"Speakable" Written Language: A Linguistic Study of Free Indirect Discourse in Pride and Prejudice

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Abstract

Free indirect discourse quotes speech or thought indirectly but omits the tag -- the "Darcy said" or "Elizabeth thought" -- that both identifies what follows as quotation and attributes it to a particular source. It is widespread in eighteenth century fiction, and Jane Austen is often considered its inventor in the English novels. One aim of this paper is to provide a linguistic description of free indirect discourse as seen in Austen's Pride and Prejudice.

Two kinds of free indirect discourse in Austen will be identified: 1) words-and-phrases free indirect discourse, which is often satiric, quoting speech rather than thought, and 2) whole-sentence free indirect discourse, which is often sympathetic, quoting thought as well as speech. Ann Banfield's (1982) definition of free indirect discourse as represented consciousness will be deployed in this study to argue that free indirect thought is linguistically distinguishable from free indirect speech in depicting the literary notion of "point of view".

摘要

自由間接言談 (free indirect discourse) 是用來間接引述話語或意念的文學手法。它省略了其後所提示之被引述語，例如 "Darcy 說" 或者 "Elizabeth 心想"等指出其來源的引語。這種文學手法在十八世紀小說中甚為普遍；至於它在英語小說裡頭的運用，珍・奧斯汀 (Jane Austin) 通常被認為是第一人。本論文的目的之一便是針對自由間接言談在奧斯汀小說— 傲慢與偏見 (Pride and Prejudice) 中的呈現，提供一個語言學上的描述。

本文將指出兩類奧斯汀所使用的自由間接言談。一為單詞及片語：其語氣通常是嘲諷的，引述的對象為話語而非意念。二為整句式：其語氣多半是同情的，引述的對象既可能是話語或是意念。Ann Banfield (1982) 將它定義為陳述的意識。研究中將運用此項定義，做出下面的論證：在描述"觀點(point of view)"此文學概念時，自由間接意念與自由間接話語在語言上有所區分。

另外一項本研究所採取的概念則是：語境能夠幫助讀者辨認自由間接言談的來源 (Neumann 1992)。本研究將會說明，語境如何能夠幫助讀者釐清文學中令人混淆的觀點問題。換言之，藉由語言學 (或說是語言的研究)的工具，讀者能夠獲取些許的線索，以理解文學作品中到底是誰在說話。本研究的一項重要意涵是，小說的文學性敘事體與其他類型的論述並無語言上的差異。自由間接言談應被視作口頭方式表達的句子，而非文學敘事體所

獨有的。可以想見的是，書面語相對於口語的議題在此再次提出，並予以討論。

0. Introduction.

The "double-voice" nature of the free indirect discourse, as suggested by Bakhtin (1984), is widespread in eighteen-century fiction. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that the ambiguity nature of free indirect discourse may be its most intriguing feature, free indirect discourse is not always indiscernible. It is often identifiable and attributable via its associated syntactic characteristics. One aim of this paper is thus to provide a linguistic description of free indirect discourse, using Austen's Pride and Prejudice as a text since reported discourse is so prevalent in this novel.

Another aim of this paper is to argue that free direct speech represents, in terms of its syntactic dimensions, the so-called "internal perspective" (Su 1984), which is crucial in the study of point of view. In addition, the material in this perspective is arranged according to the order of consciousness and thus its realization is indispensable to the temporal interpretation of narrative presented in the psychological time.

1. Survey of Literature.

Free indirect discourse (FID) is often taken to refer to quoted speech or thought indirectly but omits the tag or inquit – the "Darcy said" or "Elizabeth thought" – that both identifies what follows as quotation and attributes it to a particular source. According to an earlier German view of FID, it is deemed as stemming from an imaginative identification between writer and characters so extreme that, according to one early theorist, the writer "inwardly experiences" what the characters experience (Pascal 1977:22). Hence, the German name for FID *erlebte Rede* means "experienced discourse."

Inspired by such a view, Banfield (1982) defines FID as represented consciousness and attempts to see free indirect thought (in a free indirect thought, the speaker asks, instead of a third party, him/herself) as linguistically distinguishable from free indirect speech. Neumann (1986) broadens the common view of FID and suggests to refine its definition as "any sentence containing words plausibly identifiable as quotation that are not explicitly attributed as quotation, or at least not as quotation from a specified source) but likely to originate with a character rather than with the narrator, or with some character other than the quoting character." His broader definition implies that the ambiguity we usually associate with FID is therefore allowed, but it also acknowledges that not every instance of FID is equally ambiguous. Context defines which words are quoted and whose words they are more unambiguously in some instances of FID than in others.

