex. fungera som ett tecken på att talaren vill ha en förklaring till den föregående turen, det vill säga nú har en elicitiativ
funktion medan nú med en stigande-fallande ton har en retrospektiv funktion och mottas som en kvittering. Den prosodiska analysen visar vidare att talaren kan signalera en högre grad av förvåning genom att använda högre ljudstyrka och mer dynamisk intonation.

I avhandlingens sista kapitel sammanfattas och diskuteras resultaten i de fyra empiriska kapitlen. Studien visar att det finns en gemensam nämnare i bruket av ordet nú i isländska trots att det kan ha en rad olika funktioner. Sammanfattningsvis kan man konstatera att nú används för att fokusera eller framhäva något viktigt i en tidigare, pågående eller kommande tur. I stället för att förankra det sagda i den aktuella referenstiden, förankrar nú yttrandet i samtalets interna tid, i diskurstiden.
Data

*Friends.* Informal gathering with three or four participants in their mid to late twenties recorded in a private home in Reykjavik in June, 1996. Length: 120 min. Transcription: Helga Hilmsdóttir. Recording and tapes: Camilla Wide.


*PTC.* Private telephone conversations between a woman and her friends and family, recorded in July and August, 2002. Length: Approx. 77 min. Transcription, recording, and CDs: Helga Hilmsdóttir.

*ITC.* Institutional telephone conversations between a woman representatives for various institutions and companies, recorded in July and August, 2002. Length: Approx. 17 min. Transcription, recording, and CDs: Helga Hilmsdóttir.

*Teens.* The youth radio program *Lovísa* broadcast on the public radio station *Rás 2* 11.09.1997. Length (speech part): approx. 40 min. Participants: a female program host, a male program host, a music expert, a film critic, sales representatives of record companies (adults), young people interviewed outside the studio, young people calling the program during a quiz. Transcription: Helga Hilmsdóttir. Tape: Camilla Wide.


*Teens.* The youth radio program *Ó hve glöð er vor æska* ‘Oh how happy is our youth’ broadcast on the public radio station *Rás 2* 10.06.1997. Length: (Speech, transcribed part): approx. 41 min. Participants: Two male hosts, a female and a male studio guest, a number of people in short interviews and dialogues. Transcription: Helga Hilmsdóttir. Tape: Camilla Wide.

*The Soul of the Nation.* The radio phone-in program *Þjóðarsálin* ‘The Soul of The Nation,’ broadcast 17.5, 23.5, 30.5, 31.5, 3.6, 4.6, 5.6, 7.6, 10.6, and 11.6.1996. Length: approx. 30 min./broadcast except 10.6.1996 which is approx. 40 min. Participants: Moderators (two female, one male), callers. First transcription: Jóhanna Snorradóttir, Jóhannes B. Sigtryggsson. CA transcription: Helga Hilmsdóttir. Preservation: Institute of Linguistics, University of Iceland (Project leaders: Professor Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, Camilla Wide.)

References


### Appendix A: Notation on transcription conventions

#### PAUSES AND TURNTAKING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(0.5)</td>
<td>Silences measured in tenths of seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.)</td>
<td>Micro pause, i.e., a pause no longer than 0.2 second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[</td>
<td>Overlapping talk begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>]</td>
<td>Overlapping talk ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>Two or more speakers start simultaneously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>No interval between two adjacent utterances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### TEMPO AND RHYTHM
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>Talk inside is done with a pace slower than surrounding talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; &lt;</td>
<td>Talk inside is done with a pace faster than surrounding talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:::</td>
<td>Lengthening of sound. Each colon indicates that the sound has been lengthened by approximately 0.10 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Sudden cut-off of a sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'</td>
<td>An apostrophe indicates a glottal stop or word finished abruptly but not cut off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### INTONATION, STRESS AND VOLUME
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nú</td>
<td>Capitalized letters signal a beginning intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>A slash indicates a high onset or a pitch step-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\</td>
<td>A reverse slash indicates a pitch step-down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
<td>An arrow pointing down marks a fall in pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑</td>
<td>An arrow pointing up marks a rise in pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→</td>
<td>An arrow pointing forward signifies a level contour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>A full stop indicates a falling terminal contour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>,</td>
<td>A comma indicates slightly falling terminal contour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>A question mark indicates a rising terminal contour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ğ</td>
<td>A reversed question mark indicates a half-rising terminal contour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NÚ</td>
<td>Uppercase indicate emphasis with louder volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>° °</td>
<td>Talk inside uttered with sotto voce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### VOICE QUALITY
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* *</td>
<td>Talk inside delivered with a laughing voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ $</td>
<td>Talk inside delivered with a smily voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>Talk inside delivered with animated voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># #</td>
<td>Creaky voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.já</td>
<td>The word is said with in-breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% %</td>
<td>Clearing the throat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### OTHER
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Audible aspiration. One h indicates approximately 0.10 second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.h</td>
<td>Audible inhalation. One .h indicates approximately 0.10 second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.mt</td>
<td>Clicking sound caused by parting of the lips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(xx)</td>
<td>Item or word in doubt by the transcriber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(( xxx ))</td>
<td>Comments by the transcriber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix B: Notation on glosses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>1st, 2nd, 3rd person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1nameF</td>
<td>1st name, female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1nameM</td>
<td>1st name, male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONJ</td>
<td>conjunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>dative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>genitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREET</td>
<td>greeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPER</td>
<td>imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP</td>
<td>impersonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF</td>
<td>infinitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAST</td>
<td>last name (not patronymic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>masculine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MV</td>
<td>middle voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>neuter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>nominative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PatrF</td>
<td>patronymic, female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PatrM</td>
<td>patronymic, male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>past participle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRT</td>
<td>particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>past tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REF</td>
<td>reflexive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP</td>
<td>verb particle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Nú and núna in Íslensk orðabók 1963, 1983, and 2002

