

DISCOURSE PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTICLES *NO* AND *NU* IN IŽVA KOMI

Eda-Riin Tuuling

University of Tartu, EE

eda-riin.tuuling@ut.ee

Abstract: This research focuses on the pragmatic functions of the discourse particles *no* and *nu* in the Ižva dialect of the Komi language. The study is based on contemporary spoken-language material. *No* and *nu* appear to carry the same functions, with the exception of the confirming stand-alone use, which is restricted to *no*. The distribution between the two forms is speaker-based, with *no* being more common for most speakers. Syntactically, *no* and *nu* occur in pre-clausal, clause-internal, and stand-alone positions. The functions are described for dialogic contexts, distinguishing between clauses beginning initiative and responsive turns, as well as for monologic contexts, where the particles preface clauses that do not initiate a turn. In addition, stand-alone use – that is, instances where the particle constitutes a turn on its own – and clause-internal use are examined. The observed functions include urging, topic continuity, shared knowledge, transitions, discrepancy, affiliation, hesitation, and self-repair.

Keywords: corpus study, discourse markers, Izhma/Ižva Komi, Permic languages, pragmatics

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1. Introduction

When looking at the literature about the *NU/NÄ* particles in Komi, we get some conflicting information, as most of it mentions only the form *no*. The chapter on particles in the Komi grammar by Bubrix (1949: 194) has an example sentence (1), which is translated into Russian with the particle *nu*.

- (1) *No inö kuta mödyšödž viččyšny.*

‘**Nu**, ladno, stanu do drugogo raza ždat.’ (‘**NO**, okay, I will wait until next time.’).

Lytkin (1955: 277) and Podorova (1954: 7) mention *no* as a focus particle (*vydelitel'nyje časticy* in Russian) and also translate the examples into Russian with *nu*. In a recent Komi-Russian dictionary (Beznosikova, Ajbabina & Kosnyreva 2000), we find an entry for *no* with three meanings given:

- 1) Interjection used for prodding, Russian translations *no*, *nu*;
- 2) Particle, Russian translation *nu* (English 'well')
and, on a separate row, Russian *ladno*, *xorošo* (English 'okay');
- 3) Adversative conjunction, Russian translation *no* (English 'but').

While this Komi-Russian dictionary does not have an entry for *nu*, and the other sources do not mention it under particles, Majtinskaja (1982: 141) writes that *nu* in Komi is a modal particle borrowed from Russian, and the particle *no* is mentioned only for Finnish, Estonian, Karelian, and Livonian. For Komi, Majtinskaja (1982: 103) does mention *no* as an adversative conjunction borrowed from Russian.

This research focuses on the Ižva² dialect of Komi as represented in an available video corpus (Blokland et al. 2016) rich in contemporary spoken language material. The Ižva dialect is spoken in the Russian Federation in the northern Komi Republic and in diasporas in the Yamalo-Nenets, Khanty-Mansi and Nenets Autonomous Okrug and in the Murmansk Oblast (Saxarova & Sel'kov 1976: 3). The main contact languages for the Ižva Komi dialect have been, as for other Komi dialects, Russian, but also Nenets (Saxarova & Sel'kov 1976). When comparing it to other Komi dialects and the literary language, Leinonen (2009: 309) writes that “the Ižma dialect has been traditionally more in contact with Russian than the others”. When it comes to the *no* vs *nu* question, the Ižva dialect description by Saxarova and Sel'kov (1976: 114) also mentions only *no*, describing it as a focus particle. However, when examining the Ižva Komi video corpus, we can also find the form *nu* used in many of the same functions as the particle *no*.

The issue of *no* versus *nu* also arises in some other Finno-Ugric languages. While the literary languages of Estonian and Finnish have only *no* (Keevallik 2016; Sorjonen & Vepsäläinen 2016), both *no* and *nu* have been attested in Karelian (see entries for *no(h)* and *nu(h)* in

1 English translations are not provided in the dictionary and are added by me in this paper.

2 In this paper I use the Komi name *Ižva* instead of Russian *Izhma*.

Kotimaisten kielten keskus 2009), Livonian (Tomingas 2022), Ingrian (Markus 2024), Seto (Todesk 2025), Kamas (Klumpp 2026; Zubova et al. 2023) and Selkup (Teptiuk 2026; Zubova et al. 2023). While *no* is considered to be an original Finnic word (Sorjonen & Vepsäläinen 2016: 243), *nu* is thought to be a borrowing from Latvian, in the case of Livonian, or Russian, in the case of Ingrian, Kamas and Selkup. Seto might have been influenced by both (Todesk 2025: 242).

Be it *no* or *nu*, the previous literature does not delve deeply into their functions in Komi, describing them only as (focus or modal) particles. No corpus study has been done on these particles in Komi. In addition to the previously mentioned studies on *no* and *nu* in Finno-Ugric languages, their discourse pragmatic functions in some other European languages have been well described in the volume “NU / NÅ: A Family of Discourse Markers Across the Languages of Europe and Beyond” (Auer & Maschler 2016b), including Russian, the main contact language for Komi (Bolden 2016); see also (Bolden 2018; Kuosmanen & Multisilta 1999). The aim of this study is to provide a similar description of pragmatic functions of *no* and *nu* in contemporary spoken Ižva Komi.

2. Data and method

The data for this study comes from the Ižva Komi video corpus (Blokland et al. 2016). The corpus consists of 55 recordings, most of them being semi-structured interviews carried out between 2014 and 2016 with and by native Ižva dialect speakers.³ Some of the interviews feature a non-native interviewer whose utterances were not collected. In addition, some interviews had people not participating in the interview chiming in in Russian – those utterances were also not collected. The corpus also features some performances and workshops recorded in the same timeframe and some older archive materials. Most of the recordings have a Russian translation, and for some, an English translation is

3 One of the recordings features an interviewee whose place of origin borders the Ižva and Upper-Vychegda dialect areas and the recording is marked for both dialects. That recording was not selected for analysis.

also provided. Of the 55 recordings, 23 interviews conducted between 2014 and 2016 were selected for analysis. The selection criteria were:

- 1) interviews made between 2014 and 2016 to focus on contemporary spoken Ižva Komi;
- 2) must feature competent native Ižva dialect speakers to provide a stable input regarding language knowledge;
- 3) must feature a Russian translation to support my understanding of the text;
- 4) must have basic metadata on speakers to control for sociolinguistic variables;
- 5) must be over five minutes long to provide sufficient amount of speech from different speakers; and
- 6) must feature video to better understand pronunciation and affect.

The 23 selected recordings amounted to 13 hours 58 minutes and 11 seconds of material and featured 27 speakers, 11 male and 16 female, born between 1929 and 1996. All Ižva Komi diasporas were represented.

All utterances spoken by native Ižva speakers containing *no* and *nu* that appeared in the transcription, or were additionally heard when listening to the recordings, were collected, while also noting the recording they appeared in, the speaker who produced them, and their timecode in the corpus. Some utterances where the vowel was elongated were marked with two vowels in the transcription but were still collected under *no* or *nu* (or ambiguous) as the transcription was not consistent in marking vowel length. Vowel length was later analysed separately for all instances left after the exclusion criteria.

The collected utterances amounted to 2094 instances. Out of these, 278 were identified as the adversative-conjunction *no* and thus left out of the analysis. In some instances, it was hard to determine if a *no* functioned as an adversative conjunction or a discourse particle. For example (2): the topic is people with special healing powers and the interviewee concludes that there are such people and adds that nowadays there are fewer of them. *No* is translated as an adversative conjunction in both the Russian and English translation, but in my opinion, it could also be the discourse particle marking that the speaker is clarifying his statement or backtracking via softening.

- (2) videocorpora.ru/en/node/136 AFX (00:07:37 – 00:07:41)
Ijymes' setšemjas. No eni etšadžyk nin köňešne.
 be:PL such:PL PTCL now few:AUG already PTCL.EPI
 'There are such. **NO** nowadays less already, of course.' / 'There are such.
But nowadays less already, of course.'

There were also cases where the interpretation differed in the Russian and English translation. Altogether, I marked 201 of the analysed instances as being ambivalent or disagreeable compared to the translation.

