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To Re-present a Nobel Prize Winner. Interpreting a Public Literary Conversation

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Abstract: This article examines the unfolding of interaction in a growing and, so far, scarcely examined social and cultural practice – interpreter-mediated public literary conversations. In this context, the activity of interpreters, although indispensable when authors and audiences do not share a common language, is sometimes regarded as a “necessary evil” that allegedly causes delays and information loss. Exploring an interpreter-mediated public literary conversation with Nobel Laureate Svetlana Alexievich as a case in point, the focus of this article is rather on what the presence of an interpreter might add to the shared performance on stage. Attention is drawn to the temporal evolvment of the interlocutor’s communicative resources, evident within narrative sequences, drawing on prosody research and research on gestures. The study suggests that, apart from keeping the non-Russian speaking audience updated on content, the interpreter’s rhythmically calibrated performance adds an energizing asset to the event as a whole. The notion of the “coupled turn”, internally hosting gestural and prosodic coherence across topical boundaries and language frame shifts, emerges as a usable unit for the analysis.

Keywords: multimodal interaction, coupled turn, gestural affiliation, antiphonal co-narration

Introduction

This article aims at highlighting some aspects of interpreter-mediated interaction, the turn-taking conditions that are shaped as they develop in distinct gestures, prosody, and speech rhythms. The study approaches the nature of the interpreting turn as part of the conversational flow, being both separate from and intrinsically interconnected with the corresponding original utterance. It moreover explores what and how the interpreting can contribute to the performed, unfolding narrative, apart from updating the audience.

The public conversation used as an example features the Belarusian writer Svetlana Alexievich, the host Fredrik Wadström, a journalist, who conducts the show in Russian and Swedish and Kajsa Öberg Lindsten, a Swedish translator of Alexievich’s books, here performing as interpreter. Talk is about the books, which portray ordinary people’s life and experiences of war and peace in soviet and post-soviet time. It is also about the writer’s inspirations and creative process. The conversation took place at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, two days after Alexievich was awarded the 2015 Nobel Prize in Literature. It was also broadcast live and this article is based on that recording.

Theoretical background

Within Interpreting Studies, the current investigation places itself in the discourse- and interaction-analytical field, as defined by Pöchhacker (2016: 71). This field is characteristically represented by research on interpreter-mediated face-to-face interaction, inspired by ethnomethodology and conversation analysis,

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encompassing aspects of multimodality (e. g. Biagini et al. 2017; Straniero-Sergio 1999; Wadensjö 1998, 2008; Davitti and Pasquandrea 2017). Interpreter-mediated interaction is here explored as joint activity rather than as sequences of separate text production and translation moves. As highlighted by the work of Wadensjö (1998, 2008) in conversations, the interpreter is normally given and takes on responsibility for building coherence and contextual continuity within and across topical episodes (for topical episodes in multipart conversations, see Korolija and Linell 1996).

The studies collected by Hausendorf (2007), another important source of inspiration, present various aspects of temporality as expressed in multimodal elements of conversational interaction. The authors show how conversational tasks are performed lingually as well as extra-lingually, via “reconstructed structures” (Hausendorf 2007a: 15).

This implies structures of interactional sequentiality, captured in phenomena covered by such as prospectivity and retrospectivity in prosody, the rhythmical configuration of utterances and trajectories (Couper-Kuhlen 2007), or the evolvment and synchronization of gestures and talk (Streeck 2007).

Furthermore, it has been of great use to take part of the earlier observations of prosodic orientation in turn-transitional speech rhythm, list format intonation, and other phonetic significances in talk-in-interaction (e. g. Auer et al. 1999). The research on inter-turn prosody has continuously developed to discern different kinds of parameters operating for example in turn endings and onsets or in cross-cultural speech rhythm typology (Szczepek Reed 2009, 2010). In the current work, conversational speech rhythm has been studied on the level of the intonational phrase within the prosodic hierarchy (Selkirk 1978).

Another important research field is Gesture Studies. Gestures can be experienced as intimately intertwined with speech, while at the same time being separate from it. As Kendon notes, “gestures, like verbal expressions, may be vehicles for the expression of thoughts and so participate in the tasks of language” (2007: 25).

Psychologist and psycho-linguist McNeill (2005) goes further and claims that verbal, para-verbal (intonation), and non-verbal utterances (gazes, gestures, postures) are never separate communicative tracks, but together always represent whole expressional entities, made perceptible simultaneously in several, merging modes (see also Duncan et al. 2007: 3). McNeill (2008, 2018), who suggested a basic gesture taxonomy of iconic, metaphoric, deictic, and beat gestures, develops the view that mimics and gestures grow out of the same source as does speech, and that they can be regarded as originating from and belonging to the same communicative impulse. He puts a special focus on the speech-gesture synchrony and co-expressivity and calls the “pre-verbal” phase of the formulation process, coming forth in gestures or onsets of gestures, the “growth point”, that is, “the initial form of a thinking-for-speaking unit” (McNeill 2008, 2018: 8). McNeill’s Growth Point Theory gains relevance for interaction when he looks at the formulation activities arising in conversational situations.

Following a psycho-linguistic line of individual cognition, however, he concludes that the growth point or starting point in the process of utterance formation can also be inherently social, that is, interdependent of interactional events within a conversation, a “micro-genesis” (Duncan et al. 2007: 6) of co-constructed meaning and modelling of speech production; people can “think together” (*ibid.*) and are highly sensitive to each other’s formulation processes.

Dausendschön-Gay, Gülich, and Krafft (2007: 181), Streeck (2009) and Müller (2013) are among those who demonstrate that the act of formulating utterances in conversation results not only from individual cognition but also from an interactional, multimodally performed endeavour. Streeck et al. (2011) assert that “the simultaneous use of diverse semiotic resources – currently discussed under the heading multimodality [...] – is pervasive in the organization of endogenous human action”. Goodwin also talks about the “laminated organization of human action” (2013: 11).

