STUDIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Colette Moore

Quoting Speech in Early English

CAMBRIDGE

Quoting Speech in Early English

COLETTE MOORE

University of Washington

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521199087

First published 2011

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Moore, Colette.
Quoting Speech in Early English / Colette Moore.
p. cm. (Studies in English Language)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-521-19908-7 (hardback)
1. Quotation. 2. English language–Discourse analysis. 3. English language–Middle English, 1100-1500–Terms and phrases. 4. Grammar, Comparative and general–Interrogative. I. Title. II. Series.
P302.814.M66 2011
427'.02–dc22
2010045750

ISBN 978-0-521-19908-7 Hardback

Quoting Speech in Early English

Before quotation marks became widespread convention, English texts were organized more fluidly, employing varying lexical and textual strategies for marking represented discourse. When we add our present-day quotation marks to editions of Middle English texts, we also overlay our modern interpretation of speech representation, with its expectations of faithful reporting and carefully delineated voices. In doing so, we mask the less-determined nature of early speech marking, and obscure the ways that its plasticity functions as a narrative and stylistic tool. This book provides the first full study of speech representation in pre-modern English. Studying the pragmatic and discourse strategies of English texts from 1350–1600 is essential to reading Middle English works and to understanding the cultural assumptions implicit in the production of early written texts.

COLETTE MOORE is an assistant professor in the Department of English, University of Washington.

STUDIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The aim of this series is to provide a framework for original studies of English, both present-day and past. All books are based securely on empirical research, and represent theoretical and descriptive contributions to our knowledge of national and international varieties of English, both written and spoken. The series covers a broad range of topics and approaches, including syntax, phonology, grammar, vocabulary, discourse, pragmatics and sociolinguistics, and is aimed at an international readership.

Already published in this series:

Charles F. Meyer: *Apposition in Contemporary English*
Jan Firbas: *Functional Sentence Perspective in Written and Spoken Communication*
Izchak M. Schlesinger: *Cognitive Space and Linguistic Case*
Katie Wales: *Personal Pronouns in Present-Day English*
Laura Wright: *The Development of Standard English, 1300–1800: Theories, Descriptions, Conflicts*
Charles F. Meyer: *English Corpus Linguistics: Theory and Practice*
Stephen J. Nagle and Sara L. Sanders (eds.): *English in the Southern United States*
Anne Curzan: *Gender Shifts in the History of English*
Kingsley Bolton: *Chinese Englishes*
Irma Taavitsainen and Päivi Pahta (eds.): *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English*
Elizabeth Gordon, Lyle Campbell, Jennifer Hay, Margaret Maclagan, Andrea Sudbury and Peter Trudgill: *New Zealand English: Its Origins and Evolution*
Raymond Hickey (ed.): *Legacies of Colonial English*
Merja Kytö, Mats Rydén and Erik Smitterberg (eds.): *Nineteenth Century English: Stability and Change*
John Algeo: *British or American English? A Handbook of Word and Grammar Patterns*
Christian Mair: *Twentieth-Century English: History, Variation and Standardization*
Evelien Keizer: *The English Noun Phrase: The Nature of Linguistic Categorization*
Raymond Hickey: *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms*

Günter Rohdenburg and Julia Schlüter (eds.): *One Language, Two Grammars?: Differences between British and American English*

Laurel J. Brinton: *The Comment Clause in English*

Lieselotte Anderwald: *The Morphology of English Dialects: Verb Formation in Non-Standard English*

Geoffrey Leech, Marianne Hundt, Christian Mair and Nicholas Smith: *Change in Contemporary English: A Grammatical Study*

Jonathan Culpeper and Merja Kytö: *Early Modern English Dialogues: Spoken Interaction as Writing*

Daniel Schreier, Peter Trudgill, Edgar Schneider and Jeffrey Williams: *The Lesser-Known Varieties of English: An Introduction*

Hilde Hasselgård: *Adjunct Adverbials in English*

Raymond Hickey: *Eighteenth-Century English: Ideology and Change*

Charles Boberg: *The English Language in Canada: Status, History and Comparative Analysis*