For recordings where a Komi *no* was more fitting to be interpreted as a discourse particle but translated as *no* 'but' in Russian, another explanation could be that in the Russian spoken by the Komi-Russian bilingual people who have made the translations, *no* is used as a discourse particle parallelly with *nu*, as seems to be the case in Komi. Such a shift has been described for Ingrian by Markus (2024).

214 examples were left out of the analysis for

- 1) appearing in a code-switching context, meaning the speaker had shifted to Russian for a full utterance, as in (3), or
- 2) being interrupted by the other speaker and thus hard to functionally label, as in (4), or
- 3) appearing in the transcription but not being heard well or at all.

- (3) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/171> (00:27:08 – 00:27:16)
 MSF: *I sien esten ozyrdžyka jözys*
 and because here rich:AUG:ADV people:3SG
olisny da?
 live:PST:3PL yes
 'And that's why here people lived more prosperously, yes?'
 AJT: *Nu⁴ vyživali[,]* *esten setšemys abu*
 PTCL survive:PST:PL(Ru.) here such:3SG NEG
völema med kodke tšyg kulis.
 be:PST2.3SG COMP someone hunger die:PST:3SG
 'NU they survived, here it was not so that someone died of hunger.'

4 Transcribed as *no* in the corpus.

- (4) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/130> (00:27:00 – 00:27:03)

MSF: *No* *vot* *sies* *ee* *zejdžyk*
 PTCL PTCL.DEM DEM.ACC FILL lot:AUG
 rasskažite *kudž* *ne* [...]
 tell:IMP:PL(Ru.) how PTCL
 ‘NO VOT, about that tell us more, how did you [...]’
 MPČ: *No* *sie* [...]
 PTCL DEM
 ‘NO that [...]’
 MSF: [...] *kudž* *ne* *tödmašinnyd?*
 how PTCL meet:PST:3PL
 ‘[...] how did you meet?’

This left 1602 instances where *no* or *nu* was used as a discourse particle. In 290 of these, the particles were used as part of a collocation like *no/nu vot*, *no/nu da*, etc. The functional analysis of the collocations was outside the scope of this article. Lytkin (1955: 284–285) describes them under concessive particles, saying that they can introduce a new topic, mark the change of the topic, the unexpectedness of the situation, emphasise attitude and so on. He adds that they are more common in spoken language and often accompanied by gestures and a change in intonation.

The number of instances left was thus 1312. In some instances, the distinction between *no* and *nu* was left ambiguous to my ear. The corpus transcription, unfortunately, was also unreliable at times with cases of a clear *nu* being uttered when the transcription said *no* and vice versa. I disagreed with the corpus transcription in 133 cases and in 29 cases the particle was left out of the transcription altogether. In the end, 920 *no* forms were considered, 241 *nu*, and 151 remained ambiguous, marked as *nV*. The latter was mostly because the vowel was reduced or because external factors made the vowel difficult to hear – such as poor recording quality or overlapping speech. Pinpointing the vowel quality was harder with some speakers than with others. In some instances, the particles could also be interpreted as *nõ*, *na* or *nou*. Those instances were still categorised as *no*, *nu* or *nV*, depending on which sound they come phonetically closest to.

With ambiguous cases making up a quite large part of the data and clear cases of *no* and *nu* appearing mostly in the same syntactic positions and carrying the same functions, analysing differences in the use

of *no* and *nu* is not the focus of this paper, but will be discussed briefly in Section 3. Further investigation is needed to see if there might be any differences in their distribution. As for other Uralic languages where *no* and *nu* co-exist, Markus (2024: 181) and Todesk (2025: 276) consider them to be phonetic variants of the same particle in Ingrian and Seto, respectively, and Tomingas (2022: 102–103) notes them having similar functions in Livonian.

The 1327 instances of *no*, *nu* and the ambiguous form, labelled *nV*, were then analysed for the following properties:

- 1) vowel length of the particle – short, medium, long;
- 2) the type of the clause they modify;
- 3) their syntactic position relative to the clause;
- 4) if they appear in a dialogue or monologue context, and in which turn;
- 5) if the particle is followed by a pause – yes, no, brief pause (around 200 to 300 msec);
- 6) what pragmatic function they carry.

This paper focuses on the last point listed – describing the pragmatic functions of *no* and *nu* (and *nV*) in Ižva Komi, with prosodic patterns described where they emerge. Many previous studies (Auer & Maschler 2016b; Markus 2024; Todesk 2025) on the NU/NĀ particles have described their functions using the conversation analytic (Schegloff 2007) and interactional linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2017) framework and the same approach will be followed here.

3. Distribution and speaker-difference

When examining potential differences between *no* and *nu*, I considered both their structural (and therefore functional – see Chapter 4 for the functional analysis) distribution and their distribution across speakers.

The particles were sorted with respect to their position regarding the clause and the turn. Syntactically, the particles *no/nu/nV* appear in pre-clausal or clause-internal position in my dataset. They can also form a turn on their own, referred to as the stand-alone position in Auer & Maschler (2016a: 10).

Pre-clausal particles can be turn-initial or turn-internal. Turn-initial use prefaces a turn in a conversation which, in turn, can be analysed for its sequential positioning – whether the turn is initiative or responsive (Schegloff 2007; Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2017). The label turn-internal is used when the pre-clausal particle modifies any clauses following the initial one, including in narratives and monologues. When the particle appears clause internally, no distinction regarding turn is made. Figure 1 gives an overview of the syntactic distribution in my dataset.

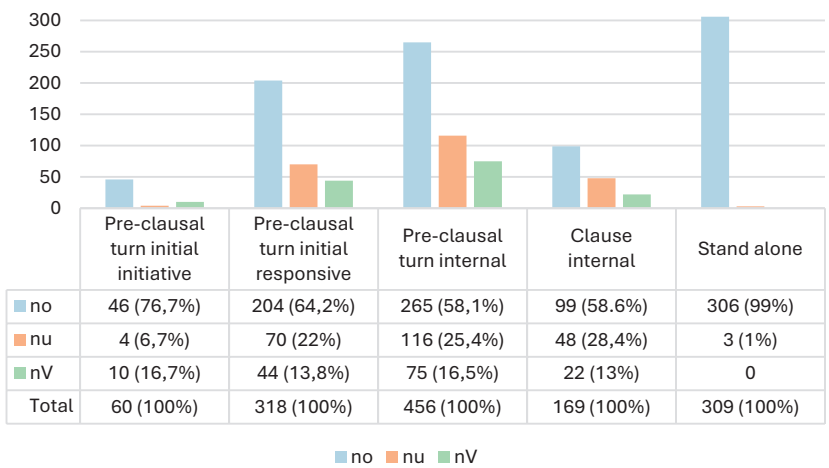


Figure 1. *no/nu/nV* distribution by turn and position therein.

From Figure 1, we can see that both *no* and *nu* (and *nV*) were used in pre-clausal turn-initial responsive position, in pre-clausal turn-internal position, and in clause-internal position. A deviation can be seen in pre-clausal turn-initial initiative use position, but this can be explained by the nature of the data: initiative sequences were mostly produced by a *no*-dominant interviewer. However, the stand-alone use shows a more significant difference in usage patterns, with only one percent of the forms being *nu*. Section 4.4 provides an overview of the stand-alone use functions, with confirming/affirming being the most frequent function. The three *nu* tokens under stand-alone use do not fall under that function but are instead emphatic or urging. From Figure 1, we can conclude that no structural difference between *no* and *nu* emerges from this data, except for the stand-alone position.

As a *no*-dominant interviewer was already mentioned, it is now time to look at the speaker distribution. Because the affirming/confirming stand-alone function is represented only by *no*, the statistics in Figure 2 exclude that use in order to provide a more balanced overview of the speaker distribution of *no* and *nu*, based solely on the functions in which both appear. Figure 2 provides an overview of the variants – *no*, *nu* and ambivalent *nV* – used by each speaker. The figure is ordered by age, and each speaker is marked by their initials, birth year, and location: **I** for the Ižva region in the Komi Republic; **S** for Syktyvkar, the capital of the Komi Republic, located in a non-Ižva area where several participants had moved for work or study; **KM** for the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug; **K** for the Kola Peninsula in the Murmansk Oblast; **YN** for the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug; and **N** for the Nenets Autonomous Okrug. If a speaker had moved from one region to another, this is marked with >.

