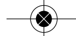
Research Repository UCD

Title	Tales from the Celtic Tiger: migrants' language use and identity
Authors(s)	Regan, Vera
Publication date	2016-05-01
Publication information	Regan, Vera. “Tales from the Celtic Tiger: Migrants’ Language Use and Identity.” Four Courts Press, 2016.
Publisher	Four Courts Press
Item record/more information	http://hdl.handle.net/10197/24667

Downloaded 2023-10-31T04:02:18Z

The UCD community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you. Your story matters! (@ucd_oa)

© Some rights reserved. For more information



Tales of the Celtic Tiger: migrants' language use and identity

VERA REGAN

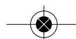
INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes an aspect of Ireland and Irishness in the twenty-first century. It tells the story of a country undergoing major changes and a concomitant identity in flux. Ireland has had, in a relatively short space of time, an economic boom and a subsequent crash. This economic cataclysm, with its major shifts in population caused by immigration and emigration, has brought with it changes in how Irish people see themselves and indeed what constitutes 'Irishness'. The study presented here tells this story through the lens of language: language use, language practices and language attitudes. An important 'barometer' of identity is language; here, language tells a story of identity in flux where 'Irishness' is redefined. Similarly to the picture painted by Lamarre (this volume) of a changing Quebec identity, Ireland's rapidly changing identity may be captured here through language use in Ireland today; specifically the language of the 'new Irish'.

This chapter derives from on-going research on identity, migration and sociolinguistic competence that investigates the language use of Polish people in urban and rural Ireland.[1] It has developed through discussions within the interdisciplinary research group on Irishness and Québécité which interrogates the nature of Irishness today and in the past.[2]

People's social identities are constituted and negotiated through different processes, one of which is their patterns of language use. Language plays an important, but often under problematized, role in interculturalism. Despite frequent references to the importance of language in the process of integration, on the part of both policy makers and researchers, there is, in fact, a lack of empirical data on actual language use by migrants. Without data, discussions about the impact of language on interculturalism and integration are difficult to sustain. This research investigates language practices as indicators of such processes. Choice of language, variation patterns, co-construction of linguistic interactions may all index issues such as people's feelings about their new environment, their aspirations, future plans and sense of their own identity. Qualitative and quantitative approaches will provide triangulated evidence of identity construction, giving an insight into the complex interaction between social and linguistic practices in Ireland in the twenty-first century.

1 'Language, identity and interculturalism in Ireland', funded by the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences, 2009–2010 (V.Regan, PI). 2 Quebec-Ireland Workshop,



Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 114

The present research uses sociolinguistic models and a mixed method approach to provide a detailed analysis of how both migrant and 'traditional' Irish negotiate and construct identities through language in this new context, with implications for how Irish society manages its new social and linguistic diversity.[3] Given the importance of language to identity and society, an in-depth analysis of this process and of the construction of identities in this rapidly changing context will help understand the evolving identity of contemporary Ireland.

IRELAND AND MIGRATION

Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland, contrary to anecdotal prediction, has seen the recently arrived migrants not 'going home', but staying in Ireland in large numbers. For these people, the acquisition of English as spoken in Ireland (that is, Irish English, as opposed to other varieties of English spoken throughout the world), and the use and maintenance of their first language [L1] (Polish, in the case of this study) are a crucial part of the process of both identity and community construction. The acquisition of vernacular community speech variation patterns, in particular, reveals much about identity construction on the part of newcomers to the host country, as well as reciprocal attitudes between Irish society and the newcomers.

Contrary to what has sometimes been implied, diversity and language change (linguistic as well as cultural) are not new in Ireland, nor are issues of multiple identities. Despite recent work nuancing historical issues of identity (for example, see Kelleher, this volume) a stereotype of 'Irishness' has persisted which is, by and large, the legacy of a late nineteenth-century 'nation state'-type concept of Irishness, which portrays Ireland as culturally monolithic, constructed as 'Celtic'. Like Quebec, Irish has had 'an imagined past' (see Lamarre, this volume) and, analogous to Lamarre's study of contemporary Montreal, a newly multicultural and multilingual Ireland of the twenty-first century has rapidly rediscovered diversity, with an increased focus on variation at an individual rather than a macro level.