To sum up, the prosodic, postural, and gestural properties of talk-in-interaction are intimately connected with speech – and with each other. Together they form a unity of embodied human expression (Kendon 2000) and interrelate, be it accompanying, reinforcing, contradicting, or in some other way interacting with each other. By employing Gumperz’s (1992) notion of “contextualization cues”, the phonetician and interactionalist Müller appositely put it as follows already in 1999:

Contextualization cues such as rhythm, speech rate and loudness, as well as the gestural and facial symbolism that accompanies and helps to interpret utterances, [...] are usually employed as indexical signs that gain their signaling value and their context-creating force only as situated occurrences. Indexical signs, [...] display a special kind of reflexivity: They co-interpret each other, attributing meaning to each other in a joint and reciprocal manner. (Müller 1999: 153)

Methods and research questions

The study directs attention to the intertwinement of speakers' modal expressiveness in interpreter-mediated conversational interaction. Applying an interactionistic approach, our basic unit of research is the situated, shared activity and particular focus lies on the sequential, cross-turn interrelatedness of two speakers' modal expressions in time. Methodologically, this implies that after having established utterances as pertaining to a source language or constituting renditions of such utterances (Pöchhacker 2016: 11), we explore them further, as a united adjacent pair, here called a "coupled turn".¹ As such, every twofold turn couple in itself forms a local topical sub-episode (Korolija 1998). In practical terms, it means that the single turn constructional units are first analyzed individually, as a preparation for the subsequent scrutiny of their multimodal interrelatedness. This method applies explicitly for the gestural analyses in excerpts 1, 3 and 4, worked out by means of series of frames on gestural phrases, in the presentation reduced to the few ones providing the most distinct evidence for the prospective and retrospective interplay between the turns. Converted into drawings, the frames/images explicitly highlight hand formations, faces and body positions. In excerpt 2, the methodological discovery procedures for rhythmic analysis described in Auer et al. (1999: 36–46) have been a guideline. The inter-turn prosody of speech rhythm (Couper-Kuhlen 2007) was derived by careful and repeated listening, with the notion of prosodic prominence (Auer et al. 1999: 37) in mind, eventually discerning what Auer (ibid.: 13) calls a "perceived rhythm", until a consistent regularity of beats throughout the alternating voices could be stated. By locating the nuclear stresses of the speakers' intonational phrases, the beat intervals were measured and defined according to Couper-Kuhlen and Ford's (2004) method on sound patterns in interaction.

Applying the coupled turn as analytical unit, the research questions put forward are the following: How does interpreting affect narration on stage, and vice versa? What does the specific conversational context in focus here imply for the character of the interpreted turn? How can the interpreted turn be described in the context of its sequential surrounding: As a relayed version of the prior turn(s)? As an imitation? As an affirmation? As an extending repair, for those who did not understand? As a complement to the ongoing, original speaker's turn – an attachment as it were, or a turn in its own right?

To sum up, some multimodal traits of an interpreter-mediated public literary conversation are investigated, to see how local continuity and coherence are built and maintained across turns, topical boundaries, and language frame shifts. The main attention is directed towards the temporal evolution of the interlocutors' use of multimodal resources in narratives.

Data and setting

The Public Service live broadcast, forming the video data² for this article, was disseminated in Sweden, in the writer's home country Belarus, and streamed online. The recording includes shifts between three camera angles and occasional zooming on a specific performer. The center-left hand side of the stage is illuminated by a spotlight and furnished with three chairs and a table with water and glasses for the writer, the interpreter, and the moderator. All three are wearing small headset microphones. The right-hand side of

¹ The term "coupled turn" applies only to spoken originals and subsequent renditions and is deduced from the *linked-ness* between and *united action* of the two turns at talk. It must not be confused with Toury's concept of "coupled pairs", suggested for *comparisons* between (segments of) original and translated texts, selected for analyses (Toury 1995: 87–101). 60

² Officially available <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMmKKBt8NH4>>, published Dec. 12, 2015.

the stage is dark, except during two longer reading sections, when actors recite passages from the books mentioned in the conversation. The interpreter, sitting at an angle close to the writer, renders her utterances into Swedish. Being the translator of many of Alexievich's books into Swedish, she is well familiar with the author's background, idiolect, and life-world.

The total duration of the video is 105 minutes, 66 of these form the conversational parts which were transcribed and analysed thematically. Four segments were chosen for closer analysis. The excerpts presented in the study are drawn from these. The transcript conventions used (for key, see appendix) combine the classical Jeffersonian and GAT systems (Selting et al. 2009), employed in studies by some of the researchers referred to above (Couper-Kuhlen 2007, Streeck 2007).³ All transcriptions are done in the original languages from the video recording. Software such as Quickplayer, InqScribe and iMovie were used to manipulate speed and produce frames. Converted into mp3-format, selected parts could be analysed for temporal details in Audacity. Translation into English was done line-by-line, more literally than idiomatically, for the purpose of line correspondence and exposure of the phenomena illustrated: Russian-to-English in straight types, Swedish-to-English in *italics*.

Analysis

The analysis concentrates on multimodal interactional events taking place mainly between Alexievich and the interpreter, in excerpt 4 also including input from the audience. The focus predominantly lies on gestures and gazes in excerpt 1a/b, prosodic features in excerpt 2a/b, imagery and pre-formulation activities in excerpt 3a/b, and multimodal upgrading in excerpt 4a/b. Svetlana Alexievich's (here: SA) and the interpreter Kajsa Öberg Lindsten's (IN) turns, first investigated separately, are then explored as the entirety of a coupled turn in the context of an unfolding sequence.

