

Wadensjo 1995

# RECYCLED INFORMATION AS A QUESTIONING STRATEGY

## OUTLINE

Analysis of an authentic case  
of interpreter-mediated police interrogation



### FOCUS:

**police-officer's strategies for eliciting from the suspect  
her spontaneous story**

*[i.e. case of minor theft that is under investigation]*

**and the ways in which the dynamics of the interpreter-  
mediated conversation affects such strategies**



## INTERPRETERS IN (SWEDISH) SOCIETY

since 1975: right to interpreting service for  
PERSONS not speaking Swedish (or hard of  
hearing) ratified by law



OFFICIALS OF THE VARIOUS  
PUBLIC BODIES HAVE A  
RESPONSIBILITY TO CALL UPON  
AN INTERPRETER IF NEEDED



*Representatives of the majority  
(institutions) are no less  
dependent on interpreters than  
their clients*



## POPULAR IMAGES OF INTERPRETERS

PRODUCERS OF TEXTS (rather than providers of service or agents of control) and even TOOLS to be used or handled by the primary interactants = CHANNEL

**L2 = L1**

instrument with no discretion or freedom of will

INTERPRETER

necessary evil - a remedy to an abnormal situation



## THE MULTIFUNCTIONALITY OF TALK IN INTERACTION

MONOLINGUAL PARTIES' UTTERANCES HAVE 2 FUNCTIONS:

- 1) question/proposition **for the other party** to react upon appropriately
- 2) preliminary questions or propositions **for the interpreter** to react upon appropriately by repeating them in another language

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**INTERPRETER**



*necessary evil - a remedy  
to an abnormal situation*



MO  
UT  
FUI

1) qu  
othe  
appro

2) pre  
propos  
to reac  
repeati  
languag



# MONOLINGUAL SITUATION = NORMALITY



Also from the researcher's perspective!

**BUT** interpreter-mediated encounters  
imply their own conditions and  
organizational principles



Interpreter's output is **TEXT  
PRODUCTION**, which is performed  
by **TALKING (ACTIVITY)**

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# INVESTIGATION

## **POLICE INTERROGATION**

Police officer's efforts to elicit information on a given topic from a suspect or a witness, which result in a written report

ENCOUNTER = result of joint efforts

CENTRAL ISSUE = what happens to questioning techniques in interpreter-mediated interrogations?

## INTERROGATION CONCERNING A MINOR THEFT

- Police officer and interpreter are aware of the Interpreters' Code of Ethics
- Officer addresses the suspect directly
- Suspect = young Russian-speaking woman caught red-handed shoplifting in a department store
- Crimes = shoplifting + receiving stolen property
- FOCUS: second round of interrogation

### THE CASE

**PURPOSE:** eliciting information for further questioning

#### TYPES:

- quotes from documents or absent persons
- formulations
- quotes from immediately preceding turns

### RECYCLED INFORMATION

→ 364. Peter: men Rita säger ju det. att ni gick alla tre,  
but Rita says like this, that you went all three.  
365. Irina: а РИТА так говорила, что вы все трое  
пошли.  
but Rita so says that all three of you went there.  
366. Sasha: а я так не говорю.  
but I don't say so.  
367. Irina: men jag säger inte så.  
men jag säger inte så.  
but I don't say so.  
368. Peter: (1.0)  
men va e::h va säger-? då::: (.) ljuger Rita?  
but what e::h what says-? then::: (.) is Rita lying?  
369. Irina: во::: что тогда сказать что кто-то из вас,  
е::: лжёт?  
but::: what then [one can] say that one of you e::h is  
lying?

370. Sasha: наверное.  
perhaps.  
371. Irina: (1.5)  
"kan hända,"  
"might be."  
372. Peter: kan hända?  
might be?  
373. Irina: (1.5)  
perhaps?  
374. Peter: (2.0)  
ljuger hon?  
is she lying?  
375. Irina: она лжёт?  
is she lying?  
375. Sasha: (1.5)  
наверно, я говорю что я про этот бокс  
ничего не знаю.  
perhaps. I say that I about this locker don't know anything.




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## THE CASE

-> 364 Peter: men **Rita** säger ju det. att ni gick alla tre,  
*but Rita says like this, that you went all three.*  
365. Irina: а **РИТА** так говорит что вы туда все трое  
пошли.  
*but Rita so says that all three of you went there.*  
366 Sasha: а я так не говорю.  
*but I don't say so.*  
367. Irina: men jag **säger** inte så.  
*but I don't say so.*  
(1.0)  
368. Peter: men va e:::h va säger-? då::: (.) ljuger Rita?  
*but what e:::h what says-? then::: (.) is Rita lying?*  
369. Irina: но::: что тогда сказать что кто-то из вас,  
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*but::: what then [one can] say that one of you e:::h is lying?*

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*perhaps.*  
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*°might be.°*  
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*might be?*  
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*perhaps?*  
(2.0)  
374. Peter: **ljuger** hon?  
*is she lying?*  
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*is she lying?*  
(1.5)  
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*perhaps. I say that I about this locker don't know anything .*





**PURPOSE:** eliciting information for further questioning

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**RECYCLED INFORMATION**

alla tre,  
ent all three,  
и туде вно -

# 1. QUOTES FROM AN ABSENT PERSON

**GOAL:** *make the interrogator appear less threatening by presenting him as mediator (simply forwarding what others have said)*

439. Tami: ...  
440. Tami: ...  
441. Tami: ...  
442. Tami: ...  
443. Tami: ...  
444. Tami: ...  
445. Tami: ...

446. Tami: ...  
447. Tami: ...

→ you are supposed to reach alternatively of receiving under pressure.  
448. Tami: ...  
449. Tami: ...  
450. Tami: ...  
451. Tami: ...  
452. Tami: ...  
453. Tami: ...