Arising from the arrival of emigrants to Ireland during the economic boom in the early twenty first century (the so called 'Celtic Tiger'), new and different forms of variation become apparent. In terms of language, this is represented not so much by variation in relation to the multiple dialects which exist throughout the country but rather variation at an individual level. Individual speakers have recourse to a multiplicity of linguistic choices: choice of which particular language to use, in which particular situation, choice of whether to mix the multiple languages they know, choice about the particular words they use and what these choices may indicate. These choices may be seen to index identity issues, with the speaker using language to indicate

funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences Bilateral Awards, 2009–2012 (M. Kelleher and M. Keneally, PIs). **3** Mixed methods generally applies to a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. For a more comprehensive discussion, see Zoltan Dornyei, *Research methods in applied linguistics* (Oxford, 2007), p. 42.

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 115

intentions about identity construction, which, in turn, may imply agency at an individual level.

The chapter focuses on the language practices of one group of recent newcomers to Ireland, Polish migrants. In the early twenty-first century, diversity in Ireland is underscored by the arrival of numerous immigrants from different countries. A large proportion of people come from Eastern Europe, in particular Poland. The specific aim of this study of Polish immigrants is to see what their life stories represent in terms of a wider view of the story of Ireland as a whole. We closely examine the language use of a group of Polish speakers in Ireland in order to illuminate issues such as how people are integrating, or not, into Irish society, what the implications are for social cohesion, how the linguistic choices of Polish speakers indicate their hopes, aspirations, aims for the future, notions of identity and moves in identity construction. We view the Polish community as an exemplar of other groups of migrants in Ireland today.

VARIATIONIST METHODOLOGY

The study starts from the premise that language can be seen as an index of social integration on the part of migrants. Social scientists have studied many indices of integration with interesting findings. In the process, most emphasize the crucial role of language, but, until recently, as we have already pointed out, the issue of actual language use by migrant speakers was scarcely addressed, and certainly not in any detail. In a wider project we address this deficit,[4] and in this chapter, we provide an example of a detailed, close-up investigation of how people actually use the language of the country they happen to be living in and the implications of these choices.

In the following case, a concurrent combination of qualitative and quantitative research is used, as mentioned earlier. As Dornyei reflects, 'Concurrent designs are … useful for combining micro and macro perspectives: for example, quantitative research can tap large-scale trends in social life, while qualitative research can provide a micro-analysis of how the broad trends affect or are perceived by the individuals.'[5] The general methodology used in the present study comes from the variationist paradigm in linguistics. It is centrally a quantitative method which, since its inception, has always incorporated a qualitative interpretative component and is currently evolving towards an increasingly ethnographic approach.

Variationist sociolinguistics places variation as central in linguistic description and analysis. Generally speaking, variation refers to differences in linguistic form, or two or more ways of saying the same thing. It finds correlations between these forms and social facts. So a person may say, variably, either 'I'm running' or 'I'm runnin'. The

4 'Language, identity and interculturalism in Ireland', Senior Research Fellowship 2009–10 funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences and 'Second language acquisition and native language maintenance in the Polish diaspora in Ireland and France', funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2006–9. (D. Singleton, V. Regan, E. Debaene, PIs) **5** Dornyei, *Research methods in applied linguistics*, p. 173.

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 116

choice is conditioned by multiple social and linguistic factors, such as the social factors of age, sex, social class, context and interlocutor, as well as by linguistic factors such as the following sound or the verb type involved, for example. Variationists model the variation intrinsic to speech by detailed, quantitative, multivariate analysis that reveals which factors influence the choice of variants (for example, *in* vs *ing*) and the varying strengths of the effects of these factors. A computer programme, or in fact, a set of computer programmes have been developed by variationist linguists which are adapted to natural speech data, taking into account the simultaneous and intersecting factors that affect the choice of variants. Some earlier variation research in the 1980s had a tendency to use *a priori* categories which have increasingly been seen as predetermined and essentialist. Currently, variation work, as noted earlier, is seeking to combine classic quantitative analysis with qualitative analysis based on ethnographic work. This results in a more subtle representation of speakers' language, which reveals more about what it means to be a member of a particular community or community of practice.[6]