Gestural affiliation and enactment

The first excerpt contains the answer to a question from the moderator Fredrik Wadström (MO), put by him initially in Swedish, for the on-site audience, and then in Russian, addressing Svetlana Alexievich.

Excerpt 1: End of the moderator's question, 00:04:07–00:04:22.

- 1 MO: ... kunde du ana då, när du började samla material till
 ... *could you imagine, when you started collecting the material for*
 2 den första boken, att det här var början på en lång resa,
 the first book, that this was the beginning of a long journey?
 3 Вы могли себя представить, что это начала долгого пути,
 Could you imagine, that it is the beginning of a long journey,
 4 когда вы встретили первой женщин для первой книги?
 when you met the first woman in the first book?

The moderator asks whether Alexievich knew, at the time when she 'started collecting material' (Swedish version), or when she 'met the first woman' (Russian version) for her first book, that it would be the

³ Gail Jefferson (1938-2008) developed the first-generation conversation analysis transcript notation system. The *Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem* (GAT) is similar to the Jefferson system but includes signs for gestures and prosody.

beginning of her career as a writer. The difference between the versions turns out to have some significance for the interpreting.

– *No, of course not*, Alexievich answers straight away (excerpt 1a, line 1), explaining that she did not know about her future life as an author when meeting the first woman for an interview. After the continuer *but* and a tiny pause, she starts recalling the voices of the women from her childhood.

Excerpt 1a: “... sound of women’s talk”, 00:04:24–00:05:05.

- 1 SA: Нет конечно, но: (.) .h э мне с детства когда я жила в деревне
 No of course not, but uh ever since my childhood when I lived in the village
- 2 ещё очень нравились...э...женские рассказы, потому что (.)
 I very much liked ... uh ... the stories of the women, because
- 3 в послевоенные деревни только женщины жили белорусские,
 in the post-war villages only women were living, Belarusian,
- 4 э мужчин практичес- практически не было (.) и поэтому::
 uh men practic- practically there were no and therefore,
- 5 вот эта то^{#im.1}нальность э женского разговора,
 that very tonality uh of women's talk
- 6 вот эта пронзит^ьельность женского разговора .h а а она м м
 that specific penetrating sound of women's talk and and it hm
- 7 она была мне знакома (.) и там было какая такая интонация
 was familiar to me and there was such a kind of intonation
- 8 э э ко[•]торая сов- >совершенно иначе объясняла мир.<((turns to IN))
 uh uh which com- completely differently explained the world.

In the whole first half of Alexievich’s turn, there only occurs one small onset of a gesture before the word *village* (1a, line 1); her hands and body basically do not move at all, except for inklings of head-shakes at *only women were living* (1a, line 3), and *men practically (there were) no* (1a, line 4). She looks mainly forward, turning her face and gazes either a little down or up all the time, slightly frowning. This turn is her very first utterance in the current event; it occurs somewhat hesitatingly and the formulations grow forth accompanied by small *uh* and *hm* sounds. Eventually, the trajectory leads to the rising tone and parallel gesture of the deictic expression of *that very tonality* (1a, line 5), with a prosodic, as well as a gestural, emphasis on the central word *tonality*. From here on, more gesticulation takes place, culminating in a stroke apex on *completely differently*, which occurs just

before the retraction or recovering of the gesture and the verbally accelerated closing of the turn (1a, line 8; for gesture types, phases, and phrases, see Kendon 2004). In lines 5, 6, and 7, her gesture changes into a beat type, her hand making tiny rhythmical movements up and down, signaling “something the speaker feels to be important” (McNeill 2008, 2018).

Alexievich’s gestures in the turn, shown above in excerpt 1a, are one-handed, close to the rest position near her head, and performed in a loosely closed hand formation, only opening up with stretched fingers at the very end in order to highlight *completely differently* (1a, line 8). She closes by turning towards the interpreter, who attentively has been watching Alexievich’s facial expressions.

Taking the turn, the interpreter gives the audience a hasty glance, looks down, and then starts rendering. The interpreter’s gaze moves during the whole first part of her turn, first to the moderator, then to the audience and back in front of her, to Alexievich again, and so on. This is, as well, the interpreter’s very first turn on the microphone that evening, and her fleeting glances seem to make a quick reconnaissance, checking her position on stage and trying to look across the dazzling stage headlights to catch sight of the audience.

Excerpt 1b: “... the intensity of telling”, 00:05:06–00:05:35.

- 9 IN: \uparrow au ↓ \uparrow mo \uparrow au
Eh...nä, de kunde jag naturligtvis inte ana
Uh... no, of course I couldn't imagine that
- 10 \downarrow → wr
när ja började o o samla material till denna bok.
when I started to gather the material for this book.
- 11 \uparrow mo \uparrow au
Men däremot hade jag ända sen min barndom
However, ever since my childhood I had
- 12 \uparrow mo \uparrow au
varit fascinerad av kvinnornas berättelser
been fascinated by the stories of the women
- 13 \uparrow mo ↔ \uparrow au \uparrow mo
i den belarusiska by där jag själv växte upp.
in the Belarusian village where I myself grew up.
- 14 \downarrow \downarrow \downarrow
| #im.2 | eh intonationen, tonen i berättelsen, intensiteten i berättelsen
eh the intonation, the sound of the telling, the intensity of the telling
- 15 | \downarrow \uparrow \downarrow \uparrow
o deras beskrivning av världen som skiljde sig
and their description of the world which differed
- 16 \downarrow \downarrow
från andra beskrivningar av världen som jag hade hört.
from other descriptions of the world that I had heard.