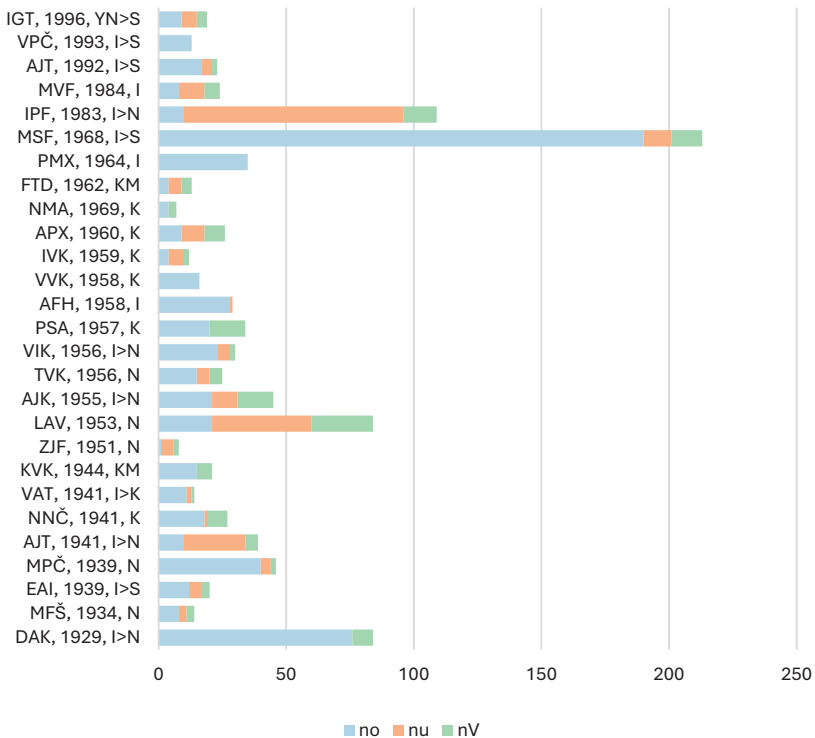


Figure 2. *no/nu/nV* distribution by speakers.

Looking at the figure, we can see that the distribution of *no* vs *nu* (vs *nV*) varies by speaker, with most speakers being *no*-dominant. There are speakers who use only *no*, but no speakers who use only *nu*. Both *no*-dominant and *nu*-dominant speakers can be found in different age groups. The usage patterns also vary within geographic locations. For speakers who use both particles, no functional distribution between *no* and *nu* was observed, apart from the use of *no* in the stand-alone confirming function. For two *no*-dominant speakers, AFX and VAT, instances of *nu* occurred after a codeswitch; that is, their previous utterance had been in Russian.

The potential difference in the distribution of *no* and *nu* should be looked at in more depth, taking into account more sociolinguistic variables, general Russian influence on the speaker's use of Komi, code-switching, etc.

4. Analysis of function

This chapter is organised by the structural position of the particle. The structural distribution and labels used have been introduced in Section 3. The examples given are titled with the URL leading to the recording in the corpus, and timecode of the presented utterances in the recording. Initials of the speaker are written either after the URL, in case of one speaker, or before the presented turns, in case of several speakers. The examples are transliterated using the scientific transliteration of Cyrillic and glossed in accordance with the Leipzig Glossing Rules. In Komi examples, the palatalisation of consonants is marked with *ʹ*/. Russian words with no Komi morphology are transliterated as they would be from Russian. An English translation made by me is provided, with the particle in question not translated. The examples are presented with the orthography they are written with in the corpus, however more serious mistranscriptions like incorrect word order, missing words, etc. have been corrected. If my interpretation of the particle – *no* vs *nu* vs *nV* – in any example differs from what is given in the corpus, it will be marked with a footnote. The corpus punctuation is not followed, pauses are marked with [,]. If the example starts or ends mid-sentence, it is preceded or followed, respectively, by (...). Interruptions are marked by [...] and unintelligible parts are marked by [X].

4.1. Turn initial, pre-clausal

4.1.1. Initiative turn

One of the most frequently attested functions of NU/NÅ according to Auer & Maschler (2016a: 12) is urging or prompting, in which case the particle prefaces an initiative turn (or appears as stand-alone). Due to the nature of the data – semi-structured interviews – this use, and initiative sequence use in general, are not very prominent but still occur. In (5), the interviewee recounts how people sometimes tell her to go and visit the tundra with *nu* functioning as a prefacing element in the imperative quote. Urging NU/NÅ has been described as expressing stance in some languages (Auer & Maschler 2016a: 14; Markus 2024: 166), but the Ižva Komi examples are too scarce to make the same claim.

- (5) videocorpora.ru/en/node/125 LAV (00:06:46 – 00:06:50)
Višttoolasnys taj: nu⁵ mun vetly (...)
 say:FUT:3PL PTCL.ENIM PTCL go.IMP.2SG go.IMP.2SG
 ‘They say: “NU go and visit ...”’

Keevallik (2013; 2016: 226) has argued that Estonian initiative-sequence-prefacing *no* can signal mutual knowledge and prior involvement between the speakers and that a topic is being continued over a longer stretch of time. In my Ižva data, the same function is illustrated in (6). The interviewer is describing how in Ižva region people always considered Naryan-Mar to be a rich region, illustrated by reported speech beginning with *no* – the particle here marks the mutual knowledge of Ižva people.

- (6) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/171> AJT (00:26:20 – 00:26:29)
No esten pyr vištalisny[,] *no mijan kudž*
 PTCL here always say:PST:3PL PTCL 1PL.GEN how
vištaleny[,] *Ižmayn[,]* ‘*No seten ved*
 say:PRS:3PL Ižma:INE PTCL there PTCL.ENIM
Narjan-Mar doras[,] *bura ozyra oleny.’*
 Naryan-Mar region:ILL3SG good:ADV rich:ADV live:PRS:3SG
 ‘NO here, it is always said, NO how at our place is said, in Ižva, “NO there in Naryan-Mar region they do live very prosperously, don’t they.”’

5 Transcribed as *no* in the corpus.

Bolden (2016: 57) also highlights the continuity aspect for Russian *nu*, writing that it can preface actions that are motivated by something that has preceded them. The same applies in Ižva Komi example (7) where the interviewer asks the interviewee to retell a story he once already told someone else. After discussing how the story should be told, the actual beginning of the narrative is prefaced with *no*. The particle is elongated and followed by a pause, which can additionally signal hesitation and the speaker's planning of how to launch into the story.

- (7) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/89> EAI (00:05:21 – 00:05:28)
No[,] *Vaška Mikulajys sija*[,] *Ödesdinyś tom mort*[,]
 PTCL Vaska Mikulaj:3SG 3SG Ödesdin:ELA young person
značit.
 that_is(Ru.)
 'NO, Vaska Mikulai, so he was a young man from Ödesdin.'

Marking transitions that at the same time look back on the preceding talk and start a new topic or action is common for NU/NĀ particles in general (Auer & Maschler 2016a: 15). One context it can be found in is moving into closing sections. In (8), *no* is used to mark transition to ending the interview by the interviewer. In my dataset, this kind of use was often preceded by a pause of the conversation dying down.

- (8) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/168> MSF (00:39:03 – 00:39:08)
No zej ydžyd spaśibo tjanly[,] *myj ee*
 PTCL very big thank_you 2PL:DAT COMP FILL
śornitinyd mijanked.
 talk:PST:2PL 1PL:COM
 'NO very big thank you to you that you chatted with us.'

A new *no/nu*-prefaced topic emerging after a pause is also illustrated in (9), where, when the previous topic is finished, the interviewee, after a moment of silence, asks what else the interviewers are going to ask. Initiative sequence questions prefaced by *no/nu* carry both an urging or prompting function and a connection to the preceding talk or situation.

- (9) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/134> PMX (00:22:08 – 00:22:10)
No myj nōšta jualannyd?
 PTCL what more ask:PRS.2PL
 'NO what else are you going to ask?'

In several instances, the aim of *no/nu* prefaced initiative sequence questions in my data is to follow up or clarify, prompt the other speaker to elaborate. In (10), the interviewer asks a question and after receiving a laconic confirmation, follows up with another question to encourage the interviewee to elaborate on it.

