

& she was like “O_O”: Animation of Reported Speech on Twitter

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Abstract

This study relates discourse-pragmatic aspects of the use of the quotatives SAY, BE *like*, BE *all*, and GO to the question of the supposed or actual spoken-likeness of written computer-mediated communication (CMC). 1,800 tokens of reported speech, collected from Twitter, were analyzed in a “constructed dialogue” framework (Tannen, 2007). The results show that users of Twitter employ various CMC devices to animate and modally enrich reported speech, especially in speech reports with BE *like*, BE *all*, and GO. They perform a style of communication that is reminiscent of conversational speech, even while having qualities that seem to belong uniquely to CMC.

Keywords: CMC, paralanguage, Twitter, reported speech, quotative, constructed dialogue, animation

1. Introduction

This study examines discourse-pragmatic aspects of reported speech on the social network site and micro blogging service Twitter. The study gives a novel view of speech reports with the introducers (henceforth *quotatives*) BE *like*, BE *all*, and GO, which are typically associated with informal spoken language. Thus, the study relates to a question that has been of much interest to linguists studying computer-mediated communication (CMC), namely the issue of whether online language is more written-like or spoken-like, and if it has emergent features that differ both from speech and writing as typically construed.

A quotative may be defined as any item “used to introduce reported speech, sounds, gesture and thought by self or other,” and the quotative is typically followed by a representation of what was supposedly uttered (Biber et al., 1999: 1118-1120; Buchstaller, 2006: 5; Holt, 2009: 194-195). In English, SAY is the prototypical ‘traditional’ quotative. In (1), the quotative frames (subject + verb) are in boldface and what was said is delimited by quotation marks.

Wikström, Peter. 2014. “& she was like “O_O”: Animation of Reported Speech on Twitter.” *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 13(3):83-111.

1. Well, **she said** “Three-thirty” and then **she said** “Well, you’d better make it four.”¹

There are additional traditional quotatives, including *think*, for reporting thought, and the Ø-quotative (i.e. a speech report with no frame, though the report may be delimited by quotation marks in writing or an intonation change in speech; see e.g. Holt, 2009). However, the present study is concerned only with SAY and the ‘non-traditional’ quotatives BE *like*, BE *all*, and GO.² Examples (2)–(3) show these non-traditional quotatives.

2. Okay cool well anyway my mom’s **like** “I was thinking of getting them something from Hickory farms” <laugh> **I was all** “Mom!”
3. And **I was going**, “Well, I need a lot of help.” **She goes**, “Well just get anyone in.”

Most previous studies of these non-traditional quotatives focus on speech, and of those that do not focus exclusively on speech, very few concern written online language. A research overview by Barbieri (2005: 226–227) shows that much of the data used in previous studies has been elicited speech (e.g., sociolinguistic interviews). Some studies use corpora of naturally occurring language, but the material is often up to two decades old. Accordingly, key contributions of the present study as regards reported speech are the use of data that are recent (collected 2011) and unelicited, and that concern reported speech found in an online written language environment rather than in spoken language.

Twitter is a major online platform for communication, by last recent figures having 530 million registered users, posting around 175 million messages per day (Basch, 2012; Honigman, 2012). As a social network site (boyd and Ellison, 2008), Twitter permits the public or semi-public posting of *tweets*—individual messages of 140 or fewer characters. Users of Twitter can interact with one another in a variety of ways. They can

¹ Examples (1)–(3) are from Biber D, Johansson S, Leech G, et al. (1999) *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*, Harlow: Longman., presented as they appear there.

² These quotatives are sometimes referred to as the ‘new quotatives,’ generally for ease of reference rather than to denote actual novelty (e.g. Buchstaller, 2001b; Barbieri 2007). The present study will simply refer to them as ‘non-traditional’, as opposed to the ‘traditional’ quotative SAY.

use a reply function to reply to a specific tweet, or address a tweet to a specific user (by prefixing a username with @. Further, hashtags (a string of letters preceded by a #-symbol, e.g. #food) can be used to organize multi-user interaction around a specific topic or to categorize tweets according to theme (Honeycutt and Herring, 2009; Zappavigna, 2012).

The aim of this study is to analyze the use of what I will call animating features (e.g. representations vocal qualities or facial expressions; an extension of what is called animation of voice in Tannen, 2007) and linguistic CMC features (e.g. abbreviations and emoticons) within speech reports framed by quotative SAY, BE *like*, BE *all*, and GO in a dataset of 1,800 tweets. The study examines how various linguistic devices are used by quoters (the authors of tweets containing speech reports) to animate quotees (the person or entity who is the putative source of the reported speech). The working hypothesis was that reported speech framed by the non-traditional quotatives would contain more instances of animating features than instances framed by SAY, making them qualitatively more similar to reports in informal spoken discourse.

2. Background

2.1 The spoken-likeness of written CMC

Computer-mediated communication is a growing field concerned with many aspects of the structure and function of language and social interaction in new media platforms, ranging from email and web-based chat forums to virtual world interactions and Skype calls (see e.g. Herring, 2004; Crystal, 2010). The present study limits its focus to one of the main concerns for linguists studying CMC, namely the characterization of written online language in terms of qualities typically associated with forms of speech as opposed to writing. Indeed, online writing has often been construed as “written speech” (Crystal, 2006: 26-27). Systematically differentiating writing and speech is difficult, as various forms of writing and speech have features that overlap on a continuum (Hård af Segerstad, 2003: 38; Baron, 2008: 46). Crystal (2006: 27, fn. 5) notes that “even the notion of a continuum is an oversimplification of the ways the variables intertwine,” but maintains that contrasting ‘typical’ features of speech and writing has heuristic value. Key areas of agreement between some accounts of stereotypical features are presented in Table 1 and Table 2 (the presentation here is

reorganized, but the features derive from Hård af Segerstad, 2003; Crystal, 2006; Baron, 2008).

Table 1. Stereotypical features of speech and writing relating to time, space, and discourse situation.

