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CHAPTER 4

Remembering and understanding with *oh*-prefaced yes/no declaratives in Dutch¹

ABSTRACT

Shared understanding is at the heart of social interaction: it is demonstrated and maintained with every turn-at-talk. Still intersubjectivity can on occasion break down, and this can happen for a plethora of reasons. Using conversation analysis, this paper demonstrates three practices that participants in Dutch talk-in-interaction use to repair breakdowns of intersubjectivity. The first practice consists of an *oh ja*-prefaced declarative. With this practice an interactant conveys that s/he remembers here-and-now some information which s/he thereby treats as relevant for understanding the prior talk. The second practice consists of an *oh*-prefaced declarative, with which the speaker claims to now understand something s/he earlier did not understand or had misunderstood. Both practices are declarative yes/no-type initiating actions, meaning that confirmation is treated as the relevant next action. Both practices, however, do very distinct actions. With a remembering, an interactant claims independent epistemic access, whereas with doing understanding access is local, and inferred from and dependent on the co-interactant's talk. We compare

¹This chapter is a slightly modified version of a paper that was published as Seuren, L.M., Huiskes, M. & Koole, T. (2016) Remembering and understanding with *oh*-prefaced yes/no declaratives in Dutch. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 104, 180–192.

these two practices to *oh*-prefaced yes/no-type interrogatives. These too are used to address problems with intersubjectivity, but they claim instead that the prior talk by the interlocutor somehow contradicts the speakers' background assumptions.

Keywords: Conversation Analysis, Yes/no-type initiating actions, Epistemics, Repair, Intersubjectivity, Understanding

4.1 Knowing and understanding in interaction

As was argued by Sacks (1995, Volume II, p. 140) in his lectures, understanding is indispensable for social interaction: “if understanding isn’t there, then there’s nothing much going on.” But as Sacks also notes, this is not why understanding is of interest for researchers of social interaction. Instead, it is because participants in talk-in-interaction do “showing understanding”; that is, the interactants treat understanding as relevant for the ongoing talk.

This paper discusses three practices that interactants use in Dutch talk-in-interaction to address breakdowns of intersubjective understanding (see Heritage, 1984b; Sidnell, 2014). The focus is on two specific types of declarative yes/no-type initiating actions (YNDs). These are declarative utterances that address information to which the addressee has primary epistemic access and which therefore make confirmation relevant as a next action (G. Raymond, 2010a; Heritage, 2012a). In the first practice the YND is prefaced by *oh ja* (“oh yeah”/“oh that’s right”). With an *oh ja*-prefaced YND the speaker claims that s/he here-and-now remembers some information which s/he thereby treats as relevant for understanding the prior talk (cf. Betz & Golato, 2008; Emmertsen & Heinemann, 2010; Heritage, 1984a; Koivisto, 2013; Middleton & Edwards, 1990; Kasterpalu & Hennoste, 2016). These two turn-constructive units—the *oh ja* and the YND—constitute one turn at talk, one “major action” (Levinson, 2013). In the second practice the YND is prefaced by just *oh*. With an *oh*-prefaced YND an interactant both claims and demonstrates that s/he now understands (Heritage, 1984a; Koivisto, 2015b; Golato & Betz, 2008; Kasterpalu & Hennoste, 2016; Weidner, 2016). We compare these two practices with a third, very similar practice: an *oh*-prefaced yes/no-type interrogative (YNI) (G. Raymond, 2003). With an *oh*-prefaced YNI, a speaker also addresses a problem with intersubjectivity, and confirmation is also treated as a relevant next action. With *oh*-prefaced YNIs, however, the speaker conveys that his/her assumptions were in some way contradicted by the addressee.

The particular understanding that interactants achieve is typically not for-

mulated. Instead, by doing a next turn interactants displays how they understood a prior turn—for example, by doing an answer, a speaker displays his/her understanding of the prior turn as a question (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 728). After each turn-constructive unit (TCU) there is a transition relevance space (TRP) where the addressee of that TCU can become the next speaker (Sacks et al., 1974) and by not initiating repair at a TRP the addressee implicitly claims that the prior turn was unproblematic and thus that s/he has understood that prior turn (Robinson, 2014). This understanding can then be accepted or rejected in the third turn (Schegloff, 1992; see also Koole, 2015). Understanding thus to an extent takes place under the radar: as long as there is no evidence to the contrary, interactants continue to assume that they understand and are understood (Schutz, 1932/1967). This means that when interactants do understanding—that is, specifically demonstrate and not just claim that they understand—they do so for a reason: reaching an understanding was problematic (Lindwall & Lymer, 2011; Robinson, 2014)—that is, intersubjectivity had potentially or actually broken down (Schegloff, 1992).

The three practices discussed in this paper are used to address actual breakdowns of intersubjectivity. In all three practices, the change-of-state token *oh* (Heritage, 1984a) is combined with an additional TCU that conveys the specific change of state that has been realized.

The *oh ja*-prefaced YND is used to do now-remembering. We call this doing now-remembering as opposed to just doing remembering, because one of the crucial aspects of the practice we discuss, is that the interactant had forgotten information that s/he treats as relevant for understanding a prior turn (cf. Middleton & Edwards, 1990). As s/he now remembers, s/he also understands that prior action, and thus the interaction can continue (Mondada, 2011; Robinson, 2014).

