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The present moment as an interactional resource: The case of *nú* and *núna* in Icelandic conversation

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In this paper, I will present an empirical study on the use of the temporal adverbs *nú* and *núna* ‘now’ in Icelandic talk-in-interaction. The aim is to investigate whether the two words have different functions, and, if so, to describe these differences. As I will show, *nú* and *núna* show clear differences in respect to their syntactical distribution. Furthermore, I will argue, that the syntactic distribution also reflects differences on the functional level. While *núna* occurs in the end field and has a clear referential function, *nú* tends to occur in the front field and have closer ties to the finite verb. The theoretical and methodological framework for the study is interactional linguistics, and the data comprises my transcription of around fourteen hours of conversation.

Keywords affective stance, deixis, interactional linguistics, spoken Icelandic, syntax, temporal comparison, temporal origo, transition

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I will explore how the temporal markers *nú* and *núna* are used in conversational Icelandic. Both words refer to the ongoing moment, which is also known as the temporal deictic centre (Fillmore 1997 [1971]) or the temporal origo (see Hanks 1996), and both could be translated into English with the temporal adverb *now* (for a discussion of *now*, see Schiffrin 1987; Aijmer 2002; and for studies on comparable words in other languages, see e.g. Hakulinen & Saari 1995; Grenoble 1998). Thus, Icelandic seems to have two words which have the same, or at least very similar, meaning.¹ The similarities are clearly reflected in dictionary definitions of the two cognates. According to the authoritative dictionary *Íslensk orðabók* (2002), *nú* is a temporal adverb referring to the ongoing moment: *á þessari stundu, á líðandi stundu* ‘at this moment, in the present moment’. In addition to the temporal meaning, *nú* also has other, non-temporal functions, for example, to give the utterance a tone of determination (*Hvað er nú þetta?* ‘What is THIS?’, Hilmisdóttir 2010), as a structuring device which signals continuity (*Fyrst borðaði ég. Nú, svo fór ég í bíó.*

‘First I ate. NÚ, then I went to the movies.’, Hilmisdóttir 2007:230–268), or as a response to somewhat unexpected information (A: *Ég er mjög reið*. B: *Nú?* A: *Tölvunni minni var stolið*. ‘A: I’m very angry. B: NÚ? A: My computer has been stolen.’ Hilmisdóttir 2007:269–323). *Núna*, by comparison, is only used to index temporality, and it is glossed in the dictionary with the temporal phrase *nú, einmitt á þessari stundu* ‘now, EXACTLY at this moment’ (my emphasis). In other words, *núna* is considered to index a narrower time frame than *nú*. This dichotomy can be compared to Fillmore’s (1997 [1971]:48) suggestion that *now* refers either to time periods (*I live in Chicago now*, my example) or to time points (*Turn now!*, my example). However, in this paper, I will argue that the difference between *nú* and *núna* cannot be adequately addressed merely by looking at the time frame.

Previous studies that focus on the differences between *nú* and *núna* include Jónsson (1982), Wide (1998), and Hilmisdóttir (2007). Jónsson (1982) focuses on the origin and function of the suffix *-na*. The suffix can be found in the near-synonymous word pairs *nú* – *núna* ‘now’, *hér* – *hérna* ‘here’, *þar* – *þarna* ‘there’, and *svo* – *svona* ‘so’. As Jónsson (1982:233) points out, these suffixed forms are found in medieval Icelandic manuscripts and can be traced back at least to the 13th century. In medieval Icelandic, *-na* was mainly used as a general marker of emphasis, following not only deictic adverbs such as those mentioned above, but also pronouns (*þatna* ‘it’) and verbs (*varna* ‘was’). However, in contemporary Icelandic, the pairs *þar* ‘there (anaphoric)’ – *þarna* ‘there (deictic)’ and *svo* ‘so’ – *svona* ‘like that’ have developed discrete lexical meanings, while the pairs *hér* – *hérna* ‘here’ and *nú* – *núna* ‘now’ are often used, as it seems, interchangeably.

In cases in which *nú* and *núna* are not interchangeable, Jónsson (1982:221) argues that, in addition to temporal precision, the choice between the two types is mainly a matter of stylistics. Hence, the primary form, *nú*, has traditionally been considered to belong to a more formal register, while the secondary form, *núna*, has been considered to be more common in colloquial language.

In this study, however, I will argue that there are other explanations for the co-existence of the two types *nú* and *núna*. One of the keys to understanding the difference between them is to investigate their sequential and syntactic distribution in spontaneous conversation. As Jónsson (1982:257–258) points out, there is a considerable difference between *nú* and *núna* in respect to their syntax; whereas *nú* tends to occur in a sentence-initial position, *núna* tends to occur sentence-finally. Jónsson’s study is not based on empirical data, but, nonetheless, examples which would support his claim can easily be found in naturally-occurring conversations. Consider the following excerpt, drawn from a radio phone-in program *The Soul of the Nation* (see Table 1). The excerpt immediately follows an introduction and greeting sequence.

The key for transcription symbols and glossing abbreviations can be found in the Appendix. All instances of *nú* and *núna* are left untranslated and are marked in

Corpus and year of recording	Form of interaction	Situation	Participants	Duration
<i>Friends</i> (1996)	Face-to-face	Evening gathering (audio recording)	Four women in their mid- or late twenties	146 min
<i>Reunion</i> (1998)	Face-to-face	Evening gathering (audio recording)	Six women in their early twenties	90 min
<i>PTC</i> (2003)	Telephone calls	Private telephone conversations (audio recording)	One woman in her early thirties and various other participants	78 min
<i>ITC</i> (2003)	Telephone calls	Institutional telephone conversations (audio recording)	One woman in her early thirties calling different institutions	17 min
<i>Teens</i> (1996, 1998)	Face-to-face conversations, telephone calls	Radio show for teenagers: radio talk, interviews, film review (audio recording)	Several young adults	100 min
<i>The Soul of the Nation</i> (1998)	Telephone calls	Phone-in radio program (audio recording)	Moderator, studio guests and various callers phoning the program	310 min
<i>Elections</i> (1996)	Face-to-face	Political television debate (audio-visual recording)	Five candidates for the presidency, six invited reporters, and one moderator	110 min
Total duration: 14 hours 11 minutes				

Table 1. Database of modern Icelandic spontaneous conversation.

boldface, and the focus of interest is marked with an arrow in the left margin (see also Section 2 on data and methods).

(1) *I'm getting fed up; Soul database, 07.06.96*

(A = a caller; M = the moderator)

- 01 A >Vi (h)öfum **nú** talað saman áður?<
we have.3.PL NÚ talk.PP together before
 'We have **NÚ** talked before'
- 02 M J↓á:↑áj↓á: Hvort við ekki höfum,
PRT whether we not have.3.PL
 'Yes yes yes we certainly have'
- 03 A Ég skal segja þér eitt eh::e. Eva- Eva Marie,
I shall.I tell you.DAT one eh- e- Eva- Eva Marie
 'Let me tell you one thing eh- E- Eva- Eva Marie'
- 04 A <**Nú**: fer mér að leiðast svolítið hvernig að mÝnd 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'
- 05 forsetafram- forsetakosningarnar eru að taka á
president presidential.elections.DEF be.3.PL to take on
sig °núna°.
it.REF NÚNA
 'the president- the presidential elections are taking **NÚNA**'
- 06 M N↑ú:::
- 07 A J↓á:↑: mér finnst þetta **nú** orðið ansi .hhh ansi
PRT I.DAT think.MV this NÚ become.PP quite .hhh quite
 'Yeah, I think this has **NÚ** become quite'
- 08 á:þekkt e:: (.) bara sona: *eh .h* hörku: alþingiskosningum?
similar eh- PRT PRT ((chuckle)) tough parliament.elections.DAT
 'like eh- just like eh .h real parliamentary elections'

In (1), the caller begins by referring to his previous conversations with the moderator, and thus establishes himself as a 'regular' on this radio show (line 1). When the moderator has acknowledged his assertion, the caller produces an utterance which projects that something important is coming up (line 3). This utterance is then followed by an announcement in which the caller gives the reason for the call: a complaint (lines 4–5). This particular turn begins with a *nú* and ends with a *núna*, both referring to the temporal origo. The moderator responds to this new piece of information by producing *nú* with a prolonged vowel which the caller treats as a go-ahead signal, and, as a result, explains the reason for his complaint (lines 7–8) (see Hilmisdóttir 2007:302ff. on *nú* as a dialogue particle; see also Heritage 1984; Local 1996 on the English *oh*).