Speech	Writing
Temporally immediate: immediate reception of utterances and immediate feedback.	Temporally distant: utterances are composed and sent, and may be received long after the sending.
Spatially immediate: the prototypical speech situation is face-to-face.	Spatially distant: the writer is not in the same immediate space as the recipient.
Ephemeral: speech is a process taking place in the moment.	Durable: writing is a product that can be stored.
Dialogic: there is a speaker and an interlocutor, and constant feedback.	Monologic: there is no immediately present interlocutor. There may be no feedback.
Situated: Speech can rely on immediate physical or social situational context for deixis.	Unsituated: Writing cannot rely on immediate situational context.

Positioning online language with regard to these features is difficult. Various forms of online language (e.g. email, web chat, or instant messaging) differ from one another, and should thus be analyzed separately (Crystal, 2006). However, online language may in general be described tending more toward writing than speech (Crystal, 2006: 31; Baron, 2008: 48; Hård af Segerstad, 2003: 53). To begin with, online communication is most often typewritten. However, it may be spoken-like in having relative immediacy (e.g. live chat, conversations between players in virtual worlds, instant messaging), but this immediacy is temporal, not spatial, and the temporal immediacy is constrained by writing time, transmission time, etc. Such interactions are also dialogic, but still differ from prototypical speech, for instance in that the pace of turn-taking is different.

Table 2. Stereotypical features of speech and writing relating to utterance content.

Speech	Writing
Speech is typically informal.	Writing is typically formal.
Spoken utterances are short, structurally simple, and rich in reduced or simplified features such as contractions.	Written utterances are long and structurally ornate.
Spoken vocabulary is limited and simple.	Written vocabulary is extensive.
Spoken vocabulary is concrete.	Written vocabulary is abstract.
Spoken language is spontaneous and emergently organized in interaction.	Written language is planned and organized before being communicated.
Spoken language is multimodal; it is richly adorned with paralinguistic cues, e.g. prosodic cues.	Written language is unimodal; there is only the text.

The present study is limited in scope to considering one particular platform for written online language use, namely Twitter. The language of Twitter may be characterized as mostly written-like in terms of the features in Table 1, in that communication on Twitter is relatively spatially and temporally distant, and cannot rely on immediate non-linguistic situational context. A general or *prima facie* characterization of Twitter in terms of the features in Table 2 seems more difficult, since the utterance content of tweets can vary widely. This issue is treated further in Section 5 (Discussion and conclusion), in relation to the findings presented below specifically regarding reported speech on Twitter.

2.2 Online paralinguistic

Most central at present is the final point of comparison in Table 2, namely the multimodality afforded by face-to-face paralinguistic. Baron (2009: 108) notes that “[w]hile they are technically forms of writing, most varieties of online communication have often been thought of as forms of speech, with creative punctuation and typography substituting for paralinguistic cues (such as volume, proxemics, and facial expression) for expressing emotion.” While typewritten CMC devices such as emoticons cannot be seen simply as ‘substitutes for paralinguistic’, they constitute the most central devices for animation examined in detail below. Further, while it has been common to view emoticons as straight-forward disambiguators of online discourse (e.g. a

smiley face functioning merely to clarify that the author intended his/her utterance to be a joke), this is an oversimplification (Baron, 2009: 130; Crystal, 2006: 39). A single emoticon can have a large array of meanings depending on context. Crystal (2006: 38-39) is somewhat self-contradictory on this point, on the one hand claiming that emoticons are heavily constrained in their expressive potential, being restricted to “gross notions such as extra emphasis, surprise, and puzzlement,” but on the other hand recognizing that “an individual smiley [...] allows a huge number of readings.” Accordingly, what appears to be ambiguity may be reconstrued as openness or complexity of meaning. Arguably, context-sensitive expressive potential makes emoticons more, not less, like facial expressions.

2.3 Reported speech as constructed dialogue

While there are many ways of approaching the discourse-functional and pragmatic complexities of reported speech, the present study uses as a primary framework one particular approach, namely the notion of *constructed dialogue* developed by Deborah Tannen. Instead of distinguishing between, e.g., ‘actual’ and ‘hypothetical’ speech Tannen (2007) emphasizes the status of all reported speech, even apparent direct quotation, as “primarily the creation of the speaker” (i.e. the quoter) in the present (Tannen, 2007: 103).

In this framework, every utterance of any kind possesses a Bakhtinian polyphony that “derives from the multiple resonances of the people, contexts, and genres with which the utterance or word has been associated” (Tannen, 2007: 103). This dialogic quality is certainly inherent in speech reports. Reported speech is further ‘constructed’ in that any given speech report must either (a) present an utterance that was never actually uttered by anyone, or (b) constitute a major recontextualization that changes the import of the utterance. That is to say, even if a speech report is verbatim, “[i]n the deepest sense, the words have ceased to be those of the speaker to whom they are attributed, having been appropriated by the speaker who is repeating them;” the utterance “exists primarily, if not only, as an element of the reporting context” (Tannen, 2007: 104-105).

In a sense, reported speech stages a “mini-drama,” with the quoter setting a scene and playing (or inviting the interlocutor to play) one or

several parts (Tannen, 2007: 119). Crucial to this ‘dramatic’ aspect is the concept of *animation*. One of Tannen’s examples is an anecdote about a host of a dinner party ‘imitating,’ or rather constructing, the voice of a cat by speaking in a high-pitched, childlike voice (Tannen, 2007: 119). Thus, regardless of whether a speech report accurately represents ‘actual’ manner of delivery, “[t]he speaker uses the animation of voices to make his story into drama and involve his listeners” (Tannen, 2007: 120).

While Tannen gives no clear criteria for determining what is and is not animation, it is clear that she is focusing on paralinguistic qualities of voice, e.g. volume, tone, pitch, breathiness, and also non-lexical sounds such as sobbing and grunting. It may be considered a contribution of the present study that it extends and operationalizes the concept of animation of voice for the purpose of analyzing reported speech on Twitter (see Section 3).