The *oh*-prefaced YND is used to do now-understanding (Koivisto, 2015b). Interactants do now-understanding for one of two reasons: either they did not understand at all, or they had misunderstood. In both cases, the *oh*-prefaced YND claims that the speaker here-and-now understands correctly. The practices is thus the same, but the sequential environment varies. When an interactant does not understand, the talk does not progress until the problematic turn has been addressed. The trouble source can thus be found in the local sequential environment. In cases of misunderstandings, however, the interactants have no reason to assume that their understanding was not correct. In fact, a misunderstanding requires by definition that the participants have moved on, since by moving on they claim to understand each other. The problem source of a misunderstanding is thus not necessarily located in the immediate prior turn,

or even in the local sequence (Koivisto, 2015b; Schegloff, 1992).

Although the focus in our analysis is on declaratives, we find that *oh*-prefaced YNIs can also be used to restore intersubjectivity. This practice, however, is less frequent in our data and its functions are diverse. As such, we can only give a taste of *oh*-prefaced YNIs in this paper. Our aim here is to show that there are systematic differences between *oh*-prefaced YNDs and YNIs: they are used in different sequential environments and do different actions. These differences provide insights into the epistemic claims that are encoded with both syntactic constructions.

4.2 Data

The data used for this analysis consist of about 12.5 hours of casual phone conversations recorded by students at Utrecht University. The conversations are mostly between students, friends, and family, with topics spanning everything from homework to social events. The data have been analyzed according to the method of conversation analysis (Ten Have, 2007) and transcribed according to Jeffersonian conventions (in Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). We provided word-by-word glosses as well as a free translation on a roughly turn-by-turn basis.

We found 66 cases of *oh (ja)*-prefaced YNDs and 27 cases of *oh*-prefaced YNIs. From this we removed all instances where the practice was used for other functions than repair. For example, in response to a news announcement, an *oh*-prefaced YND can be used to invite more talk (Heritage, 1984a; Jefferson, 1981). We also removed all cases where either the quality of the recording was insufficient, or the *oh*-prefaced YND was not responded to due to extra-interactive circumstances. Our final selection consisted of 19 clear cases of *oh*-prefaced YNDs, 8 *oh ja*-prefaced YNDs, and 12 *oh*-prefaced YNIs.

4.3 Restoring intersubjectivity

We will first show that interactants use *oh ja*-prefaced YNDs to do now-remembering. This practice is used to revise a claim of not understanding by demonstrating that the interactant now has adequate knowledge to understand an action that s/he had treated as problematic. We then show that *oh*-prefaced YNDs are used to do now-understanding. This practice can be used when an interactant lacked any understanding, had an understanding that was treated as incorrect by the interlocutor, or when the interactant him-/herself notices

that an assumed understanding was incorrect. Finally, we briefly discuss an *oh*-prefaced YNI to show how syntax plays a part in these practices.

4.3.1 Doing now-remembering with *oh ja*-prefaced YNDs

When an interactant has a problem understanding his or her co-interactant, s/he can signal that s/he has a problem, thereby soliciting a remedy from the co-interactant (Schegloff et al., 1977). But as Heritage showed in his seminal paper on *oh* in English (Heritage, 1984a, p. 319), an interactant can instead propose a solution by formulating an understanding, what he calls an understanding check. In this way the interactant shows that s/he has an understanding problem, suggests a means of resolving it, and requests of the co-interactant that s/he confirms or disconfirms the adequacy of the proposed understanding.

Heritage (1984a) shows that there are two types of understanding checks: candidate understandings and displays of understanding. They differ in their sequential structure. With candidate understandings, the speaker uses *oh* after the addressee has confirmed the understanding and in that way claims that the confirmation was necessary for the change of state. With displays of understanding on the other hand, *oh* prefaces the understanding check, thereby claiming that the understanding has been achieved independent of any subsequent confirmation by the addressee. In both cases, *oh* is used to claim a “now-understanding” (Koivisto, 2015b).

In this section we will show how rememberings can be used to repair problems of intersubjectivity. Similar to understanding checks, they propose a solution to a problem of understanding, but not by proposing the correct understanding. Instead, they address some temporary lack in the speaker’s background knowledge.

We find that interactants do now-remembering following a slight hiccup in the interaction. That is, the turn-transition from the co-interactant who has done a first-pair part to the interactant who should provide an appropriate second pair part is problematic (Sacks et al., 1974). By doing now-remembering at this point, the interactant (i) treats a prior turn as problematic, (ii) shows that the problem is one of understanding, and (iii) conveys that s/he lacked an understanding because s/he had forgotten some background information. This remembering is interactionally contingent on confirmation even though the change of state has already been claimed and demonstrated: the remembered information falls in the co-interactant’s epistemic domain, and confirmation is thus treated as a relevant next action (Heritage, 2012a; see also Labov & Fanshel, 1977).

Extract (1) is a case in point. Ben has been telling Nadia about his plans for the evening: he is going to a friend's place to watch football (data not shown) and probably play poker (line 1–5).