People are constantly engaged in the process of identity construction, finding a place for themselves in the social world by negotiating their positions in various intersecting communities of practice in which they participate. Various rationales and constructs have been proposed for this process. Bakhtin, for example, portrays the individual's selfhood as emerging from a struggle with their surroundings.[7] Migrants using a language which may not be their first language are even more intensely caught in the maelstrom of different communities as they cross borders of various kinds – geographical, psychological and social. For the multilingual speaker, by the nature of the multiple worlds they inhabit and the fluidity of their relationships with these worlds, the process must be managed with great subtlety (for a similar trajectory, see Lamarre's discussion of young Montrealers and their use of contemporary speech repertoires, this volume).

The multilingual speaker chooses from their linguistic repertoire in the process of identity creation. He or she uses language to construct identity, to index aspects of persona and forge new links between place and persona. The speaker also uses variable speech patterns in adopting stances vis-à-vis the norms and ideologies that they encounter in their day-to-day interactions.[8] The fact that the speaker has a choice between different variants available means that this type of variation is closely bound up with identity construction. As Bucholtz notes, 'identities emerge from temporary and mutable interactional conditions, in negotiation, and often in contestation with other social factors and in relation to larger, often unyielding structures of power'.[9] Migrant speakers, almost by definition, must daily engage in such dealings with these 'unyielding' or, at least, relatively unyielding structures.

6 This is often referred to as 'third wave' variationist research, see Vera Regan, 'Variation and second language acquisition' in J. Herschensohn and M. Young-Scholten (eds), *The Cambridge handbook for second language acquisition* (Cambridge, 2013), pp 272–91. **7** See M. Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination* (Austin, 1981), and *Speech genres and other later essays* (Austin, 1986). **8** Alexandra M. Jaffe, *Stance: sociolinguistic perspectives* (New York and Oxford, 2009).

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 117

An additional element for multilingual migrant speakers is that, depending on their level of proficiency, the sort of 'bricolage' in which native speakers engage in to construct identities is, in their case, significantly more complex.[10] The non-native speaker may have limitations on the linguistic resources available to them (unless they are near-native) in a way a native speaker does not (not forgetting that they may also have more resources of another variety such as knowledge of other languages). They may compensate for gaps in their knowledge of the L2 and use language forms with functions different from those of native speakers. It is now generally accepted that language is a practice, not a static entity, as linguists tended to view it previously,[11] and more recent work documents the dynamic nature of speakers' behaviour in relation to language (see Lamarre, this volume). Non native speakers use variation patterns in highly creative ways as indeed native speakers do; often their use of variation speech patterns functions as an element in self-presentation and identity construction as performativity. As people use gestures, body language, and jewellery in their self presentation so also do they use variation patterns.[12]

THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL: LINGUISTIC BRICOLAGE AND MIGRATION CHOICES

Life choices made by migrants in the twenty-first century can vary enormously, both in contrast to the choices made in previous eras and also in relation to other migrants. These choices, which impact their lives and identities, can depend on issues like aspirations for the future, reasons for leaving their country of birth or attitudes to their country of residence. Language use can be a useful tool for charting these choices, often providing interesting correlations (as in the statistics we will present later) between choice in language elements and identity as well as aspirations on the part of migrants. With the precise goal of charting these choices, this chapter focuses on the use of one linguistic variable (use of discourse *like*) as it is used by Polish people living in Ireland. The investigation of this very specific and much-used linguistic feature can reveal significant amounts of information regarding the lives of migrants in Ireland and, by extension, of migrants globally in the twenty first century.

GLOBAL ENGLISH AND IRISH ENGLISH

We will now turn to the language with which migrants who arrive in Ireland are confronted. While there has been extensive work carried out on features of L1 Irish

9 Mary Bucholtz, 'Sociolinguistic nostalgia and the authentication of identity', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7:3 (2003), 398–416, 408. **10** For a discussion of 'bricolage', see D. Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style* (New York, 1984). **11** Penelope Eckert, *Linguistic variation as social practice: the linguistic construction of identity in Belten High* (Oxford, 2000). **12** Penelope Eckert, *Jocks and burnouts: social categories and identity in the high school* (New York, 1989), and 'Variation and the