2.4 Discourse-pragmatic constraints on the quotatives

The non-traditional quotatives, especially *BE like*, have received a fair deal of scholarly attention in the last two decades. Generally, there is a broadly sociolinguistic approach to the quotatives, with a focus on how quotative use is constrained by external variables such as speaker age, ethnicity, or gender (see e.g. Blyth Jr et al., 1990; Ferrara and Bell, 1995; Tagliamonte and Hudson, 1999; Cukor-Avila, 2002; Barbieri, 2007). The focus here, however, is on the content of speech reports.

There is thought to be a relation between the content of the speech report and what quotative is used (see e.g. Tagliamonte and Hudson, 1999; Barbieri, 2005). The traditional quotative *SAY* is the neutral option, used to introduce direct quotation, reporting it “without the contribution of any particular pragmatic effect” (Tagliamonte and Hudson, 1999: 152). *SAY* is associated with apparently unambiguous reporting of actual speech, rather than representation of inner states or hypothetical speech (Buchstaller, 2001b; Jones and Schieffelin, 2009).

On the other hand, quotative *GO* has been found to have a strong association with non- or semi-lexicalized representations of sounds, e.g. “[a]nd everybody goes, ‘Puff, puff, puff,’” using an example from Romaine & Lange (1991: 230). Tagliamonte & Hudson (1999) found that *GO* was favored with non-lexical items in both British and Canadian English, and with “internal dialogue” (i.e. the representation of thoughts,

etc.) in Canadian English specifically. Blyth Jr et al. (1990: 222) also found that GO is more associated with “evaluation and dramatic effect” than the neutral SAY, though they did not find it to be used for expressing thoughts or inner states. However, other studies have found GO to be associated with ‘actual’ speech reporting (Barbieri, 2005; Buchstaller, 2001b).

BE *like* is strongly associated with the reporting of representations of sounds as well as inner states and thought, in a manner that blurs the distinction between direct and indirect reporting and does not signal the same relative commitment to veracity as SAY does (Romaine and Lange, 1991; Dailey-O’Cain, 2000; Tagliamonte and D’Arcy, 2007). Further, Sams (2010) finds a preference for using BE *like* to report hypothetical future dialogue rather than past speech. Blyth et al. (1990) note that BE *like* often seems to be used to summarize the quotee’s frame of mind. Barbieri (2005) finds that BE *like* is strongly associated with “inner speech” with first person quotees, while being used for direct speech reporting with third person quotees, indicating that the discourse-pragmatic function of the quotative may shift systematically depending on whether the quotee is self or other. Buchstaller (2001a; 2001b; 2003) finds that BE *like* and GO often occur together with various features such as non-lexical sounds, stereotyped expressive sounds, gestures, mimicry, and imitation of voice or changed voice style. Buchstaller and D’Arcy (2009) suggest that such “mimesis,” roughly corresponding to what is here termed animation, is a universal constraint on quotative BE *like*, finding the same preference in several varieties of English.

All is the least explored of the non-traditional quotatives covered in the present study. Rickford et al. (2007) find that BE *all* slightly favors “overt words,” while disfavoring “thought or ambiguous cases.” Waksler (2001) finds that BE *all* is often used for direct speech, both in the quoter’s own voice and with the quoter imitating the voice of the quotee. Further, BE *all* is often used for demonstrating or expressing inner states of the quotee and imitating actual or constructed nonverbal behavior (Waksler, 2001: 133-134).

2.5 The quotatives in computer-mediated communication

Few previous studies have looked at the non-traditional quotatives in online language environments. Rickford et al. (2007) look at BE *all*, both

as an intensifier and as a quotative, using primarily spoken language data. Their spoken language data show that quotative BE *all* had a sudden peak of popularity in the early-to-mid 90s but was largely replaced by *like* in their 2005 data. They then used data obtained by searches in the Google newsgroup archives to corroborate this, finding a similar rise-and-fall pattern, though delayed by a few years (Rickford et al., 2007: 20).

Tagliamonte and Denis (2008) look briefly at the use of quotatives in instant messaging (IM) data from teenagers. They found that SAY, BE *like*, and Ø are the most commonly used quotatives. Interestingly, they found that Ø was more common than BE *like* in IM while BE *like* was the predominant quotative in their spoken language data used for comparison. They hypothesize that the prevalence of unframed reported speech in IM might be due to punctuation and transmission breaks (the splitting of messages into several transmissions) rendering a quotative frame superfluous. Since SAY was also found to be proportionally more common in IM, they conclude that IM features greater use of “formal and standard variants” than spoken language (Tagliamonte and Denis, 2008: 18-20).

Jones and Schieffelin (2009) also look at quotative BE *like* in IM. Their data show a general increase in the use of “enquoted material” and a particularly substantial increase in the use of quotative BE *like* between 2003 and 2006. They write that “[t]he spread of be + like into IM correspondence gives a quotative format once thought exclusively oral new purchase in written language and heralds new strategies of voice representation within a typewritten medium ostensibly limited in its expressive potential,” which suggests that this development appears to be associated with users’ efforts to make IM more spoken-like (Jones and Schieffelin, 2009: 78). Further, they found that “mimetic enactments” (roughly corresponding to what is called animation in the present study) also occurred in their IM data, for instance in the form of repeated letters to represent elongation of sounds, variation in case for amplification, or emoticons to represent facial expression (Jones and Schieffelin, 2009: 105-107).

3. Material and methods

The present study is concerned with animating features and CMC features within speech reports framed by SAY, BE *like*, BE *all*, and GO in unelicited language data collected from Twitter. The data comprise a set of 12 samples of 150 tweets each, for a total dataset of 1,800 tweets containing reported speech. For each of the four quotatives examined, there is one sample for first person singular quotee, one for third person singular male quotee, and one for third singular person female quotee (Table 3).

Table 3. The 12 samples making up the Twitter quotative dataset.