(1) GK1-03:12.6-03:33.2

- 01 Ben w- we ga- gaan ook pokeren als °het goed is°.
we go also play.poker if it right is
w- we a- are going to play poker °if I'm right°.
- 02 Nad ↑WAT?
what
↑WHAT?
(0.8)
- 03 (0.8)
- 04 Ben >we gaan waarSCHIJnlijk ook even< po:keren
we go probably also just play.poker
05 als het goed is;
if it right is
**>we are PROBABLY also going< to play po:ker
if I'm right;**
- 06 (2.0)
- 07 Nad e- oké:, h.
okay
e- okay:, h.
- 08 (1.6)
- 09 Ben >ja wee' niet,<
yeah know not
>yeah don't know,<
- 10 dat v- °(ja) dat dat° vond ik wel ↑leuk.=
that yeah that that found I ADV fun
that f- ° (yeah) that that° I liked.=
- 11 Nad -> =>oh ja je hebt natuurlijk< vaka:ntie.=
oh yeah you.SG have of.course vacation
=>oh that's right you're on holiday< of course.=
- 12 =ik ve:rg~~e~~et het de hele #tijd#.
I forget it the whole time
=I kee:p forgetting that.
- 13 Ben (ehm) j(h)a h (.) gelukkig ↑wEl.
yeah fortunately ADV
(ehm) y(h)eah h (.) fortunately I ↑am.
- 14 Nad >oké en stefano dan? e:h<
okay and Stefano then
>okay and what about stefano? e:h<

Nadia treats Ben's telling as problematic. She first initiates repair in line 2 with the open-class repair initiator (Drew, 1997) *wat*, which Ben treats as signaling a hearing problem. After his repeat in line 4–5, however, there is a long silence of 2 seconds. Nadia then says *oké* in a somewhat marked manner:

she stretches the final vowel and there is a slight rise in pitch. When done as a sequence-closing third (Schegloff, 2007) *oké* (e.g., in line 14) is short and the pitch is flat or falls. As *oké* is pronounced here, it conveys that the prior turn was heard, but that Nadia has an unspecified reason as to why she cannot accept it—that is, *oké* indexes but does not identify a problem (Robinson, 2014).

Ben's initial response—*ja wee niet* (“yeah don't know”)—aligns with Nadia in treating his turn as unusual. That is, with his utterance Ben orients to Nadia's turn as treating his telling as unusual and he agrees that it is unusual that he is going to play poker (see Selting, 1996 for a similar case in German). He further demonstrates this orientation by providing an account, thereby attempting to resolve the problem. But the problem persists, as is clear from Nadia's following utterance in line 11. Instead of acknowledging Ben's account, she does an *oh ja*-prefaced YND. By treating the information in her remembering as here-and-now relevant, she shows that she could not understand Ben's turn in line 4–5, because she had forgotten that he was on vacation. The problem thus was not that she did not understand why Ben would want to play poker—which is how Ben addressed Nadia's *oké* with his account in line 10. She did not understand why Ben had extensive plans for what she believed was a school night.

So we see that Nadia indexes a problem in line 7 because she lacked the relevant background information to completely understand Ben's turn in lines 4–5 (and possibly in line 1). That does not mean Ben's turn is not adequately designed for Nadia (see Sacks et al., 1974). By doing a remembering, she conveys (i) that she now has adequate knowledge to understand the prior turn, (ii) that she already had independent access to that knowledge, and thus by extension (iii) that Ben had adequately designed his earlier action. Notice also that Nadia acts convinced that Ben is on holiday: she claims independent epistemic access with *natuurlijk* (“of course”) and explicitly states in line 12 that she keeps forgetting. Nonetheless confirmation of her remembering is treated as relevant. Nadia provides a sequence-closing third in response to Ben's confirmation in line 13, and only afterwards does she move on to a new topic.

Notice that the nature of the problem is opaque to Ben. While there clearly is some problem which Nadia signals with her *oké*, what that problem is, is unclear until Nadia herself has repaired it. Interactants in general rely on an indeterminate number of assumptions about shared background knowledge for each action. Without a signal as to which one might be problematic, repair cannot be provided. Ben does attempt to, his account does not address the problem. All these unspoken assumptions also mean that we as analysts can see only a fraction of what is going on. It is only in cases such as these

where assumptions are (possibly) violated, that is, where interactants explicitly address that there is misalignment, that we get a glimpse into the vast amount of shared knowledge and experience that interactants rely on.

While doing remembering claims that the speaker has independent epistemic access to some piece of information, that is, that s/he holds that piece of information to be true, that information need not actually be true. This distinction between cognitive and interactional remembering becomes clear in extract (2). It takes place early in a conversation between Sandra and her mother Anja. Anja has been telling Sandra what she is cooking for dinner. Prior to the data shown, Anja has named a long list of ingredients.

- (2) VW1-01:18.3-01:26.6
- 01 San voor jou alleen?
for you.SG alone
just for you?
- 02 of ook eh
or also
or also eh
- 03 is: papa
is dad
- 04 -> oh ja papa is er zo #wel#.
oh yeah dad is there presently ADV
oh that's right dad will be there #presently#.
- 05 Anj voor mij alleen,=
for my alone
just for me,=
- 06 =nee fred die e:h <↓werkt>.
no Fred he works
=no fred he e:h <↓'has to' work>.
- 07 (0.2)
- 08 San (↑maar jo)
but yo
(↑but yo)
- 09 ga je dat allemaal ↑helemaal maken voor
go you.SG that all completely make for
10 jezelf;
yourself;
**are you going to make ↑all of that for
yourself;**
- 11 (0.7)
- 12 Anj ja?
yeah?
- 13 (.)
- 14 San oh wau:w; (0.4) wat ↑goed.
oh wow what good
oh wo:w; (0.4) how ↑great.