Following Neumann's classification, three types of FID can be distinguished. In what he calls "definite" FID, the readers feel sure which words are quoted and from whom, because they have seen them explicitly quoted before, with attribution. In "almost definite" FID, the case for identifying a passage as quotation can be very strongly made, perhaps because the readers "know" by some means that a character said or thought something at a particular moment in the story, and a sentence at the appropriate point in the narrative strikes us as translating back into what that character would typically say or think in that situation. In "indefinite" FID, the readers may not know whether to attribute particular utterances to the narrator, or to a character, or

even to which character, or, if the readers can identify the character to associate with the viewpoint expressed, they may not know whether the sentence renders words he or she actually does speak or think now, or only reports what he or she might say or think, now or another time.

Neumann's definition of FID is in fact given in Bakhtin's Discourse in the Novel (1981):

> The speech of another is introduced ... in *concealed form*, that is, without any of the *formal* markers usually accompanying such speech, whether direct or indirect. (p.303)

This clearly defines the very nature of FID. While the speech of another is introduced in concealed form, it is usually difficult to identify who the speaker is; it is often ambiguous and indiscernible in this respect. However, Bakhtin's definition points out another important syntactic characteristics of FID. It is concealed because it is usually without any of the formal and explicit grammatical markers as to who speech it is.

2. **Linguistic Description of FID.**

Following Chatman (1978), below are typical examples of tagged and free direct vs. indirect discourse:

tagged direct discourse:	John asked Jane, "Shall I come here to see you tomorrow?"
free direct discourse:	Shall I come here to see you tomorrow?
tagged indirect discourse:	John asked Jane whether he should go there to see her the next day.
free indirect discourse:	Should he come here to see her tomorrow?

Like tagged indirect discourse, free indirect discourse shifts pronouns and verbs to fit the quoting speaker's perspective but, typically, retains any other indicators of the here-and-now of the quoted speaker as well as independent-clause word order. Since it is sometimes difficult to identify and attribute FID, a word is in order regarding the syntactic characterization of FID.

2.1. Narrative Monologue.

This first type of FID is often known as "reported speech" (Smith 1980) is described by Cohn (1966:97) as a form bearing certain syntactic similarities to direct discourse, having "the rhythm of spoken language rendered through exclamations, rhetorical questions, repetitions ... and exaggerated emphases." Consider the following examples:

EXCLAMATION

(1) That she should receive an offer of marriage from Mr. Darcy!

RHETORICAL QUESTION

(2) How could she deny that credit to his assertion, in one instance, which she had been obliged to give in the other?

Narrated monologue differs, however, from direct discourse in that the original tenses are back-shifted, the pronominalization reoriented according to the purported speaker, and, of course, the quotation marks removed. If (1) and (2) were in the form of direct discourse, they would become (3) and (4) respectively:

(3) Elizabeth: "That I should receive an offer of marriage from Mr. Darcy!"

(4) Elizabeth: "How can I deny that credit to his assertion, in one instance, which I have been obliged to give in the other?"

Compared with (3) and (4), the forms *should* and *could* in (1) and (2) are back-shifted, and there are no reporting clauses with matrix verbs of communication or consciousness such as *say*, *announce*, *realize*, *wonder*, as in the indirect speech versions (5) and (6) below. For the writer, narrated monologue allows a character's thoughts to be reported indirectly, without any distancing expressions like *he said, she exclaimed.*

(5) Elizabeth exclaimed/could not believe that she should receive an offer of marriage from Mr. Darcy!

(6) Elizabeth wondered how she could deny that credit to his assertion, in one instance, which she had been obliged to give in the other.

The linguistic features differentiating narrated monologue from indirect discourse are fairly obvious. The subject noun phrase and the auxiliary verb invert only in the direct discourse form of a question, as in (2). In terms of the usual generative syntactic formulation, after the questioned WH-constituent has been fronted, the order of the subject and the following auxiliary, which includes a tense affix, is reversed[1].

The subject-verb inversion rule in questions applies, however, only to Root sentences[2].

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[1] Katz and Postal (1964) argue that there is an underlying preposed question constituent, basically *whether*, within questions that trigger auxiliary inversion. This *whether* appears explicitly in embedded questions like (6) above.