	<i>said</i>	<i>was like</i>	<i>was all</i>	<i>went</i>	Total
I	I said (<i>n</i> = 150)	I was like (<i>n</i> = 150)	I was all (<i>n</i> = 150)	I went (<i>n</i> = 150)	<i>n</i> = 600
he	he said (<i>n</i> = 150)	he was like (<i>n</i> = 150)	he was all (<i>n</i> = 150)	he went (<i>n</i> = 150)	<i>n</i> = 600
she	she said (<i>n</i> = 150)	she was like (<i>n</i> = 150)	she was all (<i>n</i> = 150)	she went (<i>n</i> = 150)	<i>n</i> = 600
	<i>n</i> = 450	<i>n</i> = 450	<i>n</i> = 450	<i>n</i> = 450	N = 1,800

The data were collected by manual searches, using the search interface provided by Twitter's website, for the strings *I said*, *he said*, and so forth. The search phrases were limited to past tense for practical reasons. Preliminary test searches tended to give more frequent quotative results in the past tense (e.g. searches for *he is like* tended to give many irrelevant hits, where the subject, *he*, was simply being likened to someone or something else, whereas *he was like* yielded more frequent quotative uses).³ Additional elements had to be added to the *went* search strings to eliminate a mass of irrelevant retrievals such as "I went to the bathroom," "he went with his friends," etc.⁴ For all search strings, the

³ It should be acknowledged that this delimitation of the present study leaves room for some uncertainty, as there could be unexpected variations in usage patterns between tenses. The reader is advised to keep this in mind when evaluating the results presented below.

⁴ The following list of elements was added to the *went* searches (a minus-prefix excludes all search results containing that element; double inverted commas are

first 150 retrieved tweets containing at least one relevant, i.e. quotative, use of the search string were collected.⁵ All the tweets collected are from 11–16 March, 2011. The material represents general English use on Twitter, not use belonging to any particular variety or demographic.

On an ethical note, users of Twitter agree to terms of service which are quite clear about the public status of public tweets, and the possibility of keeping profiles and tweets private should the user so desire (Twitter, 2013). All tweets quoted below were publicly posted. They are presented unmodified, except that all addressed or mentioned usernames have been anonymized as @*user* and one hyperlink has been replaced with a description.

The 1,800 items in the dataset were categorized according to presence or absence of animating features. As mentioned in Section 1 (Introduction), what I call animating features is an extension of what Tannen (2007) calls animation of voice, namely features of speech reports that represent or ‘dramatize’ aspects of voice, manner of delivery, stance, etc., in the dialogue constructed by the quoter. To adapt Tannen’s concept of animation of voice to written reported speech, I qualitatively identified certain devices that seem to be employed more or less systematically on Twitter, as in online language generally, to represent gestures, tone of voice, manner of delivery, etc., as well as to express emotion or attitude, or sometimes to gloss salient actions or events.

Table 4 presents the devices, all of which are explored in detail in section 4.2. These devices were mainly identified by means of a variety of pilot searches performed before the collection of the present dataset. While the devices are presented one by one, these animating features are not mutually exclusive. Often, multiple devices are used simultaneously within one speech report, as will be evident from several examples.

used to search for an exact phrase): -“*went and*”, -“*went in*”, -“*went straight*”, -“*went here*”, -“*went to*”, -“*went for*”, -“*went right*”, -“*went out*”, -“*went through*”, -“*went with*”.

⁵ Here, first retrieved means most recently posted. Thus, the sample may be considered arbitrary, but not truly random.

Table 4. Devices used for animation.

Upper-case and case-shifting
Representation of sounds, letter repetition, and non-lexical items
Excessive or otherwise marked punctuation and spacing
Marked representation of dialect, accent or style
Asterisked glosses of actions/events and paralinguistic cues
Emoticons representing facial expression or attitude
Expressive abbreviations
Hashtags
Pictures and video

4. Results

4.1 Frequency of animating features in the dataset

This section presents the frequency of occurrence of animating features within speech reports in the dataset. For the practical reason of mechanically simplifying quantification, only one speech report was counted per tweet, even when individual tweets contained multiple quotatives.⁶ Tokens were coded as *animated*, *plain*, or *undetermined*. Section 4.2 presents all the devices that were counted as animating, as well as when and why they were counted as such. Indeterminacy mostly resulted from unclear speech report boundaries making it impossible to judge whether an animating feature was intended to be construed as part of the speech report or as part of the surrounding discourse. Examples clarifying what was considered undetermined are also presented as part of the analysis throughout Section 4.2. Section 4.2 also contains examples of cases where animation of voice resulted not from the employment of specific devices in the speech report itself, but rather from salient features of the linguistic context surrounding the report.

⁶ Specifically, only the instance of reported speech that caused the tweet in question to be retrieved during the data collection procedure was counted. This also means that only past tense tokens were counted, even though some of the instances in tweets with multiple quotatives were present tense.

Table 5. Frequency of animation in the dataset.

Quotative	Animated		Plain		Total	Undetermined
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>said</i>	87	22.5%	300	77.5	387	63
<i>was like</i>	217	54.8%	179	45.2%	396	54
<i>was all</i>	257	60.5%	168	39.5%	425	25
<i>went</i>	252	61.2%	160	38.8%	412	38
Total	813	50.2%	807	49.8%	1,620	N = 1,800

Table 5 shows the ratio of animated to plain tokens in the dataset as a whole and for each of the four quotatives separately. Undetermined tokens are excluded from the percentages and totals, as well as from the calculation of chi square. In the whole dataset, approximately half of the speech reports contain animating features, indicating that animation is quite common overall on Twitter.

With *said*, animation is comparatively uncommon (22.5%), whereas a majority of tokens contain animated features with the non-traditional quotatives. The distributional difference was found to be statistically significant ($\chi^2=160.04$, $df=3$, $p = .000$). Excluding *said*, the three non-traditional quotatives are not significantly different from one another as regards frequency of animation ($\chi^2=4.06$, $df=2$, $p = .131$).