In line 1, Sandra asks if Anja is going to cook all that just for herself. She begins to ask if it is also for her father, but breaks off that TCU. She also breaks off the next action in line 3 in which she was probably going to ask if her dad was going to be home soon (*is papa zo thuis* / “will dad be home momentarily”). The reason for the break is clear: in line 4 she demonstrates that she remembers that her father will indeed be home in a little while. But as it turns out, Anja is cooking only for herself, because Fred, Sandra’s father, has to work.

Although the concept of remembering presupposes knowing, which in turn presupposes a belief that the information is true, it can in fact be false. Participant’s beliefs, no matter how strong, are open to negotiation, in particular when another participant has epistemic primacy.² We have no reason to assume that Sandra is any less certain of her beliefs than Nadia in (1), but the sequence in (2) shows why confirmation is relevant: the addressee as the one who has epistemic primacy is always in a position to deny what the speaker believes s/he knows. Remembering is an interactional practice and it’s done for interactional purposes (Middleton & Edwards, 1990).

In this section we have shown that interactants in Dutch can claim and demonstrate now-remembering with a YND prefaced by the particle combination *oh ja*. This practice is highly similar to the German *ach ja* (Betz & Golato, 2008), English *oh that’s right* (Heritage, 1984a), Danish *nåja* (Emmertsen & Heinemann, 2010), and Finnish *ai nii(n)* (Koivisto, 2013). The speaker shows that s/he remembers then and there some locally relevant information. When now-remembering is done at a point where a response is due, it conveys that the interactant had forgotten some background information critical to understanding the turn for which a response is due. Now that the interactant remembers, s/he understands the prior turn and the talk can continue.

4.3.2 Doing now-understanding

In the previous section, we showed how displays of remembering are used in a way similar to understanding checks as they are described by Heritage (1984a). An interactant does now-remembering to index that a problem of understanding has been resolved. In this section we focus on actual understanding checks. We discuss three sequential environments in which understanding checks are used in Dutch talk-in-interaction. In all cases an *oh*-prefaced YND is used to claim

²It is possible that Sandra does not actually remember that her dad will be home soon, that is, believes that she remembers, but instead that she remembers that he is typically home around dinner time, and thus that he will be home soon. However, this is not the remembering she demonstrates in the interaction.

and demonstrate that the speaker now understands. The problems addressed are, however, different and this is reflected in the sequential structure of each case.

We begin by showing a case that has a sequential structure slightly different from the examples Heritage (1984a) discusses. Heritage finds that when repair is solicited by a speaker, and the repair is provided by the addressee, the adequacy of that repair is demonstrated with a free-standing *oh* as a sequence-closing third. In our corpus we find that following the repair proper the speaker who solicited repair can do an *oh*-prefaced YND, thereby demonstrating his/her now understanding.

Consider extract (3). Christina and Belle are talking about Belle's thesis project for which she has to go to Den Bosch, a city they both loathe. In overlap with what seems to be an affiliating turn by Christina in line 3, Belle suddenly complains that she has problems fixing her stove.

(3) HS1-01:45.8-02:07.8

01 Bel =>ik word er echt< <gedeprimeerd van °(joh)°>.
I become there really depressed of INT
=>it's making me really <depressed>.

02 (.)

03 Chr jA het is o[ok,=jah.]
yeah it is also yeah
yEAH it is a[lso=yeah.

04 Bel [ik zit het g]asfornuis te fiksen,
I sit the stove to fix
[I'm fixing the stove

05 maar het past ↓niet.
but it fits not
but it doesn't fit.

06 (0.4)

07 Chr wat, #eh#
what
what, #eh#

08 Bel °oh wacht°.
°oh wait°.

09 (0.2)

10 verkeerde °(ringetje)°,
wrong ring.DIM
wrong °(ring)°,

11 (0.7)

12 hhh. hu

13 .HH ja: me gasfornuis was heel gf- goo:r?
yeah my stove was really filthy
.HH yea:h my stove was really gf- filthy?

14 (.)

15 dat was (.) drie maa:nden niet gedaan
that was three months not done

16 of zo, .HH
or something
that hadn't (.) been done in three months or something, .HH

17 (0.3)

18 °dus ik° dacht laat ik °effetjes #e:h#°
so I thought let I just
°so I° though lets °just #e:h#°

19 (0.2)

20 Chr -> oh [je bent aan het schoo]nmaken
oh you are on the cleaning

21 -> gesla°ge:n°_
started
oh [you started cleaning_]

22 Bel [°(laat ik een keer schoon)°]
let I a time clean
[°(lets for once clean)°]

23 (1.1)

24 Bel .h ja: ik ben ook ongesteld.=
yeah I am also on.my.period
.h yeah because I'm on my period.=

25 =dus dan krijg
so then get

26 [je ineens van die s]choonmaak°[(neiging)en]°.
one suddenly of those cleaning.urges
**=so then [you suddenly get those c]leaning
 °[(urg]es)°.**

26 Chr [Hmpf::] [ha ha ha]

In response to Belle's complaint in line 4–5, Christina initiates repair with the open-class repair initiator *wat* ("what"). Her problem seems to be a result of the way in which Belle introduces her complaint: she does so in overlap with Christina's affiliating turn in line 3: it is topically disjunct from the ongoing talk, and she does not account for her complaint—that is, she does not say what does not fit.

