

Research Article

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Rosa S. Gísladóttir

Other-initiated repair in Icelandic

Abstract: The ability to repair problems with hearing or understanding in conversation is critical for successful communication. This article describes the linguistic practices of other-initiated repair (OIR) in Icelandic through quantitative and qualitative analysis of a corpus of video-recorded conversations. The study draws on the conceptual distinctions developed in the comparative project on repair described in the introduction to this issue. The main aim is to give an overview of the formats for OIR in Icelandic and the type of repair practices engendered by them. The use of repair initiations in social actions not aimed at solving comprehension problems is also briefly discussed. In particular, the interjection *há* has a rich usage extending beyond open other-initiation of repair. By describing the linguistic machinery for other-initiated repair in Icelandic, this study contributes to the typology of conversational structure and to the still nascent field of Icelandic social interaction studies.

Keywords: other-initiated repair; conversation analysis; Icelandic

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1 Introduction

The ability to repair comprehension problems in conversation is critical for successful communication. By indicating trouble with hearing or understanding the talk of others, in a process referred to as *other-initiated repair* (OIR; Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977), participants in conversation can overcome hitches and reach mutual understanding. As a research domain, other-initiated repair brings together issues of language, social behaviour and cognition (Dingemanse and Enfield 2015), offering a window on how speakers deal with linguistic indeterminacy and the complexity of talk in interaction. Cross-linguistic research on other-initiated repair can shed light on interactional universals while highlighting the perimeters of language-specific features (Dingemanse and Enfield 2015). The aim of this article is to contribute to the comparative study of OIR by charting the linguistic practices of other-initiated repair in Icelandic. Through quantitative and qualitative analysis of a corpus of video-recorded conversations, the study gives an overview of the main formats for OIR in Icelandic and the type of repair practices engendered by them. With the richest inflectional system of any modern Germanic language (Zaenen, Maling, and Thráinsson 1985), Icelandic is well documented at the sentence-level and below. However, research on conversational interaction in the language is limited (but see, for instance, Blöndal 2008; Hilmisdóttir 2011; Hilmisdóttir 2010) and the system of other-initiated repair in Icelandic is so far undescribed. Thus by documenting the linguistic machinery behind efficient interaction, this study works towards mapping an uncharted territory of Icelandic conversation.

The paper is organized as follows. After a brief introduction to the research domain (1.1) and the language under investigation (1.2), Section 2 describes the data collection and the corpus. Section 3 provides an example of a basic (or “minimal”) sequence of other-initiated repair in Icelandic as well as how lasting comprehension problems can result in a series of repair initiations in an extended OIR sequence.

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***Corresponding author: Rosa S. Gísladóttir:** Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, E-mail: rosa.gisladottir@mpi.nl

Section 4 proceeds to the main topic of the article, presenting the formats used for OIR in Icelandic. Section 5 discusses some boundary cases of OIR-like practices that are used to perform actions additional to, or instead of, initiating repair. Section 6 provides a summary of the main results and conclusions.

1.1 The research domain

Other-initiated repair has been defined as when a participant initiates repair due to problems with speaking, hearing and understanding (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977), where “speaking” refers to mispronunciation or saying something inappropriate, incorrect, etc. (Svennevig 2008). Other-initiated repair is distinguished from self-initiated repair (frequently referred to as self-repair), where the speaker of the turn to be repaired and the turn containing the repair initiation is the same (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977).

The majority of research on OIR has been based on English (for overviews, see Hayashi, Raymond, and Sidnell 2013; Kitzinger 2013). While a growing body of work has investigated specific aspects of other-initiated repair in individual languages besides English, the current study of Icelandic is a part of a systematic and comprehensive cross-linguistic comparison of OIR, reported on in this issue (for an introduction and the coding scheme, see Dingemanse, Kendrick, and Enfield This issue; Dingemanse and Enfield 2015). This research builds on theoretical distinctions developed in prior work (e.g., Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977), but adopts a flexible coding scheme to capture distinctions not previously reported. The structure of this article reflects some of the main features addressed in this coding scheme (see Dingemanse, Kendrick, and Enfield This issue).

For the purpose of the comparative project, a sequence was coded as a case of other-initiated repair if the speaker of the turn causing trouble treats the repair initiator as indicating a problem of speaking, hearing or understanding and provides a repair, for instance with repetition, rephrasing, or (dis)confirmation. In other words, it is the *response* to the OIR that is used as a defining factor and not the format of the OIR itself, in line with the next-turn *proof procedure* used in conversation analysis (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). The collection used for the current study also includes peripheral cases where OIR-like practices are used in the service of other actions than repair (see Section 5). For details of the rationale behind the coding scheme and the project more generally, see Dingemanse, Kendrick and Enfield (This issue) and Dingemanse and Enfield (2015).

1.2 Icelandic

Icelandic is a North Germanic language spoken by about 300.000 people mainly in Iceland, an island in the North Atlantic Ocean (Thráinsson 2007). The language is closely related to other Nordic languages, including Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Faroese. The basic word order is SVO, which holds in main clauses as well as embedded clauses. Icelandic has a rich inflectional system (Zaenen, Maling, and Thráinsson 1985), featuring four cases, three genders and two numbers. In the following transcriptions, interlinear glosses only contain case, gender and number information if considered relevant for the analysis of the sequence. Definite articles, which are suffixed to nouns, are indicated with *-the* following the noun they belong to.

2 Data collection and corpus

The Icelandic data reported on in this study were sampled from eight video recordings of everyday interaction made by the author in Reykjavík, Iceland, in 2011 and 2012. The corpus was constructed in accordance with a set of guidelines developed by and for the members of the comparative project reported on in this special issue (see Table 1 and introduction to the special issue for further information). Each recording is between 10 and 70 minutes, totalling 5 hours and 30 minutes of Icelandic conversation (all of the recorded material was used for the present study). The majority of the recordings involve multi-party interactions, with three people or more. In total 32 speakers were recorded. Most of the speakers

are in their late teens or twenties, but the speakers' age ranges from 10 years old to late eighties (for more information on the data collection see Table 1). The data were annotated by the author in ELAN (Wittenburg et al. 2006) and coded according to the distinctions developed in the comparative project. While the OIR cases were not systematically coded for prosody (see coding scheme; Dingemanse, Kendrick, and Enfield This issue), a subgroup of cases was later examined for intonation contour (falling, rising, level)¹. This includes all instances of open OIR and representative examples from the major categories of restricted OIR.

The corpus contained 147 cases of other-initiated repair.