4.2 Animation of reported speech in sample tweets

Upper-case and case-shifting

One of the most common forms of animation of voice in the dataset is use of case to represent emphatic or agitated delivery. In example (4) below, *lesbian* is written in upper-case, presumably to represent shock or excitement on behalf of the quotee. In (5), *Yogi Bear* is similarly emphasized. Example (6) shows a more subtle use of case variation, whereby some marked quality of stress or intonation of *fine* is suggested by an initial capital.⁷

4. So i just told my Best friend That i like girls more and **She Said “Your a LESBIAN!... I Already knew it ”** x) Lovee Her! <3

⁷ Throughout this section, the speech reports under discussion are marked by boldface.

5. i told her to name bears **she said.. Panda Bear, Grizzly Bear, YOGI BEAR!!** LMAO - shes soo cute
6. My mom said @user is her boyfriend. **She said I think that man is so Fine.**

In (7), alternation between lower-case and upper-case is employed to dramatize the worried doubts of the quotee during the event reported on. Note that it does not seem to matter whether the quotee actually said or thought those exact things; the function of the speech report is to construct an animated representation of the event reported on, but the representation need not be ‘factually’ accurate to fulfill its communicative purpose.

7. @user LOL I was all “I’m sure she knows. **BUT WHAT IF SHE DOESN’T.** It won’t get that far anyway. **BUT WHAT IF IT DOES.”**

Examples (8)–(9) illustrate a difficulty that arose with categorization as regards case. Example (8) was categorized as animated due to the excessive punctuation (repetition of exclamation marks) and repetition of letters, but not due to the upper-case. This is because a look at other tweets by the same Twitter user revealed that s/he apparently writes consistently only in upper-case. A handful of other users featured in the dataset also showed the same tendency to write only in upper-case. Similarly, there are some who consistently capitalize the first letter in all words, apparently for no particular reason relevant to the present study. But there are also ambiguous cases such as (9).

8. MY LIL 5 YEAR OLD COUSIN KEPT CRYIN N SHIT SO I SMACKED HIS ASS AND **HE SAID “BOOGIEEEE!! I WANT YOU OUTTA MY FAMILY!!!!”** LMFAOOO. WTF
9. @USER ITS A BOY AND **HE WAS LIKE “PET MY STOMACH”** so i did

The user who authored (9) did not write consistently in upper-case (indeed, there is variation in case within this very tweet), so the upper-case writing may be taken to have expressive force. On the other hand, it is not clearly the case that the speech report is animated by the upper-case writing in any salient way, as everything preceding the report is also in upper-case. Accordingly, (9) was considered undetermined.

Representation of sounds, letter repetition, and non-lexical items

In the dataset, letter repetition seems to be used most commonly to represent the sound of delivery, especially vowel-lengthening, in orthographic renderings of words or non- or semi-lexical items. That is, similarly to emphatic use of case, non-standard orthography is often used to create a construal of manner of delivery of what is reported.

“Oooh” in (10) appears to be either a representation of an excited sound (typically pronounced something like IPA [u:]), or a vowel-lengthened interjection *oh*. Similarly, the commiserating interjection *aww* in (11) has repetition of the *w*, presumably meant to represent lengthening in articulation.⁸ With (12), it is unclear whether the quotee actually uttered the sound *uhhh*, but regardless, there is clearly an attitude being constructed on behalf of the quotee.

10. She was all “Oooh, Chas got your red in it I see. That's pretty. Turn around lemme see it!” Lol,
11. Hahaha was talking about how Katie c Got booed and I said aww I liked Caitlin... Tis cos am about to text you Caitlin :L
12. @user it's all good brah. I just...getting my heart broken currently. Doesnt feel good so I was all uh hh towards you.

Sometimes letter repetition occurs with items that are not inherently expressive, for instance in (13) below, where it is used in a proper name. Again, the letter repetition seems to represent emotive vowel-lengthening in speech. With the addition of the lengthened vowel to the utterance of the name *Tyreee*, the quoter is could for instance be animating a positive or excited attitude on behalf of the quotee. In (14), the repeated letter string *NOMNOMNOM* is used to represent the “gross” sound of eating ChapStick. The upper-case is presumably emphatic, meant either to represent something concrete, like the noise level of the eating sounds, or something more abstract, like the enthusiasm of the eater. The item *nom* is commonly used online to represent the sound of eating, and especially enthusiastic or pleasurable eating.⁹

⁸ Note that repeated consonants may thus also represent a lengthened vowel sound.

⁹ Cf. e.g. <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=nom%20nom%20nom> (accessed August 2013).

13. @user Talkin to my mom **she said Hey Tyreee!** Lmao
14. @user I knew a 5yearold and she liked to eat chapstick... It was gross **she was all NOMNOMNOM**

Example (15) shows a clearly non-lexical representation of sound. The item *hjhfg* may be an approximation of a sound actually produced by the quotee, but even if it is not, it still functions to animate the ‘mini-drama’ of his reaction to being asked to leave. Finally, in (16), the quoter is apparently using *raaarrrwwgrrr* to playfully animate the scene of his/her roaring while “being a lion.”

15. @user colussy was telling alex he had to go but **he was all “hjhfg no”** and hugged me
16. @user Omg, I was too busy being a lion to do that xD And our couch had the same color as the huge rocks so **I was all raaarrrwwgrrr**

Excessive or otherwise marked punctuation and spacing

It is difficult to set a non-arbitrary cutoff point for what constitutes excessive punctuation. For the purposes of categorizing speech reports according to animation, anything more than one exclamation mark or question mark, as in (17) below, was counted. The repetition of punctuation here seems to represent emotive emphatic force in a way similar to writing in upper-case. In the two speech reports in (18), the quoter uses punctuation in a marked way, together with upper-case and emoticons that are ‘expressionless’ (signaled by a straight line for a mouth), to animate the reported laughter of both quotees as being somehow forced or mechanical.