After some intervening turns in which Belle seems to have fixed her problem with the stove—while the utterances in line 8 and 10 are done for Christina, they are not addressed to her—she begins to explain in line 13 that her stove was really filthy because nobody had cleaned it for three months. She thereby begins to address Christina's problem. In the middle of her TCU in lines 18 and 22, there is a small pause and at this point Christina displays her understanding that Belle is cleaning, which explains why she is putting her

stove back together.³ While Christina's understanding may be independent of any confirmation (Heritage, 1984a), Belle does provide one in line 24. In this way she orients to her primary epistemic rights both as the one who did the problematic turn, as well as the one who is cleaning. Christina provides the repair proper which she has inferred from Belle's talk. So while both participants are not on equal epistemic footing, this is not a matter of who knows more (see Golato & Betz, 2008), but who has more rights to know.

As argued by Heritage (1984a), by having *oh* preface her understanding check, Christina is treating the prior talk as adequately informative. She can infer from Belle's talk about her dirty stove, and possibly the turn started in line 18, why Belle started talking about the stove. However, by formulating her understanding, Christina also shows that the explanation had not yet been provided. A free-standing *oh* or *oh* combined with some other sequence-closing third like *oké* would treat the repair sequence Christina initiated in line 7 as complete. An understanding formulation on the other hand treats the understanding as inferable from prior talk, but not yet on record. In this way Christina claims co-responsibility for restoring intersubjectivity: Belle did a problematic turn, but as soon as Christina has reached an understanding of that turn, she demonstrates this.

In extract (4) we also see a problem of understanding that is repaired with an *oh*-prefaced YND. The problem is, however, different from the one in (3) and so is the repair sequence. The extract comes from a conversation between mother and daughter, Marie and Diane. Marie has been telling Diane that James, Diane's brother, recently went on a sailing trip during which he lost his sunglasses.

(4) WD1-06:37.6-06:52.2

01 Dia oa:::h;
 02 (0.5)
 03 heeft hij ook met:
 has he also with
 has he also with:
 04 betrAA:nde ogen is ie thuis gekomen;
 teary eyes is he home come
 did he come home with tEA:ry eyes;
 05 (1.0)
 06 Mar nou: dat is vandaag gebeur:d.=
 well that is today happened
 well: that happened today.=

³Another aspect of Belle's turn that might be problematic is her use of *fiksen* ("repairing"). This could imply that her stove was broken, while she only took it apart for cleaning.

07 =dus eh h:u [hu hu]
 so
 =so eh h:u [hu hu]
 08 Dia -> [oh >hij heeft<] geBE:LD.
 oh he has called
 [oh he] CALLed.
 09 (0.6)
 10 Mar jA:h.
 yEA:h.
 11 (.)
 12 Dia oa::h.

Diane in line 1 provides an emphatic response cry (Goffman, 1981) and asks if James was crying when he came home to tell his parents. She thereby conveys her understanding that James had come home when he told his parents. Marie does not provide a type-conforming answer to Diane's YNI, signaling a problem with the question (Hayano, 2013; G. Raymond, 2003). Instead she prefaces her response with *nou* ("well"), showing that it is not going to be straightforward (Mazeland, 2016; Pander Maat, Driessen, & Van Mierlo, 1986; Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). Marie rejects one of the underlying presuppositions of Diane's question: that James had come home to tell his parents about the sunglasses. But she rejects the presupposition indirectly. She uses a stand-alone *dus* ("so") to project the upshot (G. Raymond, 2004) that James did not come home, because he only lost his glasses that very day. Thereby leaving the actual inference to Diane.

In the subsequent turn, Diane uses an *oh*-prefaced YND to convey her now revised understanding (Koivisto, 2015b) that James called, which Marie confirms. Notice that there is a short pause after Diane's revised understanding, but that almost immediately after Marie's confirmation, Diane moves on with a new turn at talk. While her understanding may be independent from any subsequent confirmation, by not doing a next action until confirmation has been provided, she treats that confirmation as conditionally relevant.

So far we have shown that *oh*-prefaced YNDs are used to display that the speaker now understands either after s/he had claimed to not understand as in (3) or had understood incorrectly as in (4). The final case we will discuss also concerns a misunderstanding. It is, however, repaired differently from the misunderstanding in (4). In (4), the incorrect understanding is encoded as a presupposition of a request for information. It would not be possible to provide a type-conforming response to that request, without confirming the presupposition (see G. Raymond, 2003; Hayano, 2013). So repair is initiated, at least in part, to account for why an answer cannot be provided. The situation

is different in fragment (5) (see below). Here, repair is done not to address some problematic action, but its primary function seems to be solely to restore intersubjectivity.