[2] In Emonds (1976), the term "Root Sentence" describes the contexts for S-Aux inversion. The notion is preferable to our "highest sentence" because the inversion rule also applies in conjoined sentences immediately dominated by the highest sentence, as in the following examples given by Emonds:

She didn't do the dishes, and why should she?

When is he coming, and where is he from?

A Root Sentence, as defined by Emonds, is an S that is not dominated by a node other than S.

It does not apply to indirect questions: (7) is ungrammatical because it is the direct discourse form of question that is embedded under the Root Sentence[3].

(7) * Elizabeth wondered how could she deny that credit to his assertion, in one instance, which she had been obliged to give in the other.

Among the syntactic reflexes of internal perspective in narrated monologue is the use of exclamation structures and their associated punctuation. These structures are not permissible for the indirect speech counterparts. Exclamation marks used to communicate excitement, as in (1), cannot be used to punctuate indirect discourse unless the excitement indicated belongs to the current "speaker," as in (8):

(8) * Elizabeth could not believe that she [refers to someone other than Elizabeth] should receive an offer of marriage from Mr. Darcy!

In this case, if the lower subject is not interpreted as coreferential with the higher, the sentence is ill-formed.

But the use of exclamation structures is not the only distinguishing feature. Adjective and/or adverb-preposing is allowed in narrated monologue (9), but not in indirect speech (10):

(9) Happy did she think it for Bingley and her sister that some of the exhibition had escaped his notice.

(10) *She said happy did she think it for Bingley and her sister that some of the exhibition had escaped his notice.

Furthermore, we find state predicates denoting mental states, emotions, acts of thought. These designate unobservables of consciousness which, in real life, are accessible only if the subject reports them. Psychological terms depicting inner views such as *sorry*, *melancholy*, as in (11) are expressions of this type:

(11) She was not sorry [my underline], however, to have the recital of them interrupted by the entrance of the lady from whom they sprung.

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[3] See also Keenan and Hull's (1973) discussion of indirect questions. They observe that in general indirect questions have the syntactic form of either an embedded WH-question, as in

John knows which man stole the chicken.

Or an embedded relative clause. They argue that this is to be expected, because their analyses of the two constructions predict that they will have the same truth conditions, although different underlying logical representations.

A somewhat different phenomenon occurs with deictic expressions. Deictic forms take their reference from the identity of the speaker and his/her position at the time of the speech act: the deictic word *here* designates the moment occupied in time, and *this*, if without antecedent in the discourse, designates an object or entity near the speaker. In contexts other than direct quotation, when one speaker's words are repeated by another at a different time and place, these deictic expressions, and others like them, are reserved for reference to the position of the current "speaker." The original speaker's *here*, *now*, and *this*, accordingly become *there*, *then*, and *that*, in indirect discourse. For instance, (12a) is changed into (12b) when reported:

(12a) John: "This man is here now."
(12b) John said that man was there then.

However, in narrated monologue, deictic time and space words and deictic demonstratives often do not change, even though the personal pronouns are reoriented toward the narrator as the current speaker. Thus, Elizabeth, though referred to in the third person, can refer to time "present" to her as *now* rather than *then*:

(13) Elizabeth, feeling it incumbent on her to relieve him
from so unpleasant a situation, now [my underline]
put herself forward to confirm his account by
mentioning her prior knowledge of it from Charlotte
herself.

Similarly, a speaker may not normally report another's words using the original speaker's terms for a third party, unless that term is also appropriate for him/her or s/he is being ironic. Kinship terms exhibit this prohibition most obviously, but is also true for terms of address. For example, in (14a) and its reported counterpart (14b), if the speaker of (14b) is not a sibling of (14a), the terms of address *father* must be qualified by a possessive pronoun, as in (14c):

(14a) A: "Father will be here soon."
(14b) B: A said that Father would be there soon.
(14c) B: A said that his father would be there soon.

Such a prohibition, however, does not hold in narrated monologue. The name the experiencing consciousness commonly employs may be used to refer to that person in his thought (Kuno 1977). When narrated from Elizabeth's consciousness, the owner of Pemberley House is referred to as *Mr. Darcy*, as in (15), below:

(15) Mr. Darcy with grave propriety requested to be
allowed the honour of her hand; but in vain.

But he is referred to as *Darcy* by the narrator:

(16) Between him and Darcy there was a very steady
friendship, in spite of a great opposition of character.
Bingley was endeared to Darcy by the easiness,
openness, ductility of his temper, though no dispo-

> sition could offer a greater contrast to his own, and
> though with his own he never appeared dissatisfied.