- (10) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/90> (00:24:55 – 00:25:01)
- MSF: *To est' ti petinnyd veres saas[,]*
 that_is(Ru.) 2PL go_out:PST:2PL husband behind.ILL3SG
ee[,] Karp kolxozas kyten jaranjas tol'ko?
 FILL Karp kolkhoz:ILL3SG where Nenets:PL only(Ru.)
 'That is, you married into Karp kolkhoz where there were only
 Nenets people?'
- DAK: *Aha.*
mhm
 'Yes.'
- MSF: *No i kutšema?*
 PTCL and how
 'NO and how was it?'

4.1.2. Responsive turn

Responsive turns in Ižva Komi that are prefaced by *no/nu* mostly signal that the following will not be quite the preferred response. This function is attested in a variety of languages discussed in Auer and Maschler (2016a: 26) and, according to Bolden (2016: 56), it is also among the main functions of *nu* in Russian. Bolden (2018) has described how in Russian *nu*-prefaced responses to questions may signal that the upcoming answer is non-straightforward, non-conforming with the requirement set by the first speaker or, when confirming, convey an epistemic incongruency. Epistemic incongruency can be observed also in the stand-alone confirming function (see Section 4.4).

In my dataset, these responses usually follow an interrogative turn. *No/nu* might be either short or elongated to varying degrees, and a pause may or may not follow it. Cases in which the particle is elongated and/or followed by a pause may also signal hesitation or formulation problems.

One type of non-confirming answers are responses that operate on the question's terms. For polar questions, it means not simply confirming or disconfirming the proposition presented, and for content questions, not

being fully compatible with the question form (Bolden 2018: 30, 39). Such examples can also be found in Izva Komi. For instance, in (11), when asked if the reindeer herds were large, the interviewee provides a number instead of confirming the proposition.

- (11) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/135> (00:17:04 – 00:17:08)

MSF: *I ydžyd stadajasys völiny?*
 and big herd:PL:3SG be:PST:3PL
 ‘And were the herds big?’
 NNČ: *NV⁶ tysjač kuim da vyytidžyk.*
 PTCL thousand(Ru.) three and high:AUG
 ‘NV about three thousand and more (heads).’

Example (12) displays this in response to a content question. Instead of giving a number as an answer, the interviewee starts listing languages and how well he speaks them.

- (12) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/87> (00:01:40 – 00:01:52)

VPČ: *A una kyyjas[,]* *kymyn kyy*
 but many language:PL how_many language
tödan?
 know:PRS.2SG
 ‘But how many, how many languages do you know?’
 AJT: *No[,]* *pože vištoony me[,]* *komiys da*
 PTCL may:PRS.3SG say:INF 1SG Komi:ELA and
ročys ötdor šornita[,] *angliškejen*
 Russian:ELA besides speak:PRS.1SG English:INS
burdžyka[,] *ša neuna[,]* *ee[,]*
 good:AUG:ADV then not_many FILL
korejskej kylene[,] *da[,]* *nemetskejen.*
 Korean language:INS and German:INS
 ‘NO, one can say that besides Komi and Russian, I speak English quite well, then a little Korean and German.’

Another type of non-confirming answer is one that problematises the presuppositions of the question (Bolden 2018: 39). In (13) the interviewer asks whether the large house being discussed belonged to the interviewee’s grandmother or great-grandmother. The interviewee finds

6 Transcribed as *nu* in the corpus.

the presupposition – that the entire house belonged to a single person – problematic since the house was divided into two halves. Bolden (2018: 41–42) notes that in Russian, *nu*-prefaced responses to such questions may be formulated in a way that suggests that the problematic nature of the presupposition should already be known to the questioner, for instance, through the use of epistemic particles. In (13) we can also see the Komi enimitive particle *ved* (< Ru. *ved*‘) used. Enimitive is a label used for marking uncontroversial information (see Panov 2020; Zubova et al. 2022).

(13) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/126> (00:42:49 – 00:42:59)

- MSF: *Vot sya kerkays sylen?*
 PTCL.DEM DEM house:3SG 3SG.GEN
 ‘That house is her’s?’
- IPF: *A vot sies og kuž vištoony.*
 but PTCL.DEM DEM:ACC NEG.PRS:1SG can.CNG say:INF
 ‘But that I cannot tell.’
- MSF: *Il’i babydlen?*
 or(Ru.) grandmother:2SG:GEN
 ‘Or your grandmother’s?’
- IPF: *Kodlen?*
 who:GEN
 ‘Whose?’
- MSF: *Il’i tenad babydlen sya kerkays,*
 or(Ru.) 2SG.GEN grandmother:2SG:GEN DEM house:3SG
ydžydys taj?
 big:3SG PTCL.ENIM
 ‘Or is that house your grandmother’s, the big one?’
- IPF: *Nu sya[,] ydžyd kerkays ved kyk*
 PTCL DEM big house:3SG PTCL.ENIM two
pölevina sajyn.
 side POSTP
 ‘NU that big house is divided into two, as you know.’

The final non-confirming type also observed in the Ižva data are responses signalling that the speaker deems the question unanswerable (Bolden 2018: 44). In this kind of answer, the speaker might claim not to know the answer, as in (14), or signal that the question cannot be answered.

- (14)
- <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/149>
- (00:55:36 – 00:55:46)

MSF: *Myj sya šušeny=to[,]* *kodjas ušaleny?*
 what DEM to_be_called:INF=CNTR who:PL fall:PRS:3PL
 ‘What are those called, that fall down?’

VIK: *No me og tōd kudž sya*
 PTCL 1SG NEG.PRS:1SG know.CNG how DEM
šušeny.
 to_be_called:INF
 ‘NO I do not know how they are called.’

As mentioned, in Russian, a type-confirming answer beginning with *nu* might convey an epistemic incongruency – it signals that the information asked should already be known by the enquirer.⁷ In my Komi data I have labelled the same use as ‘obvious answers’. The answers may also contain epistemic particles, e.g., *kōněšne* ‘of course’ in (15).

- (15)
- <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/171>
- (00:29:17 – 00:29:25)

MSF: *A esten jōžys öö[,]* *no vot[,]* *kutšema*
 but here people:3SG FILL PTCL PTCL.DEM how
ōni[,] *molod’ožys kol’čče ali oz*
 now young_people:3SG stay:PRS:3SG or NEG.PRS:3SG
kol’ččy?
 stay.CNG

‘But here the people, NO VOT, how is it now, the young people stay or don’t stay?’

AJT: *No mlad’ožys kōněšne munenys.*
 PTCL young_people:3SG PTCL.EPI go:PRS:3PL
 ‘NO the young people, of course, go away.’

No/nu prefaced responses to statements also often carry some misalignment with the previous turn. In (16) one of the interviewees claims, after talking about how in the old days steamboats navigated the Pechora River, that nothing travels on the Pechora River anymore. The other disagrees, pointing out that the ferryboat does. This statement is in

7 For answers to polar questions, *nu* is followed by affirmative word *da*: *nu da* (Bolden 2018: 50). *No/nu da* was also a frequent collocation in this data and while collocations were left out of the analysis, it can be assumed the Izva Komi collocation may carry a similar interpretation if it appears as a response to a polar question.

turn met with some disagreement as the first interviewee points out that while a ferryboat does, he was talking about steamboats.

(16) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/149> (00:49:12 – 00:49:24)

VIK: *Važen addžan[,] paroxodjas*
 long_time_ago see:PRS.2SG steam_boat(Ru.):PL
vetlisny[,] ōni paroxod ninem abu.
 navigate:PST:3PL now steam_boat(Ru.) nothing NEG
Pečora kužays ninem oz vetly.
 Pechora along:3SG nothing NEG.PRS:3SG navigate.CNG
 ‘In older days, you see, steamboats were going, now there is no
 single steamboat. Along the Pechora nothing navigates.’

AEK: *No parom vetle.*
 PTCL ferry(Ru.) navigate:PRS.3SG
 ‘**NO**⁸ a ferryboat navigates.’