Extract (5) is from a conversation between two friends, Sarah and Wendy. Wendy was supposed to visit her boyfriend's parents over the weekend, and in lines 1–2 Sarah asks how that went.⁴

(5) BN1–02:13.5-03:50.5

- 01 Sar .hh en hoe was het ↑zondag ↑no:g?
and how was it Sunday still
- 02 met die ou↓ders van daan.
with those parents of Daan
.hh and how was it on sunday? with daan's parents.
- 03 (1.0)
- 04 Wen e::hm >↑oh da's niet ↑doorgegaan<.=
oh that's not go.through
e::hm >oh that did not take place<.=
- 05 Sar =job en elle kwamen ↑toch of niet.=
Job and Elle came TAG or not
=job and elle were coming ↑right or not.=
- 06 Wen [=ja]
[yeah]
- 07 Sar [()] (da) helemaal niet doorgegaan.
completely not go.through
[()] (that) not take place at all.
- 08 Wen >ja da' is wel doorgegaan, alleen ik ging<
yeah that is ADV go.through only I went
>yeah that did take place, I just went<
- 09 ik ging smiddags high↓teaen hè?
I went in.the.afternoon to.high.tea TAG
I went for high tea in the afternoon right?
- 09 (0.6)
- 10 Sar .hh
- 11 (1.1)
- 12 Sar wa' ging je ↑doen smiddags?
what went you do in.the.afternoon
what did you ↑do in the afternoon?
- 13 Wen highteaen met uh anne
to.high.tea with Anne
highteaing with uh Anne
- 14 en[e:h]
and]

⁴Wendy talks about *high tea*—*highteaen* is a verb and could be translated as “to high tea”—which is usually called afternoon tea in England and the US.

- 15 Sar **and[e:h]**
 [o:h] >ja ja ja< (et) ja
 oh yeah yeah yeah yeah
 [o:h] yeah yeah yeah (et) yeah
- 16 (0.8)
- 17 Wen [en eh]
 [and eh]
- 18 Sar [(is da')] niet doo:rgegaan.=
 is that not go.through
 [(did that)] not take place.=
- 19 Wen =nee want toen (wa-)
 no because then
 =no because then (wa-)
- 20 ik was pas veelste laat thui:s.
 I was only much.too late home
 I was ho:me far too late.
- .. <Wendy talks about trip to high tea>
- 65 .hh toen zAg ik dat het jasmin was
 then saw I that it Jasmin was
 .hh then I sAw that it was jasmin
- 66 en toen ja dat was (.) was echt super leuk.
 and then yeah that was was really super fun
 and then yeah that was (.) was really super fun.
- 67 (0.5)
- 68 Sar -> .h oh dus je high tea is ↑we↓ doorgaan.
 oh so your high tea is PRT go.through
 .h oh so your high tea ↑did take place.
- 69 (1.0)
- 70 Wen >↑ja: ja ja<
 yeah yeah yeah
 >↑yea:h yeah yeah<
- 71 (0.6)
- 72 maar da' [bij die ouders van daan niet.]
 but that at those parents of Daan not
 but that [with the parents of Daan not.]
- 73 Sar -> [oh maar d- de ouders van
 oh but d- the parents of
- 74 -> daan niet.
 Daan not
 **[oh but t- the par]ents of
 daan not.**
- 75 Wen ja
 yeah
- 76 (0.7)
- 77 Sar -> .h o:h de (.) high tea is (te) laat geworden om
 oh the high tea is too late became to
 nog naar de- nou snap ik het .hh

PRT to the now get I it
.h oh the (.) high tea had gotten (too) late to
still to the- now I get it .hh
 79 Wen *£ja snap je het£?*
yeah get you it
£yeah do you get it£?
 80 (0.6)
 81 Sar *j(h)a uhuhu £ik dacht dat je gewoon te£ (.)*
yeah I thought that you simple too
yeah uhuhu £I thought that you simply too£ (.)
 82 *te lang had geslapen of zo.*
too long had slept or something
had slept too long or something.

Wendy's initial response in line 4 is delayed, and by *oh*-prefacing it she resists Sarah's question (Heritage, 1998). But Sarah pursues the topic in line 5, asking clarification on whether the visit did not take place at all, because other people were supposed to go as well. In her explanation Wendy introduces the afternoon tea she had also planned, which was the reason she did not visit Daan's parents. But she never gets to the explanation, as Sarah interrupts in line 18 asking if that—the afternoon tea—did not take place. Although Sarah uses *dat* ("that") to refer to the afternoon tea, it is understood by Wendy as referring to her visit to Daan's parents. So by providing a confirmation, Wendy conveys to Sarah that her afternoon tea fell through, while she herself understands it as confirming that her date with Daan fell through.

At a later point in the interaction Sarah seems to notice that she misunderstood Wendy. After her confirmation in line 19–20, Wendy starts a narrative about the trip she made to the restaurant (data not shown). The story comes to conclusion in line 65–66, but instead of providing an appropriate response, Sarah does an *oh*-prefaced YND. By using this practice, and particularly by putting emphasis on the positive polarity adverb *wel*, she displays her revised understanding that Wendy's afternoon tea did take place, and that she had earlier understood the exact opposite. In response to this question, Wendy shows in line 70 that she believed that Sarah had correctly understood: she uses a multiple saying to convey that she had already addressed the question (see Stivers, 2004). After two more displays of understanding in lines 73–74 and 77, Sarah explicitly states that she now understands and she explains how she had understood: she thought that Wendy had overslept and missed her afternoon tea.