The two instances in lines 4 and 5 are in many ways representative of *nú* and *núna* in conversational data, and their co-occurrence raises some questions regarding not only the syntactic distribution but also potential functional differences. Why does the speaker use both *nú* and *núna* in the same turn? Does the syntactic position of the tokens affect their semantic or interactional functions? Do either *nú* or *núna* have any other function apart from anchoring the event in the present moment or any other meanings?

In this paper, I will present an empirical study of the use of temporal *nú* and *núna* in naturally-occurring conversations. The study offers an analysis of two frequently used adverbs which have thus far not been investigated systematically from an interactional perspective (with the exception of Hilmiðóttir 2007). The study will include a quantitative and qualitative analysis addressing the following two questions: (i) Where in the syntactic structure do temporal *nú* and *núna* occur? (ii) To what extent can the syntactic positions be linked to different interactional functions?

Since the two types are on the border between being function and content words, it is necessary to include in the analysis a discussion of their semantic content as it manifests itself in the interaction. Thus, I will argue that *núna* refers to a static time period the duration of which has to be interpreted by the interlocutor in situ, while the temporal *nú* behaves in a more dynamic fashion and typically involves a new situation. I have divided the temporal *nú* into three categories: (i) *nú* that introduces a temporal comparison ('now' vs. 'then'); (ii) *nú* that indexes a transition; and (iii) *nú* that, in addition to anchoring the utterance in time, conveys an affective stance. As I will show, the semantic or functional differences of *nú* and *núna* can be linked to specific sequential positions.

The article is organized as follows: In the second section, I introduce the data and the methods used in the study. In the third section, I discuss the construction of turns and address the syntactic position of *nú* and *núna* in the utterance. In the fourth section, I examine the syntax and function of *nú* and *núna*, and, in the final section, I summarize the results and discuss their significance.

2. METHODS AND DATA

The theoretical and methodological framework for the study is INTERACTIONAL LINGUISTICS (see Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996a; Steensig 2001; Hakulinen & Selting 2005; Lindström 2006). Hence, the methodology and most of the central terminology regarding turn taking and the organization of talk is taken from the conversation analytic tradition (see e.g. Hutchby & Wooffitt 2008), while some of the terminology has its origin within traditional linguistics, in particular syntax and pragmatics.

Interactional linguistics has been described as a study which takes theoretical interest in uncontrolled and non-experimental daily speech. Thus, the analysis below

presents the results of an inductive and in-depth analysis of conversational data. The data on which this study is based consists of about 14 hours and 11 minutes of naturally occurring conversation recorded between 1996 and 2003. In order to get a broad representation of modern Icelandic interaction, the database includes several different conversational contexts. Table 1 lists the recordings included in the database and provides information on the form of interaction, situational context, number of participants, and the duration of the recording (see also Hilmisdóttir 2007: 81ff.):

As seen in Table 1, the database includes a wide range of conversational contexts including informal dinner parties, institutional and non-institutional telephone conversations, radio programs for teenagers, a radio phone-in program, and a political debate on television. In other words, the database includes conversations which vary with respect to degree of formality, number of participants and modes of communication.

The conversations were transcribed by the author. The transcription conventions that are applied here are first and foremost based on a system which was developed by Gail Jefferson for American English (see Hutchby & Wooffitt 2008:69ff.), with a few additions in respect to prosody (namely, the symbols ↑, ↓, →, /, and \). As noted earlier, transcription conventions are listed in the Appendix.

It is necessary to bear in mind that these transcriptions are a SELECTIVE REPRESENTATION of the primary data, the conversations themselves. The aim was to make the transcripts easily accessible without omitting anything that could potentially be relevant for the analysis of *nú* and *núna* in interaction.

In the following section, I will describe how turns are constructed in conversation and present other central concepts used in this study.

3. CONSTRUCTING TURNS

Turns are composed of at least one TURN-CONSTRUCTIONAL UNIT (TCU). A TCU consists of a single lexical item, a phrase, a clause, or a syntactically organized utterance (see Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974:702). Each TCU is followed by a TRANSITIONAL RELEVANCE POINT (TRP), and at every TRP, the discourse floor is open and a speaker-change may occur. If other participants do not claim the floor, the same speaker may continue talking. As a result, a turn can consist of anything from a single word to a series of TCUs containing more than one syntactic construction as in many narrative sequences (see also Linell 1998:158).

As numerous studies have shown, speakers rely primarily on syntax, prosody and contextual relevance to determine whether a turn is coming to a completion (see Sacks et al. 1974; Ford & Thompson 1996). In this paper, particular attention will be given to the syntactic aspect of the turn construction, and a distinction will be drawn between TCUs that use syntax to project a turn-completion and TCUs that do not.

Pre-front field	Front field	Middle field	End field		Post-end field
(i) <i>jæja</i> <i>well</i>	nú <i>NÚ</i>	er nóg <i>be.3 enough</i>	komið <i>come.PP</i>		
(ii)	sem að <i>which that</i>	heitir nú <i>call.3 NÚ</i>	Heaven <i>Heaven</i>		ekki satt? <i>not true?</i>
(iii) <i>mm</i> <i>ehm</i>	<i>hann</i> <i>he</i>	er <i>be.3</i>	þar <i>there</i>	núna <i>now</i>	er flakki? <i>Isn't he?</i>

Table 2. The syntactic positions of *nú* and *núna*.

As I will show, the temporal *nú* and *núna* tend to occur in different syntactic positions. These positions can be described in terms of the theory of SYNTACTIC FIELDS (Diderichsen 1962 [1946]; Bjerre et al. 2008; see also Thráinsson 2007:19 for an application to written Icelandic). In this study, I rely mostly on Auer's (1996a, b) integration of the field analysis and the theory of interaction (see also Lindström 2002:85–86 for an application to Swedish talk-in-interaction).

Thus, in this study, I will parse the turn into five different fields. The term FRONT FIELD (or the foundation field) refers to the slot before a finite verb, MIDDLE FIELD (or the nexus field) refers to the finite verb, subject and the adverbial, and END FIELD (or the content field) refers to the remainder of the syntactic structure. The slots surrounding the core syntax are referred to as the PRE-FRONT and the POST-END FIELDS, respectively. These two fields are typical slots for interactionally sensitive items such as particles and terms of address, and consequently these slots have been a focus of interest within interactional linguistics (see e.g. Hilmsdóttir 2007:230–266).

Auer's ideas are based on the assumption that during the production of a TCU the interlocutor is looking for a syntactic JUNCTURE at which the ongoing utterance can be treated as syntactically complete (given that the utterance is also pragmatically and prosodically complete). The anticipated juncture is referred to as a POSSIBLE SYNTACTIC CLOSURE (Auer 1996b:56 for German). Until the TCU reaches a syntactic closure, it follows a certain projectable pattern (i.e. syntax).