Similar to Alexievich, whose speech she renders, the interpreter starts her turn with a *no, of course (not)* (excerpt 1b, line 9) as the beginning of the expected answer, but she makes an insertion – *when I started gathering material for this book* (1b, line 10) – which did not directly occur in the words of Alexievich. Her obvious reason is to re-contextualize the Swedish version of the moderator’s question and create coherence within her language frame. When recapitulating the narrative picture of Alexievich as a child in a Belarusian village, listening to women’s storytelling, her eyes still wander around, but her hands rest. Arriving at the specific sound of the peasant women’s voices – the point where Alexievich

started to support her speech with gestures – the interpreter likewise underlines her following phrases with hand movements, but hers are far stronger than the original, as is her pronunciation. She uses the common ring gesture, with the index finger and thumb touching each other (Kendon 2004: 238–247), as an indexical gesture when accentuating the special character of the women’s voices and intonation. In fact, the highlighting of the Belarusian women storytellers’ tone undergoes a vocal/prosodic and gestural upgrading from the original to the interpreted version, a phenomenon typically evident in certain intra-turn repairs or repetitions in a single individual’s talk (Szczepek Reed 2010). Here, the upgrading involves two speakers’ coupled turn. It shapes and explicitly places into the center of attention the cardinal subject(s): the writer’s informants during her research on female war experiences, the protagonists of Alexievich’s earliest work.

The setting of the village is passed without elaboration in the interpreter’s version, and the fact that nearly all those left in these villages after the war were women is not mentioned. The interpreter is seemingly focusing more on re-evoking Alexievich’s emotions than on reproducing her utterance as a series of registered contents. The seeking process of formulating a certain quality in her childhood experiences, as evident in Alexievich’s sound extensions, delaying humming and co-expressive gesture-speech performance of word search (image 1), is reinforced and further built on toward a re-realization in the interpreting (image 2). The writer’s gestures re-appear in the interpreter’s turn, which seem to have various functions.

Image 1



SA: “...that very sound” (1a, line 5)

Image 2



IN: “...the intonation” (1b, line 14)

First, the “social resonance of gesture” (McNeill 2008, 2018: 13), as in showing shared feelings, or as a means of joint storytelling, conveys mutual understanding. For the interpreter, the mirroring of a gesture also functions as a technique to underline what she takes as the speaker’s core message. Hence, her utterance, in its multimodal entirety, is tightly connected in the coupled turn – our unit of analysis.

To conclude from the first example: The interpreter (excerpt 1b) seems primarily oriented towards fulfilling two tasks: 1) to create and maintain coherence within the overall sequence structure, that is, to render Alexievich’s answer (excerpt 1a) to the moderator’s question; and 2) to communicate Alexievich’s feelings and attitude, her expressive recalling of voices from her childhood. She reproduces the original story, “re-presenting” (*relaying by replaying*) Alexievich’s voice (Wadensjö 1998: 247). Watching and listening carefully, she is prepared to latch on just as Alexievich stops talking, and replays to the audience what had come forward in the immediately preceding “gestural mimicry” (McNeill 2008, 2018: 12): the inner mode of Alexievich’s utterance.

Prosodic affiliation and antiphonal speech

In this paragraph, the analysis will focus on the role of prosody and speech rhythm in the exchange of turns between the writer and the interpreter.

The research on speech rhythms as interactional phenomena, conducted for example by Auer, Couper-Kuhlen, and Müller (Auer et al. 1999), demonstrates a diversity of context-sensitive multimodal properties concerning talk-in-interaction. Pitch, stress, volume, and duration of speech sounds can merge into a pattern of beats, establishing itself as a rhythm, for the speaker as well as for the listener. According to Auer, rhythmic

beat can be used by interlocutors as a means of facilitating or recognizing relevant places for turn taking, preference organization, and closings (Auer 1999: 33). Examples where rhythms become especially tangible are in list formats and narratives (Couper-Kuhlen and Ford 2004, Imrie 2008). In the current data, some of these findings seem indeed applicable. There are passages where the narratives of the writer, in alternation with the renderings of the interpreter, show not only how rhythmic patterns are established as regular, that is, how isochrony is kept throughout longer stretches of talk by one speaker, but also how it is maintained across turns (Auer et al. 1999, Couper-Kuhlen 2007, Imrie 2008, Szczepek Reed 2010). In interpreter-mediated conversations, prosodic-rhythmical alignment can undeniably be kept across language borders, as will be shown in the next couple of excerpts.

The conversation with Alexievich has now come to her book on the local people's experiences of the 1986 nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, Ukraine. The writer's recollection of her visit to this town comes in relatively short utterances, interspersed by the interpreter's renderings. Together they shape a significant rhythm, maintained throughout sequences of up to ten or more turns. Excerpt 2 exemplifies how Alexievich's and the interpreter's turns prosodically interlaced.

Excerpt 2a: “ ... when you arrived at Chernobyl”, 00:54:37–00:55:08.

- 1 WR: А **тут** ты прие**џ**аешь, и тебе **н:ичего** не по**н**ятно –
But here you arrive, and you understand nothing -
- 2 IN: Men när man kom till Tjer**n**obyl, då förstod man <inte**falls**>
But when you arrived at Chernobyl, you didn't understand at all
- 3 ↓<°vad det var som hade hänt°>.
what it was that had happened.
- 4 WR: **Всё** как будто тоже ↓**самое** – дере**в**:**в**ье(.)э какие-то **пти:цы** летают, ↑да, (.)
Everything (looked) as if it were the same – trees uh (some) birds flying, yes,
- 5 э... вот ре**ка**: течёт, как **буд**то всё тоже ↓**самое**;
uh ... the river flowing on, as if it were all the same;
- 6 IN: Allt såg ut precis som fö**ru**t – **få**:glarna flög, **trä**den stod där,
Everything looked like before – the birds were flying, the trees were standing there,
- 7 / 3 /
floderna flöt ↓fram. ↑**All**t var precis som innan... ↓°olyckan°.
the rivers were flowing on. Everything was exactly like before ... the disaster.