Both (4) and (5) show cases of misalignment; one interactant has an incorrect understanding of something in the co-interactant's epistemic domain. The sequential structure of the two extracts, however, differs. In (4) Diane en-

codes the incorrect understanding in a question. This is addressed by Marie after which Diane repairs her misunderstanding. In (5) on the other hand, Sarah immediately corrects her own misunderstanding when she notices it and only later (line 81–82) explains how she had misunderstood. This difference is partly brought about by the structure of the conversation. Sarah could infer from Wendy's story about her afternoon tea that Wendy had had afternoon tea and thus that she must have misunderstood, but Diane had no such cues and thus her incorrect understanding has to be corrected by Marie. Yet the practice in both these cases, and in (3), is the same: an *oh*-prefaced YND is used to display that the speaker now understands. The practice is thus highly similar to remembering we showed in section 4.3.1. The sequential structure of both practices is, however, very distinct. The *oh ja*-prefaced YNDs are done independent of the interlocutor's talk, and so claim independent epistemic access. The *oh*-prefaced YNDs are done in response to the co-interactant's talk; the correct understanding is inferred from what the other says. The speaker's epistemic access is thus dependent on the interlocutor.

4.3.3 Interrogative formulations of understanding

The epistemic stance encoded with declaratives make them especially suitable for displays of understanding. With a declarative the speaker claims high certainty, which means that the epistemic gradient is relatively shallow (Heritage, 2012a). When a speaker does understanding, the claim is that s/he understands the co-interactant adequately for all practical purposes. This need not mean that both are equally knowledgeable, but such a claim also indexes a shallow or flat epistemic gradient. And while the declarative is indeed the format we most frequently see for doing now-understanding, we found that understanding can also be done with other practices. In our corpus, we found a small selection of *oh*-prefaced yes/no-type interrogatives (YNIs) (G. Raymond, 2010a). By doing an *oh*-prefaced YNI an interactant claims that the prior telling was not in line with his/her prior knowledge and/or expectations, and s/he conveys the revised belief.⁵ An exhaustive discussion of this practice requires more attention than we can give it here. We will, however, use an example to show that *oh*-prefaced YNDs and YNIs are used in different contexts.

Consider extract (6). Annemarie has been telling Michelle about a week she recently spent at a school in Germany, where she claims she spent the entire

⁵We want to stress here that we are not talking about the participants' *actual* cognitive beliefs. Our discussion is about the beliefs that participants convey through talk and these may or may not reflect the beliefs the participants have *in their mind*.

time eating. After joking that she must have gained five kilos she begins to talk about all the food that was available.

(6) RM1—01:16.1-01:26.9

- 01 Ann je begon met ontbijt elke dag (dan) >hadden
one started with breakfast every day then had
- 02 we<
we
every day started with breakfast >we (then) had<
 (0.9)
- 03 vijf soorten yoghurt staan,
five types yoghurt stand
five types of yoghurt,
 (0.3)
- 04 (vier) soorten muesli,
four types muesli
(four) types of muesli,
- 05 Mic -> oh had je echt zo'n hot↑elontbijt.
oh had you.SG really such.a hotel.breakfast
oh did you really have like a hot↑el breakfast.
 (0.6)
- 06 Ann ja: we >↑zaten in een< (.) gebouw van een eh (.)
yeah we were in a building of a
yea:h we >were in a< (.) building of a eh (.)
- 07 ↑politieke partij?
political party
↑political party?

While Annemarie is still in the middle of her telling in line 6—the prior turn does not seem pragmatically or prosodically complete (Ford & Thompson, 1996; Local & Walker, 2012)—Michelle uses an *oh*-prefaced YNI to ask whether Annemarie had a hotel breakfast, that is, a continental breakfast or breakfast buffet. As the topic has only just been initiated, Michelle has not yet conveyed any expectations about what Annemarie would have eaten during her trip, yet notice the adverb *echt* (“really”). The function of *echt* varies, but it is typically found either as a news receipt or as a focus particle. When used as a news receipt, it conveys (feigned) disbelief comparable to English *really*. As a focus particle, as it is used here, we frequently find it in first pair parts, where it is used to emphasize the truth of a proposition. Its function here, as part of an inserted question, is similar: it puts emphasis on *hotelontbijt* and conveys that Michelle did not expect it. This does not mean that Michelle had any assumptions about what Annemarie had for breakfast, but most schools—at least in the Netherlands—do not serve a buffet-type breakfast. Annemarie’s telling is surprising; it does not fit Michelle’s knowledge of breakfast at schools.

Note also that Michelle uses the term *hotelontbijt*, instead of a term like continental breakfast, and uses *zo'n* (“such a”) as a means of categorizing the type of breakfast. By categorizing the type of breakfast as one you would get in a hotel, Michelle shows that Annemarie’s talk about breakfast fits with her beliefs about one context—hotels and possibly vacations—but conflicts with her beliefs of the locally relevant context—the facilities of a school.

The action implemented by the *oh*-prefaced YNI is similar to the YNDs in the previous section: it conveys both that Michelle now understands and what—that is, how—she understands. But unlike the formulations of understanding in excerpt (3), (4), and (5), Michelle conveys that her new understanding contradicts an understanding that had not yet been expressed or even implied. Furthermore, the YNI does not address a local problem of understanding. Instead it treats the prior talk as unexpected in relation to the speaker’s background assumptions.