VIK: *Nu⁹ parom toko vetle a*
 PTCL ferry(Ru.) only navigate:PRS.3SG but
važen Raketa vyle pukšan i
 long_time_ago Raketa onto sit:PRS.2SG and
gorte munan.
 home:ILL go:PRS.2SG
 ‘**NU**¹⁰ only a ferryboat navigates but in the old days you would sit
 on the Raketa and go home.’

The disagreement in *no/nu*-prefaced responses does not have to be complete; it may instead take the form of downplaying the prior statement. In (17), the interviewer comments that the interviewee’s house is full of children in the summer. The interviewee downplays this – perhaps out of modesty – while still indicating that they find the children’s presence interesting.

8 In the corpus, the *no* is translated as an adversative conjunction in both Russian and English, but I would argue the function is ambivalent in this case and could also stand for the particle use.

9 Transcribed as *no* in the corpus.

10 In the corpus, the particle is transcribed as *no* and translated as an adversative conjunction in both Russian and English, but I would argue this is a case of the particle use.

- (17) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/136> (00:02:55 – 00:03:01)
 VPČ: *Aleksej Filippovičlen kerkays tyr čel'ad'jasen.*
 Aleksei Filippovich:GEN house:3SG full children:PL:INS
 'Aleksei Filippov's house is full of children.'
 AFX: *No tyr ñe tyr a no[,] men inter'esne.*
 PTCL full NEG full but PTCL 1SG.DAT interesting
 'NO full, not full, but NO, for me it is interesting.'

Marking stance is also described for many languages in Auer and Maschler (2016a: 27). In (18), the interviewee is talking about how young herdsmen go to tundra in only a jacket as they do not have traditional working boots and *malitsas*¹¹. The interviewer asks how that is possible. The interviewee has a general negative opinion on the reindeer herding today and *no* used in the beginning of the answer seems to stress it.

- (18) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/147> (00:07:45 – 00:07:55)
 MSF: *A kudž sya öö[,] kör- köryn vetlyny*
 but how DEM FILL reindeer reindeer:INE go:INF
kör vidžny i[,] töbek i ma'iča
 reindeer look_after:INF and footwear and malitsa
(abu)?
 NEG
 'But how so – they go to the reindeer, go to herd them and – no footwear and malitsa?'
 APF: *No oz mödnys karny da[,]*
 PTCL NEG.PRS:3SG want.CNG make:INF PTCL
oz mödnys šyr-¹² etaa[,] vurny dak!
 NEG.PRS:3SG want.CNG sew(Ru.) FILL sew:INF PTCL
 'NO¹³ because they do not want to make, because they do not want to se-, this, sew!'

11 Traditional long fur coat of the Arctic people.

12 The Russian verb for sew would be *šit'*, in Komi pronunciation likely *šyt'*, but the *r* in *šyr* may come from blending with the Komi verb *vurny*.

13 In corpus, translated as the adversative conjunction (*no*) in Russian, but a particle (*well*) in English.

The stance can also be positive – emphatic and affiliating. In (19), the interviewee says she is the only one of her sisters still alive, the others have already passed away. She says she is seventy-five years old. The interviewer responds emphatically, encouraging her to continue living.

- (19) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/130> (00:05:43 – 00:05:49)
 MPČ: *Menum vot[,]* *semesjat pjat'.*
 1SG.DAT PTCL.DEM seventy(Ru.) five(Ru.)
 'I am seventy five.'
 MSF: *No oony da oony na tijanly kole.*
 PTCL live:INF and live:INF still 2PL:DAT need:PRS.3SG
 'NO you still need to live on.'

4.2. Turn internal, pre-clausal

No/nu can also preface clauses that do not start a turn. According to Auer and Maschler (2016a: 27), a typical function of NU/NÅ particles in this position is to mark some kind of transition, and the same can be observed in the Ižva Komi data. In (20), the interviewee is talking about her aunt and how they used to speak on the phone a lot. In her narrative, she describes getting an apartment and then moves on to the next episode – what her aunt told her afterwards, which is prefaced by *no*.

- (20) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/130> MPČ (00:21:48 – 00:21:54)
Menum kvartira esten šetisnys. No i
 1SG.DAT apartment(Ru.) here give:PST.3PL PTCL and
vištale: 'Te pukty pröstej t'elefonse.'
 say:PRS.3SG 2SG put.IMP.2SG simple phone:ACC3SG
 'I was given an apartment here. NO and she said: "Install a simple telephone."'

One context in which transitions indexed by a prefacing *no/nu* occur is summarizing clauses. In (21), the interviewee describes how she ran a kindergarten group for Komi children. She describes that they had an ensemble and what activities they engaged in and then summarizes these activities with a *no*-prefaced clause.

- (21) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/149> AEK (00:32:51 – 00:32:59)
- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| <i>I</i> | <i>ansambl'</i> | <i>daže[,]</i> | <i>mijan</i> | <i>völi</i> | <i>myjke[,]</i> |
| and | ensemble(Ru.) | even(Ru.) | 1PL.GEN | be:PST.3SG | FILL |
| <i>ñol'</i> | <i>aresajasys</i> | <i>šylyšny</i> | <i>myjke[,]</i> | <i>komi</i> | |
| four | year:ADJ:PL:3SG | sing:PST:3PL | FILL | Komi | |
| <i>pesñajas</i> | <i>da</i> | <i>komi</i> | <i>st'ixotvoreñijas.</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>komi</i> |
| song(Ru.):PL | and | Komi | poem(Ru.):PL | PTCL | Komi |
| <i>jazyk</i> | <i>koroče</i> | <i>naked[,]</i> | <i>znakomiti</i> | <i>komi</i> | |
| language(Ru.) | in_short(Ru.) | 3PL:COM | introduce:PST:1SG | Komi | |
| <i>kultura[,]</i> | <i>skazkajas</i> | <i>komi</i> | <i>skazkajas[,]</i> | | |
| culture | fairy_tale(Ru.):PL | Komi | fairy_tale(Ru.):PL | | |
| <i>stixotvoreñijas[,]</i> | <i>nu</i> | <i>pisatel'jasked</i> | <i>da</i> | | |
| poem(Ru.):PL | PTCL | writer(Ru.):PL:COM | and | | |
| <i>poet'jasked</i> | <i>znakomiti</i> | <i>da.</i> | | | |
| poet(Ru.):PL:COM | introduce:PST:1SG | and | | | |
- ‘And we even had an ensemble, this, the four-year-olds sang, this, Komi songs and Komi poems. **NO** with the Komi language, in short, I made them acquainted, Komi culture, stories – Komi stories, poems, **NU** and with writers and poets I made them acquainted.’

The *nu* used in (21) also represents another typical context in which a *no/nu* is used in narratives – when listing something. This context can also be related to the formulation trouble described in the next chapter as the particle, especially following a pause, signals that information the speaker was searching for has been found.

More often, the transition was not from one equivalent episode to another but from the main story to a clarification or background information. In (22), the interviewee says that his family was called the *Kal'uš* (Ižva word for ‘blacksmith’) family and immediately provides an explanation that his forefathers were blacksmiths, using the more common Russian word, and that is why his father’s side of the family was known as the Blacksmith family.

- (22) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/136> AFX (00:09:06 – 00:09:11)
- | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Kaľuš</i> | <i>čukar</i> | <i>mijan</i> | <i>lyd'dyše</i> | no |
| blacksmith | bunch | 1PL.GEN | be_regarded_as:PRS.3SG | PTCL |
| <i>sya</i> | <i>kuznětsjas</i> | | <i>völemaaš[,]</i> | <i>sidžse</i> |
| 3SG | blacksmith(Ru.):PL | be:2PST:PL | because | kin:1PL |
| <i>aješań</i> | <i>Kuzněč</i> | <i>röd</i> | <i>lyd'dyše.</i> | |
| father:1SG:EGRE | blacksmith | kin | be_regarded_as:PRS.3SG | |
- ‘We are considered the Blacksmith bunch, **NO** they were blacksmiths and that’s why our kin, starting from my father, is considered to be the Blacksmith kin.’