Table 1: Key properties of the data collected for the studies in this issue

-
- Recordings were made on video.
 - Informed consent was obtained from those who participated.
 - Target behaviour was spontaneous conversation among people who know each other well (family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances), in highly familiar environments (homes, village spaces, work areas).
 - Participants were not responding to any instruction, nor were they given a task—they were simply aware that the researcher was collecting recordings of language usage in everyday life.
 - From multiple interactions that were collected in the larger corpus, the selection for analysis in this study was of a set of 10-minute segments, taken from as many different interactions as possible (allowing that some interactions are sampled more than once), to ensure against any bias from over-representation of particular interactions or speakers.
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3 Sequential structure and OIR

In this section I will introduce the core elements of an OIR sequence, using examples from the Icelandic corpus, and illustrate how lasting comprehension problems can result in an extended OIR sequence.

3.1 Minimal OIR sequence

A sequence of other-initiated repair consists of three parts; a *trouble source* turn (which causes the comprehension problem), a *repair initiation* (which signals that there is a problem), and a *repair solution* (which fixes the problem). A minimal sequence of OIR is shown in Extract 1. The sequence involves a repair initiation by Signý in line 2 (*ha* “huh”), indicating that the prior turn by Hjördís was problematic in some way. The repair initiation subsequently triggers a repair solution by Hjördís, who repeats the problematic turn in line 3:

Extract 1: CollegeGirls_1592020

1	Hjördís	hvað var að í auganu what was concerning in eye-the <i>what was wrong with your eye</i>	T-1
2	Signý	ha↘ ² huh <i>huh</i>	T0
3	Hjördís	hvað var að í auganu what was concerning in eye-the <i>what was wrong with your eye</i>	T+1

¹ Since many of the examples in the current article involve overlapping talk or background noise, such as music, pitch traces of the repair initiators cannot be given.

² Falling pitch in repair initiations is indicated with a downward slanting arrow (↘); rising pitch is upward slanting arrow (↗); level pitch is a horizontal arrow (→).

Following the conventions developed in the comparative project, the repair initiation (here in line 2) is referred to as T0 (i.e., turn zero) (see also Enfield et al. 2013). The turn causing trouble is labelled as T-1 and the repair solution is referred to as T+1. The sequence in Extract 1 is *minimal* in the sense that it involves only one repair initiation (T0).

3.2 Non-minimal OIR sequences

In some cases more than one repair initiation is needed to resolve the problem of hearing or understanding. Extract 2, featuring a conversation between friends at a party, involves several attempts by the same speaker (Elías) to initiate repair. Elías is simultaneously addressed by two people, Þorgeir and Hanna, and the overlap triggers a series of repair initiations. The focus here is not on the first repair initiation (*ha*) in line 3, directed to Þorgeir, but to the OIR attempts directed to Hanna in lines 6, 8 and 10:

Extract 2: Party_1890511

1	Hanna	[() gott að sjá þau aftur nice to see them again () <i>nice to see them again</i>	T-1 ₁
2	Þorgeir	[() ((unclear))	
3	Elías	ha↘ ((points to Þorgeir with both hands)) huh <i>huh</i>	
4	Þorgeir	() ((unclear))	
5	Elías	já já yes yes <i>yes</i>	
6	Elías	hvað segirðu↘ ((leans towards Hanna)) what say-you <i>what do you say</i>	TO ₁
7	Hanna	ég sagði var ekki gott að sjá þau aftur I said was not nice to see them again <i>I said wasn't it nice to see them again</i>	T+1 ₁ / T-1 ₂
8	Elías	sjá→ see <i>see</i>	TO ₂
9	Hanna	þau them.PL.ACC <i>them</i>	T+1 ₂ / T-1 ₃
10	Elías	hver↘ who.PL.ACC <i>who</i>	TO ₃
11	Hanna	fjölskylduna þína family-the.ACC your <i>your family</i>	T+1 ₃

The OIR attempts that are directed to Hanna begin with the repair initiation *what do you say* (TO₁). Despite Hanna's response in line 7, Elías initiates repair again in lines 8 and 10, first with a partial repetition ("see") and then a question word ("who"). Non-minimal OIR sequences of this kind illustrate a common transition from a repair initiation that is open or broad in terms of where the problem lies ("what do you

say?") to a more restricted OIR, in this case spelling out that the problem involves the object of the verb "see" ("who?") (for the ordering of repair initiators, see Clark and Schaefer 1987; Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). The distinction between open and restricted repair initiations is further discussed in Section 4. Extract 2 also demonstrates that repair initiations can take many forms; here, comprehension problems are indicated with an interjection (*ha* "huh"), an idiomatic phrase (*hvað segirðu* "what do you say"), partial repetition and a content question word. The range of OIR formats in Icelandic is described in the next section.

4 Formats for other-initiation of repair

In this section I discuss the most common formats used by speakers of Icelandic for formulating OIR. A basic distinction is made between *open* and *restricted* repair initiators; for a description of these two types and their subtypes, see Table 2. Open type repair initiators indicate some problem with prior talk, but do not specify which aspect of the turn is problematic or why, i.e., whether there is a problem of speaking, hearing or understanding (Drew 1997). In contrast, restricted repair initiators characterize the problem in more detail. The term *restricted* is here used for what has been called *closed class* OIR (Drew 1997). Table 3 shows the relative frequencies of these OIR formats and their subtypes (discussed below) in the Icelandic corpus.

Table 2: Some basic format types for other-initiation of repair

Open. Open type repair initiators are requests that indicate some problem with the prior talk while leaving open what or where the problem is exactly.

- *Interjection.* An interjection with questioning intonation.
- *Question-word.* An item from the larger paradigm of question words in the language. Usually a thing interrogative, sometimes a manner interrogative.
- *Formulaic.* Expressions not incorporating interjection or question-word, often managing social relations or enacting politeness.

Restricted. Restricted type repair initiators restrict the problem space in various ways by locating or characterising the problem in more detail.

- *Request type (asking for specification/clarification).* Typically done by content question-words, often in combination with partial repetition.
- *Offer type (asking for confirmation).* Typically done by a repetition or rephrasing of all or part of T-1.
- *Alternative question.* Repair initiator that invites a selection from among alternatives.

Within restricted, *external* repair initiators address problems about unexpressed elements of T-1; this 'external' function can be performed by all of the listed format types for 'restricted'.

Table 3: Types of repair initiators and their frequency in the Icelandic corpus

Type	Subtype	Nr. of cases	Proportion
Open	Interjection	51	34.7%
	Question-word	7	4.8%
	Formulaic	0	0%
Restricted	Request (asking specification)	33	22.4%
	Offer (providing a candidate)	55	37.4%
	Alternative question	1	0.7%
	Total	147	100%

4.1 Open formats

Listeners can use several strategies for open OIR. The coding scheme makes a distinction between formats that involve an interjection (e.g., *huh?*), formats with a question word (e.g., *what did you say?*) and formulaic expressions (e.g., *pardon?*).