One special characteristic of narrated monologue is that it can take a third person reflexive without overt antecedent. Langacker (1969) and Lasnik (1976) have argued that only first and second person reflexive pronouns may appear in positions where they are not preceded by, or embedded in a sentence containing a coreferential noun or pronoun. But the reflexive pronoun *herself* in (17) below is acceptable despite the lack of a grammatical antecedent noun phrase, when reported in Elizabeth's voice:

> (17) From herself to Jane – from Jane to Bingley,
> her thoughts were in a line which soon brought
> to her recollection.

In what follows, the syntactic reflexes of another style of internal perspective, internal monologue, will be identified.

2.2. Internal Monologue.

An internal monologue is a presentation of a thought sequence often presented as if the character were speaking aloud. The sentences are introduced by utterance verbs such as *cry*, *repeat*, *say*, as in (18) and (19):

> (18) "How despicably have I acted!" she cried [my
> underline]. "I who have prided myself on my
> discernment! ... Till this moment I never knew
> myself."

> (19) "But surely," said [my underline] she, " I may
> enter his with impunity ...

We also find verbs of thinking such as *think*, *reflect*, introducing parts of the monologue:

> (20) "And of this place," thought [my underline] she,
> "I might have been mistress ... I should not have
> been allowed to invite them."

The form of internal monologue is the form of direct discourse, signaled typographically by quotation marks. It is characterized by a first-person reference to its speaker and the use of present-tense verbs:

> (21) ... and continually was she repeating, "Why is he
> so altered? From what can it proceed? It cannot be
> for *me*, it cannot be for *my* sake that his manners
> are thus softened. My reproofs at Hunsford could
> not work such a change as this. It is impossible
> that he should still love me."

2.3. Internal Analysis.

The third type of internal perspective provides an unrestricted view into the character's world via the narrator's narration. The viewpoint corresponds linguistically to the literary style referred to as internal analysis. According to Cohn (1966), the term "internal analysis" is often applied to passages in which "the characters' thoughts and feelings are reported in subordinate clause following *he hoped, feared, knew, ignored, concluded.*" Dry (1975:59) points out that "it is only a name for clauses that have as their topic the psychological processes of a character," and denotes a form in which

> a verb of communication (e.g., *cried, wailed*) or consciousness (e.g., *remembered, felt*) is followed by the subordinating conjunction *that*, which, in turn, is followed by a clause reporting – with back-shifted tenses, and with pronominalization and demonstrative elements of time and place reoriented toward the current speaker – the "internal sentences" of the original speaker.

Since it is the indirect counterpart of internal monologue, internal analysis is used to report a character's thoughts or feelings, as in (22):

> (22) … she thought of his regard with a deeper sentiment of gratitude than it had ever raised before; she remembered its warmth, and softened its impropriety of expression.

Internal analysis, unlike internal monologue, employs the past tense and third-person pronouns. A sentence of direct discourse such as (23a) becomes (23b):

> (23a) "I perfectly remember everything that has passed in conversation between Wickham and myself in our first evening at Mr. Philip's.
>
> (23b) She perfectly remembered everything that had passed in conversation between Wickham and herself in their first evening at Mr. Philip's.

In addition, if there are any time and place adverbs, they must be changed to fit the perspective of the current speaker, not that of the original speaker; i.e., back-shifting is necessary so that *has passed* in (23a) is changed to *had passed* in (23b).

Although internal analysis is also a way of representing a character's psychological processes – presenting the material embedded under the communication verbs from the character's point of view – the knowledge and values reflected in this style may not coincide with those of the consciousness whose point of view is represented. Instead the narrator's knowledge or valuation may be incorporated into the content of the lower clause, in which case there may be a clash of truth values. The narrator's knowledge usually differs from that of a character. This clash is quite acceptable if the lower clause is embedded under the communicative verbs usually associated with

internal analysis. While Elizabeth may think it is impossible that Darcy still loves her, the narrator's presupposition, which is contrary to Elizabeth's is presented in the nonrestrictive relative clause, *who was in love with her*, of the made-up sentence (24):

> (24) Elizabeth thought it impossible that Mr. Darcy, who was in love with her, still loved her.

This is exactly what Dry (1975:80) means by saying

> It might be possible to claim for internal analysis the ability to mark material as reflecting a character's viewpoint by excluding from the claim presuppositional and parenthetical material, such as the preceding pronominal adjectives and restrictive relative clauses.