In some instances, the *no/nu* and following clarification were said with intonation and gestures suggesting that the elaboration should not come as a surprise to the listener. Similar undertones could sometimes be seen in clause-internal use, where *no/nu* was marking speech production problem (see example (26)). This relates to *no/nu* marking shared knowledge, first mentioned when describing initiative turns. In some instances, though, the clarification was prompted by the listener’s reaction that suggested some confusion, thus the *no/nu* prefaced clarification can be seen as a repair.¹⁴

No/nu-prefaced clarifications can also involve backtracking from what has already been stated and, in this way, signal some kind of discrepancy between the prior utterance and what is about to follow – just as when these particles preface responsive turns. In (23), the interviewee describes how her brother-in-law swore at her, but then backtracks, clarifying that it was not actual swearing but rather joking.

- (23) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/90> DAK (00:16:22 – 00:16:28)
- | | | | | | | |
|-------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| (...) | <i>maťtyše</i> | <i>me</i> | <i>vyłam.</i> | No | <i>balujte</i> | <i>oz</i> |
| | curse:PRS.3SG | 1SG | on.ILL1SG | PTCL | joke:PRS.3SG | NEG.PRS.3SG |
| | <i>sid'</i> | <i>maťtyš</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>balujte</i> | <i>mekede.</i> | |
| | so | curse.CNG | but | joke:PRS.3SG | 1SG:COM:1SG | |
- ‘... he curses at me. **NO** jokes, not so much curses but jokes with me.’

¹⁴ See Stivers (2012) on sequence expansion.

The transition marked by *no/nu*-prefacing can also involve moving from a sidetrack back to the main story. In (24), the interviewee is recounting how he joined the army on the same day he graduated from school. When the interviewer laughs in surprise, the interviewee digresses to reaffirm that the event indeed happened this way. He then returns to the story of joining the army, prefaced by *nu*. The pause and filler following *nu* (*i*) further signal some hesitation about how to proceed.

(24) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/126> IPF (00:03:22 – 00:03:46)

<i>Me</i>	<i>školase</i>	<i>pomali</i>	<i>i</i> [,]	<i>eščo</i>	<i>na</i>			
1SG	school:ACC3SG	end:PST.1SG	and	also(Ru.)	more			
<i>del'neja</i>	<i>setšem</i>	<i>völi</i>	<i>myj</i> [,]	<i>od'innadtsatej</i>				
nice	such	be:PST.3SG	COMP	eleven(Ru.):ORD				
<i>klassas</i>	<i>vypusknejys</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>provodyys</i>	<i>džik</i>				
grade:INE.3SG	graduation_party:3SG	and	send_off:3SG	exactly				
<i>öti</i>	<i>lune</i>	<i>völi.</i>	(...)	<i>Da</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>da.</i>
one	day:ILL	be:PST.3SG	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<i>Da</i>	<i>setšem</i>	<i>istorija</i>	<i>völi</i>	<i>aha.</i>	NU	<i>i</i> [,]	<i>etaa</i> [,]	
yes	such	story(Ru.)	be:PST.3SG	yes	PTCL	and	FILL	
<i>šuri</i>	<i>pograñičnej</i>	<i>vojskaa</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>eta</i> [,]				
end_up:PST.1SG	border_control	squad:ILL3SG	and	FILL				
<i>veledisny</i>	<i>syjažiste</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>všo</i>				
teach:PST.3PL	signalman:ILL	and	and	all				

‘I finished school and it was a good fit that the graduation of the 11th grade and the send-off to army were exactly on the same day.’
[Interviewer laughs, surprised.]
‘Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Yes, it happened so, yes. **NU** and, mm, I ended up in the border troops and, mm, was taught to be a signalman and that was it.’

In the Izva Komi data, transitions from the general to the more specific are more common. When it comes to other Finno-Ugric languages, same applies to Estonian, but in Finnish it is the opposite way around (Hennoste 2000: 1803).

In narratives, *no/nu* can also preface rhetorical questions, often signalling that the speaker is having trouble formulating an utterance, as in (25). Todesk (2025: 255–256) provides similar findings from Seto.

- (25) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/126> IPF (00:11:07 – 00:11:11)
Nu potomu čto nu kudž vištoony nu[,] kor
 PTCL because(Ru.) PTCL how say:INF PTCL when
dyr=se šornitan russkejnas (...)
 long=ACC3SG speak:PRS.2SG Russian:INS:3SG
 ‘NU, because, NU how to say, NU, when you have spoken Russian for
 a long time ...’

4.3. Clause-internal

Clause-internal *no/nu* often signals a problem in speech production and can be described as a filler. In their article on *nu* and *vot* in spoken Russian, Kuosmanen and Multisilta (1999: 51) write that *nu* (and *vot*) can mark two kinds of informational transitions – searching for information and finding the information sought. Many clause-internal instances of *no/nu* in the Ižva Komi data fit one of these uses. In a formulation-problem context, *no/nu* can be interpreted as self-urging, relating to the urging function described for initiative turn pre-clausal use (Auer & Maschler 2016a: 14).

When searching for information, *no/nu* is usually followed by a pause, and the particle may be elongated. Sometimes the speaker is searching for a specific word, and sometimes for a way to continue and formulate the utterance. In (26), the second *no* is slightly elongated and followed by a pause. During this pause, the interviewer also gestures to the interviewee, suggesting that although the interviewer is having trouble finding the word, both participants know which word is intended. The sentence contains numerous fillers, indicating that the speaker’s difficulty in formulating the question is more extensive.

- (26) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/130> MSF (00:41:51 – 00:42:06)
A mm vot öö mužikys öö šemjaas
 but FILL PTCL.DEM FILL man:3SG FILL family:INE.3SG
vot no tija[,] öö sešša[,] ajnyd
 PTCL.DEM PTCL 2PL.GEN FILL then father:2PL
sešša d’ednyd[,] öö uvažajtisny
 then grandfather:2PL FILL respect:PST:3PL
aššynys no[,] götyrjasnysse?
 REFL:ABL:3PL PTCL wife:PL:3PL:ACC3SG
 ‘But the men in the family, well yours, then your father, then your grand-
 father, did they respect their, NO, wives?’

When *no/nu* signals that the information sought has been found, it is usually not elongated and is not followed by a pause, at least not a long one. A pause is likely to precede it, however, along with fillers and other hesitation markers, such as elongation of the preceding word. Such examples include both the successful retrieval of a sought word and getting back on track after problems in sentence formulation. In (26), the first *no* marks the speaker finding their way after formulation problems illustrated by the fillers in the preceding speech. In (27), the interviewer gets stuck on how to formulate her thought, as signalled by a pause and an elongated filler.

- (27) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/166> MSF (00:13:06 – 00:13:08)
- | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <i>I</i> | <i>kutšem</i> | <i>körjases</i> | <i>börjeny</i> | <i>medlanne[,]</i> |
| and | which | reindeer:PL:ACC | select:PRS:3PL | so_that |
| <i>eem</i> | no | <i>vodže[,]</i> | <i>rödse</i> | <i>nuedny?</i> |
| FILL | PTCL | ahead | family:ACC.3SG | carry:INF |
- ‘And which reindeer are selected to, eem, **NO** continue carrying the family line?’

In some cases the information found is not so much a continuation of a thought but rather a concluding remark as illustrated in (28). The ending of the word preceding *no* is elongated, and there is a pause.

- (28) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/167> VAT (00:10:16 – 00:10:27)
- | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| <i>Starajtčam</i> | <i>kor[,]</i> | <i>ñimlunjas</i> | <i>korke</i> | <i>ke</i> |
| try:PRS.1PL | when | nameday:PL | when:INDEF | PTCL |
| <i>myjke</i> | <i>gažadžyka[,]</i> | <i>ee</i> | <i>noodedlynny</i> | <i>stavys</i> |
| FILL | fun:AUG:ADV | FILL | organize:INF | all:3SG |
| <i>gäkartam</i> | | | | |
| <i>i</i> | <i>kudžke[,]</i> | no | <i>starajtčam</i> | <i>bydčēmase</i> |
| and | somehow | PTCL | try:PRS.1PL | different:ACC3SG |
| | | | | do:INF |
- ‘We try to, when there is a nameday, to organise something more fun, we gather everyone and somehow, **NO** we try to do different things.’

Clause-internal *no/nu* can also signal self-correction or rephrasing. In these cases, a pause before or after is less likely to occur. In (29), *no* is used to mark a correction from a Russian verb to a Komi verb.