17. talked to a friend today who is an Adam convert (since Oprah :) she was all “Did you see Adam on Idol last night??? I was gonna call u!!!”
18. Then I was all “AHA. AHA. AHA. AHA. :|” She was all “HA. HA. HA. HA. :|”

Examples (19)–(21) show the use of extra or removed spacing for expressive purposes. In (19), the extraneous spacing combines with the upper-case writing to heavily emphasize *single*, perhaps representing

drawn out vocal delivery, whereas the lack of spacing in (20) represents rapid or frantic delivery. Further, (20) shows a fairly common CMC device of making one or several exclamation points become *Is*, as happens if one lets go of the shift-key while typing out exclamation points. This device is typically used to represent excessive excitement.¹⁰ Example (21) is similar to (20), but adds a long string of periods to represent an extended pause before the frantic outburst (*zomg* is a variant of *omg*, ‘oh my god,’ with the *z* apparently being merely a ludic addition which does not abbreviate anything).

19. She said I'm S I N G L E I do wat the fuck I want lmao
20. @user ugh it was so hard to not be like yesterday “noone cares”
when he was all
“ZOMGMYHOUSEISONORNEARAFULTLINE!!111!!”
21. @user i swear i died FOR her when she told me though, i was all
“.....ZOMGWHAAAAATFLAILUGHOMG!”

A difficulty with categorization that arose as regards marked use of punctuation is that omission of punctuation—especially of commas and apostrophes—is very common in all writing on Twitter. Examples (22)–(23) illustrate this.

22. **She said “auntie I want to be like you”** [hyperlink leading to picture of tattooed feet]
23. “That’s ur boyfriend callin? **She said “Fuck it thats karma”**”

It is conceivable that such missing punctuation could be intended to represent e.g. breathless speech, but there is no particular contextual justification for such an interpretation. This seems to be the case throughout the dataset; accordingly, missing commas or apostrophes were not considered to be devices for animation.

Marked representation of dialect, accent or style

Sometimes, quoters use non-standard spelling to represent dialect, accent, or style. In (24), a speech report is animated by marked imitation

¹⁰ Cf. e.g. <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=!1> (accessed August 2013).

of spoken manner (marked because it contrasts with the style of the rest of the tweet). Conceivably, the quoter's intention is to mock or poke fun at the quotee by constructing an imitation, possibly exaggerated, of his style of articulation.

24. @user1 lmfao @user2 said #WEEYYAHHHH in the car, lmfao, then **he was like “so you jes gon put det on twidduh huh?”**

Examples (25) and (26) illustrate how immediate linguistic context can determine what constitutes animation. In the bold-face report in (25), there are no animating features per se (e.g. use of case or excessive punctuation), but the informal tone of the surrounding language (the use of quotative *BE like*, the use of the gaping emoticon O:, and the lack of punctuation) makes the exclamation “I better hide this from father!” seem markedly stilted or hyper-formal by comparison. Similarly, the ‘proper’ style of the bold-face report in (26) becomes an animated construction of a calm and reasonable demeanor by contrast with the preceding ‘shouted’ report.¹¹ The addition of *SATAN* at the end of the tweet is perplexing, but possibly represents how “they” responded to the quoter.

25. @user I got it and **I was like “I better hide this from father!”** but then I opened it and was like O:
26. They were all “JUST BECAUSE I HAVE A BACKBONE DOESN'T MEAN I'M RELATED TO CHICKENS.” And **I was all “Well, it makes sense to me.”** *SATAN*.

A problem with categorization as regards this device for animation is that some tweets are entirely written in an ‘accent.’ Most notably, tweets written in a manner representing African American Vernacular English (AAVE) style tend to contain speech reports written in the same manner. Seemingly, the AAVE style in the report in (27) serves no salient animating function, but simply represents the standard dialect of a speech community.

¹¹ That is, in these examples the style is not marked in and of itself, but becomes marked by contrast with its linguistic and narrative context. It could be argued that no stylistic choice is ever ‘intrinsically’ marked, but only marked relative to some immediate or general context.

27. @user I am...Nigga I texted u earlier and just realized yo fone is broke I forgot..**I was like this nigga aint gon txt me back??**

Accordingly, tokens where there is no stylistic contrast between the speech report and the language surrounding it were not categorized as animated. Animation, being a functional/pragmatic component of reported speech, has to be considered as much a quality of context as one of form.

Asterisked glosses of actions/events and paralinguistic cues

Many tokens in the dataset feature the use typographic markers such as asterisks to set off phrases or clauses that represent actions/events or paralinguistic cues. In (28), the quoter includes a verbal gloss of an action, **does math in head**, as part of animating an entire sequence of events. Example (29) is similar, with a gloss of reading something in a textbook. In (30) the same device is employed to animate the mimicking of a dance move performed by the quotee. This device clearly resonates with Tannen's view of reported speech as creating a 'drama' of sorts. Indeed, the asterisked phrases are arguably rather reminiscent of stage directions in a play. Example (31) further illustrates this stage direction quality. The gloss **Island accent** could have been presented as full-fledged expository prose (e.g. "She said, in her island accent..."). Instead, a compressed gloss signals that the speech report should be 'read out' in the accent.

28. @user I was all "OMG 6:07" **does math in head** I'm gonna be late! What day is it?" lol. might as well have been "who am I?"
29. And She was all "Whaa? **reads textbook** OH DAMN."
30. She was like ' isn't dis deh dance move your people do ? ** skanks out of the room** '
31. She said ... ** Island accent ** " Everyday I look in the mirror and say DAMNNN I'm cute " Lmfao

In (32), the speech report comprises nothing but a series of asterisked representations of events, unaccompanied by any verbal utterance. The o,e following the report (or conceivably intended to be part of it) is an emoticon generally representing a twitching reaction (it is a horizontally

aligned face, with *o* as an open eye, *e* as a half-shut eye, and the comma may as a drooling mouth). It should be noted that (32) challenges some common definitions of quotatives or reported speech generally, as the quotative here introduces only actions/events, and not sound, speech, gesture, or thought. However, it certainly resonates with Tannen's view of reported speech as animated drama.

32. @user he was like: *puts protection on and enters you,fucks you*
keeps fucking *still fucks* *pulls out* o,e

It may be worth noting that asterisks were very rare with *said*. Arguably, this is to be expected; for instance, replacing *was like* with *said* in the case of (32) simply does not seem idiomatic.