4.4 Discussion & Conclusion

Research on change-of-state tokens over the past few decades has shown that they can support many types of social actions (i.a. Betz & Golato, 2008; Emmertsen & Heinemann, 2010; Golato & Betz, 2008; Heritage, 1984a; Koivisto, 2013, 2015b; Schegloff, 1992; Kasterpalu & Hennoste, 2016; Weidner, 2016). In this paper, we have focused on two specific practices in Dutch talk-in-interaction: declarative yes/no-type initiating actions (YNDs) that are prefaced by *oh ja*, and YNDs that are prefaced by just *oh*. We demonstrated that these practices are used for different, albeit strongly related, functions. Both are used in situations where an interactant has a problem with understanding, and they are used to address this problem. However, the particulars of the problems they address are different and this reflects the different epistemic claims that are made by these practices (Stivers et al., 2011). *Oh ja*-prefaced YNDs claim independent epistemic access: the change-of-state is realized independent of the interlocutor’s talk (Emmertsen & Heinemann, 2010). *Oh*-prefaced YNDs on the other hand claim dependent epistemic access: the change-of-state is realized in response to the interlocutor’s talk.

With an *oh ja*-prefaced YND, an interactant does now-remembering (see Betz & Golato, 2008; Emmertsen & Heinemann, 2010; Heritage, 1984a; Koivisto, 2013; Middleton & Edwards, 1990) by both claiming to remember and showing what s/he remembers (see Koole, 2010). We find that speakers do now-remembering in this way when they have claimed to lack epistemic ac-

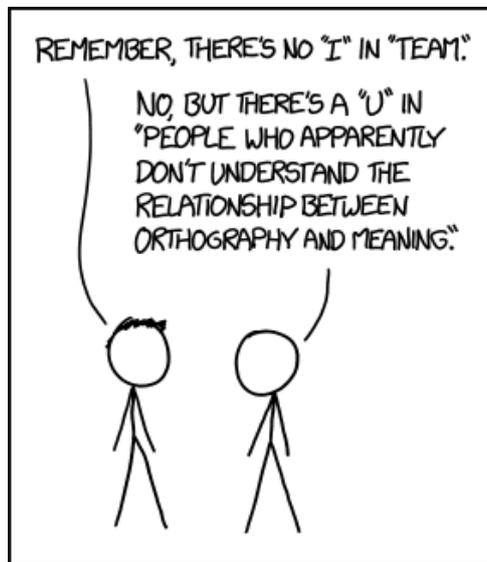
cess, either by claiming a lack of understanding or by requesting information. Doing remembering repairs the earlier claim of no understanding. Here the preference for self-repair over other-initiated repair (Schegloff et al., 1977) and the preference for remembering (Koivisto, 2013) seem to be one and the same. Although a speaker makes a claim about a personal mental state, confirmation by the interlocutor is still treated as relevant as the interlocutor has primary epistemic access.

With an *oh*-prefaced YND, the speaker claims to now-understand (Koivisto, 2015b; Weidner, 2016), thereby also inherently conveying that s/he earlier did not understand (Lindwall & Lymer, 2011). We have shown that this practice is used to address problems of understanding in various sequential environments. It can convey that a repair proper was adequately informative and that the speaker now understands (Heritage, 1984a). It is then used to propose closing of the repair sequence. Second, it can index the revision of an incorrect understanding that was encoded in a prior turn. Finally, it can be used to signal that the interactant had misunderstood, where that incorrect understanding had earlier been interactionally ratified. While these contexts differ, the practice and its function are the same: doing now-understanding. As with doing now-remembering, when a speaker claims to now-understand, confirmation is treated as a relevant response. Both interactants thus attribute primary epistemic status to the interlocutor.

As doing understanding claims a relatively shallow epistemic gradient, we would expect that declaratives are particularly suitable for this action. However, we occasionally find *oh*-prefaced yes/no-type interrogatives (YNIs) as a practice for doing understanding. A crucial difference between these practices is that *oh*-prefaced YNIs are used to show that the prior talk was unexpected in relation to the interactant's background assumptions. The *oh* thus still indexes a change-of-state, but the change is a realization that the speaker might have held incorrect assumptions. Furthermore, we do not find, nor do we expect, that YNIs can be used to do remembering. These findings would be in line with earlier work by Turner (2012; see also Gunlogson, 2001), who argued that B-event declaratives are used when a speaker has epistemic access based on what was said earlier in the conversation—that is, they treat the information in the YND as shared (G. Raymond, 2010a)—whereas B-event interrogatives are used when information is new to the interaction and the speaker lacks epistemic access. Further work might show that indeed interrogatives do not claim epistemic access and therefore cannot be used to do remembering. It would be particularly interesting to look at negative interrogatives, as these are frequently considered to actually make a strong claim of knowing. This would

suggest that negative interrogatives might be suitable to in some way do both now-understanding and now-remembering.

Intersubjectivity is thus very much a cooperative project. On the one hand participants in talk-in-interaction design their utterances so they can be optimally understood by their co-interactants (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 727). And on the other hand participants strive towards an understanding of their co-interactant's talk. When intersubjectivity breaks down, restoring it takes priority (see Sacks et al., 1974, p. 709), and both interactants work together towards a situation where they again understand one another. This becomes particularly clear when the addressee in (3) in the middle of her co-interactant's account and in overlap with the repair proper displays that she now understands. Understanding is at heart an interactional achievement, and not simply a state of mind.



There's no "I" in "VOWELS".