Thomas Hoffmann: *Preposition Placement in English: A Usage-Based Approach*

Claudia Claridge: *Hyperbole in English: A Corpus-Based Study of Exaggeration*

Päivi Pahta and Andreas H. Jucker (eds.): *Communicating Early English Manuscripts*

Päivi Pahta and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.): *Medical Writing in Early Modern English*

Acknowledgments

This work was made possible through funding and research support from the University of Washington, the University of Michigan and the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Michigan. This research had many different forms over a number of years, and it is a pleasure to be able to thank the people who have guided it through its many incarnations. I have grown a lot over the course of this research, due in large part to the extraordinary generosity of scholars of English language history and medieval studies who have helped me to think through these concepts and to pursue these questions. Particular thanks to those who have commented on drafts of the manuscript or sections of the manuscript: Richard W. Bailey, Laurel Brinton, Anne Curzan, Merja Kytö, Tim Machan, Frances McSparran, Lesley Milroy, A. C. Spearing, Karla Taylor, Elizabeth Traugott, Míceál Vaughan and three anonymous reviewers. Helpful suggestions have also come from Michael Adams, Mary Blockley, Andreea Boboc, Michael Clanchy, Daniel Collins, Jonathan Culpeper, Jennie Evenson, Susan Fitzmaurice, Peter Grund, Barbara Kryk-Kastovsky, Donka Minkova, Päivi Pahta, Malcolm Parkes, Ad Putter, Matti Rissanen, Jane Roberts, Pamela Robinson, Herbert Schendl, Bob Stockwell, Irma Taavitsainen, Theresa Tinkle, Brita Wårvik, from my colleagues at the University of Washington, and from attendees at conferences where I have presented pieces of the work: Studies in the History of the English Language-I (May 2000), Los Angeles, California; the Society for Textual Scholarship (April 2001), New York, New York; Organization in Discourse-II (August 2002), Turku, Finland; the 37th International Congress on Medieval Studies (May 2002), Kalamazoo, Michigan; the International Society for the Linguistics of English (October 2008), Freiburg, Germany; Studies in the History of the English Language-VI (April 2009), Banff, Canada. Flaws in the work are, of course, entirely my own.

Especial thanks to Paul Schaffner of the University of Michigan *Middle English Compendium* for his critical assistance in searching the raw data of the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*; the corpus study would not have been possible without his work. I am grateful to Elena Semino and Lancaster University for the use of the Lancaster Corpus of Spoken and Written English. I have benefited from assistance at a number of libraries

and archives, particularly from Judy Avery and the University of Michigan libraries; Faye Christenberry and the University of Washington libraries; and librarians at the British Library; the Bodleian Library; the Cambridge University library; the University of London library; the Parker library at Corpus Christi College, Oxford; the Wren library at Trinity College, Cambridge; the National Library of Scotland, and the Huntington Library. Elizabeth Green performed some critically-timed research help with the corpus searching. Many thanks, finally, to Helen Barton and the editorial staff at Cambridge for all of their assistance and patience.

Images are reproduced through the kind courtesy and permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, the President and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, the British Library, and Macmillan and Co. Some material in 1.2.3 and 2.1 was adapted from two earlier articles and is included courtesy of John Benjamins and Mouton de Gruyter: (Section 1.2.3) Moore, Colette 2006. "The use of *videlicet* in Early Modern slander depositions: A case of genre-specific grammaticalization." *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 7.2: 245–263; (Section 2.1) Moore, Colette 2002. "Reporting direct speech in Early Modern slander depositions." *Studies in the History of the English Language: A Millennial Perspective*. Donka Minkova and Robert Stockwell, (eds). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 399–416. Every effort has been made to secure necessary permissions to reproduce copyrighted material in this work, though in some cases it has proved impossible to trace or contact copyright holders. If any omissions are brought to our notice, we will be happy to include appropriate acknowledgments on reprinting, or in any subsequent edition.

Thanks, finally, to my family for their help and support, especially Joel Moore, Helen Moore Kennedy, Paul LaPorte and Andrew LaPorte. This book is dedicated to my husband, Charles LaPorte, who read it more times than I could reasonably ask.