Table 2 shows examples of syntactically organized TCUs from the database containing an instance of (i) *nú* in the front field, (ii) *nú* in the middle field, and (iii) *núna* in the end field. It should be pointed out, however, that the syntactic formula presented here is a working definition. In the conversations themselves, the speakers do not rely completely on syntax, but, instead, their sense for a turn-completion is based on a holistic evaluation of syntax, prosody and the contextual relevance of the proposition.

The bold lines between the columns in Table 2 represent important syntactic junctures. The first one represents the weak syntactic projectability of the pre-front field (see Auer 1996b:297 on the pre-front field in German), and the second represents the juncture which follows a possible syntactic closure. In the case of Icelandic, the closure occurs after the last word in the middle field or after an object in the end

	<i>Nú</i>		<i>Núna</i>	
	N	%	N	%
Front field	76	93%	11	6%
Middle field	5	6%	0	0%
End field	0	0%	153	88%
Non-integrated (without a finite verb)	1	1%	10	6%
Total	82	100%	174	100%

Table 3. Syntactic distribution of temporal *nú* and *núna*.

field. This means that the temporal marker *nú* is always an integrated part of the core syntax, while *núna* is often produced after a possible syntactic closure.

In addition to differences regarding the syntactic distribution, *nú* and *núna* show a difference regarding their abilities to occur independently. While the temporal *nú* never occurs on its own, *núna* can function as a TCU as a turn of its own or as a part of a phrase without a finite verb. In this study, such cases are referred to as NON-INTEGRATED instances. Here, it is worth noting that non-integration does not mean that *núna* is used independently of the surrounding discourse. As always in conversation, each turn is produced in a certain sequential environment. In many cases, the temporal adverb *núna* can be understood as being an extension of a prior turn, although the prior turn may seem to have reached a completion. Thus, by using the term non-integrated, I am referring to instances of *núna* which are in some way separated from the finite verb. This separation may be manifested by a pause, a speaker change or an inserted utterance.

I now turn to the results of my study.

4. SYNTAX AND FUNCTION OF *NÚ* AND *NÚNA*

In the data, there are 174 instances of temporal *núna* and 82 of temporal *nú*. By comparison, 574 of the instances of *nú* have a non-temporal function (see Hilmisdóttir 2007:149). That is to say, the non-temporal *nú* occurs much more frequently in the data than the temporal one. (For more detailed information on the distribution of the temporal *nú*, see Hilmisdóttir 2007:96). The instances of *nú* and *núna* are distributed relatively equally in the data across both formal and informal situations, which suggests that the use of the two words is not specific to a certain type of conversation. Also, there is no indication that the difference between the two words in contemporary spontaneous speech can be assigned to different stylistic registers.² Thus, in order to identify a potential functional difference between *nú* and *núna*, a different approach is needed. In this study, I use the syntactic distribution of the two types as a basis.

When the syntactic distribution of *nú* and *núna* is analyzed, a striking pattern emerges. Table 3 presents the distribution of the two adverbs in the database. As seen

in this table, *nú* shows a very strong tendency to occur in the front field. Out of 82 instances, 76 occur in this position, which equals 93% of all instances in the database. *Núna*, on the other hand, shows a clear preference for occurring in the end field. Out of 174 instances of *núna*, 153, or 88%, are uttered after the possible syntactic closure. This distributional difference between *nú* and *núna* gives a fairly strong indication that the two words may serve different interactional functions.

In the remainder of this paper, I will present sequential analyses of individual instances as they appear in the database. Due to limited space, I will focus on the syntactic slots that are typical for each token, and, therefore, I exclude examples of *núna* in the front field. Such instances occur in the same type of contexts as *nú* in the front field and the database shows that speakers have a clear preference for choosing the latter token. The organization of the study is based on syntactical positions. First, I will discuss *núna* in the end field (4.1), which is followed by an analysis of non-integrated *núna* (4.2). Then, I will look at *nú* in the front field (4.3). In the section that follows, I will discuss *nú* in the middle field (4.4), and, finally, I will show an instance of *nú* in a conventionalized phrase (4.5).

4.1 *Núna in the end field*

The overwhelming majority of *núna*, 88% of all instances, occur in the end field. In these cases, *núna* is uttered after a possible syntactic closure, as the last piece of information before the speaker yields the floor. The first excerpt in this section is drawn from a telephone conversation between a computer technician working at a help desk and a caller seeking advice. When the excerpt begins, the caller has already explained that she has problems connecting to the internet, and the technician poses his first question in order to identify what is wrong (line 1).

(2) *Fixing the computer; ITC database, 02.08.03*

(*C = computer technician; E = a caller seeking help*)

- 01 C Hvaða vafra erta nota erta nota Netscape eða
what browser be.2.to use be.2.to use Netscape or
 Internet Explorer.
Internet Explorer
 'What browser are you using, Netscape or Internet Explorer?'
- 02 (0.7)
- 03 E Explorer =
Explorer
- 04 C = Ókei,
PRT
 'Okay'
- 05 (1.0)

- 06 C héra: farði #eh:::# Ertu meða opið n.úna.
PRT go.2.in eh::: be.2.you with.it open.PP NÚNA
 ‘Eh, go to, is it open NÚNA’
- 07 E J↑á:
PRT
 ‘Yes’
- 08 (0.4)
- 09 C °Ókei° Farði héra: Farði héra#:::## T↑ools.
PRT go.2.in PRT go.2.in PRT Tools
 ‘Okay, go to ehm, go to ehm Tools’

After hearing the caller’s answer to the opening question (line 3), the computer technician begins to give her instructions on how to fix the problem (line 6). The technician initiates his turn with the planning marker *héra* ‘lit. here’, which indicates that he is thinking and gives him more time to plan his next turn. The planning marker is followed by the imperative *farði* ‘go to’, which creates a slot for instructions on what to click on next. However, in the subsequent talk, the computer technician does not produce his anticipated instructions, and, instead, he inserts a parenthetical question in order to verify that the caller’s internet browser is actually open. Here, the computer technician uses the temporal marker *núna* in the end field (line 6). It is only after the computer technician has received a positive answer from the caller (line 7) that he completes the anticipated instructions; he acknowledges the caller’s positive answer with the particle *ókei* ‘okay’, repeats the imperative *farði* ‘go to’, and continues with further instructions regarding what to click on next (line 9).