Emoticons representing facial expression or attitude

Emoticons often perform emotive and expressive functions in the speech reports in the Twitter dataset. In (33), a grumpy or annoyed emoticon (-_-) is combined with a lower-case *e*, representing a half-shut or twitching eye, to represent the quotee's emotional and physical reaction to getting something in his/her eyes. In (34), the positive reaction of the quotee is animated by a joyfully grinning emoticon, repeated for emphasis.

33. @user it went all in my eyes. **I was like -_-e**
34. this morning, my mum made danielle toast for breakfast. then like
15 mins later she comes up the stairs wi crumpets for me! **i was all
:D:D:D**

Example (35) shows another form of emphatic repetition, namely repeating the 'mouth' rather than the entire smiley. *Demi* or *emi* may be a name or nickname that the quotee was calling out enthusiastically, though it is difficult to guess without context. The final symbol in the tweet is a Unicode heart symbol, which I interpreted as not being part of the speech report. While it is difficult to analyze oblique examples such as this one, it is plainly the case that the quoter is using these online devices together with the quotative frame to construct and animate a scene in an expressive way.

35. And I was all 8DDDDDDDeeeeemi! 8D ♥

Example (36) shows an emoticon being used with *said*. As with asterisked glosses, emoticons are quite common with the non-traditional quotatives, but comparatively rare with *said*. Again, it seems that the non-traditional quotatives are more flexible, as quotative SAY can only accommodate emoticons if they are an addition to a central verbal utterance describing the manner of delivery whereas, e.g., BE *like* can accommodate any kind of emoticon even unaccompanied by a verbal utterance. That is, *he said :D* does not seem to work as well as *he was like :D* does.

36. Lol i told my mama i need her to take up my pants **she said “-___-
I dnt believe in pants.”**..lmao

Finally, (37) shows an emoticon that is clearly dramatizing some aspect of stance or attitude on behalf of the quotee, though in a way that is quite difficult to interpret. The emoticon </3 represents a broken heart. It is positioned within the speech report as delimited by quotation marks, but it is very difficult to imagine what exact facial expression, body language, tone of voice, or other paralinguistic cue it could be intended to represent.

37. Now she was like “Never make someone your priority if your just an option to them ! They hurt you sometime or another ! </3”

It is certainly the case that some expression of body language could signal heartbreak to an observer who possessed the right contextual knowledge, but the broken heart emoticon ‘lexicalizes’ heartbreak in a way that has no conventional paralinguistic equivalent. In this respect, one might argue that CMC offers possibilities absent from either speech or conventional writing.

Expressive abbreviations

In the dataset, the abbreviations *lol* ‘laughing out loud,’ *lmao* ‘laughing my ass off,’ *omg* ‘oh my god,’ and *wtf* ‘what the fuck,’ as well as multiple variants of these, were found to be used to animate an attitude or emotional state on behalf of the quotee in a manner arguably similar to e.g. emoticons. It can be difficult to distinguish between abbreviations that are simply used for convenience or to save space and abbreviations that represent emotive expression. The abbreviation *omfg* in (38) could

be an abbreviation of convenience for the utterance *oh my fucking god*, but it seems more likely in this context that it is intended to express an attitude of being startled or shocked (i.e., the expression *omfg* stands as a representation for the emotional state which the expression is associated with). Example (39) is similar, except that the attitude expressed is one of amusement. Note that abbreviations such as *lol* an emotive/expressive quality that is not present in abbreviations such as *ppl* ‘people’ or *etc* ‘et cetera,’ or many other common CMC abbreviations such as *bbl* ‘be back later,’ which were not found to perform animation.

38. @user hahaha he was so ducking cute as soon as he realized I could read it **he was all “omfg”** and I was all “:.\$”
39. And one of my classmate saw the Jrs. half naked pic in wink up and **she went “LOL! That's Johnny's porn”**

Example (40) contains *lol* as part of the item *LOLWHUT* (*whut* being a variant spelling of *what*), variations of which are conventionally used in CMC to express a mixture of amusement and bafflement.¹² In (41), it seems that *lmaolmao* is a token that represents the occurrence of actual laughter (like e.g. **laughs**) rather than an abbreviation of convenience for the actual repeated utterance of the phrase *laughing my ass off*. The abbreviation *wtf* (‘what the fuck?’) is similar to e.g. *omg* in that it often seems to animate, for instance, a shocked reaction, rather than actually representing the utterance of the exclamation.

40. @user I have not but omg MYV using keigo is the funniest shit ever! XD He was all "WATAKUSHI" and **I was like “LOLWHUT?”**
41. @user I was laughing the moment she said “skips happily to.....”
And **I went, WTF lmaolmao! XD**

Hashtags

Hashtags are hyperlinks generated by prefixing a string of letters with a hash symbol (#). Their basic function is to categorize tweets or organize conversations, since clicking a hashtag leads to a timeline that shows all

¹² Cf. <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=lolwhut> (accessed August 2013).

tweets containing that hashtag. However, hashtags are often appropriated by users of Twitter for a variety of expressive purposes, such as marking emphasis, or generally as an alternative to other typographic devices common in CMC.

In example (42), Twitter's hashtag function seems to be used to emphasize an exclamation, in a way parallel to how one might mark it with boldface or underlining in writing, or by prosody or volume in speech. Note that even while clicking the hashtag *#poof* in (43) would lead to a timeline of other tweets containing it, it seems unlikely that the author of this tweet intended it as a contribution to a general conversation about to topic *#poof*. Rather, the hashtag is here used similarly to how asterisks are often used in CMC. These kinds of uses of hashtags were considered animated.

42. @user I thought I was the only one. I saw YG's today and **I was like #thefuck?!**

43. Remember the Kraken? @user clamped down on him and **he went #poof**

Example (44) illustrates a problem for categorization as regards hashtags as a device for animation. The tag *#prayforjapan* is an actual topic tag that was used to organize a conversation on Twitter about praying for Japan in the wake of the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake. The tags *#doactualstuff* and *#prayforit* in the speech report seem not to be intended to, e.g., mark the phrases for emphasis, but rather to turn the phrases into a sarcastic comment on the tag *#prayforjapan*. This hashtag usage is interesting, but cannot be considered animating in any sense relevant to this study.