Íslensk orðabók 1963:

nú, ao 1 á þessum, líðandi tíma: þá og nú, eins og nú er ástatt; nú er frá því að segja næst segir frá því. 2 með spurningu: nú, er hann farinn? 3 til e.k. áherslu, án ákveðinnar merkingar: það get ég nú varla sagt, það máttu nú ekki. 4 sem upphafssórd í skilyrðissetningum, einkum í lagamáli: nú gerir rikissjórnin aðrar ráðstafanir, og skal þá. 5 til órvunar: nú, nú, haltu áfram.

Íslensk orðabók 1983:

nú, ao 1 á þessari stundu, á líðandi stundu: þá og nú, eins og nú er ástatt; nú er frá því að segja næst segir frá því; nú orðið nú á tíðum, eins og komið er á líðandi stundu. 2 með spurningu: nú, er hann farinn? 3 til e.k. áherslu, án ákveðinnar merkingar: það get ég nú varla sagt, það máttu nú ekki. 4 sem upphafssórd í skilyrðissetningum, einkum í lagamáli: nú gerir rikissjórnin aðrar ráðstafanir, og skal þá … 5 sem einsk. uh, til órvunar: nú, nú, haltu áfram; í aðdáunarskyni: nú, nú, falleg eru gullin; til fullvissunar eða áréttingar: nú, nú, hættu þessu; sem líður í setningarígildi: bittí nú, svona nú.

Íslensk orðabók 2002:

3 nú, ao 1 á þessari stundu, á líðandi stundu → þá og nú /eins og nú er ástatt / nú er frá því að segja næst segir frá því / nú orðið nú á tíðum, eins og komið er á líðandi stundu / nú …, nú … † fyrrst 2, svo …, eina stundina, … aðra stundina → hann grípur í ráðaleysu nú til þess, nú til hins 2 merkingarlítið innskotsorð sem stundum eykur áherslu stundum með e-s tilhofiðun til viðmælenda, dregur stundum úr eða milder staðhæfingu eða lýsingu, meðal annars með því að bregða yfir hana blæ viðtekins sannleika, og gefur stundum til kynna efnisskil í samtali eða einraðu → það var nú karl í krapinu! / fyrir nú utan peningayóðsuna! / það get ég nú varla sagt / við vildum nú ekki vera að hlusta á þau / heldurðu að þú getir nú ekki gert þetta fyrir mig? / mikið er nú veðrið gott / það máttu nú ekki / það er nú svo / rétt er nú það / halda nú ekki vera alveg viss um að svo er ekki 3 upphafssórd setningar í samtali þar sem sett er fram almenn (sönn) staðhæfing sem athugsemd eða spurning byggist síðan á → nú ert þú gamall Ísfirðingur, hvernig finnst þér … / nú er það svo að … 4 (lagamál) upphafssórd skilyrðissetningar þar sem rakinn er hugsanlegur atburður aður en sagt er hvernig skuli bregðast við (aðalsetningin allajaðna með þá og sögninni skulu) setjum svo að, ef svo vildi til að, ef → nú gerir rikissjórnin aðrar ráðstafanir, og skal þá …

4 nú, uh 1 lýsir undrun (oft með spurningu) → nú, er hann farinn? / nú, náði hún prófinu?! • lýsir aðdáun → nú, nú, falleg eru gullin • til fullvissunar eða áréttingar → nú, nú hættu þessu sbr. bittínu, svona 2 innskotsorð til að herða á svari, örva viðmælandann eða hefja aftur frásög eftir útúrdur → nú, nú, hvað sagði hann? / nú, eftir þetta hét ég svo áfram niðri bæ … 3 kallorð við hest til að hvetja hann úr sporunum
| NH 2      | Mona Forsskåhl: Mitt emellan eller strax utanför. Språkkontakt i finlandssvensk slang (2005) |
| NH 4/TS 1 | Jan-Ola Östman (red.): FinSSL – Finlandssvenskt teckenspråk (2005) |
| NH 5/KKN 3| Hadle Oftedal Andersen & Idar Stegane (red.): Modernisme i nordisk lyrikk 1 (2005) |
| NH 7      | Helga Hilmisdóttir: A sequential analysis of nú and núna in Icelandic conversation (2007) |