Such insight of Dry's provides a grounding for how clash of value may be a way to test point of view.

3. **Point of View.**

In prose fiction, the narrator's FID – that is, unattributed quotation of a character by the narrator – can, because of the shifted tenses and pronouns, often be mistaken for objective narration. Correctly identifying and attributing FID is important, however, in so far as it is possible, because it determines who sees and who speaks in the given passage, the factors determining point of view in fiction.

Point of view may be studied via the syntactic reflexes is further supported by Dry's (1975) linguistic study of Jane Austen's Emma. In her investigation, Dry argues that certain linguistic phenomena may reveal attributes of a source consciousness whose point of view is adopted for the narration. These linguistic phenomena include factive verbs, the omission of attributive phrases (e.g., *for him*, *to her*), and unanchored progressive tenses and deictic words of space and time, all of which are sensitive to the beliefs and spatio-temporal location of the speaker.

Consider the following example from Pride and Prejudice (p.275):

> (25) … and she could do nothing but wonder at such a want of penetration, or fear that, perhaps, instead of his seeing too *little*, she might have fancied too *much*.

According to our syntactic characterization, (25) is a passage written in the so-called narrated monologue. Note the use of italics in the example. The two words *little* and *much* are italicized to show that such a sentence is given from the perspective of Elizabeth's inner world, in terms of how she feels regarding Darcy's affection.

Syntactic constructions and punctuation marks could also serve clues to point of view reflected in a passage. Consider the following, taken from Pride and Prejudice (p.284):

> (26) How earnestly did she then wish that her former opinions had been more reasonable, her expressions more moderate!

This exclamation sentence was written in the typical style identified above as the narrated monologue of FID. Though there being no inquit, and the verb tense as well as the pronouns were given as in an indirect speech, the "how + adjective/adverb" construction is not allowed in a typical indirect speech; nor would there be an exclamation mark at the end of an indirect speech. This example is again given from Elizabeth's point of view, i.e., one of the characters' point of view.

Even though the story line of Pride and Prejudice evolves around Elizabeth, the main character. FID is not necessarily characteristic of Elizabeth's speech. In the following example (p.262), the use of the reflexive pronoun *himself*, used without the proper antecedent as normally required in the indirect or even direct speech, illustrates that the (27) is given from Bingley's perspective, rather than from that of Elizabeth's:

> (27) … and in spite of his being a lover, Elizabeth really believed all his expectations of felicity to be rationally founded, because they had for basis the excellent understanding and super-excellent disposition of Jane, and a general similarity of feeling and taste between her and himself [underline mine].

This internal monologue proves that FID can in fact be given from any character's consciousness, i.e., point of view. The same can be said of internal monologue, another type of FID. Internal monologue presents a thought sequence as if the character carrying the thought were speaking aloud to him-/herself. Let's use again (18), already given above and repeated here as (28), as an illustration of this point:

> (28) "How despicably have I acted!" she cried [my underline]. "I who have prided myself on my discernment! … Till this moment I never knew myself."

(28) is FID because although it assumes the syntax of tagged direct discourse, the reader may infer from the context that Elizabeth (she) did not really utter these sentences out loud. Rather, her thought sequence was presented as if it were sentences she said. We have identified in 2.2 that (28) displays the characteristics termed as internal monologue in our study, and internal monologue, like narrated monologue, is thought presented from the character's point of view.

Internal analysis represents, instead of the character's, the narrator's point of view. (29) (from Pride and Prejudice, p.290) can be a good example to illustrate our point:

> (29) yet, whenever she *did* speak, she must be vulgar. Nor was her respect for him, though it made her more quite, at all likely to make her more elegant.

The first clause of the first sentence in (29) contains the italicized *did*, which is a strategy to show the speaker's attitude – emphasis, contempt, disagreement etc., and it is not until the main clause can we make sure that this is uttered from the narrator's point of view. The use of the model *must*, and in that tense, hints at vulgarity of Mrs. Philips as a value judgment imposed by the narrator. The inserted subordinate clause *though it made her more quite* presents a stronger evidence for our claim of (29) as an internal analysis. The fact that Mrs. Philips' respect for Bingley could not

be a driving force to make the former more elegant is presented, somewhat satirically, to the reader through a point of view that seems to be omniscient of the character's inner world.