4.1.1 Interjection strategy

The interjection *ha* [ha], comparable to English ‘huh’, is by far the most common open repair initiator in the Icelandic corpus, accounting for 88% of open OIR (51 cases out of 58). The interjection has a phonemic /h/ in onset position, followed by a low-central, unrounded vowel. In contrast to comparable interjections in the majority of other languages surveyed in this special issue, the Icelandic interjection has falling pitch (see also Dingemanse, Torreira, and Enfield 2013; Enfield et al. 2013). This issue is discussed in more detail below. Falling intonation in repair initiations is indicated with a downward slanting arrow (↘).

The most common response to the *ha* interjection is a full or partial repeat of the problem turn (full: 15 cases, partial: 18 cases). In Extract 1 we saw an example of a repair sequence with the *ha* interjection followed by a full repeat of the problem turn without any modification (i.e., verbatim repeat). In many cases, however, part or all of T-1 is replaced or rephrased in the repair solution. An example of partial repetition with modification is presented in Extract 3:

Extract 3: SeniorCitizens_154520

1	Margrét	ég hef nú bara mest áhyggjur af- þú ofreyrnir þig (.) við spilin I have now just most concerns of you.NOM strain you.ACC with cards-the <i>I'm just most concerned that – you strain yourself (.) with the cards</i>	T-1
2	Birta	ha↘ huh <i>huh</i>	T0
3	Margrét	þú ofreyrnir augun við að spila, ég er mest hrædd við það you strain eyes-the with to play I am most afraid with that <i>you strain your eyes playing, I'm most afraid of that</i>	T+1

The repair solution in line 3 is a modified version of T-1; some elements are repeated, but rephrasing has taken place (e.g., “you strain yourself” ⇒ “you strain your eyes”). Note also the fronting of the “you strain...” clause in T+1.

A closed mouth variant of the interjection, *hmm*, was found in the Icelandic corpus but it is rare; 4 out of 51 *ha*-interjections were produced with a closed mouth. Extract 4 gives an example of this.

Extract 4: CouplePlayingCards2_526475

1	Sóley	sjam ((not clearly articulated)) see.1PL <i>see</i> ((short for “we’ll see”))	T-1
2	Guðni	hmm↘ huh <i>hmm</i>	T0
3	Sóley	sjáum ((clearly articulated)) see.1PL <i>see</i> ((short for we’ll see”))	T+1

This example also demonstrates the common practice of articulating repair solutions involving repetition more carefully than in the original trouble source turn (Curl 2005).

All of the interjections in the present corpus have a falling pitch. This is in line with pilot findings based on three conversations from another corpus (ÍSTAL – Corpus of Spoken Icelandic) that the interjection has falling pitch (Enfield et al. 2013). The current investigation, which involves a much larger dataset, finds the same contour (falling pitch) in all cases of open OIR (i.e., also in the question-word strategy, described below). Moreover, while restricted repair initiators were not systematically coded for prosody, most types of restricted OIR feature falling pitch, as revealed by representative examples below (for an exception, see section 4.2.1)³. The results thus extend prior reports from the comparative project, which were restricted to the interjection strategy (Dingemanse, Torreira, and Enfield 2013; Enfield et al. 2013). The falling pitch pattern may seem somewhat surprising given that questioning and uncertainty are frequently associated with rising pitch in languages of the world (Dingemanse, Torreira, and Enfield 2013; Ohala 1983). In Icelandic, however, questions commonly have falling intonation. The “preferred” nuclear question contour for both content (*wh-*) questions and polar (*yes/no-*) questions in Icelandic involves a low boundary tone, i.e., falling intonation (Dehé 2009). Although questions with final rise do occur, they have been argued to have special connotations (Árnason 1998; Árnason 2011; Dehé 2009). Árnason (1998) argues, for instance, that rising pitch is used in “friendly suggestions”, while a low boundary tone is found in “matter of fact” questions (Árnason 1998). Thus while more research is needed on question intonation in Icelandic, particularly in non-elicited, spontaneous conversation, the falling pitch in *ha* and other repair initiators fits well with the querying nature of other-initiated repair and the system of interrogative prosody in Icelandic as described so far (Dingemanse, Torreira, and Enfield 2013).

4.1.2 Question-word strategy

Another way to initiate repair with an open format in Icelandic is to use the phrase *hvað segirðu* “what do you say”. The question word *hvað* “what” cannot appear on its own as an *open* type repair initiator in Icelandic, in contrast to many spoken languages surveyed in the comparative project (see, for instance, Enfield et al. 2013). *Hvað* picks out a referent in nominative or accusative case, singular, neuter; in isolation, it can function as a *restricted* repair initiator referring to a problematic referent in the appropriate case, number and gender. While the complex inflectional system in Icelandic offers affordances for restricted other-initiated repair, giving participants in conversation more specific means to refer to problematic elements (i.e., specifying case, number, gender), the inflectional specificity likely constrains the use of *hvað* in open OIR. Since *hvað* “what” restricts the problem to a referent in nominative/accusative, singular, neuter⁴, the complete phrase *hvað segirðu* “what do you say” is required for open other-initiated repair when speakers want to keep the nature of the comprehension problem underspecified.

Only four instances of the open question-word strategy were found in the Icelandic corpus, demonstrating that the use of *hvað segirðu* in open OIR is much less common than *ha*, at least in informal conversations between friends and relatives (such as those recorded for this project). *Hvað segirðu*, and its past tense variant *hvað sagðirðu* “what did you say” (not found in the corpus), may be more common in formal situations.

An example of *hvað segirðu* was presented in Extract 2 above. The relevant part of this sequence is repeated in Extract 5 for convenience. The repair initiation “what do you say” in line 6 targets the trouble turn by Hanna in line 1; lines 2 to 5 involve intervening talk directed to another person (Þorgeir).

³ It is the author’s impression that falling pitch is dominant in restricted OIR. However, since not all restricted cases of OIR were examined for prosody, it is possible that other contours are used in restricted OIR, especially in cases where an additional action is being performed.

⁴ Note that it is possible to imagine a situation in which the participant initiating repair does not hear the gender or number of the referent causing trouble and therefore chooses the neuter, singular form.

Extract 5: Party_1890511

- | | | | |
|---|---------|--|-----|
| 1 | Hanna | [() gott að sjá þau aftur
nice to see them again
() <i>nice to see them again</i> | T-1 |
| 2 | Þorgeir | [()
((unclear)) | |
| 3 | Elías | ha↘ ((points to Þorgeir with both hands))
huh
<i>huh</i> | |
| 4 | Þorgeir | ()
((unclear)) | |
| 5 | Elías | já já
yes yes
<i>yes</i> | |
| 6 | Elías | hvað segirðu↘ ((leans towards Hanna))
what say-you
<i>what do you say</i> | T0 |
| 7 | Hanna | ég sagði var ekki gott að sjá þau aftur
I said was not nice to see them again
<i>I said wasn't it nice to see them again</i> | T+1 |

The repair solution in line 7 involves repetition of the trouble source turn, as is common with the interjection strategy. Note also that the repair solution here contains the preface *ég sagði* “I said”; this practice (and the present tense equivalent *ég segi* “I say”) occurs in three open OIR sequences in the Icelandic corpus, both following the interjection and the question-word strategy.