The temporal reference of *núna* in the computer technician’s utterance is narrow and corresponds to the dictionary definition mentioned above: ‘exactly at this moment’ (see *Íslensk orðabók* 2002). The time which is indexed by *núna* (partly) overlaps with the moment at which the adverb is uttered. However, my database shows that such instances are not particularly common. In fact, the majority of instances of *núna* have a more open time frame, such as in the excerpt in (3) below. This stretch of talk is drawn from the database *Friends*. Here, three women are sitting around a kitchen table gossiping and sharing their personal stories. Just before the excerpt begins, Hólmfríður was telling the other women that she was reading the annual wedding supplement which comes with one of the largest newspapers in Iceland. The other women tease her about reading this supplement, and Hólmfríður responds by trying to justify herself (line 1):

- (3) *The 35th anniversary*; *Friends database*, 14.6.96
 (H = Hólmfríður; S = Sunna; N = Nanna)

- 01 H Sk↓o 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’

- 02 m^oðursystir mín var í heimsókn um [daginn] (0.3)
aunt my be.3.PT in visit about day.DEF
 Þær byrja
they start.3.PL
 ‘my aunt was visiting the other day. They start’
- 03 S [ts:.....]:::
- 04 H a rökræða hvað væri þrjátíu og fimm ára .hh
to debate what be.3.PT.SUBJ thirty and five years .hh
 [brúðkaupsafmæli
wedding.anniversary
 ‘debating what is thirty fifth wedding anniversary’
- 05 [((clicking sounds))]
- 06 H >af því að móð- s-systir mín átti þrjátíu og fimm ára
because that au- n- nt my have.3.PT thirty and five year.PL.GEN
 ‘because my aunt had a thirty five year’
- 07 brúðkaupsammæli **núna** < [hhhh] og ein e: Þær vorekki
Wedding.anniversary NÚNA and one eh they be.3.PT.not
 /sammála,
agree
 ‘wedding anniversary **NÚNA** and one eh they didn’t agree’
- 08 N [° .já::]:°
PRT
 ‘Yes’

In (3), Hólmfríður explains that her aunt and her mother were wondering what a 35th wedding anniversary is called (lines 2 and 4). After providing this information, Hólmfríður produces a parenthetical insertion at a faster tempo and a softer voice than the surrounding talk (see the discussion in Mazeland 2007:1837–1838). This unit is a ‘because’-prefaced account. The account delivered as a parenthetical insertion is anchored in time with the temporal marker *núna*, uttered in the end field. Following the parenthetical, Hólmfríður returns to her story and explains that the two women did not agree about what to call this anniversary (line 7).

When Hólmfríður anchors the anniversary in time by using *núna*, she is not providing a very precise time frame. The time indexed by *núna* does not necessarily coincide with the moment at which Hólmfríður tells the story. In fact, we do not know when exactly the wedding anniversary was, but we know from Hólmfríður’s use of the past tense that it took place sometime in the past, most likely in recent past. In this case, the time frame is open, since the actual day of the wedding anniversary is not particularly important in the context. What is important, rather, is to explain why the question about the 35th anniversary is relevant now for Hólmfríður’s mother and aunt.

The openness of *núna* is also manifested in other temporal words or phrases that often co-occur with *núna*. In the present data, almost every third instance of *núna* in the end field, or 31%, was followed (and preceded, on rare occasions) by temporal markers which indicated everything from an exact moment, such as in *núna á þessari stundu* ‘in this moment’, to a very broad and open time frame, such as *núna undanfarna áratugi* ‘the last decades’ and *núna undanfarin þrjú til fjögur ár* ‘the last three or four years’. Thus, it seems clear that the claim that *núna* refers to a narrow time frame such as suggested in the dictionary does not hold in contemporary conversational Icelandic. By comparison, the temporal *nú* is modified in only two instances out of 82. Both instances can be seen as conventionalized phrases: *nú þegar* ‘right away’ and *nú fyrst* ‘not until now’.

The temporal *núna* in (2) and (3) are positioned in the end field. Both instances anchor in time the proposition in which they occur. As I have shown, *núna* can in some cases refer to a precise moment, such as in (2), where the computer technician asks the caller whether her internet browser is open, but, in other cases, such as in (3), the temporal frame can be open and imprecise. In other words, *núna* has an open meaning potential, and the actual meaning of the adverb has to be negotiated and interpreted on a case-by-case basis.³ What these cases have in common is that they occur after a possible syntactic closure. Thus, there seems to be a somewhat loose connection between the beginning of the utterance and the temporal marker *núna*. This loose connection is even more evident in the following section, in which I will discuss non-integrated instances of *núna*.

4.2 Non-integrated *núna*

In addition to occurring in the end field, *núna* occurs in some cases without a finite verb. Such instances, which are referred to as non-integrated *núna*, can occur either as turns in their own right or within a phrase. The non-integrated *núna* forms a relatively small category; only six instances are found in the database. These instances are important for the comparison of *nú* and *núna* and therefore included in the analysis. Consider (4), which is also drawn from the phone-in program *The Soul of the Nation*. When the excerpt begins, the caller is introducing the reason for the call:

- (4) *Watching the television; Soul database, 31.05.96*
(*B = a caller; M = the moderator*)

01 B #e:::# Ég hringi **núna** vegna þess að ég sat fyrir framan
#e:::# I call.1 **NÚNA** because that.GEN that I sit.1.PT for front
‘eh I’m calling **NÚNA** because I was sitting in front of’

- 02 sjónvarpið og horfði á (0.2) tvær fréttir /Þær komu
television.DEF and watch.1.PT on two news they come.3.PL.PT
 ‘the television and watched two news stories, they came’
- 03 hvor á eftir annarri,
each on after other.DAT
 ‘one after the other’
- 04 (0.3)
- 05 M m↓m
- 06 (0.3)
- 07 B j↓á:
PRT
 ‘Yes’
- 08 (0.4)
- 09 M N↓ú:na.
- 10 (0.6)
- 11 B Það var °eh° í: gær í- /Nei það var í
that be.3.PT eh in yesterday in- no it be.3.PT in
fyriradag sennilega,
day.before.yesterday probably
 ‘It was yesterday, no it was the day before yesterday, probably’
- 12 M j↓á
PRT
 ‘Yes’

The caller’s turn at the beginning of (4) is constructed as an introduction to a story, and therefore it is still pragmatically incomplete. After a pause, the moderator provides a continuer indexed as *mm*, which acknowledges the proposed topic and signals to the caller that he can continue (line 5). However, instead of taking the floor again, the caller only produces an affirmation which is again followed by a brief pause (lines 7–8). By so doing, the caller yields the floor one more time, although an explanation for what he saw on television is still anticipated. The delay seems slightly odd here, and it is perhaps caused by an attempt by the caller to create suspense. At this point, the moderator takes the floor before the caller and produces a one-word turn containing only an instance of a temporal *núna* (line 9). The caller treats this turn as a request for verification, and his next action is to specify when he saw the news broadcast (line 11).

Prosodically, *núna* is produced as a one-word turn, initiated with a clear beginning intonation and completed with a terminal contour. Also, although the caller uses the word *núna* in a prior turn (line 1), the moderator is not using the word as a question repeat (see the discussion in Jefferson 1972). She is not questioning

the fact that the caller claims that he is ‘calling NÚNA’. Instead, she is questioning his second statement about watching the news, which is temporally ambiguous (lines 1–2). The word functions as a full question (‘Was it now?’). Here, *núna* is used as a repair initiator whose function is to request more precise information regarding time. Subsequently, the caller responds by giving the moderator the requested information.

It is worth pointing out that, in this particular slot, the speaker could not have used the adverb *nú* with the same result. As I have shown elsewhere (Hilmisdóttir 2007:269ff.), *nú* as an independent turn is typically used to prompt an explanation or an account of some sort without identifying a particular word that causes the problem (compare the English *oh?*) (see also excerpt (1) line 6).

In addition to occurring as a turn of its own, *núna* can also occur as a SYNTACTIC EXPANSION. Syntactic expansions are units that are added to a seemingly complete turn. These units are syntactically symbiotic with their mother-utterance and can be understood only in that context (see Auer 1996b). Nonetheless, the two related units are separated, either due to their timing or because of turns interspersed by co-participants. Such symbiotic instances of *núna* could in theory be considered a part of the end field. However, since they are clearly added to a turn that the speaker and co-participants have treated as syntactically, prosodically and pragmatically complete, I have classified them here as instances of a non-integrated *núna*.