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 118

English,[13] the use of Irish English by allophones who have immigrated to Ireland has remained largely absent from the linguistic portrait of Ireland to date.[14] Underlying language attitudes in Ireland is the constant, if at times unspoken, presence of the Irish language and its loss; for instance, see a quote in Kelleher, this volume, 'the Irish, the last remnant of the purest and most original language of the British Isles, and probably of North Western Europe also, is fast fading from amongst us'. Discourses of purity, on the one hand, and of loss, on the other have persisted over time. As formal academic institutions, schools teach L1 pupils the more formal varieties of the language. This trend continues in second language (L2) teaching where, even in officially bilingual countries, students have been shown to have a limited knowledge of mildly marked informal variants in their second language.[15] Studies of L2 varieties of English focus on the two most commonly taught: British (standard) and American. While Ireland attracts many EFL (English as a foreign language) students, Irish English (like many other varieties of English) was, for many years, regarded as an inferior form of English and was often termed a 'brogue' or 'Blarney'. Descriptions have frequently focused on 'rural vocabulary and put an emphasis on colloquial and slightly farcical items' rather than on a treatment of Irish English as a legitimate variety with the same range of variation as elsewhere.[16] According to Jenkins,[17] Irish English is also viewed as less prestigious than other varieties of English among teachers of EFL in general. L2 speakers are also more likely to learn and be tested in either standard British or US English.[18] As a result, informants in this study are unlikely to have been exposed to variation patterns in informal Irish English before their arrival in Ireland.

As already noted, the particular feature of Irish English on which this paper focuses is the supra-regional one of discourse *like*. It is a feature of all of the 'Englishes' throughout the world today, but it has been found to embed slightly differently according to the particular community. Therefore we can hypothesize that if the newcomer speakers use it in the same way as the local speakers (Irish English in this case), this might be an indication of their attitudes to the local community and possibly

indexical field', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 12:4 (2009), 453–78. **13** For instance, see Hickey, *The dialects of Irish: study of a changing landscape*. Trends in Linguistics: Studies & Monographs (Berlin, 2011). **14** Although, see Vera Regan, Niamh Nestor, and Caitriona Ni Chasaide, 'The Polish community in Ireland: language use and identity', *New perspectives on Irish English* (John Hume Institute for Global Irish Studies, University College Dublin, 2010). Also Niamh Nestor and Vera Regan, 'New kids on the block: young Poles, language, and identity' in N. Bushin-Tyrrell, M. Darmody and S. Song (eds), *Ethnic minority children and youth in Ireland* (Rotterdam, 2010). **15** For Holland and Ireland, see Jean-Marc Dewaele and Vera Regan, 'The use of colloquial words in advanced French interlanguage' in S. Foster-Cohen and A. Nizegorodcew (eds), *EUROSLA Yearbook 1* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2001), pp 51–67. For Canada, see Katherine Rehner, Raymond Mougeon and Terry Nadasdi, 'The learning of sociolinguistic variation by advanced FSL learners: the case of *nous* versus *on* in immersion French', *Studies in Second Language Acquistion*, 25 (2003), 127–56. **16** Carolina P. Amador-Moreno, 'How the Irish speak English: a conversation with T.P. Dolan', *Estudios Irlandeses*, 2 (2007), 214–17; Raymond Hickey, *Irish English: history and present-day forms* (Cambridge, 2007). **17** Jennifer Jenkins, 'English as a lingua franca' (Paper read at JACET 47th Annual Convention, 11–13 Sept. 2008, Waseda University). **18** Alan Davies, 'Assessing world Englishes', *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 29 (2009), 80–9, 82.

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 119

even to integration into this community. However these speculations would have to be corroborated by qualitative analysis which would investigate attitudes to Irish English as opposed to more standard English varieties, attitudes to Ireland and the Irish, aspirations and intentions, such as whether the immigrants intend to stay in Ireland. As well as qualitative analysis of the content of what is spoken, linguistic analysis can reveal, for example, instances of where more standard variants of certain other variables are adopted where the local variants are not.