- (29) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/147> APF (00:13:48 – 00:13:51)

(...) *horays special'ne horays osta- no*
 bull:3SG specially bull:3SG be_left(Ru.) PTCL
kol'isnys (...)
 be_left:PST:3PL
 '... bulls, specifically bulls were *osta-* **NO** were left ...'

In a few instances, the clause internal *no/nu* was used as an intensifier. In (30), the interviewee is talking about differentiating between Komi and non-Komi people and gives an example of how he recognized a Komi person only by their face, stressing that the face looked absolutely Komi-like.

- (30) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/87> AJT (00:13:35 – 00:13:39)

(...) *nevažen avtobusyn muni[,]* *i vidžeda[,]*
 not_long_ago bus:INE go:PST.1SG and see:PRS.1SG
konduktorys
 conductor:3SG
 [X] *čužemys no komišys komi.*
 face:3SG PTCL Komi:ELA.3SG Komi
 '... not long ago I was riding the bus and saw – the conductor, [X]
 his/her face **NO** absolutely Komi like.'

4.4. Stand-alone

Cases in which *no/nu* form a turn on their own are referred to as stand-alone (Auer & Maschler 2016a: 10). Stand-alone use was very prominent in my dataset with most instances having a confirming function. In this function only *no* appears. The affirmative function is also described for Karelian *no* (see entry for *no(h)* in Kotimaisten kielten keskus 2009), Polish *no*, Romani *no* and Upper Saxonian German *nu* (Auer & Maschler 2016a: 19) and mentioned for Russian *nu* in a footnote by Bolden (2016: 53): "In some Russian dialects [...], stand-alone *nu* might be used more broadly, for example as a confirming response." (See also Klumpp 2026.)

In my Ižva data the affirmative function of *no* often appears in third sequential position and is reconfirming. The same pattern has been described for Polish (Weidner 2016: 121) and Upper Saxonian German (Auer 2016: 360). For Polish, Weidner (2016: 121) argues that

the affirming *no* also carries an epistemic stance, similar to the type-confirming *no/nu*-prefaced answers – it signals that the information affirmed in the answer is already-known. Given the reconfirming nature, same can be said about *Ižva Komi*. In (31), the interviewee says he has worked in reindeer herding for thirty years. The interviewer repeats it with surprise, and the interviewee reconfirms with a *no*. While short *no* tokens were more common, the affirming function also included examples of elongation.

(31) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/169> (00:00:48 – 00:00:51)

PSA: *Komyn vo.*
 thirty year
 ‘Thirty years.’
 MSF: *Komyn vo?*
 thirty year
 ‘Thirty years?’
 PSA: *No.*
 PTCL
 ‘NO.’

In many cases, the reconfirming question repeats what was already said, as in the previous example, but sometimes what is being confirmed is not explicitly stated and is instead implied, as in (32), where the topic is hunting dogs.

(32) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/147> (00:16:55 – 00:17:01)

APF: (...) *ydžydnas boštan da[,] sya kučas*
 big:INS.3SG take:PRS.2SG and 3SG start:FUT:3SG
pyššyny öttorje.
 run_away:INF constantly
 ‘... you take a grown one and it will constantly be running away.’
 MSF: *Voddža hōžainys dore?*
 previous master:3SG at:ILL
 ‘To the previous owner?’
 APF: *No.*
 PTCL
 ‘NO.’

While Auer and Maschler (2016a: 11) define the stand-alone use as being ‘unaccompanied by additional same speaker talk’, I have also included instances in which the particle is accompanied by the speaker repeating the part of the clause being confirmed, as in (33). Similarly, I have considered as stand-alone uses instances of *no/nu* where the same speaker continues talking after the particle, but the particle does not have scope over the following utterance.

(33) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/135> (00:12:35 – 00:12:37)

MSF: *To es' komi kylan šorhítinnyd?*
 that_means(Ru.) komi language:INS speak:PST:2PL
 ‘That means you spoke in the Komi language?’

NNČ: *No[,] komi.*
 PTCL komi
 ‘NO, komi.’

Also functioning as a marker of (re)confirmation, *no* was used with a ‘that’s what I said’ meaning, often occurring in third sequential position after the other speaker had reacted to the first turn with an ‘aha’ or ‘mhm’. In some cases, this use also carried undertones of conclusiveness or of urging the other speaker to continue. In (34), the interviewee is answering a question about how many children his parents have.

(34) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/169> (00:02:51 – 00:03:02)

MSF: *Tijan ee aj-mamnydlen[,] kymyn*
 2PL.GEN FILL father-mother:2PL:GEN how_many
völi čel'ad?
 be:PST3SG kids
 ‘How many kids did your parents have?’

PSA: *Mijan[,] kvajten völim.*
 1PL.GEN six:INS be:PST:1PL
 ‘There were six of us.’

MSF: *Ooo. Ydžyd šemja.*
 INTJ big family
 ‘Oh, a big family.’

PSA: *Vit zon da öt'ik nyy.*
 five boy and one girl
 ‘Five boys and one girl.’

MSF: *Aha.*
 aha
 ‘Aha.’
 PSA: *No.*
 PTCL
 ‘NO.’

Two recordings featured multiple interviewees; in both cases these are married couples. Stand-alone *no* was sometimes uttered by a speaker to support what their spouse had said. In (35), the husband is explaining how marriages are registered and even before he has finished, his statement is supported by a *no* from his wife.

- (35) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/149> (00:15:42 – 00:15:46)
 VIK: *Sel'sövetas* *munan* *dokumentse*
 village_council:ILL.3SG go:PRS.2SG document:ACC.3SG
 oformityštan da i všo.
 file:PRS.2SG yes and all
 ‘You go to the village council, file the paperwork and that’s all.’
 AEK: *No.*
 PTCL
 ‘NO.’

Sometimes the affirming *no* was reduplicated, often as a reaction to an explanation and sometimes overlapping with the explainer’s turn. It signals that the hearer understands the explanation and knows the information the other speaker is trying to convey, as in (36), where a village is discussed.

- (36) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/126> (00:17:30 – 00:17:43)
 IPF: *Sen oleny[,]* *pöšt'i stav tože komijas*
 there live:PRS:3PL almost all also Komi:PL
 oleny.
 live:PRS:3PL
 ‘Almost everyone living there is also Komi.’
 MSF: *Mhm.*
 mhm
 ‘Mhm.’

- IPF: *Komijas oleny potomu [...]*
 Komi:PL live:PRS:3PL because(Ru.)...
 ‘Komis live there, because ...’
- MSF: *Setće korke volemaas?*
 there:ILL when:INDEF move:2PST:PL
 ‘They moved there at one time?’
- IPF: *Da völema Šapkino[,] tödannyd?*
 yes be:2PST:3SG Šapkino know:PRS:2PL
 ‘Yes, there was Šapkino, do you know?’
- MSF: *Aa, no no no.*
 INTJ PTCL PTCL PTCL
 ‘Ah, **NO NO NO**.’

There were also instances where the affirming *no* was included in a string with other affirmative words. In (37), the speaker claims that there are at least 10 kilometres between two villages, even more if you count the end of the village. After a small pause he uses a string of affirmative words accompanied by nodding to confirm what he has just said.

- (37) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/136> AFX (00:24:57 – 00:25:05)
- A pomedžys gaške i undžyk na*
 but end:TERM:3SG PTCL.EPI PTCL.FOC a lot:AUG also
eščo. Da no sidž[,] obyčne d’ešat’kilometrovej
 more(Ru.) yes PTCL so usually ten_kilometer(Ru.):ORD
krosse[,] vojedeny da das kilometra.
 cross_country_race:ACC:3SG run:PRS:3PL yes ten kilometre
 ‘But till its the end [of the village] it maybe even more. Yes, **NO**¹⁵, so [it is]. Usually when they run a ten kilometre cross-country race [they run there], yes, ten kilometres.’

Tying into multiple previously discussed functions, *no* (and, by one speaker, *nu*) was also used to urge the other speaker to continue and in a way, affirm understanding. In (38), the interviewee does not initially follow a question asked by the interviewer, so the interviewer reformulates it, purposely leaving a pause and making a gesture towards the

15 Translated into Russian with the particle *nu*, while the affirmative function is usually translated with *da* ‘yes’.

interviewee to elicit feedback on whether they are following the line of thought. The *no* confirms the interviewee is following and urges the interviewer to continue to get to where they are leading with their question.