It remains an open question what the functional distinction between the interjection and the question-word strategy in Icelandic is (for a general discussion of this issue, see Enfield et al. 2013). However, in the particular example above, the use of the question-word strategy is likely influenced by the fact that the repair initiation (T0) is temporally and sequentially separated from the problem turn (T-1) due to intervening talk. Using *ha* in this case could be perceived “out of place”; due to its interjective nature, the *ha* strategy may require immediate adjacency to the problem turn. A larger corpus is required to determine whether such sequential pressures are at play in the use of the question-word strategy more generally in Icelandic.

4.1.3 Other open strategies

The Icelandic corpus does not contain any cases of formulaic repair initiators, comparable to *pardon* or *sorry* in English. While formats such as *afsakið* “excuse me” and *fyrirgefðu* “sorry” likely exist, they are without a doubt rare and restricted to more formal situations. However, the corpus contains three instances of the open format *hvað meinarðu* “what do you mean”. While this format specifies that there is a problem with understanding, it is considered an open repair initiator as it does not restrict the source of the trouble within the relevant turn. Extract 6 features an example of “what do you mean”. Sóley and Guðni, a couple, are playing a card game.

Extract 6: CouplePlayingCards2_220380

- | | | | |
|---|-------|---|-----|
| 1 | Sóley | það er alveg pottþétt mál að maður
it is completely solid case that one
<i>it is totally clear that one</i> | T-1 |
|---|-------|---|-----|

- | | | | |
|---|-------|---|-----|
| 2 | Sóley | getur ekkert (.) svindlað núna ((chuckles))
can nothing cheated now
<i>can't cheat now</i> | |
| 3 | | (1.7) ⁵ | |
| 4 | Guðni | hvað meinarðu ↘
what mean-you
<i>what do you mean</i> | T0 |
| 5 | Sóley | annars er það bara caught on tape
otherwise is it just caught on tape
<i>or else it's just caught on tape</i> | T+1 |

Note that the repair solution in line 5 is very different from what we have seen so far. While the interjection and question word strategies frequently engender repetition or modification of the problem turn, *hvað meinarðu* elicits in this case an explanatory account for the turn in T-1 (namely that the presence of the video camera makes cheating more difficult).

4.2 Restricted formats

While open repair initiators are underspecified in terms of the nature of the problem, *restricted* formats can pinpoint where the problem lies, for instance by narrowing down which aspect of the turn is problematic (see section 4.2.1) or by seeking confirmation whether something has been understood correctly (4.2.2). The term *restricted* is used for what others have referred to as “closed class” (Drew 1997).

4.2.1 Request type: Requesting clarification/specification

One way to highlight the source of trouble in prior talk is to elicit clarification regarding a specific element. Such restricted OIR formats are here referred to as *request type* formats (the term is adopted from a lecture by Schegloff cited in Suzuki 2010). The most common request type strategy in Icelandic is to use a content question word such as *hvað* “what”, *hver* “who”, *hvar* “where” and *hvert* “where to” to elicit relevant information. Out of 33 cases of restricted request type formats, 27 include such question words. Extract 7 shows an example of a restricted format of this type. The conversation takes place at a party; Þorgeir is just returning to the living room after fetching something in the kitchen. The conversation had stalled while he was away.

Extract 7: Party_479260

- | | | | |
|---|---------|--|-----|
| 1 | Þorgeir | hún er að halda eitthvað svona stelpupartí
she is to throw something like girl's-party
<i>she's throwing like a girl's party</i> | T-1 |
| 2 | Guðný | hver ↘
who.NOM.F/M.SG
<i>who</i> | T0 |
| 3 | Þorgeir | Emilía
Emilía.NOM.F.SG
<i>Emilía ((female name))</i> | T+1 |

In this example, the question word *hver* “who” is used in isolation to request specification regarding who is throwing a party. Note that this word comes from the same paradigm as *hvað* “what”; *hver* “who” is used for masculine or feminine referents in nominative case, singular.

⁵ Silence is indicated in seconds in brackets.

Question words can also be used with additional material (e.g., *hver var þetta* “who was this?”), or used alongside partial repetition of the problem turn. An example of the latter is shown in Extract 8. A woman (Halldóra) is having lunch with her daughter (Sigrún) and son-in-law (Hjörtur). They are discussing the translation of documents in foreign languages into Icelandic.

Extract 8: MotherDaughterLunch_879130

1	Hjörtur	þetta er rosa skrítið hvað er lítið til this is very weird what is little available <i>this is very weird how little there is available</i>	T-1
2		(0.7)	
3	Halldóra	j[á yes yes	
4	Hjörtur	[í raun in reality <i>in reality</i>	
5	Sigrún	er lítið til af hverju ↘ is little available of what.DAT.SG <i>there is little available of what</i>	T0
6	Hjörtur	orðabókum dictionaries.DAT.PL <i>dictionaries</i>	T+1

The repair initiation by Sigrún in line 5 contains a repetition of the phrase *er lítið til* “is little available”, followed by an added prepositional phrase with a question word, *af hverju* “of what”. The question word *hverju* is the dative, singular form of *hvað* “what”; consequently, the repair solution in line 6 – the referent of *hverju* – has the same case (dative).

Another way to specify the source of the problem in restricted OIR is to use partial repetition of material in the trouble source without adding a content question word. An example of this is presented in Extract 9. Elías is talking about a fine he got for using an image from the internet on his blog. He has just been asked by a friend how high the fine was.