Consider (5), which is drawn from the everyday conversation *Reunion*. In this excerpt, a group of women are discussing musical styles. Earlier in the conversation, Brynhildur referred to the music which was being played as classical and Lína objected to this by pointing out that the piece is relatively new (not shown in the excerpt). After some exchanges between Lína and Brynhildur, Magga, who positions herself as the expert, makes an attempt to settle the disagreement (line 1):

(5) *Composing classical music; Reunion database, 15.8.98*

(*M = Magga; E = Erna; B = Brynhildur; V = Vala; two silent participants*)

01 M .mt Þa er náttlega líka hægt að sem:ja eitthvað °í°
 .mt it be.3 naturally also possible to compose something in
 ‘It’s of course also possible to compose something in’

02 klássískum stíl [til dæmis,]
 classical.DAT style for example
 ‘classical style for example’

03 (E) [j↑á:]
 PRT
 ‘Yes’

04 B j↓áj↑á =
 PRT
 ‘Yes’

- 05 V = j↓á[:
PRT
'Yes'
- 06 M [n↑ún↓a.
07 (0.4)
- 08 (E) Er pá [(.) veriða-]
be.3 then be.PR.to
'Are people then'
- 09 M [Bara a þessi viss]u (0.8) svona
just that these certain PRT
'Just that these particular, like'
- 10 formúla (.) fyrir því
formula for that.DAT
'formula for that'

At the beginning of (5), Magga points out that it is 'possible to compose something in classical style' (lines 1–2). What Magga seems to be getting at is that classical music is not only restricted to an era, but instead it should be viewed as a style. Her wording in the beginning of the excerpt could be seen as slightly vague, since she does not explicitly say that she is speaking about contemporary compositions. However, after backchannels from the other interlocutors (lines 3–5), Magga addresses the temporal issue by uttering the word *núna* (line 6). By producing this utterance, Magga highlights the fact that she is talking about composing contemporary classical music.

This instance of *núna* is produced as a NON-BEGINNING (see Schegloff 1996:73–77 on non-beginnings), which suggests that this unit is designed as a syntactic expansion of a previous turn. In this case, *núna* ties back to Magga's own turn, and the function of the word can only be understood in that context. Since the word is not produced adjacent to the prior turn, the co-participants have to do extra work in connecting the two parts together. Again, we have an example of *núna* which is disconnected from the mother-utterance by time. In this case, the other co-participants have added acknowledgment tokens before Magga expands her turn. Again, a choice of *nú* instead of *núna* would seem out of place and not provide the temporal information which is offered by *núna*.

A somewhat similar case can be found in the following excerpt, in which a temporal phrase containing *núna* is produced after a parenthetical insertion. In (6), a caller is discussing the declension of the noun *peningapvætti* 'money laundering' in Icelandic. In the excerpt, she explains that she heard a reporter use the word, in her opinion, ungrammatically:

- (6) *Declining 'money laundering'; Soul database, 07.06.96*
(*S = a caller; M = the moderator*)

01 S Þannig er að ég heyrði í (.) #í:# onum Guðna ess
so be.3 that I hear.1.PT VPRT VPRT he.DAT Guðni S

- Halldórssyni
Halldórsson
 ‘I heard Guðni S. Halldórsson’
- 02 frá MAdr:Íd;
from Madrid
- 03 (0.4)
- 04 M m↓: ↑h[m:
- 05 S [>af því mér finnst alveg óskap^olega
because I.DAT think.MV totally extremely
 ‘because I think is very much’
- 06 skemmtilegur,^o (1.1) **núna** einhvern tímann um daginn;_< (0.2)
fun NÚNA some.ACC time.ACC about day.ACC.DEF
 ‘fun NÚNA sometime the other day’
- 07 M m↓↑:
- 08 S Og hann var að fjargviðrast soldið útaf (.) útaf
and he be.3.PT to fuss.MV a.little out.of out.of
 ‘And he was fussing a bit about about’
- 09 /<pening a/þvætti>, Á að beygja þetta orð svona,
Money.laundering ought.3 to decline this word that.way
 ‘money laundering, are you supposed to decline this word like that?’
- 10 Ég bara:→ .hhhhh **Nú** þori ég ekkert að koma með neina
I PRT NÚ dare.1 I nothing to come with any
 ‘I just- .hhhhh **NÚ** I don’t dare to make any’
- 11 fullyrðingar þvíá þá verða allir svo vöndir út
statement because.that then become.3.PL everybody so angry out
 í mig?
in I.ACC
 ‘assertion, because then everybody gets so angry at me’

At the beginning of (6), the caller produces an utterance that is pragmatically incomplete and projects an upcoming story (compare line 4 in (4)). This story preface mentions a reporter by name. After a short pause and an acknowledgement from the moderator (lines 3–4), the caller produces a parenthetical unit that contains a positive assessment about the reporter (lines 5–6). This unit is produced in a slightly faster tempo and with a softer voice than the pre-parenthetical unit. It is followed by a 1.1 second pause and a temporal phrase anchoring the event in time (line 6).

Note here that the temporal phrase does not refer to the immediately preceding unit, i.e. the assessment of the reporter. Instead, it refers to the caller’s story preface, in which she informed the moderator that she heard this particular reporter talk on the radio. In other words, the caller has produced a parenthetical unit between

	Temporal <i>nú</i>		Non-temporal <i>nú</i>	
	N	%	N	%
Front field	76	93%	38	7%
Middle field	5	6%	536	93%
Without a verb (a conventionalized phrase)	1	1%	0	0%
Total	82	100%	574	100%

Table 4. Syntactic distribution of temporal and non-temporal *nú*.

the mother-utterance and the temporal phrase. It is curious that the caller adds a parenthetical unit within something that would normally be produced as one TCU. Here, I suggest that the explanation for the parenthetical unit can be found further along as the conversation starts to unfold and when the caller starts showing hesitation and uncertainty more explicitly (lines 9–11). Due to her plans to question the language skills of the reporter, the caller may feel that it is important to show as early as possible that she thinks highly of him. As Auer (2005:81) has pointed out, interlocutors need constantly to make decisions about whether to prioritize new and important information or whether they should first establish a common ground that forms the basis on which the recipient can process the information. In this instance, the completion of the first unit is delayed in time, and so the temporal phrase is treated as less urgent information than the assessment. As a result, the temporal phrase containing *núna* is produced disconnected from the mother-utterance, and it is the co-participant who must put the pieces together.

In excerpts (4)–(6), I have shown examples of non-integrated *núna*. In (4), *núna* occurred as a turn of its own, and in (5), *núna* was designed as a syntactic expansion and added to an already complete turn. Finally, in (6), *núna* occurred in a temporal phrase that was produced disconnected from the proposition it anchored in time. What all these instances have in common, together with the *núna* cases in excerpts (1)–(3), is that *núna* has a referential function and indexes a time unit in the physical world. Hence, *núna* can occur without a verb or be temporally disconnected from a verb. *Nú*, as I will suggest in the following section, does not have such a clear referential function and occurs almost exclusively adjacent to a finite verb.

4.3 *Nú* in the front field

The temporal *nú* has a strong tendency to occur in the front field, before the finite verb. In the present data, 76 out of 82 instances (93%) occur in that position. As I mentioned earlier, *nú* also has other, non-temporal functions, and the data shows that the temporal and non-temporal instances of *nú* have a different syntactic distribution (see also Hilmisdóttir 2010). Table 4 shows the numbers of temporal and non-temporal

nú and the syntactic distribution for each category. As Table 4 illustrates, 93% of temporal *nú* occur in the front field while 93% of non-temporal *nú* occur in the middle field. Also, a more in-depth analysis of the data shows that temporal *nú* only occurs in the middle field in very specific contexts, and these will be discussed in the following section. In this section, however, the focus will be on instances of temporal *nú* which occur in the front field. Such instances seem to occur mainly in three different contexts: (i) in temporal comparisons ('now' vs. 'then'), (ii) in transitions, and (iii) in utterances in which a speaker uses temporality to express an affective stance.