THE STUDY AND THE SPEAKERS

The focus of the study presented in this chapter is the use of discourse like by eight L2 speakers from the Polish communities in Ireland. While the number of participants is small, the number of tokens used is within the accepted norms for variationist quantitative analysis. Clearly however the limited number of individual speakers is not sufficient to demonstrate categorical explanations (for example, class, age, gender). For this reason the qualitative work will be used to suggest explanations relative to the individual participants. Six of these have migrated to Ireland since Poland acceded to the European Union in 2004; two have been living in Ireland for more than thirty-five years.[19] Between them they represent pre-Celtic Tiger and Celtic Tiger migration.

A preliminary analysis of the speech data has shown that discourse *like* is a frequent feature of the speech of many of the participants in the broader study, just as it is in the speech of L1 speakers of Irish English, and so, presumably, in the input to which the Polish participants are exposed. In relation to the speech patterns of the migrant speakers, specific research questions were: How does discourse *like* pattern in the speech of these non native users of Irish English? Does it follow the variation patterns of L1 Irish English speech? What factors constrain the variation patterns in relation to this variable and, in particular, the positional distribution of discourse *like* (given that the position is what specifically characterizes Irish English usage)?

DISCOURSE *LIKE*

Both academic and non-academic sources confirm that discourse *like* is one of the most 'salient features of present-day vernacular English',[20] throughout the global varieties of English. Discourse *like* has been studied extensively in the UK, US and Canada,[21] and many studies note the disregard with which it is met. It is described as 'intrusive …

19 The analysis for this chapter forms part of a larger study in which we analyse a corpus of second language speech data for the production of a number of different variables, including that under study in this paper, discourse *like*. This project has been generously funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences. **20** Alexandra D'Arcy, *Like: syntax and development* (Toronto, 2005), p. ii. **21** Alexandra D'Arcy, 'Like, it didn't develop ex nihilo', *NWAV*, 35 (Ohio, 2006); Jennifer Dailey-O'Cain, 'The sociolinguistic distribution of and

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 120

[making] sentences seem disjointed to many listeners',[22] a randomly occurring item with no particular meaning, which functions as a filler where speakers have difficulty enunciating their message, or a meaningless interjection which is thought to indicate lack of articulacy. Tagliamonte and Hudson point to the media's view of discourse *like* (and other forms such as *just*) as 'haphazard, random or indiscriminate'.[23] But, is discourse *like* 'haphazard' and 'random'? D'Arcy shows that, far from being a 'filler' or unconstrained by syntax, discourse *like* is, in fact, highly constrained by syntax and occurs in specific positions among speakers of all ages.[24]

D'Arcy notes that the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) documents usage of discourse *like* in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and that, in these records, discourse *like* 'generally occurs in clause-final position'.[25] Clause-final means 'like' occurs at the end of a clause e.g. 'he was six foot *like*'. Clause-medial means it occurs in the middle 'He was *like* six foot' in comparison to clause-initial, '*Like* he was six foot'. In D'Arcy's own analysis, she rules out this clause-final position and sees it as representative of an earlier stage of development. Siemund, Maier and Schweinberger query this view.[26] They analyse the distribution of discourse *like* in different varieties of English and use the ICE (International Corpus of English) Corpora for the purposes of comparability. They find two distinct patterns for discourse *like*: Irish English behaves similarly to Indian English (called the 'Group A' varieties) insofar as discourse *like* mainly occurs in clause-marginal positions (clause-initial or clause-final) (2009, 29–30);[27] on the other hand, the 'Group B' varieties, Philippine English and East African English,[28] prefer discourse *like* in clause-medial position.[29] In later research, Schweinberger adds British English, American English, Singaporean English and Jamaican English to the Group B varieties.[30] Siemund, Maier and Schweinberger note that not only is there an observable difference across varieties in the use of *like* (discourse and non-discourse, i.e., verb, noun, adjective, etc.), but that Irish English has the highest occurrence of *like*, both discourse and non-discourse, of all the varieties.[31]