Extract 9: Party_2067100a

1	Elías	hundrað- og áttatíu án vasks hundred and eighty without VAT <i>hundred-and-eighty without VAT</i>	T-1
2	Jón	áttatíu→ eighty <i>eighty</i>	T0
3	Elías	þúsund thousand <i>thousand</i>	T+1

Here Jón uses repetition of the word *áttatíu* “eighty” to elicit what the numeral qualifies, i.e., “thousand”. Dingemanse, Blythe and Dirksmeyer (2014) refer to such cases as *trouble-framing* repeats, as they create a syntactic frame which the trouble source can be “slotted” into (see also Jefferson 1972). In other words, the repeated word itself is not problematic (“eighty”), but what should follow it (“thousand”). Another example of this was seen in Extract 2 above, repeated in part in Extract 10; here Elías repeats the verb *sjá* “see” to elicit the object of the verb, *þau* “them”:

Extract 10: Party_1890511

1	Hanna	é ég sagði var ekki gott að sjá þau aftur I said was not nice to see them.ACC again <i>I said wasn't it nice to see them again</i>	T-1
2	Elías	sjá→ see <i>see</i>	T0
3	Hanna	þau them.ACC <i>them</i>	T+1

An interesting feature of these two examples of trouble-framing repeats is that the repair initiator does not have clear falling pitch, in contrast to previous examples of OIR in Icelandic, but is better characterized as having level intonation (as indicated with →). This is the case for several other restricted, request type OIRs in the corpus in which repetition of this type is used to restrict the trouble source. While the function of level intonation in Icelandic is unclear, prosodic marking of trouble-framing repeats provides important information for the interpretation of the repair initiator. Note that simply repeating a word from the trouble source turn is not enough to elicit the correct repair solution (Dingemanse, Blythe, and Dirksmeyer 2014); to use Extract 10 as an example, repeating “see” could be heard as indicating trouble with the word “see”, and not what follows it, “them” (partial repetition of this kind is discussed in section 4.2.2 below). Dingemanse, Blythe and Dirksmeyer (2014) point out that “continuing intonation” can serve to distinguish trouble-framing repeats from other uses of repetition in OIR, marking trouble-framing repeats as “recognizably incomplete” and hence inviting completion of the syntactic and prosodic frame (Dingemanse, Blythe, and Dirksmeyer 2014). Conversation analysts have noted that level intonation is used to project the continuation of the turn, i.e., signalling that the turn is incomplete (e.g., Selting 2001). The same argument regarding level intonation has been made for Icelandic (Hilmisdóttir 2007). Thus the use of level pitch in trouble-framing other-initiations of repair could serve to indicate incompleteness, providing the necessary cue to how the partial repetition should be interpreted. The standard falling pitch pattern is not a good candidate to indicate incompleteness; low boundary tones as those found in the *ha* interjection and other OIRs with falling pitch are thought to mark *finality* at the end of utterances in Icelandic (Árnason 1998; Árnason 2011; Dehé 2009). However, it remains unclear why the trouble-framing OIRs do not have rising pitch, giving that high boundary tones (as in rising intonation) signal non-finality or continuation in the language (Árnason 1998; Árnason 2011; Dehé 2009). More research is therefore required to investigate the function of level intonation in Icelandic and its significance in the system of other-initiation of repair.

4.2.2 Offer type: Offering a candidate

In section 4.2.1 I discussed restricted OIR formats that elicit a clarification on behalf of the speaker of the trouble source. Participants in conversation can also initiate repair by checking whether their understanding is correct, i.e., by offering a candidate understanding that can then be confirmed or disconfirmed (see, for instance Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). Such restricted OIR formats are referred to as *offer type* formats in the comparative project (following Schegloff, cited in Suzuki 2010). This strategy is very common in the Icelandic corpus, representing 37.4% of total OIR cases (55 out of 147). In the majority of these, a direct confirmation (“yes”) or disconfirmation (“no”) is given, with or without further explanation. An example of this is presented in Extract 11, taken from a conversation between a woman (Halldóra) and her son-in-law (Hjörtur) about a particular area in the countryside:

Extract 11: MotherDaughterLunch_2544600

1	Hjörtur	ég væri alveg til í að eiga sumarbústað (einhvers staðar) þarna I would be completely ready in to have summer-cottage (somewhere) there <i>I would be completely up for having a cottage (somewhere) there</i>	T-1
2	Halldóra	í Dýrafirðinum ∨ in Dýrafjörður <i>in Dýrafjörður fjord</i>	T0
3	Hjörtur	já yes <i>yes</i>	T+1

Here the problem concerns the underspecification of the term *þarna* “there” in line 1, i.e., which area is being referred to. Halldóra proposes a candidate understanding in line 2, which is confirmed in line 3. In this case the candidate understanding involves new material, i.e., specification of the trouble source (“there” ⇒ “in Dýrafjörður fjord”). Extract 12 below, from a conversation between college friends, features a repair initiator that does not contain new material but rather a repetition attempt:

Extract 12: CollegeGirls_2450060

1	Unnur	hún er ekkert gömul sextug eða eitthvað she is nothing old sixty or something <i>she's not old, sixty or something</i>	T-1
2	Alma	sextán ∨ sixteen <i>sixteen</i>	T0
3	Unnur	((drinks from cup))	
4	Signý	sextug sixty <i>sixty</i>	T+1

Alma initiates repair by providing a candidate hearing of the word *sextug* “sixty” from the prior turn, which happens to be wrong (“sixteen”). Since Unnur, the speaker of the trouble source turn, is busy drinking from a cup, Signý (another friend) provides the repair solution, disconfirming Alma’s version simply by repeating the correct understanding, *sextug* “sixty”.

Note that the repair initiator – a repetition attempt – has falling pitch in this case, in contrast to level pitch in the examples in Extracts 9 and 10. All three cases have in common that the repair initiator is one word, a partial repetition (or repetition attempt) of the trouble source turn. Why do they have different intonation contours? The critical difference is *what* the repair initiator in T0 repeats. In Extracts 9 and 10 an element that *precedes* the trouble source is repeated (“eighty” is repeated to elicit “thousand”, “see” is repeated to elicit “them”). As previously discussed, this use of repetition has been termed *trouble-framing*, as the repetition merely frames the problematic item (Dingemanse, Blythe, and Dirksmeyer 2014). However, in Extract 12 the trouble source itself is repeated (or rather an attempt is made to repeat *sextug* as *sextán*); Dingemanse, Blythe and Dirksmeyer (2014) refer to this type of repetition in OIR as *trouble-presenting*, as the partial repetition presents or represents the trouble source. For these two strategies to be successful in eliciting the correct repair solution, speakers must have the means to distinguish trouble-framing repetitions from trouble-presenting repetitions. While this can be done in several ways in languages of the world (see Dingemanse, Blythe, and Dirksmeyer 2014), in Icelandic the necessary cue comes from the intonation contour. In section 4.2.1 above it was argued that level pitch serves to indicate that the partial repetition should be understood as an incomplete frame, calling for a continuation (i.e., as trouble-framing). In trouble-presenting repetitions, on the other hand, there is no need to indicate with prosody that the

repetition is targeting the element that should continue. Falling pitch is therefore equally well suited for trouble-presenting repetition as other types of OIR.

4.2.3 Other restricted OIR formats

Another type of restricted OIR format is the *alternative question*; a repair initiator in the form of a question with two candidate understandings (e.g., *divorced or separated?*). The corpus contains only one instance of an alternative question, which will not be discussed here.