At the end of her first utterance (2a, line 1), Alexievich does not go all the way down with her voice but stays in a mid-levelled hold position, and thus projects a later continuation (Local and Kelly 1986: 192). The interpreter immediately comes in and catches up. Like earlier, she re-contextualizes what the question was about, specifying what Alexievich here mentions as *there* (2a, line 1), namely *Chernobyl* (2a, line 2). The writer's stress (and prolongation of the n) on *н:ичего* (*n:nothing*) is re-stressed by the interpreter exactly at the same (semantic) point, when saying *nothing at all* locally speeded up. The interpreter's voice goes down at the end of the utterance (2a, line 3), completing it in such a way, as if Alexievich's and her own utterance had belonged to the same turn, both parts jointly coming to an end. The prosodic retrospectivity (Couper-Kuhlen 2007: 80) thus stretches itself backward across the interpreter's, and into the first part of the coupled turn. At the same time, the interpreter, in allocating the turn prospectively to Alexievich, projects for the next coupled turn. Excerpt 2a/b contains four coupled turns of Russian and Swedish talk, beginning in lines 1, 4, 8, and 12. In line 4 (2a), three items are listed. The list is recounted thoroughly by the interpreter, even if the first and second items have changed places (*birds* and *trees* instead of Alexievich's

trees and *birds*) (2a, lines 6–7). The repeated prefacing and closing of the list format (Selting 2007) align the rendition to the established rhythm.

After the third item (*rivers*), the interpreter’s prosodic closing again forms a closing for the preceding original. She goes all the way down with her voice and adds, silently and in very low pitch, ... *the disaster* (2a, line 7), as a final post-ending of the completed turn couple.

In her next turn, Alexievich elaborates the picture of the Chernobyl landscape, prosodically continuing on the rhythm established between her and the interpreter.

Excerpt 2b: “may God preserve you”, 00:55:09–00:55:27.

- 8 WR: Очень **жар**ко ну тебе говорят упа[↑]си ↓**Бог** купаться в реке; (.)
 It was very hot but you were told may God preserve you from bathing in the river;
- 9  in
 - ↑Нель[↑]зя купаться в ↓реке.
 -it is forbidden to bathe in the river.
- 10 IN: °ja° de va **vä**ldigt väldit varmt, men folk sa för ↑**Guds** skull,
 Yes it was very very hot, but people said for God's sake,
- 11 försök inte å bada i ↓**f**lo den;
 don't try to bathe in the river.
- 12 WR: нель[↑]зя сесть на ↓**з**емлю.
 You may not sit down on the earth.
- 13 IN: ↑**Sätt** dej inte på ↓**m**arken;
 Don't sit down on the earth;

At the end of line 8 (in 2b), when saying *may God preserve you from bathing in the river*, and by going half-way down in pitch and doing the by-now established usual holding, the interpreter does not latch on immediately as expected. Obviously, Alexievich takes this as a possible request for repair, and reformulates her last phrase in a plainer way: *it is forbidden to bathe in the river* (2b, line 9). In the meantime, the interpreter has caught the significance of the somewhat devotional, religious expression *may God preserve you* (упаси Бог), which Alexievich had used in citing the inhabitants of Chernobyl. The writer’s sensitivity to a silence that lasted for a fraction of a second gives a hint about the strength of her expectation with regard to the established speech rhythm. The narrative about the contaminated landscape goes on in a similar way for some time, that is, Alexievich repeatedly ends up in a prosodic hold, and the interpreter leads their common trajectory to a prosodic closing.

To demonstrate the appearance of rhythmic isochrony in a stretch of talk including several turns, turn shifts, and language-code shifts, lines 1–7 of excerpt 2a are shown in a waveform (see Figure 1). The segment contains the preface, the onset to the list, the list itself (three items), and the closing of it. All these appear first in the original (Russian) and then in the interpreted (Swedish) versions, making up two coupled turns, that is, four turns in all. The waveform visualizes a basic timeline, allowing to mark on it the prosodically prominent beats, combined stress by loudness, pitch and duration. The “perceived rhythm” (Auer 1999: 13), is constituted by the nuclear stresses in the speakers’ intonational phrases, as indicated in transcript 2a, and by significant on-beats or upbeats at turn transitions.

In Figure 1, track I marks the prosodically prominent beats (or significant pauses) and their intervals. Track II marks a proposed measured regularity of beats, based on the average intervals of the perceived beats. The isochronal intervals established during a phrase are not exactly identical with the measured ones, but most of them are very nearly so, a deviance of as much as 20 % being within the limit of perceptibility as regular beats (Couper-Kuhlen 1999: 52).

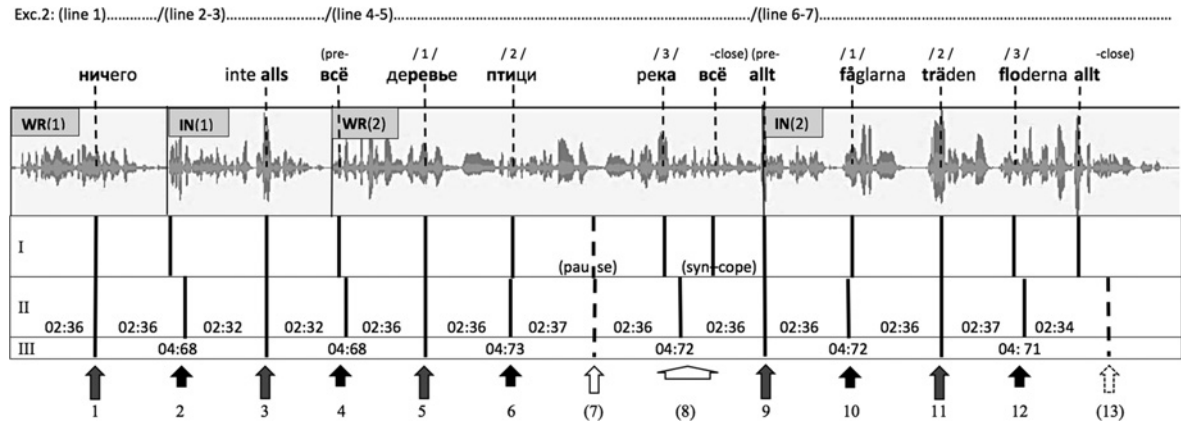


Figure 1: Isochronous perceived rhythm. Waveform of 30 seconds of speech (excerpt 2a, lines 1–7).