Along with more stereotypical 'Irish' features, new features, including *like*, now appear prominently in Irish English speech. As Hickey notes, discourse *like* is present in the speech of all age groups in Ireland.[32] It is thus safe to assume that the Polish

attitudes toward focuser like and quotative like', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 4:1 (2000), 60–80; Sali Tagliamonte, 'He's like, she's like: the quotative system in Canadian youth', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 8:4 (2004), 493–514; Sali Tagliamonte and Rachel Hudson, 'Be like et al. beyond America: the quotative system in British and American youth', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 3:2 (1999), 147–72. **22** R. Underhill, 'Like is, like, focus', *American Speech*, 63:3 (1988), 234–46, 234. **23** Tagliamonte and Hudson 'Be like et al. Beyond America: the quotative system in British and American youth'. **24** D'Arcy, *Like: syntax and development*. **25** Ibid., pp 4–5. **26** P.G. Siemund and M. Schweinberger, 'Towards a more fine-grained analysis of the areal distributions of non-standard features of English' in *Language contacts meet English dialects. Festschrift for Markku Filppula* (Cambridge, 2009). **27** Siemund et al., 'Towards a more fine-grained analysis', pp 29–30. **28** East African English includes both Kenyan English and Tanzanian English. **29** Siemund et al., 'Towards a more fine-grained analysis', p. 30. **30** M. Schweinberger, 'LIKE revisited: a quantitative analysis of the distribution, position, and function of the discourse marker LIKE in Hiberno-English and other varieties of English' in *New perspectives on Irish English* (Dublin, 2010). **31** Siemund, et. al., 'Towards a more fine-grained analysis', p. 29. **32** Hickey, *Irish English*, p. 376.

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 121

participants in this study have access to discourse *like* in the Irish English they hear. Thus, not only can we observe L2 speakers of English using 'like' as they learn English (or adjust the English they learned as a second or tertiary language when growing up outside Ireland), but we can observe whether usage follows a specific Irish-English pattern or whether it follows a more global version. The next issue is to discover whether they are acquiring the patterns of variability of the wider L1 English speech community.

POLISH MIGRATION TO IRELAND

Ireland has experienced momentous change over the last decade and a half, with a sharp reversal in its traditionally outward-migration patterns to a very rapid increase in inward migration, particularly noticeable after the accession of ten new EU member states, including Poland, in May 2004. Between 2002 and 2006 for example, there was a very fast growth in the number of non-Irish nationals in Ireland when the number almost doubled from 224,300 to 419,733 in just four years; the 2011 census reported 544,357 non-Irish nationals. The nationality with the largest increase was the Polish nationality. Polish residents increased from 2,124 in 2001 to 63,276 persons in 2006, and 122,585 in the 2011 census. Polish nationals are now the largest non-Irish group living in Ireland. There were previous migration waves to Ireland from Poland, but not by any means as great as the migration during the Celtic Tiger years (*c.*1997–2008), which Grabowska describes as having a 'dual character'.[33] Some migrants were brought in by their multinational or Irish company bosses, but most came to Ireland through the process of chain migration.[34] Factors influencing an individual's decision to migrate are complex but the post-1997 migration flow is characterized as primarily economically motivated.[35] This was facilitated by the fact that Ireland (along with the UK and Sweden) did not require Polish citizens to hold a work permit in order to gain employment after Poland's accession to the EU in 2004.

There has been much debate about the actual number of Polish nationals living in Ireland but with no definitive conclusions. According to the 2011 census,[36] the number of non-Irish nationals in general living in Ireland stands at 544,357, accounting for over 12 per cent of the total population of the country. This was a substantial increase from the estimated 5 per cent of migrants who lived in Ireland before the mid 1990s.[37] Within this figure of 544,000, 71 per cent came from European Union countries, but Poles represented, on paper at least, over 22 per cent of the total non-Irish population (and nearly 3 per cent of the total population). However, since census 2006, reports in the

33 Izabela Grabowska, 'Changes in the international mobility of labour: job migration of Polish nationals to Ireland', *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 14:1 (2005), 27–44, 32. **34** This is a common feature of migration, when migrants travel to locations where they have personal links through family and friends, and others then follow them, thus the image of links in a chain. **35** Grabowska, 'Changes in the international mobility of labour', 31–2. **36** http://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2011reports/census2011profile6migrationanddiversity-aprofileofdiversityinireland/ **37** OECD

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 122

media would suggest that this figure was somewhat low and tend to concur that approximately 200,000 Poles (or three times the reported number) were resident in Ireland in 2006.[38] Despite the very recent economic reversal in Ireland, the global economic collapse and the popular notion that Polish people would now go 'home', this does not seem to have happened, as we have noted earlier; according to the 2011 census, the number of Polish nationals officially living in Ireland increased by 93.7 per cent between 2006 and 2011; the unofficial number could be larger still.