5 Actions

We have now seen examples of all major types of other-initiation of repair present in the Icelandic corpus. These examples have in common that the main purpose of the repair initiation is to repair problems with speaking, hearing or understanding. However, the practices used in other-initiation of repair can be used to perform social actions other than solving comprehension problems. Other-initiations of repair have in common that they signal that some aspect of the prior turn does not meet the recipient's expectations (Drew 1997), which makes them a resource for actions such as displaying doubt, surprise, disagreement or a challenge (Schegloff 1997; Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2006). Such actions can be termed OIR-derived as they play on the questioning nature of repair to perform additional, related actions. In this section I will describe several actions from the Icelandic corpus that are built from the linguistic practices for OIR.

The first action is display of surprise. In Extract 13 below, several college girls are having dinner together. Guðrún addresses one of them, Alma, in line 1, revealing something that comes as a surprise to two other girls who are present, Lísá and Signý (note that Alma does not talk in the sequence):

Extract 13: CollegeGirls_769745

- | | | | |
|---|--------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Guðrún | nennir þú aðeins að tala nú var ég að fréttu að þú ert
mind you.SG a little to talk now was I to hear that you.SG are
<i>do you mind talking a bit, I just heard that you are</i> | T-1 |
| 2 | Guðrún | að flytja með Andra til Svíþjóðar og [þið eruð bara að fara að búa (.) í Sví [þjóð
to move with Andri to Sweden and you.PL are just to go to live in Sweden
<i>moving with Andri to Sweden and you are just going to live together in Sweden</i> | |
| 3 | Lísá | [haba haba er það ()
hubba hubba is that ((unclear))
<i>hubba hubba ((slang)) is that ((unclear))</i> | |
| 4 | Signý | | [↑ha↘ T0
huh
<i>what</i> |
| 5 | Rósa | =heyrdi Kalli tilkynnti mér það nú að hann væri ekki tilbúinn
hey Kalli announced me that now that he were not ready
<i>hey Kalli told me that he is not ready</i> | |
| 6 | Rósa | að flytja með mér til útlanda
to move with me to foreign countries
<i>to move abroad with me</i> | |

The fact that Alma and her boyfriend are moving together to Sweden is newsworthy, particularly given that they are only 20 years old and the couple has not been dating for long. While Lísá shows her

approval or excitement with the slang *haba haba* (“hubba hubba”⁶) in line 3, Signý responds to the news with the interjection *ha* in line 4. Note that the interjection is not responded to with repetition or rephrasing, highlighting that it is not taken as other-initiation of repair (hence there is no T+1 marked in the transcript). Instead, the conversation continues on a related topic (Rósa, another girl in the conversation, tells her friends that her boyfriend does not want to move abroad with her). Less than a minute later (not shown), Alma shares that she finds it uncomfortable to talk about the fact that she is moving to Sweden with her boyfriend “because it sounds so bad”, given they haven’t been dating for long.

The interjection *ha* is here pronounced with a sharp fall, starting from a high pitch. The high initial pitch distinguishes this use of *ha* from other instances of the interjection in other-initiation of repair, described above. This version of *ha* is therefore “prosodically marked,” in the sense that it contains conspicuous cues (in this case high initial pitch) triggering special inferences (see, for instance, Selting 1996). The interactional context of the interjection in Extract 13 suggests that the special inference to be drawn is that the interjection functions as a display of surprise. The turn in lines 1 and 2, to which the interjection responds, is a prime environment for a surprise token, as it contains unexpected, surprising information (indeed, the news “sounds so bad” that Alma prefers to not talk about it). Moreover, the preface *do you mind talking a bit* (“nennir þú aðeins að tala”) suggests that the information is so unexpected that it requires an account on behalf of Alma. Note also that the interjection is produced in overlap with the end of Guðrún’s surprising news, which is in line with research on English showing that surprise tokens are produced without delay, usually immediately following the newsworthy turn or with slightly early onset (in overlap) (Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2006).

The corpus contains several instances of OIR formats (e.g., interjection, repetition) with marked prosody of this type (sharp fall from high initial pitch) being used for displaying surprise. The use of prosodically marked OIR formats in displays of surprise has previously been described for German by Selting (1996), who reports that open repair initiators *was* “what” and *bitte* “pardon” are used for this function. Similarly, Schegloff (1997) and Wilkinson & Kitzinger (2006) provide an example of *what* functioning as a surprise token in English (although it is not prosodically marked). In contrast to these reports, which involve the question-word strategy or formulaic open OIR for displaying surprise, the interjection strategy is used in Icelandic, as illustrated in Extract 13 above. Note that *ha* is here translated as *what* because the question-word strategy is used for displays of surprise in English (Schegloff 1997; Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2006).

The Icelandic corpus also contains three cases where the English word *what* is used in displays of surprise. An example of this is given in Extract 14. Rannveig is telling friends at a dinner party about one of her teachers, who once unexpectedly brought his wife to class. In line 1, Rannveig mimics the wife talking to her husband during the class.

Extract 14: DinnerParty_2324995

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 1 | Rannveig og bara ↑Jónas þú ert að muldra↑ ((high pitch voice))
and just Jonas you are to mumble
<i>and just Jónas you are mumbling</i> | T-1 |
| 2 | Ingunn what ↗=
what
<i>what</i> | T0 |
| 3 | Rannveig = og allir bara eitthvað
and everyone just something
<i>and everyone was just like</i> | |
| 4 | ((everybody laughs)) | |
| 5 | Þórey nei ertu að grínast
no are-you to joke
<i>no are you kidding</i> | |

⁶ Merriam Webster online dictionary describes the English version “hubba hubba” as used to express approval, excitement, or enthusiasm. The Icelandic version *haba haba* has a similar meaning, although it has a sexual undertone.

The ensuing laughter and explicit appreciation of the funny aspect of the story in lines 4 and 5 highlights the surprise function of the open repair initiator. Indeed, Rannveig does not treat *what* as a sign of comprehension problems; there is no repair solution and consequently T+1 is not marked in the transcript.

Importantly, *what* has rising pitch, in contrast to the majority of other instances of OIR in the corpus (which have falling or level pitch, as discussed in section 4). The two other cases of English *what* in the Icelandic corpus that function as displays of surprise also feature rising pitch. In English conversation *what* is produced with rising pitch in open OIR⁷ (see, for instance, Schegloff 1997), as well as when the repair initiator signals surprise (for examples, see Couper-Kuhlen 1993; Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2006). Thus speakers of Icelandic not only borrow the English word for this function but also copy the accompanying rising intonation from English, rather than using the sharp fall found in the Icelandic cases. The claim is not that intonational features are borrowed from English for use in Icelandic words, but rather that the interactional *practice* (Schegloff 1997) of using *what*+rising intonation in displays of surprise is copied from English conversation. English influence on Icelandic interaction is not surprising, given the extensive exposure to English and use of the language in Iceland⁸ (see, for instance, Arnbjörnsdóttir 2007; Arnbjörnsdóttir 2011). Indeed, it has been argued that the status of English in Iceland comes closer to a second language situation than a foreign language situation (Arnbjörnsdóttir 2007; Arnbjörnsdóttir 2011). Even young children who haven't received formal education in English can understand spoken English and express themselves to some extent (Lefever 2010).