Nú in the front field is often used to present a current event or situation as different or opposite to another event which took place in the past or will take place in the future. In other words, *nú* in the front field is used for TEMPORAL COMPARISONS. Consider the excerpt in (7), drawn from the data *Reunion*. Six women are gathered in a kitchen, cooking dinner and chatting with each other. When this excerpt begins, the women have been talking for a while about the dress Guðrún is wearing. Then, Vala points out that Guðrún had never worn this dress before although she has had it for a while. Following this statement, both Lína and Guðrún take the floor simultaneously (lines 1–2):

(7) *Nice dress; Reunion database, 15.8.98*

(*L = Lína; G = Guðrún; B = Brynhildur; three silent participants*)

- 01 L [[já herna (.) Þú notað]ir þennan kjól aldrei,
PRT PRT you use.2.PT this.ACC dress.ACC never
'Yes eh you never wore this dress before'
- 02 G [[Ég notaði hann aldrei (.) áður,]
I use.1.PT he.ACC never before
'I never wore it before'
- 03 (?) m↑::
- 04 G Nei af því að hann var of víður [°á mig°
PRT because he be.3.PT too wide on I.ACC
'No because it was too big for me'
- 05 L [já↓
PRT
'Yes'
- 06 (1.2)
- 07 B [[Nú er hann nefnilega rosalega /flottur,
NÚ be.3 he namely extremely cool
'NÚ it really looks cool'
- 08 (?) [[Fer etta allt saman,
go.3 this all together
'Is this all supposed to go together?'

Guðrún acknowledges that she had never worn the dress before (line 2), and, after Lína has yielded the floor, Guðrún explains that the reason is that the dress was too large for her (line 4). This explanation is acknowledged by Lína in a terminal overlap (line 5). After a 1.2-second pause, Brynhildur adds a final assessment on the dress (line 7). The topic is then exhausted and someone in the group poses a question regarding the cooking (line 8).

Brynhildur's comment in line 7, 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 contradict the two aspects in Brynhildur's comment (*var* 'was' and *viður* 'wide,' see line 4) that are different from Guðrún's comment.

In (7), *nú* occurs in the front field, before the finite verb. Moreover, this instance occurs turn-initially and it is therefore the first item that the interlocutors hear when the speaker takes the floor. By initiating a turn with *nú*, the focus is placed on the present moment, and this sets the temporal context from the very beginning. The situation is presented as a comparison to a situation in the past which was addressed in the prior utterance.

In other cases, the comparison is not made explicit, but, instead, there is a clear sense of TRANSITION involved. Consider (8), which is also drawn from the data *Reunion*. In this excerpt, the women are taking photos of each other. When the excerpt begins, the women have been taking photos for some while and at the moment it is Vala's turn. The only sounds that can be heard are quiet laughter and clicking sounds from the camera (lines 1–3):

(8) *Photo session; Reunion database, 15.8.98*

(*B = Brynhildur; L = Lína; M = Magga; G = Guðrún; two silent participants*)

- 01 B he he
- 02 L hehhh he he he [he he he
- 03 M [hhheehh he he
- 04 G J↓æj↑a **Nú** er nóg kom[ið,
PRT NÚ be.3 enough come.PP
 'Well, **NÚ** this is enough'
- 05 B [NEI Ég á eftir [(x x)
PRT I have.I left
 'No, I'm not done'
- 06 L [o Ég líka,
and I also
 'And me neither'

After a few minutes of posing for the camera, Guðrún takes the floor and utters the particle *jæja* 'well', which strongly suggests either a topic change or some kind of

transition (see *Íslensk orðabók* 2002). This particle is then followed by a statement which is initiated with a temporal *nú* (line 4).

The temporal *nú* initiates a TCU in which Guðrún announces that a new situation has come up: she has had enough of posing for the camera. At the same time, Guðrún's announcement functions as a warning to the other women who are made aware that Guðrún is no longer going to participate in the joint activity of taking a photo (see the discussion in Clark 1996:28–58). Thereby, Guðrún has given the other women a chance to protest, which they also do (line 5–6).

Again, *nú* is positioned in the front field. Note that *nú* is not produced turn-initially in this case; it is preceded by the dialogue particle *jæja* 'well', which also adds to the feeling of transition. *Jæja*, however, is produced in the pre-front field and it is thus not a part of the core syntax in the same way that *nú* is. In other words, the speaker could potentially yield the floor after *jæja*, but after she utters *nú* in the front field, she has signalled that a syntactically organized TCU is in progress, and the interlocutors have to wait until she reaches a possible syntactic closure.

The third and final category comprises instances which, in addition to showing temporality, also show emotional intensity, or affective stance (see the discussion in Ochs 1996:410 on affective stance). I refer to such instances as TEMPORAL-AFFECTIVE. Such an instance is found in (9), which is also drawn from the data *Reunion*. When this excerpt begins, the women have finished cooking and they have just sat down and started to eat. They are putting food on their plates and music can be heard in the background. After a relatively long lapse in the conversation, Magga takes the floor and addresses Erna with a firm tone in her voice (line 2):

(9) *I want the CD; Reunion database, 15.8.98*
(*M = Magga; E = Erna; four silent participants*)

- 01 (2.5)
- 02 M Erna **nú** *kem* ég við hjá þér á eftir og (.) /kref
Erna **NÚ** *come.I I VPRT at you.DAT on after and demand.I*
'Erna **NÚ** I'll come by your place later and demand'
- 03 þig um [Diskinn
you.ACC about CD.DEF
'the CD'
- 04 E [.hu::h j↑á↓:
INTERJ PRT
'Oh yeah!'

Magga firmly states that she will stop by Erna's place after the dinner *nú* and demand that Erna lend her the CD (line 1). Erna makes a demonstrative sound by inhaling,

.*hu:h*, and hence displays a very strong response to Magga's statement. The inhale is then followed by the particle *j'á↓*: 'yes', which signals a sudden recollection or a realization of some sort (line 4). In the next few seconds, this short exchange evokes laughter. When the laughter dissipates, Magga explains the reason for these strong reactions: Erna has been promising to lend Magga a particular CD for quite a while but she never remembers to bring it when they meet.

Magga's emotional intensity is encoded both in her choice of verb *kref* 'demand' and in the temporal-affective *nú*, uttered in the front field. In this case, *nú* is preceded by a term of address in the pre-front field, in which Magga singles out the recipient of her firm statement.

By using *nú* in the front field, the present moment is put in focus right from the beginning. However, in this instance, the temporal meaning of *nú* is less prominent than in the instances found in previous excerpts. Note how Magga combines both a temporal *nú* and the phrase *á eftir* 'later'. Thus, compared to the instances of *nú* which I have discussed so far, this example seems to have a less specific time frame. Instead, the use of *nú* seems to index emotional intensity, and it emphasizes Magga's firm commitment to stop at Erna's house later in the evening to pick up the promised CD. The temporal-affective use of *nú* in the front field resembles the use of non-temporal *nú* in many ways (see Hilmisdóttir 2010), and, in fact, it seems reasonable to assume that such use has triggered the development of *nú* into a semantically bleached particle.

In excerpts (7)–(9), I have shown examples of *nú* in the front field. In (7), *nú* occurred in an utterance which compared a current state to a situation in the past. In (8), *nú* introduced a transition from one state to another, and in (9), *nú* was used in an utterance in which a speaker was showing emotional intensity. As I will suggest in the following section, temporal *nú* in the middle field serves the same functions.