Beat 1, 2, and 3 (in SA’s and IN’s turns, excerpt 2a, lines 1–3) project the anticipation of beats to come. The rhythm is further established in beat 4, confirmed in beat 5, continued in beat 6 (in SA’s turn, lines 4–5), and thereafter (from beat 9 in IN’s turn, lines 6–7) going on until beat 12 (and beyond). The different lengths of the beat-marking arrows in the numbered bottom line show a perceived supra-rhythm, a regular alternation between strong and weak beats.

On the whole, the majority of perceived beats coincide with the ascertainable, fairly regular, measured ones, to make up a solid rhythm, five of them being especially salient (1, 3, 5, 9, and 11). An irregularity at beat 7, noticeable as an (inter-turn) pause, perceptible and thus countable as a beat (Auer 1999: 11), is followed by a syncope (8) at the end of Alexievich’s second turn. White arrows mark projected but not acoustically realized beats. The momentary ‘disorder’ at beat 8 is repealed by the interpreter’s onset at beat 9, falling into the former regularity of the joint rhythmical pattern. The noteworthy, underlying supra-rhythm of every second beat, established in the first two turns indicates a still wider prosodic prospective trajectory (Couper-Kuhlen 2007: 72).

The alternately shaping and maintaining of a common speech rhythm, affiliating to each other in overall prosodic trajectories, evokes the impression of declamatory storytelling, not unlike so-called scansions. These are phenomena defined as “highly isochronous, loudly spoken passages [...] with syntactic or lexical parallelism and/or hyperbole as well as with list structures on the verbal level” (Auer 1999: 34), and are for example described as occurring in the storytelling of Southern Italian everyday conversations (Müller 1999). The combination of the isochronous scansion character, and the interpreted turns being semantic-pragmatic repeats, strikingly recalls *call-and-response*, or *responsorial* chanting, also called *antiphony*, signifying an alteration between two voices where sound effects are echoed. In the current case of a public literary talk, it becomes evident that coupled turns in consecutively interpreted storytelling can obtain the character of antiphony.

Pre-formulation and the interpreting of metaphors

Towards the end of the conversation, Alexievich tells about her new, ongoing book project, which is about love. Confessing that it is not easy to get people to talk about love in an unconventional way, she seeks for the right expression for what she means. Slowing down her speech, she slightly lifts both hands to help bring forth what she searches for in her mind. She laughs smilingly, while her two-handed symmetrical gesture rises to a pre-stroke preparation position (excerpt 3a, line 1). Both her hands face each other, hovering in front of her with the palms turned downward, making a series of small isochronous twist movements and leading to a two-handed stroke apex on *small shrine* (3a, line 2). Going into the following retraction phase, her fingers are loosely cupped and then closed, while transforming into an affirmative or settling beat gesture before ending up in a (still two-sided) hold position.

Excerpt 3a: “Crystalline”, 01:39:38–01:39:47.

1 (h)m... (h)m... Потому что это такое хрустальное как бы состояние
 (h)m...(h)m... Because it is such a crystalline sort of condition
(oo).....
_o_o_o_o_____oo_____/_____/_____/_____/_____ (hold)

2 такой э э хрустальный (#im.3) сундуточок, который каждый точень хра↓нит-
 such a uh uh crystalline small shrine, which everybody very much keeps safe -

The gestural-verbal co-expression process thus stretches from the candidate formulation of *Because it is such a crystalline sort of condition* (3a, line 1), as a pre-state of something more conceivable to come, to the new, recycling attempt in *such a uh uh crystalline, small shrine* (3a, line 2). Here the speaker seems to be holding an object in her hands, though an object consisting of “an idea or an abstraction”, modeling an iconic gesture for the sought-after metaphor (McNeill 2008, 2018: 4). In this way, expressions of various modalities (verbal utterance, humming, hand movements, temporal delay) are jointly used to perform an activity of metaphor search/elaboration. Alexievich’s utterance lands in a hold position of both voice and gesture, thus indicating that the meaning of the gesture stretches all the way forward into the interpreter’s turn, signifying the turn allocation – as well as prospectively purporting its searching character into it.

The interpreter, again carefully having watched the writer’s expressions, starts hesitantly, with *because it is* (3b, line 3). She begins to raise one hand, with an inkling of a ring gesture, all during an emerging body movement of slightly twisting around back and forth, and slowly changing posture. Meanwhile, she twice pronounces the word *crystalline*, mirroring Alexievich’s candidate plus recycled formulation, the second time affirmatively, like a repair, in combination with *condition* (3b, line 3). While going on with *like a small ...* (end of line 3), her body posture comes to a rest, her gaze hastily wandering between the moderator, Alexievich, and the audience in saying *shrine of crystal* (line 4), as the core message and searched-for metaphor, which in her version comes completely without gestures. Then, a two-sided openhanded gesture arises and is held, palms turned inward to herself, with the gaze down on her hands for a short moment, at *saves very carefully, uh* (end of line 4). Immediately looking up (line 5), she consolidates that same gesture by beating it a couple of times at *and which you keep to yourself*, after which she finally lands both hands on her legs.

Excerpt 3b: “out of crystal”, 01:39:48–01:40:03.