The examples of displays of surprise in Extracts 13 and 14 have in common that there is no T+1, i.e., the conversation continues without a repair solution being proffered. The *ha* and *what* are not treated as indicating trouble with hearing or understanding. In Extract 13, which features the interjection *ha*, marked prosody and the sequential environment (surprising news in prior turn) contribute to the interpretation that a display of surprise is being performed. In Extract 14, the practice *what*+rising intonation and the sequential context give the repair initiator a flavour of surprise. Note that there are no instances of English *what* functioning as run-of-the-mill OIR in the Icelandic corpus, i.e., targeting true problems with hearing or understanding; just using the English practice may therefore be enough to indicate surprise.

Formats for other-initiation of repair can also be used to perform disaligning actions, including disagreements or challenges (Schegloff 1997). In Extract 15, four senior citizens at a retirement home are playing cards. Halldór and Anna are on the same team and they have just lost a trick. Halldór has been complaining about bad luck previously in the interaction.

Extract 15: SeniorCitizens_300160

- | | | | |
|---|---------|--|-----|
| 1 | Halldór | það er alltaf sama sagan
it is always same story-the
<i>it's always the same story</i> | |
| 2 | Anna | nei nei
no no
<i>no, no</i> | T-1 |
| 3 | Halldór | ↑nei hvað↘
no what
<i>what do you mean, no</i> | T0 |
| 4 | Birta | þetta er bara byrjunin
this is just beginning-the
<i>this is just the beginning</i> | |
| 5 | | ((intervening talk omitted)) | |

⁷ *What* with falling or continuing intonation functions as a restricted repair initiator (Dingemanse, Blythe, and Dirksmeyer 2014; Schegloff 1997).

⁸ As an example of the amount of exposure to English in the media, a study from 2011 found that more than 70% of material broadcast on Icelandic TV stations was in English (Sergio Ortega, cited in Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2011).

- 6 Birta vertu ekki svartsýnn
 be-you not pessimistic
 don't be pessimistic

In line 2, Anna objects to her teammate's complaint about their situation in the game. Halldór challenges this objection by using partial repetition plus “what”, *nei hvað*, which roughly translates to “what do you mean, no?”. This format – partial repetition plus *hvað* “what” (nominative/accusative, singular, neuter) – bears a superficial resemblance to restricted OIR, involving a question word and partial repetition (see section 4.2.1). However, when there is a real problem with hearing or understanding, the question word is more likely to be fronted (i.e., occur before the repeated material) and agree in gender, number and case (e.g., *hvaða frétt* “what news”).

The Icelandic corpus contains five instances of partial repetition plus *hvað* delivering an action of a type similar to the one above, best described as a playful challenge. The challenging aspect of this practice is even clearer in other cases, where the format is immediately followed by a direct challenge or exclamation by the same speaker (e.g., “you think I don't know my cards?” or “what the hell!”). As in displays of surprise, marked prosody (in this example high initial pitch followed by a fall) is an indicator that the OIR-like format is not intended as “straight” other-initiation of repair.

OIR practices can also be used for teasing. Extract 16 features a conversation between college friends. Sandra, one of the girls, has just arrived; discussion about Skype prompts her to talk about a Skype job interview she was supposed to have earlier in the day.

Extract 16: CollegeGirls_350540a

- | | | | |
|---|--------|---|-----|
| 1 | Sandra | heyrðu það bilaði mækrófónninn hjá henni
listen it broke microphone-the.NOM at her.DAT
<i>well her microphone broke</i> | T-1 |
| 2 | Alma | mækrófónninn ∩ ((smiles))
microphone-the.NOM
<i>the microphone</i> | T0 |
| 3 | Sandra | mækrófónninn, ég er orðin svo amerísk sjáiði til
microphone-the.NOM I am become so American see-you.PL
<i>the microphone, I've become so American you see</i> | |

To refer to a microphone, Sandra could have used the relatively accepted loanword *mikrafónn* or the traditional *hljóðnemi*. Instead, she uses a more direct borrowing, *mækrófónn*, which in contrast to the standard loanword retains the English [aɪ] vowel in the first morpheme. Alma's response in line 2 resembles a restricted OIR with partial repetition. However, the smile on Alma's face during the delivery of the OIR indicates that a problem with hearing or understanding is not at stake, but a non-serious mocking of Sandra's pronunciation. Sandra's reply to Alma includes an account for why she used the term, suggesting that the OIR was not just taken as simple initiation of repair or playful tease but also as a slight critique. This is in line with descriptions of teases in English, which despite their humorous aspect tend to get serious, “po-faced” responses (Drew 1987).

The tease, the challenge and displays of surprise have in common that their formats trade on the questioning nature of OIR practices to retro-actively highlight some aspect of the preceding turn. This backward-looking feature makes OIR formats useful for a range of other actions; the Icelandic corpus also includes OIR-derived actions such as pre-disagreements and joke appreciations. In the examples above the additional action is quite evident, thanks to factors such as marked prosody or smiling. However, this is not always the case. The line between straight other-initiation of repair and OIR-derived actions can be blurry and participants in conversation sometimes respond to more than one action in the prior turn.

5.1 Other uses of the *ha* interjection in Icelandic

We have previously seen that the interjection *ha* in Icelandic can function as a display of surprise (see Extract 13), besides being used in open OIR. The Icelandic corpus contains other instances of *ha* that suggest the interjection is even more flexible in terms of the practices in which it is used. Extract 17 presents an example where the interjection is the only aspect resembling an OIR sequence (hence there is no marking of T-1, T0, T+1). The conversation takes place at a party; it has emerged that the beer glasses are dusty. In line 1, the hostess (Hanna) reveals that since she got pregnant she hasn't used them in a while. In line 2, Party-goer Kristján indirectly asks whether her husband Jón hasn't been using the beer glasses, i.e., whether he hasn't been "doing his job" in terms of drinking:

Extract 17: Party_452890

- 1 Hanna þau voru alltaf mikið notuð (.) svo varð ég ófrísk
they were always a lot used then became I pregnant
they were always used a lot, then I got pregnant
- 2 Kristján er Jón ekki að standa sig
is Jón not to do-well
is Jón not doing his job
- 3 (0.9) ((Kristján stands up and starts to walk outside of the living room))
- 4 Hanna ha hann er ekki mikill glasamaður
ha he is not big glass-man
huh he is not so much into glasses
- 5 (0.8) ((Kristján has almost left the living room))
- 6 Kristján () er það (.) ekki (.) ekki að hann drekki ekki
((unclear)) is that not not that he drinks not
((unclear)) is that so, not that he doesn't drink
- 7 Hanna nei (0.4) nei alls ekki hið síðarnefnda ((laughs))
no no totally not the latter
no, no totally not the latter
- 8 Kristján ((laughs))

Hanna responds to Kristján's question, explaining that her husband is not so much into glasses, implying that he prefers drinking his beer straight from the can. Indeed, Hanna later confirms that the reason the beer glasses are dusty is not because her husband doesn't drink. Hanna's response in line 4 is prefaced with *ha*. There is no pause between the interjection and the rest of the turn. Hanna goes immediately ahead with a response following the interjection, suggesting that there is no real problem of hearing or understanding.