4.4 *Nú in the middle field*

Only a small minority of temporal *nú* occur in the middle field: five instances out of 82 (6%). By looking more closely at these instances, it becomes clear that they occur only in specific contexts: (i) in TCUs with interrogative syntax; (ii) in TCUs with subordinate syntax; and (iii) in TCUs containing conventionalized phrases, such as *nú þegar* 'right away' and *nú fyrst* 'not until now'. To gain some idea of what these instances look like, let us look at an example of a TCU which is constructed as syntactically subordinate to a previous turn. In (10), which is drawn from a radio program for teenagers, DJ Sólrún is visiting the studio and chatting with the two hosts. Sólrún is prompted by Elín, a program presenter, to tell the listeners what she is doing *núna*, and Sólrún responds (line 1):

(10) *It's called Heaven; Teens database, 26.7.98*

(*S = DJ Sólrún, a studio guest; B = Björn, program presenter; E = Elín, program presenter*)

01 S J↑á::: (.) Ég er að fara að halda hipphoppkvöldi (0.5) á
PRT I be.1 to go to hold hip.hop.evening.ACC on
 'Yes I'm going to organize a hip hop evening in'

02 *Tunglinu* h *Lækjargötu* (1.1) *Fimmtudaginn* í *næstu*
Tunglið.DAT Lækjargata.DAT Thursday.ACC.DEF in next
viku
week.DAT
 'Tunglið h Laekjargata Street on Thursday next week'

→ 03 B *sema* *heitir* **nú**: *Heaven* °ekki satt°→
which.that name.3 NÚ Heaven PRT
 'Which is called NÚ Heaven isn't it?'

04 (0.2)

05 E H↓*eav*↑*en*↓
Heaven

06 S H↓*eav*↑*en* j↓ú↑ú *mhmh hehh heh*
Heaven PRT ((giggles))
 'Heaven mhmh hehh heh'

Sólrún responds to Elín's question by telling her about a hip hop evening she is organizing (line 1–2). Then she specifies a time and location of the event, which according to Sólrún is going to be held on Thursday night in a place called *Tunglið*. In the following turn, Björn, the second program leader, takes the floor and makes a repair by stating that the club is 'called NÚ *Heaven*' (line 3). In this instance, *nú* is stressed and has a slightly prolonged vowel. Björn ends his turn with an affiliation-seeking tag. Sólrún's response is quite marked: she laughs (line 6) and tells Björn that the name does not make any difference to her (not shown in the excerpt).

In (10), the temporal marker *nú* occurs in the middle field, after the finite verb. The word is used to emphasize two different names: once the club was called *Tunglið*, and 'now' it goes by the name *Heaven*. In other words, this instance has a function comparable to the one shown in (7), in which the women were comparing how the dress fitted one of them now and then. The difference in this case, however, is that Björn's turn in line 3 is constructed as syntactically subordinate to Sólrún's prior turn. Björn's turn is an add-on to, or direct continuation of the preceding turn, and it could be described as an 'other-initiated expansion' (see Lerner 2004). The subordinate TCU is introduced with the increment initiator *sema* 'which that', and since the verb must occur in the second place (the Icelandic verb-second rule), the speaker has to place the temporal *nú* in the middle field.

As the above example shows, temporal *nú* does not only occur in the front field but sometimes also in the middle field as an exception. However, there are clear reasons for these exceptions to the general tendency. The middle field position can typically be explained by the Icelandic verb-second rule or by rules for interrogative syntax (i.e. verb in the front field). Hence, it can be argued that the syntactic position for temporal *nú* is the front field, with the exception of the very specific contexts mentioned above. In both cases, however, *nú* occurs adjacent to the finite verb, i.e. either right before or right after.

4.5 *Nú in a conventionalized phrase*

The close ties between the temporal marker and the finite verb seem to be one of the main differences between *nú* and *núna*. The strong ties between *nú* and the finite verb are established by the fact that *nú* has a clear tendency to occur in the front field, and it consequently occurs most of the time right before the finite verb. However, in this section, I will discuss a deviant case which shows the only instance of *nú* in the database that occurs without a finite verb.

The excerpt in question is drawn from the data *PTC*. In this telephone conversation, Arnar is telling his friend, Erna, about problems he is having with his computer. They are both sitting in front of their computers, and Arnar has been reading error messages in English that appear on the screen. Just before the excerpt begins, Arnar displays his annoyance by swearing at the computer in an angry tone. This is followed by a long lapse in the conversation, during which keyboard sounds and mouse clicks can be heard:

(11) *Problems with logging in; PTC database, 03.08.03*

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

01 A .hnf ehhhh

02 A Þá er- Þá kemur ún með herna sko (.) Bíddu hvað er
then be.3 then come.3 she with PRT PRT wait.IMPER what be.3
 ‘Then is- Then it pops up with eh y’know. Just a moment what is’

03 þetta er þetta eitthva #e# (2.0) h::
this be.3 this something
 ‘this is this something’

04 E Hv↓a
what
 ‘What?’

05 (5.2)

→ 06 E Hva nú.
what NÚ
 ‘What NÚ.’

07 (1.4)

- 08 A Nei sko það einsog hafi Það kemur stundum svon↑ah (.)
PRT PRT it as have.3.SUBJ it come.3 sometime PRT
 einsog
as
 ‘No, y’know it’s like it has- Sometimes it’s like as if’
- 09 þa hafi reyn- fa- einhver hefur reynt að komast inná, (5.7)
it have.3.SUBJ tr- g- someone have.3 try.PP to come.MV in.on
 ‘someone has tr- g- someone has tried to get into’
- 10 °E-mailið mitt°,
e-mail.DEF my
 ‘my e-mail’
- 11 E #m:#

After the lapse, Arnar takes a deep breath and lets out a big sigh, again displaying that he is unhappy with the current situation (line 1). Then he takes the floor and produces a TCU which he cuts off before completion. Although the TCU remains incomplete in a number of ways – syntactically, pragmatically and prosodically – certain continuations can be projected, i.e. that Arnar explains what error notice he is getting. Yet, instead of repairing the previous TCU, Arnar asks himself two questions regarding a message that is popping up on his screen (lines 2–3). Arnar’s second question is cut off before completion, and it ends with a planning marker, a pause, and, finally, another sigh.

It is unlikely that Arnar expects an answer from Erna, since she cannot see his screen. Nevertheless, Arnar has clearly indicated that he is annoyed with how the computer is responding. Erna response shows that she needs a clarification from Arnar. She produces the interrogative particle *hva* ‘what’ with a falling contour (line 4). Despite Erna’s attempt to prompt an explanation, Arnar does not respond and an account is noticeably absent. In fact, the particle is followed by a 5.2-second pause, during which neither party enters the floor. After this noticeable delay, Erna makes a second attempt to prompt an explanation. She repeats the same interrogative particle, *hva*, which is now followed by an instance of *nú* (line 6). Even this time Erna’s attempt to prompt an explanation is followed by an extended pause. After 1.2 seconds, Arnar finally responds to Erna’s request (lines 8–10). However, this response is ambiguous as to whether Arnar is addressing the content of his last TCU (i.e. the question) or whether he is finishing the first part of his turn.

In the excerpt in (11), *nú* occurs in a slot in which the speaker is repeating a request for a clarification. On the one hand, Erna is asking what is happening at the present moment. She has noticed that some kind of new situation has come up at the other end of the phone line, and, therefore, she wants to know what is going on. By using a temporal *nú*, Erna foregrounds the relevance of her question (i.e. a new situation). On the other hand, Erna’s use of a temporal *nú* also displays an affective

stance, and thus she upgrades her pursuit for a response. Note that Erna does not use *nú* the first time she prompts Arnar to explain what is going on. It is only after one failed attempt that she repeats the interrogative and adds an instance of *nú* after it.