3 IN: (h) för de ä(h) sån här kristallisk, e kristalliskt tillstånd, som ett litet
 because it is such a crystalline, uh cristalline condition, like a small ...
(o)....+ ((slightly turning back and forth)).....
 (#im.4)

4 skrin av kristall, som var o en bevarar väldigt noga, eh
 shrine out of crystal, which each and every one preserves very carefully, uh
(oo)_____oo_____/_____/_____/_____/_____

5 och håller för sig själv. (#im.5)
 and which you keep to yourself
(oo).....

The interpreter here re-enacts not only Alexievich’s word and metaphor search, but also the actual process of its seeking and finding, in parallel with her own finding and weighing the adequate translation of the metaphor. The initial quality of slight hesitance in her posture and voice, with a tendency to a shoulder

shrug, is a propositional attitude (Streeck 2007: 162) for, or a commentary on, what she is saying, and adds an accent of the labour of word search, which falls off when proving the crystal shrine metaphor well to be found. Furthermore, she extends on and intensifies the aspect of keeping it safe (3b, line 5; 3a, line 2). The reenactment of Alexievich’s “growth point” procedure shows not only a repetition of the process but also an explicitation, a continuation of its (plausibly intended) direction, ending in the post-formulation of *keep to yourself*. In this way a three-step procedure for reproducing the writer’s metaphor formulation of the *crystalline, small shrine* is observable in the interpreter’s interactional behaviour: 1) prospective listening and pre-formulation while Alexievich speaks; 2) a tentative search at *such a ... crystalline*; and 3) landing in the metaphor and its recipient-oriented translation, continuing its direction, with the gaze inward at *to yourself*. The three moments are caught in images 3–5:

Image 3 (moment 1)



SA: “small shrine” (3a, line 2)

Image 4 (moment 2)



IN: “such a crystalline” (3b, line 3)

Image 5 (moment 3)



IN: “to yourself” (3b, line 5)

In this 25-second segment of the exchange, the co-expressiveness of gesture and speech – first in Alexievich’s, and then, as a continuation in the interpreter’s turn – shows the gesturing first to lighten the speakers’ load in getting on with their formulation process, and then to share the burden of speech itself, going “beyond reflecting thought and play[ing] a role in shaping it” (Goldin-Meadow 2007: 45). This is going on individually in each speaker, but in the series of interactional moves, tightly linking together the two turns, one and the same word (or metaphor) search is made visible, Alexievich projecting and the interpreter completing its finding and passing it on to the audience.

Narrative resolution and the interpreter’s upgrading

The analysis of the following excerpt exhibits how the interpreter draws the dramaturgical line of the narrative course, enhancing a gradual development onto the denouement, and making it clear to all listeners. The performance is moving toward its end, the topic (in continuation of and soon after excerpt 3) being how Alexievich gathers everyday life experiences of love for her ongoing literary project. She starts an anecdote on how she happens to be riding in a taxi at home in Minsk. Noticing the driver being very upset, she asks him what the matter is, whereupon he tells her that his wife had just left him. She feels empathy and asks him to tell more, and all of a sudden realizes that this would be very valuable material for her collection of stories about love.

For the analysis of this passage, some multimodal features are marked in the transcript (rising and falling tone, stress, increasing volume, laughter, applause), to show the trajectory of growing amusement. In first announcing a list format by saying *and he starts telling about* (4a, line 1), Alexievich counts three items (4a, line 2). Then she renders her own input into the conversation with the driver (4a, line 3) and starts laughing while stating that she had wished to have her tape recorder with her. The comical effect arises in the contrast between, on the one hand, the genuine empathy for the person, and, on the other, a hardheaded, self-interested wish to collect it for her own use, which together make up the point of the story (4a, lines 3 and 4).

gesticulation upgrades, firmly directing the audience's attention to the humorous aspect of Alexievich's story and offering the listeners a good laugh.

Summary and conclusions

The analysis of excerpt 1 shows how the interpreter's gestural affiliation results in a process of continuous unfolding, and an enhancing of the emotional message of Alexievich's utterances, foregrounding the pervasive quality of the Belarusian women's tales and their way of speaking. In excerpt 2, describing the poisoned landscape of Chernobyl, the prosodic affiliation in pitch, volume, and speech rate, with its rhythm forming an antiphonal sound, shapes a trajectory of interwoven voices, as it were, with seamless turn transitions and overbridged language shifts. Therefore, the suggestion is to refer to these sequences as *antiphonal speech*, or *antiphonal co-narration*. Excerpt 3 demonstrates the formulation process "in the bud", interactionally at work in the interpreter's double-layered search: finding the translation for the metaphor and fitting it into a viable recipient design, which altogether upgrades its significance. An explicit upgrading occurs in excerpt 4, where the two-step unfurling climax is reinforced at every step, with increasing vocal and gestural expression in the interpreter's multimodal responses.

Out of these observations, as a usable analytical unit, emerged the coupled turn, a bilingual utterance pair as a key structure for examining the effects of interpreting the conversational flow, by the proximity and interrelatedness of the two parts of which it consists. The entire set of multimodal features at work in talk-in-interaction, that is, audial, visual, and kinetic expressions, encompassing intonation, gesture, gaze, and posture appears to be available for the interpreter to build meaning and coherence, in the perception of ongoing interaction as well as in the production of renditions.

A tangible characteristic of a coupled turn in the interpreted literary conversation in front of a bilingual audience is its stepwise progression in two parallel, though different paces, determined by either time or content. The sequential, *temporal* progression can, very simplified, be schematized as follows (Figure 2, where the straight line represents the original turn, and the dashed line represents the interpreted turn):

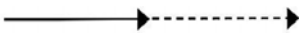


Figure 2: Temporal progression.

Contrary to this, the *topical* progression, based on the contents, digresses from the timeline in going back and recapitulating the episode just pronounced (Figure 3), aiming for the same point where the original ended:

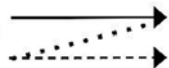


Figure 3: Topical progression.