There are two instances of this practice in the Icelandic corpus. In both cases it is used in a response to a question with a potential to be seen as quite sensitive. Indeed, Kristján's question whether Hanna's husband isn't doing his job can be seen as a tease. Although the context is non-serious (involving beer drinking), the turn is delivered in a deadpan way, inviting a more serious interpretation. As in the prior example of a tease (Extract 16), Hanna's response includes a po-faced account for why the beer glasses are dusty, thereby orienting to the serious aspect of Kristján's question. One possibility is that *ha*-prefaced responses are used when the prior turn is inapposite in some way, for instance when following a tease. Turn-initial response particles can be used to resist the constraints or agenda of a preceding question (see, for instance, Heritage 1998; Kim 2014). The use of the interjection as a response particle following inapposite questions may have come about through the questioning nature of *ha*. However, a bigger corpus is needed to determine the precise sequential and interactional environments in which *ha*-prefaced responses occur and what their functional significance is.

Extract 18 below presents another example of a *ha*-prefaced response. In this case *ha* is used as a preface to a restricted repair initiation. A woman (Guðný) describes to other friends at a party how upset

she was when her partner told her he wanted a second child soon.

Extract 18: Party_1767460

1	Guðný	ég endaði á að fara á megafyllerí tvö hérna (.) tvær helgar í röð I ended up to go on major-drinking-binge two here two weekends in row <i>I ended up going on a huge drinking binge two like (.) two weekends in a row</i>	T-1
2	Guðný	og þetta sló mig algjörlega út af laginu and this hit me completely out of balance-the <i>and it threw me completely off</i>	
3	Guðný	og ég fékk svona þunglyndiskast í hálf tveggja árum eftir þetta and I got like depression-episode for half year after this <i>and I got like depression for half a year after it</i>	
4	Jón	ha varstu ólétt bara á einhverju megafyllerí huh became-you pregnant just on some major-drinking-binge <i>huh did you get pregnant just during some huge drinking binge</i>	T0
5	Guðný	((laughs))	
6	Hanna	no ((laughs))	T+1

Jón misunderstands Guðný's story and when initiating repair (line 4) he uses the interjection *ha*, immediately followed by a question seeking confirmation. Since Guðný is busy laughing, Hanna disconfirms Jón's understanding in line 6. Thus in contrast to previous extracts where another action is being performed, this example does include a repair solution (T+1). Later on in the sequence, Guðný clarifies that she went on the drinking binge *because* her boyfriend wanted another baby. As in Extract 17, the interjection and the question in line 4 are delivered as one unit, as there is no pause between these elements. This usage demonstrates that the Icelandic *ha*-interjection can combine with other items in restricted OIR. However, more cases of this practice are needed to determine whether its function is mainly to initiate repair, or whether it acts as a response particle with added meaning, such as displaying surprise.

The examples of *ha*-prefaced restricted OIR and *ha*-prefaced response in Icelandic demonstrate that the interjection has a rich usage in Icelandic that extends beyond open other-initiation of repair. It has been noted that the interjection *huh* in English can also be used in other contexts than open OIR, for instance to pursue a response (Schegloff 1997). There are without doubt more uses of *ha* in Icelandic conversation that were not captured in the current corpus, including pursuits of response.

6 Conclusions

Addressing comprehension problems in conversation is far from being simply a matter of uttering *huh*. From the perspective of the speaker, there is a large range of formats to choose from, each with specific affordances and constraints. From the perspective of the listener, knowing the inventory of OIR formats is not enough; factors such as the sequential environment and prosody have to be taken into account for the correct interpretation. The study of other-initiated repair thus brings attention to the complexity and systematicity of conversational interaction.

This article contributes to the limited study of conversational structure in Icelandic by providing an overview of other-initiated repair in the language. All major types of open and restricted repair initiators, as defined in the comparative project, were found in the corpus. The Icelandic system for other-initiation of repair has two distinctive features. This study confirmed pilot findings (based on a smaller sample) that the *ha* interjection used in open OIR has falling pitch (Enfield et al. 2013), in contrast to most other languages discussed in this special issue. Moreover, falling pitch was found in all other cases of open OIR, i.e., in the question-word strategy as well, in addition to many restricted repair initiators. These results extend prior reports from the comparative project, which were restricted to the interjection strategy (Dingemanse,

Torreira, and Enfield 2013; Enfield et al. 2013). Given that falling intonation is common in both content questions and polar questions in Icelandic (Dehé 2009; Árnason 2011), this intonation contour fits well with the querying nature of other-initiated repair.

Secondly, Icelandic differs from other languages surveyed in this special issue in that the question word *hvað* “what” is not used in isolation in open OIR but always embedded in an idiomatic phrase (*hvað segirðu* “what do you say”). This constraint on the use of *hvað* in open other-initiated repair is likely due to the fact that the question word is inflected for case, gender and number, and thus is too specific in terms of possible referents to be used in open OIR (where the problem is by definition underspecified).

Despite these distinctive features, the repair practices in Icelandic are similar to those previously described for other languages such as English. For instance, speakers of Icelandic have the choice of using an interjection or a question-word strategy for open OIR, as has been noticed for English (Drew 1997; Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). Similarly, the devices used for restricted OIR in Icelandic – repetition, candidate understanding checks and content question words – are well known in the domain of repair (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977; Jefferson 1972). Section 5 illustrates that OIR practices can be used in social actions that are not aimed at solving comprehension problems, as previously noted for other languages (Schegloff 1997; Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2006; Selting 1996). In Icelandic, these actions include displaying surprise, teasing and challenging prior talk. A closer comparison to other languages surveyed in this special issue – from Siwu in Ghana to Chapalaa in Ecuador – reveals remarkable similarities in other-initiated repair despite differences in morphosyntactic makeup and the interactional environment (see Dingemanse and Enfield 2015). These commonalities in repair practices highlight that universal tendencies in conversational interaction can surface at the linguistic level, calling for a new “universal grammar” of language use.

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