In (11), *nú* follows an interrogative pronoun, *hva(ð)* ‘what’, and it is a part of a TCU which does not include a finite verb. As mentioned above, this instance is different from any other instance in the present data because it does not occur as a part of a syntactically organized TCU, directly adjacent to a finite verb. Here, I would argue that the phrase *hva(ð) nú* ‘what now’ could be considered as a conventionalized phrase, and, therefore, *nú* can in this case occur without being a part of a syntactically organized TCU. In the same way, other conventionalized phrases that I have mentioned earlier (*nú þegar* ‘right away’ and *nú fyrst* ‘not until now’) could potentially occur without a finite verb.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have applied an interactional approach to two Icelandic words, *nú* and *núna*. Traditionally, these two temporal adverbs have been viewed as synonymous, and in most cases, interchangeable. However, by analyzing conversational data, I have shown that there are significant differences between the two cognates, including differences in semantic content, syntactic positions, integration, and their interactional functions.

In my database, the overwhelming majority of *núna* tokens occur in the end field. In contrast, *nú* with a temporal meaning occurs in most cases in the front field. The only exceptions to this rule are instances which occur in conventionalized phrases and in utterances which are structured either as subordinates or questions. In both cases *nú* occurs in the middle field. Furthermore, I have shown that *nú* and *núna* do not have the same relation to core syntax. While *nú* almost exclusively occurs as a part of a syntactically organized TCU (with the exception of *nú* in conventionalized phrases), *núna* has a more loose relation to the finite verb and is even used as a turn on its own. Furthermore, I argued that these distributional differences reflect previously unnoted functional differences between *nú* and *núna*.

By providing examples of usage in context, I have shown that *núna* is deployed as a referential index, one which indexes a period of time. The time frame partly overlaps the moment at which the word is uttered, but its duration is interpreted on a case-by-case basis depending on the context in which the adverb is used.

By contrast, the referential function of *nú* is not as prominent as that of *núna*. Instead of anchoring an event to a stretch of time, *nú* is used in a more dynamic fashion. *Nú* typically refers to a point in time which indexes a transition or a comparison between different situations, and, in some cases, this anchoring has the effect of emphasis. In such cases, *nú* works equally on the semantic level and

the functional level (see also Aijmer 2002:27). Hence, it is the temporal meaning used in a specific sequential environment which causes the affective function, and, consequently, affective stance is a part of the meaning of *nú* (Hilmisdóttir 2010; see also the discussion in Ochs 1996:419 and Aijmer 2002:95 on *now* in English).

The temporal-affective function of *nú* is an important link between the temporal use of *nú* and the particle function of *nú* (Hilmisdóttir 2010). I suggest that it is the temporal-affective use of *nú* which first triggered the grammaticalization process of the adverb. As soon as *nú* acquired functions other than anchoring events in time, the process of semantic bleaching was made possible, and, instead of referring to the present moment, *nú* acquired new interactional functions.

Discourse particles are never totally void of their original semantic meaning, and such is also the case in respect to the non-temporal *nú*. Therefore, in studying the particle functions of *nú*, it is essential first to investigate the lexical meaning of the adverb and then consider its potential non-lexical functions.

Lexical (or lexico-functional) words such as *nú* and *núna*, however, present a challenge to the methods of interactional linguistics. The method is easier to apply when studying phenomena which have less lexical content and clearer interactional functions (for example the particle functions of *nú*). When studying lexical words such as *nú* and *núna*, one of the problems is that it is not feasible to focus only on the interactive functions, while ignoring the semantic features as they manifest themselves in conversation. It is often the semantic content which makes a certain interactional function possible. Hence, in this study, I have made observations regarding syntax, lexicon, and interactional functions in order to show how these three levels interact and affect each other.

In conclusion, as this study shows, words that are on the border between lexical and function words can be meaningfully addressed by using methods of interactional linguistics on conversational data. The differences between *nú* and *núna* are subtle and not easily identified or explained using only the methods of theoretical linguistics. By analysing conversational data in a systematic way, I have shown that speakers do make distinctions between the two near-synonymous adverbs *nú* and *núna*. This distinction is manifested in the ways speakers position the two adverbs in different sequential and syntactic slots. The choice of word and syntactic position is by no means random, but, instead, it shows a highly organized interplay between lexicon, syntax, and function.

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APPENDIX

Transcription symbols

(0.5)	Silences measured in tenths of a second
(.)	Micro pause, i.e., a pause no longer than 0.2 second
[Overlapping talk begins
]	Overlapping talk ends
[[Two or more speakers start simultaneously
=	Latching
< >	Talk inside with a pace slower than surrounding talk
> <	Talk inside with a pace faster than surrounding talk
:::	Lengthening of sound; each colon indicates that the sound has been lengthened by approximately 0.1 second
-	Sudden cut-off of a sound
/	A forward slash indicates a high onset or a pitch step-up
\	A backward slash indicates a pitch step-down
↓	An arrow pointing down marks a fall in pitch
↑	An arrow pointing up marks a rise in pitch
→	An arrow pointing forward signifies a level contour (in the left margin of an excerpt, the arrow marks the focus of interest)
.	A full stop indicates a falling terminal contour
,	A comma indicates slightly falling terminal contour
?	A question mark indicates a rising terminal contour
¿	A reversed question mark indicates a half-rising terminal contour
<u>x</u>	Underline indicates stressed syllable or word
Nú	Initial upper-case letter signals a beginning intonation
NÚ	A word in upper case indicates emphasis with louder volume
◦◦	Talk inside uttered with sotto voce
**	Talk inside delivered with a laughing voice
\$\$	Talk inside delivered with a smily voice
##	Talk inside delivered in creaky voice
.já	The word is said with in-breath
h	Audible aspiration; one h indicates approximately 0.10 second
.h	Audible inhalation; one .h indicates approximately 0.10 second
.mt	Clicking sound caused by parting of the lips
(xx)	Item or word not fully identified by the transcriber
((xxx))	Comment by the transcriber

Abbreviations used in glosses

A note on glossing. If there is an equivalent form in English it has been used. In such cases, the grammatical category is not glossed. The following forms are not indicated in the glosses: (i) nominative case and forms which are identical with the

nominal case; (ii) gender of nouns, adjectives, participles and pronouns; (iii) plural of nominals; (iv) singular of verbs; (v) infinitive; (vi) present tense; and (vii) active voice.

1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person
ACC	accusative
DAT	dative
DEF	definite
GEN	genitive
IMPER	imperative
INTERJ	interjection
MV	middle voice
PL	plural
PP	past participle
PRT	particle
PT	past tense
REF	reflexive pronoun
SUBJ	subjunctive
VPRT	verb particle

NOTES

1. Although English and the other Nordic languages have only one word which indexes the temporal origo, such pairs are not unknown in the Indo-European languages, e.g. *jetzt* and *nun* in German (*Wahrig Deutsches Wörterbuch* 1997) and *sejčas* and *teper'* in Russian (Grenoble 1998:99–104).
2. This, of course, does not exclude the possibility that some stylistic choices might be at play in written language or in older forms of spoken Icelandic.
3. Instead of considering words as having a stable, unchangeable meaning, they can be described as having a MEANING POTENTIAL which is open and vague. Hence, the more exact meaning of each instance is interpreted and negotiated in its context (Linell 1998:199; Allwood 2003).

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