If proceeding consequently, with each of the two only obeying its own law, a counter-movement in the interpreted talk occurs: the co-textual regression or retake of the topical content withholds the natural forward flow of sequences, slowing it down to about half its pace in real time. According to the analysis pursued in the current data, however, the perceptible progression, by means of multimodal resources both moving forward and keeping up backward, could be captured in a third model (Figure 4):

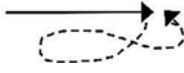


Figure 4: Combined topical and temporal progression.

The two ruling forces combined, energized by the dynamics of gestural and prosodic patterns over phrasal and turn boundaries, potentially enable the interlocutors to transform the counter-movement into a meaningful, expressively enriched conversational process.

The study has examined how the regressive-progressive discontinuity in interpreted talk is handled by a particular constellation of speakers – Nobel Prize Laureate Svetlana Alexievich and the translator of her books into Swedish, Kajsa Öberg Lindsten who performs as her interpreter. As a result, owing to their interactional cooperative achievements of gesturally creating continuity, and prosodically linking together prospective and retrospective positions, the repetitive, co-textually broken topic line in the second part of each coupled turn is coherently mended and integrated into its sequential surrounding. Hence, the cumulative conversational course of temporal and contentional progression appears to the listeners as acceptable and natural, in the investigated case doubtlessly reaching the goal of a staged performance with its demand of fluency and entertainment, as the audience’s responses show.

To answer the question on the sequential task and function of the interpreted turn in the sense of its conditional relevance, the current findings suggest, to begin with, that it has a series of propositional interactional properties. Not least by virtue of its multiple modal layers, the interpreted turn, that is, the second part of a coupled turn, can be grasped by the listener, as well as by the co-interlocutor, in several ways. Apart from the conventional requirement and expectation of being a repeat or reproduction of the semantic-pragmatic contents of the first part, it can moreover be perceived as

- a continuation of the first part utterance as an emergent unfolding (excerpt 1b);
- a coherence-building reconnection to co-text prior to the first part (1b; 4b);
- a responsorial echo of the first part, overbridging language and turn shifts (2a)
- a mimicry of the formulation process in the first part (3b);
- a completion of the projected action of the first part (3b);
- an upgrading or reinforcement of expression in the first part (4a; 4b);
- a spontaneous interactional (meta-)commentary on, or response to the first part, such as, for instance, a humorous reaction (4a; 4b).

By possessing one or more of these properties, the interpreted turn partly appropriates the sequential functional position of its first, source-language turn, even as it goes beyond, transforms, or even prospectively anticipates a reaction to it. Essentially, it does not represent or take the function of a new, regular turn itself within the sequential order. But in the situation of literary, often narrative talk to a bilingual audience, irrespective of the case of explicit coordination (when the interpreter clarifies formulations or re-organizes turn-taking (Wadensjö 1998: 109–10)), the interpreter’s turn may possibly and occasionally also be perceived as fairly autonomous, when it elucidates the preceding original turn (if not twisting or misrepresenting it). It thus adopts the function of an interpretive recycling of the previous utterance. In the current case, the interpreter’s retelling of Alexievich’s account turns into a second, naturally incorporated voice in co-narration, with the writer as the originator, but with an equal responsibility between her and the interpreter for the total performance. Here, the use of various modalities, “co-interpreting” and “attributing meaning to each other in a reciprocal manner” (Müller 1999: 153), enabled both Alexievich and the interpreter to achieve saliency of expression within the shared frame of a coupled turn, and give the listeners an impression of authenticity and originality.

Obviously, the case-specific inferences made here are far from generalizable to all interpreter-mediated public literary conversations. In this growing cultural practice, a genre-specific format can be identified, albeit performed in a diversity of ways (see Poignant 2018). Notably, the person acting as interpreter does not have professional interpreter education, hence no training in note taking, to perform consecutive interpreting of longer stretches of

talk. This might explain the choice of short consecutive throughout the conversation. Moreover, the models here applied for explorations of prosody and gestures are initially designed for monolingual discourse. It remains to be seen to what extent they are applicable on bilingual, interpreter-mediated discourse.

Nevertheless, demonstrating the work of multimodal, intermodal, and transmodal features in this particular conversation – in timing, transitional seamlessness, or in a gesture pointing at a core message – the study displays the explanatory potential of multimodal approaches to research on interpreter-mediated interaction. In spite of the bounded empirical base and the technical – and analytical – limitations, it points out a direction, indicative for the interrelation between original and interpreted discourse units, as suggested by the term coupled turn, further research on which would be desirable.

Transcription key

[]	overlapping speech
=	latching (no pause between two speakers)
(.)	micro-pause (no longer than 0.5 sec.)
>inte alls<	higher speed than surrounding speech
<som hade>	lower speed than surrounding speech
BERÄTTA	louder voice (increased volume)
°olyckan°	silent voice (reduced volume)
↑ ↓	rising or falling tone (pitch)
tonen	stressed syllable (bold)
.hh	breathing in
(h)	laughter within the talk
::	prolongation of speech sounds
((turns to WR))	non-verbal actions
#im.1	placement of frame grab (image) in the transcript
_____ O _____	duration of gesture; o = stroke on the emphasis of (bold) words/syllables
●	main stroke
___/___/___/___	beat, repeating short gesture strokes (Kendon 1990)
.....	preparation for or fading out of a gesture movement
☞/☞↑/☞↓	ring gesture (hold/up/down)
👁↑/👁↓	gaze (looking up/looking down)
👁mo/au	glance toward the moderator/toward the audience
☀☀☀☀☀	increasing/decreasing audience laughter (many voices)
🌿🌿🌿🌿	increasing/decreasing applause

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Bionotes

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