(38) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/124> (00:58:47 – 00:59:04)

MSF: *Artme myj int'ernatys vužjasse*
 appear:PRS.3SG COMP boarding_school:3SG root:PL:ACC.3SG
orede? I kyysse orede[,]
 cut_off:PRS.3SG and language:ACC.3SG cut_off:PRS.3SG
int'ernatas olygen?
 boarding_school:INE.3SG live:GER:INS
 ‘It appears so that the boarding school cuts off the roots? And the language is cut off, while living in a boarding school?’

MFŠ: *Myj?*
 what
 ‘What?’

MSF: [X] *oo, artme sidž myj[,] ee kor čel'ad'ys*
 FILL appear:PRS.3SG so COMP FILL when kids:3SG
zavod'iteny int'ernatas oony ...
 start(Ru.):PRS:3PL boarding_school:INE3SG live:INF ...
 ‘[X], it appears so that when the kids start to live in a boarding school ...’

MFŠ: *No.*
 PTCL
 ‘NO.’

MSF: *veledčyny[,] naja stavse vunedeny?*
 study:INF 3PL all:ACC.3SG forget:PRS:3PL
 ‘...start to study, they forget everything?’

As in pre-clausal position, both *no/nu* can also convey affective stance in the stand-alone position. In the languages covered in Auer and Maschler (2016a: 21, 23), affiliation and non-alignment are mentioned and both can be observed in Ižva Komi also. In (39), the interviewee is talking about a flood that washed away the whole village. The interviewer reacts with a sympathetic elongated *no*. The particle being elongated was, in general, more common in affective uses.

- (39) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/130> (00:15:51 – 00:15:57)

MPČ: *Vays* *zej* *ydžyd* *kor* *völi* *dak*
 water:3SG very big when be:PST.3SG PTCL
beregse[,] *žugededis* *sidž* *i*
 shore:ACC.3SG break:PST:3SG so and
smylo *vsju* *derevnju*.
 wash_away:PST:SG.N(Ru.) all:ACC(Ru.) village:ACC(Ru.)
 ‘When the water was very high, it broke the shore so and washed
 away the whole village.’

MSF: *No*.

PTCL

‘NO.’

In (40), the interview is coming to an end, and the interviewer says that they now have to take a photo of the interviewee. This is met with a long exclamative *no*, possibly conveying surprise and some hesitancy about the situation.

- (40) <http://videocorpora.ru/en/node/130> (00:55:37 – 00:55:43)

MSF: *Öni* *Tijante*[,] *eščo* *myjkesenta*
 now 2PL:ACC2PL also(Ru.) PH
fotografirujtasny [...]
 take_a_picture:FUT:3PL

‘Now you are also going to be, what-cha-call-it, photographed ...’

MPČ: *No!*

PTCL

‘NO!’

5. Conclusion

This paper has focused on the functions of the discourse particles *no* and *nu* in the Ižva Komi dialect. While *no* is better attested in the literature on Komi, a contemporary spoken-language corpus shows that both *no* and *nu* are used in today’s Ižva Komi. In some instances, it was hard to distinguish between the vowel used, resulting in a set of ambiguous tokens in this dataset. The ambiguous forms were included in the analysis and marked accordingly. Although *no* is more prevalent overall, *no* and *nu* seem to carry the same functions with only the stand-alone affirming or confirming function being limited to the form *no*. The

differences in the use of *no* and *nu* seem to be speaker-based, although no age or location-based patterns emerged.

Many of the functions observed correspond to those attested in other languages in the NU/NÅ family and in Russian, the most influential contact language for Komi. Here again, the confirming function stands out as an outlier, having been mentioned only for Karelian, Polish and Upper Saxonian German and, in a footnote, some Russian dialects.

One of the most prototypical functions of NU/NÅ particles is urging, which was also present in the Ižva Komi data, although it occurred relatively rarely due to the nature of the dataset. The urging element can also be seen in self-repairs, where the speaker is self-urging. In Ižva Komi stand-alone use, *no/nu* is sometimes used to signal that the speaker understands and wishes, i.e. urges, the other speaker to continue.

No/nu mark transitions in both dialogues and monologic contexts. In dialogues, it is seen prefacing transitioning toward the closing of a conversation. In monologic context, transitioning from the main story to a clarification or elaboration was the most common use. The transition could also be from the sidetrack back to the main story or just between two equal episodes. In formulation trouble informational transitions can be observed.

In initiative turns, prefacing *no/nu* can indicate topic continuity, i.e. that the next action is motivated by something that had preceded. This kind of continuity can also take place over a longer stretch of time. Topic continuity can also be linked to the shared knowledge of the speakers. Sometimes *no/nu* indexed shared knowledge in the sense of epistemic incongruency, where the *no/nu* was used to convey that the other speaker should already know something. This was seen in answers deemed obvious by the answerer and also when the confirming stand-alone *no* was used in third position to reconfirm.

Responsive turns pre-faced by *no/nu* or consisting of stand-alone *no/nu* often indicated discrepancy between what preceded and what was going to follow. For example, when questions were answered with somewhat problematic responses or statements were disagreed with or downplayed. At the same time, the particles could also convey affiliation and be used emphatically. In some instances, they were used to add stress to what was following.

Lastly, *no/nu* often signal production problems, functioning either as fillers or as markers indicating that the sought-after information had

been found. While this is most clearly observable in clause-internal position, clause-initial *no/nu*-s could also carry undertones of hesitation when other prosodic features like elongation and pauses were present. For example, conclusive clauses could follow thinking pauses and getting a bit off track.

While the functions of *no* and *nu* were in the focus of this paper, the potential factors in the distribution of the particles could be studied more extensively, taking into account also collocations. This paper has focused on Ižva dialect of Komi, but further research on other Komi dialects would also offer a larger picture on the use and distribution of these particles in Komi.

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Abbreviations

ACC – accusative, ADV – adverbial, AUG – augmentative, CNG – con-negative, CNG – contrast, COM – comitative, COMP – complementiser, DAT – dative, DEM – demonstrative pronoun, EGRE – egressive, ELA – relative, ENIM – enimitive, EPI – epistemic, FILL – filler, FOC – focus, FUT – future tense, GEN – genitive, GER – gerund, ILL – illative, IMP – imperative, INE – inessive, INF – infinitive, INS – instrumental, INTJ – interjection, N – neuter gender, NEG – negative, ORD – ordinal number, PH – placeholder, PL – plural, POST – postposition, PRS – present tense, PST – past tense, PST2 – 2nd past tense, PTCL – particle, (Ru.) – Russian word(s), SG – singular, TERM – terminative, 1 – 1st person, 2 – 2nd person, 3 – 3rd person, (.) – pause

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Kokkuvõte. Eda-Riin Tuuling: Partiklite *no* ja *nu* diskursuspragmatilised funktsioonid komi keele Ižva dialektis. Artikkel keskendub diskursuspartiklite *no* ja *nu* pragmaatilistele funktsioonidele komi keele Ižva murdes. Uurimus põhineb tänapäevasel suulise keele materjalil. *No* ja *nu* näivad kandvat samu funktsioone, erandiks vaid kinnitav funktsioon kui partikkel *no* moodustab omaette vooru. *No* ja *nu* jaotus on kõnelejapõhine ning enamik kõnelejaid kasutab vormi *no* rohkem. Süntaktiliselt võivad *no* ja *nu* esineda nii (osa)lause ees, sees kui ka moodustada omaette vooru. Funktsioone kirjeldatakse nii dialoogide kontekstis, eristades esi- ja järelliikme voore, kui ka monoloogide kontekstis, kus partiklid eelnevad (osa)lausele, mis ei alusta vooru. Veel vaadatakse partiklite kasutust osalause sees ning siis, kui partikkel moodustab omaette vooru. *No/nu* võivad komi keele Ižva murdes märkida kehutamist, teema jätkuvust, jagatud teadmisi, üleminekuid, vastuolusid, nõustumist, kõhklusi ja eneseparandusi.

Märksõnad: diskursusemarkerid, *izva/ižma*, komi keel, korpusuuring, pragmaatika