439. Peter: hon säger, (.) indirekt, (.) att dom andra sakerna tillhör ju er.  
*she says, (.) indirectly, (.) that the other things belong to you.*
440. Irina: и::: опосредственно, она говорит что все другие вещи вам принадлежат.  
*and::: and indirectly, she says that all the other things belong to you.*
441. Peter: och inte henne.  
*and not her.*
442. Irina: а не ей.  
*and not her.*  
(0.5)
443. Sasha: я могу сказать что из всех вот этих вещей мне не принадлежит ничего.  
*I can say that of all these things nothing belongs to me.*
444. Irina: jag kan säga att bland alla dom här sakerna som finns här, hör till mig ingenting.  
*I can say that among all these things that are here, belongs to me nothing.*
445. Peter: vad säger du om att Rita e::h (.) påstår att du har varit med in och köpt ett par skor och att du och den här karln var borta och låste in dom hära. (1.5) dom andra sakerna i en box. vad tycker du om det?  
*what do you say about that Rita e::h (.) claims that you have been in with [her] and bought a pair of shoes and that you and this guy went away and locked these things up. (1.5) these other things in a locker. what do you think about that?*

446. Irina: а что вы думаете о том что вот Рита утверждает что вы были с ней в магазине купили туфли. что вы с этим мужчиной закрывали вещи в бокс. что вы об этом думаете?  
*and what do you think about this that like Rita claims that you were with her in a shop [and] bought shoes. that you and this man locked up things in a locker. what do you think about this?*
447. Peter: du är misstänkt för stöld, alternativt häleri,





*you are suspected of theft, alternatively of receiving stolen property,*

448. Irina: ВЫ

you

449. Sasha: я думаю это ситуация е::: мм. (1.0) когда  
(2.0) кто-то пытается выгородить себя.

*I think this is a situation e::: mm. (1.0) when (2.0) someone  
is trying to get away.*

(1.0)

450. Irina: °mhm° det är någon eh försöker faktiskt e:::h (1.0) e:::h  
m::: (.) komma undan.

*°mhm° it's someone eh is trying actually e:::h (1.0) e:::h  
m::: (.) to get away.*

451. Peter: någon? vilken någon?  
someone? which someone?

452. Irina: а кто? (0.5) кого вы имеете в виду?  
*and who? (0.5) who do you have in mind?*

453. Sasha: я не знаю.  
*I don't know.*

## FORMULATIONS

**GOAL:** format-tying (latching onto a word)  
smooths over the latent quarrel aspect

[illegible]

**QUOTES FROM  
PREVIOUS TURNS**

**GOAL:** stressing an aspect of the utterance (prosody)

370. Sasha: наверно,  
*perhaps.*  
(1.5)

371. Irina: "You blind,"  
*"maybe be."*  
kan blinda?

372. Peter: maybe?  
*maybe?*

373. Irina: наверно?  
*perhaps?*  
(2.0)

374. Peter: "Upper lion?"  
*is the lying?*

375. Irina: → она лжет?  
*is the lying?*  
(1.5)



375. Sasha: наверно, я говорю что я про этот блок  
*ничего не знаю.*  
*perhaps. I say that I about this locker don't know anything.*



# FORMULATIONS

**GOAL:** format-tying (latching onto a word)  
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⇒ 364. Peter:      men Rita säger ju det. att ni gick alla tre,  
                    *but Rita says like this. that you went all three,*  
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                    пошли.  
                    *but Rita so says that all three of you went there.*  
366. Sasha:      а я так не говорю.  
                    *but I don't say so.*  
367. Irina:      men jag säger inte så.  
                    *but I don't say so.*  
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                    *but what e:::h what says-? then::: (.) is Rita lying?*  
369. Irina:      но::: что тогда сказать что кто-то из вас,  
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## QUOTES FROM PREVIOUS TURNS

**GOAL:** stressing an aspect of the utterance  
(prosody)

370. Sasha:       наверно.  
                  *perhaps.*  
                  (1.5)

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                  °*might be.*°

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                  → *is she lying?*

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375. Sasha:       наверно. я говорю что я про этот бокс  
                  ничего не знаю.  
                  *perhaps. I say that I about this locker don't know anything .*

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# Conclusion

## SUCCESSFUL INTERPRETATION ON THE BASIS OF THE INTERROGATION'S GOALS

- it is not sufficient to analyse talk as text
- interpreter's tasks (translating and coordinating) may affect the very nature of interaction
- a comparison between monolingual and multilingual encounters must be performed by considering the latter in its own terms (and not merely a deviation from the norm)



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