In short, narrated monologue characterizes the characters' speech and internal monologue represents the characters' thought, while internal analysis is used by the narrator to depict the characters' thought and speech. The clash of value and knowledge in the matrix clause, giving information from the narrator's point of view, and the embedded clause, describing the inner world of the character from his or her perspective, as seen in (24) is one of the best proofs for our claim.

According to our broad definition of FID, two kinds of FID in Austen can be identified in terms of the syntactic complexity of the text. First, the "words-and-phrases" FID (as illustrated by (30)), often more satiric than sympathetic in nature (Bakhtin 1973), quotes only isolated words or phrases of a character's locution, rather than thought. This is typical of eighteenth-century fiction. Second, the "whole-sentence" FID (as illustrated by (31)), often used sympathetically rather than satirically, for the free indirect quotation of thought as well as of speech.

(30) Brother-in-law of Wickham!

(31) Oh! How heartily did she grieve over every ungracious sensation she had ever encountered …

The three subtypes constituting the internal perspectives as discussed in the previous section further supports the "double-voicedness" of the 18th century English novels.

> The division of voices and languages takes place … often within the limits of a simple sentence … Frequently … even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems. (Bahktin 1981: 305)

In addition, the special use of italics in the 18th century fiction provides further evidence to the "double voice" theory by modeling visibly how the subjective and evaluative expression of one character can interweave with those of another.

4. Conclusion

Other than supporting the "double voice" theory and providing a linguistic and specific description of the often ambiguous nature of point of view in literary study, our study has two important implications to the study of language, namely the role of context in the identification of FID (4.1.) the issue of temporal representation of extended texts (4.2) and the nature of writing and speech (4.3).

4.1. Context.

We have learned from the discussion above that it is often quite difficult to identify a FID from a non-FID. The identification of such a style depends to a great extent on context. Context defines which words are quoted and whose words they are more unambiguously in some instances of FID than in others. As discussed in Section 1, such runs from the least ambiguous "definite FID" to "almost definite FID" to the most difficult "indefinite FID." What has not been pursued in the present study is the role context plays in the recognition of FID, which is an issue of great importance

to linguistics theory as well as its applications. The point deserves further investigation in order to provide possible explanation for the fact that, though the "almost definite FID" is arguably the most common kind of FID in Austen, we as readers do not find it impossible to assign the points of view when reading her works.

4.2. Temporality.

The three styles expressing internal perspective, i.e., narrated monologue, internal monologue, and internal analysis, convey directly the psychological equivalent of the dramatic present. An internal perspective, dramatizing a chosen consciousness, is used to prevent intrusions on the narrative of extraneous comments provided as explanation. Internal perspective thus allows the narrator to comment in the course of the narration and to interpret values that are attached to ideas, facts, or feelings. Such a perspective makes a consistent point of view possible for narrative presentation.

To characterize the perspective represented by a narrative unit, we need to distinguish the three types of psychological sub-units described above – sub-units which reveal the syntactic traits of internal perspective. These help us determine the nature of the temporal movement in psychological time. This finding suggests that there is a significant isomorphic relationship between the types of temporal units discussed in Su (1984) and the points of view they represent. Psychological narrative sub-units allow content to be represented according to distinct principle of temporal ordering, the order of consciousness. A study along this line would probably shed light on the study of foregrounding and backgrounding of narratives as extended texts.

4.2. Fictional/literary language vs. natural discourse

Whether FID originated in real life or in literature has been much debated. Clearly only narrator can quote characters' thoughts. But, that the characters of eighteenth-century fiction use FID to quote each other's speech as often as narrator do in itself strongly suggests that FID is possible in everyday speech and may have originated there (at least readers could imitate fiction by using FID in conversation). FID by characters is often easily identifiable in these novels. First, when a character quotes another character without attribution, we may recognize the quotation because it was quoted previously by the narrator with attribution. Second, eighteenth-century novels sometimes use italics to identify this requoted material for the novel's readers (like modern quotation-marks-within-quotation-marks). The way eighteenth-century fictional characters quote without attribution suggests how we might read unattributed quotation by eighteenth-century narrators and how we might recognize and interpret FID in Austen and later novelists after the convention of italics has begun to disappear.

Thus, if FID is not unique to literary narrative, as Neumann suggested (1992), the gap between spoken and written language does not seem to be as big as we had thought. The study of this unique literary style, i.e., FID, may shed light on one of the long studied and debated issue in linguistics regarding the very nature and the real essence characteristic of speech and writing.

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