44. TheAmazingAtheist made a video about *#prayforjapan* **He said: "Why #doactualstuff for japan when we can #prayforit!"** See the sarcasm? :c

Images and video

Occasionally, Twitter users employ the multimodal nature of online communication to animate speech reports by linking to graphical content in a tweet. In (45), the URLs lead to an image of the actor Robert Pattinson making an awkward facial expression and an animated image

of the actor Will Smith performing a silly dance move. Seemingly, the intent is to create a playful representation of the attitude or emotional state of the quotee by means of the images. The use of still images or video to express attitude seems related to the use of emoticons: in both cases, a token representation of attitude is employed to construct a representation of the attitudinal state of the quotee. This was the only clear example of such animation in this dataset, though a few similar examples occurred in the pilot study before the collection of the material used in the present study.

45. And then I was all like <http://goo.gl/1x4aa> and <http://goo.gl/vU67U>
#freshprince #happyfriday

Example (46) may be intended to animate the attitude or stance of the quotee by means of a YouTube video of an amateur performing an electric guitar solo, though in this case it seems much less certain that this is the intention; hence it was considered undetermined.

46. hahah he nailed this solo so perfectly that at the end he went like,
“Me... (YouTube <http://youtu.be/Cbphcdy9keQ?a>)

5. Discussion and conclusion

The results indicate that reported speech on Twitter can be animated in a number of ways using various linguistic devices mostly strongly associated with CMC. Many of the features seem to constitute a written-language parallel to aspects of vocal delivery such as loudness, stress, intonation, and the drawing out of sounds. Most obviously, this is the case with upper-case writing and letter repetition. Some features also animate voice by representation of dialect, accent, or style, through orthography or asterisked glosses like **Island accent**. Facial expressions are also commonly represented. This can be done with an asterisked gloss like **smirks**, but is perhaps most commonly done with emoticons. Sometimes an emoticon is reasonably understood to accurately represent, albeit in a stylized manner, the actual face of the quotee, e.g. *-_e* representing the face of someone who has gotten something in his/her eye. At other times, they seem to function in a more abstract manner, representing a general air or attitude.

The use of asterisked glosses of actions/events challenges the idea that we are dealing with reported *speech* per se. However, it resonates with Tannen's conception of reported speech as constructed dialogue, as the representation of action is a way of making the speech report into an animated play of sorts. In face-to-face reported speech, simple actions could of course be acted out by the quoter, but note that asterisked glosses allow for more detail: physically, it might be possible to act out 'reading,' but it seems more difficult to act out 'reading a textbook,' as opposed to anything else that might be read. Thus, asterisked glosses of actions such as **reads textbook**, while being evocative of face-to-face mimicry or enactment, also permit expository detail in a manner more typical of written prose.

While there is consistently some degree of ambiguity as to whether the devices used for animation represent 'actual' vocal delivery, gestural behavior, etc., it is unambiguous that the quoters use the devices to construct and animate expressions of character in one way or another on behalf of the quotees. Tannen (2007) found an important role for animation in spoken language speech reporting, but clearly her findings also hold for the online written platform examined in the present study, especially the speech reports framed with the stereotypically spoken-language non-traditional quotatives BE *like*, BE *all*, and GO. In this regard, this study also demonstrates that an extended notion of animation may be productively applied in investigations of the supposed or actual spoken-likeness of written CMC.

Some generalizations to other platforms for written online interaction is possible. While Crystal (2006: 37) considers attempts to parallel face-to-face paralinguistics with typographic CMC features "somewhat desperate," the results of this study indicate that such devices, as employed to animate reported speech on Twitter, do a good job of enriching CMC with expressive capability. As all of the devices available on Twitter are also available on other platforms – e.g. Facebook, blogs, and instant messaging – there is no reason to doubt that they could be employed as functionally there. The finding that animation is significantly more prevalent with the non-traditional quotatives, which are associated with informal spoken language, suggests that users of Twitter employ such devices at least partly in order to make their type-written communication more spoken-like, in line with a suggested general trend for written online communication (cf. Jones and

Schieffelin, 2009). However, the present findings also lend some support to Crystal's (2006) idea that there are features unique to CMC. Some of the devices used for animation enable the quoters to represent actions, attitude or stance in ways that are not possible in speech or in face-to-face paralinguistic (e.g. an emoticon with a smile so intense it requires many mouths to depict, a detailed asterisked gloss, or a video of Will Smith dancing). The finding of this study thus provides some reasons to be skeptical of construals of CMC as simply impoverished relative to face-to-face interaction (cf. Avgerinakou, 2003: 274-275).

The working hypothesis that the speech reports framed with the non-traditional quotatives should feature more animation and more spoken-like qualities may be considered partially confirmed. Animation was certainly more frequent with the non-traditional quotatives. Further, while the speech reports in this dataset are not exactly like speech reports in spoken language, there is certainly evidence of what Jones and Schieffelin (2009: 78) call "new strategies of voice representation" in a "creative mediation between forms already in use and novel contexts and goals." In section 2.1, Table 1 and Table 2 presented contrasting features of writing and speech. As mentioned, the language of Twitter is mostly written-like in terms of the features in Table 1, in that communication on Twitter is relatively spatially and temporally distant, and cannot rely on immediate non-linguistic situational context. On the other hand, the speech reports analyzed above are quite spoken-like in terms of the utterance content features presented in Table 2: the reported utterances are brief, loosely structured, highly informal, and expressive, with typographic, orthographic, and other devices enabling something at least partly similar to the rich multimodality that paralinguistic accomplishes in spoken interaction. In using various devices, often ones strongly associated with CMC, to animate reported speech in a typewritten format, users of Twitter exhibit linguistic creativity in accomplishing a specific style of communication that is highly reminiscent of informal spoken interaction, even while having unique qualities of its own.

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