Contents

Figures

Tables

Introduction: editing reported speech

Users of present-day English take for granted our quotation marks, which indicate passages of reported speech in written texts, but these markers are a purely modern convention and cannot be found in early English manuscripts. The presence or absence of these marks nonetheless changes our reading experience and our relationship to the written language in important ways. Compare this passage transcribed from the fifteenth-century Hengwrt manuscript of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*:

> She seith nat ones nay / whan he seith yee
> Do this seith he / alredy sire seith she

to its incarnation in the *Riverside Chaucer* (1987):

> She seith nat ones "nay," whan he seith "ye."
> "Do this," seith he; "Al redy, sire," seith she.

On first glance, the addition of quotation marks in the modern edition may seem a superficial difference. What this work proposes is that the difference between these two passages is in fact substantive: that the first text comes from a writing system in which speech was marked in less pronounced ways, and that the second, through the quotation marks, adds clear tags to the levels of narrative, tacitly asserting that the speakers are quoted verbatim and making presumptive editorial decisions about narrative voice in passages where the speaker and the boundaries of the reported utterance are less clearly demarcated.

These are issues that have been touched upon by scholars in recent years, yet there has been no full study of the methods of reporting speech in pre-modern English. The need for one was suggested by Suzanne Romaine when she speculated about pre-modern written texts that "the norms for reporting speech in discourse or verse may have been different then or could have varied according to genre" (1982: 125). This work provides the sort of study that Romaine anticipated. It examines the methods of reporting speech in late medieval manuscripts and texts, and employs the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* to search a broad range of texts. Further, it positions the results of this study in their cultural and

literary context. In doing so, it raises and responds to a series of historical, linguistic and hermeneutic questions. What does it mean that manuscripts have less-determined ways of indicating reported speech? Did speakers and writers of English in the pre-modern period have the same assumptions about direct and indirect speech that contemporary speakers and writers of English have? What are the implications of these methods for our understanding of late medieval literary works? How did late medieval authors work with this fluid system of speech marking? Finally, what are the consequences of modern editorial practice, in which editors consistently add quotation marks when editing medieval texts? The answers to these questions can shed light on pre-modern conceptions of reading and writing.

Reported discourse is the intrusion of the voice (spoken or written) of one speaker or writer into the discourse of another. V. N. Vološinov's famous definition states that "Reported speech is speech within speech, utterance within utterance, and at the same time also speech about speech, utterance about utterance" (1973 [1929]: 118). The embedded "speech-within-speech" nature of reported discourse grows out of the ability – which speech reporting grants – for one speaker or writer to give the words of another. Attempting to describe the properties of this discourse embedding, though, is a thorny matter, owing to the divided allegiance of the words – their dual responsibility towards both the original context from which the words are represented and also towards the new frame into which they are being positioned. The problem is a long-standing one; Plato, for example, differentiates in Book III of the *Republic* between *mimesis*, in which the poet adopts the voice of another, and *diegesis*, in which the poet never attempts to assume the voice of another. The importance of organizing and representing discourse has made the analysis of reported speech a complex issue for linguists, narratologists, anthropologists and literary scholars, and the problems of assimilating reported speech into models of language have troubled many theorists. This is why Roman Jakobson, for example, described reported speech as a "crucial linguistic and stylistic problem" (1971: 130). Reported speech has been the subject of several full studies of present-day English that employ different linguistic approaches (Coulmas 1986; Holt and Clift 2007; Janssen and van der Wurff 1996; Semino and Short 2004; Vandelanotte 2009), and of historical French (Marnette 2005), and historical Russian (Collins 2001). Early English texts, though, can assist this conversation in important ways. The late Middle Ages are a particularly fruitful place to examine the tangling and untangling of quotation, as Bakhtin mentions in passing in laying the groundwork for his study of the double-voicing of the novel: "The relationship to another's word was equally complex and ambiguous in the Middle Ages ... the boundary lines between someone else's speech and one's own speech were flexible, ambiguous, often deliberately distorted and confused" (1981: 69). A fuller consideration is

warranted, therefore, of what Bakhtin only gestures towards: the relationship to another's words in the late Middle Ages.

Terminology

The imposition of another's words into a written or spoken narrative has been named in a number of ways, and the terms are used sometimes in contradictory ways, owing to the structural complexity of the phenomenon and the interdisciplinary nature of its investigation. Direct speech or discourse (*oratio recta*) occurs when a primary speaker or writer presents the speech or writing of a secondary person through the latter's own perspective, but as reported by the primary speaker:

(1) She said,"I ate the chocolate cake."[1]

Indirect speech or discourse (*oratio obliqua*) occurs when the primary speaker or writer presents the speech or writing of the secondary person, but rephrased to fit the perspective of the primary speaker:

(2) She said [that] she ate the chocolate cake.

The difference between (1) and (2) can be found in the shifters, the deictic words that depend upon the orientation of the speaker, such as pronouns and verb tenses. (1) and (2) together have been called represented speech or reported speech. Yet these terms have also been applied to narrower uses: "reported speech" has sometimes been used to refer specifically to indirect discourse in opposition to "quoted speech" for direct discourse. And "represented speech" is the term used by Jespersen to refer to a blending of direct and indirect discourse, which has also been called free indirect speech, style or discourse (1924: 291). Free indirect speech, first discussed as *le style indirect libre* by Charles Bally (1912) and *uneigentliche direkte Rede* (quasi-direct speech) by Gertraud Lerch (1919) and Vološinov (1973 [1929]), employs the form of indirect speech while suggesting a direct reporting of the words or thoughts of the reported person:

(3) Wow, the chocolate cake was too fabulous for words.

In free indirect discourse, the reporting clause can be omitted (it sometimes appears as a parenthetical clause) and the speech-like structure of direct discourse is possible (vocatives, interjections, direct question forms and so forth) (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik 1972: 789). The free indirect style characterizes modernist work (famous adherents include James

[1] Linguistic conventions for indicating direct speech vary between languages – some languages employ angle marks like French *guillemets* (« »), others employ corner brackets, or use quotation marks with the initial left quote in the "low 9 quote" position („ "). Languages also vary in how they treat *inquit* clauses within quotation marks in whether these clauses are included within quotation marks or not.

Joyce and Virginia Woolf), though various beginnings have been posited for it, dating back to the writings of Jane Austen.

It is possible to read medieval works as containing free indirect speech, since they contain represented speech that employs some of the characteristics of direct speech and some of indirect speech (as I discuss later in this Introduction). I will avoid the term *free indirect speech* for describing this phenomenon, though, preferring to reserve that term for modern texts that employ the form to subvert the categorical distinction between direct and indirect speech. I argue instead that pre-modern texts, rather than flouting categorical distinctions, simply did not have such pronounced distinctions, and that the more fluid system lent itself better to greater overlap between the modes of discourse. Indeed, there is still some overlap between the modes of discourse in present-day English, and they are much less separate in actual use (especially oral use) than many grammarians acknowledge. But present-day users do have more clearly defined analytic categories – and this influences our ideas about discourse modes.

Researchers in historical sociolinguistics and pragmatics often use the term *speakers* to collapse the categories of speakers and writers, and *speech* as a general term in environments where speech or writing is meant. These habits grow out of usage practices in the discipline of linguistics, which focuses on present-day spoken language; much methodology in historical English linguistics is an application of these present-day methods. Short, Semino and Wynne point out that these usages are imprecise and establish the importance of distinguishing between speech, thought and writing presentation in their data (2002: 334). But the practice of using "direct speech" to refer also to directly reported written discourse underscores the ways that medieval texts used reporting strategies from oral language and the ways that the conventions for direct reporting apply similarly to speech, writing and thought. For this work, then, some of the slippage between the categories of speech and writing is not inappropriate, and I will use *direct speech* or *reported speech* as category terms, using *speech* or *discourse* for the reported embedded clause, and draw distinctions among speech, writing and thought in those places where the distinction is relevant (reported thought is not very common in these texts). *Discourse* is another problematic word: it is sometimes used to refer to speech and writing but sometimes exclusively to speech, and it has developed many complex theoretical senses in some disciplines. In the wake of Foucault, of course, scholars have also used the word to connote the means of communication within an institution or power structure (de Beaugrande 1994). I will use *discourse* in its linguistic sense, to refer to a continuous communicative unit of language above the sentence, which contextualizes morphological and syntactic elements (a conversation, a passage of a novel, the proceedings of a trial).

The term *voice* proves equally troublesome, since it has assumed many complex meanings for the field of narratology (Spearing 2001: 727). I will