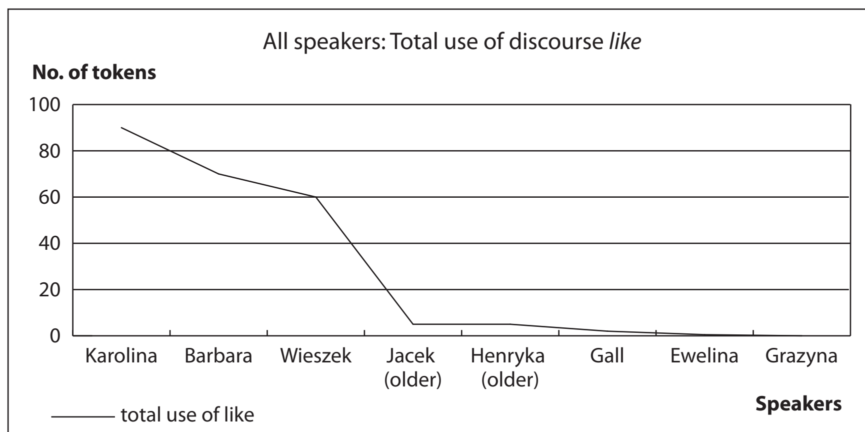
METHODOLOGY

As noted earlier, both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are used in this study. With a triangulation of these with survey data from the same participants, a more complete picture of the lives of the members of the Polish communities can emerge.

For the project as a whole, participants were found though different approaches: the 'friend-of-a-friend' approach and the 'snowball' approach. This avoided the bias of linking into a specific network of friends in the Polish community and facilitated the comparison of different categories of participants. An urban centre (Dublin) and a rural hinterland (Mayo) were targeted. Male and female in each grouping were interviewed (i.e., Poles in Mayo and Dublin who arrived in Ireland since 2004, and Poles in Mayo and Dublin who arrived prior to the Celtic Tiger boom). As previously noted, only a small subset of speakers from the larger project are described in the present study.

Participants were recorded in semi-directed sociolinguistic 'interviews' (which are, in fact, closer to conversations), guided by the participants' own interests. These

Fig. 7.1. All speakers: Total use of discourse *like*



2009, p. 15. **38** See Smyth, 'Poles based in Ireland repatriate €841 million', *Irish Times*, 26 Oct. 2010, accessed 19 Dec. 2014.

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 123

conversations provided insight into the language of the informants, and also their stories and experience of living in Ireland. Each interview lasted at least one hour. This data was transcribed and coded for quantitative analysis and also analysed qualitatively so that the individual voices of the participants would emerge. Written ethnographic questionnaires were completed by each informant.

There was a total of 231 occurrences of discourse *like* in the corpus examined for this particular study. The analysis showed a large degree of interspeaker variation, as is usual in non native speech. This is illustrated above.

Of the eight participants, three had a very high occurrence of discourse *like* in their speech, while five used few to no tokens of discourse *like*.

Every token of discourse *like* was coded according to linguistic and social factors. Social factors included gender, age, length of residence, L1 (Polish) vs L2 (English) use, attitude towards living in Ireland, transnational activity and self-reported proficiency. As regards linguistic factors, and taking account of descriptions of clause position in the literature, *like* was coded for position in the clause, following Siemund, Maier and Schweinberger:[39] clause-medial, clause-initial or clause-final position. As noted earlier, *like* in Irish English mainly occurs in clause-marginal position, so one of the aims of the analysis was to determine whether the L2 Polish speakers of Irish English would produce similar patterns. Examples from the data were:

Discourse *like* in clause-medial position:
(i) The best meat **LIKE** now is exported (Jacek, 585).
(ii) but we'd love to have **LIKE** a big family and **LIKE** he's always laughing at me because I would love to adopt some kids as well (Karolina, 620a).

Discourse *like* in clause-initial position:
(i) and **LIKE** all the kids know that you know they are brothers (Karolina, 902).
(ii) **LIKE** they're from Silesia but they went to study in Cracow and they stayed there (Barbara, 1044).

Discourse *like* in clause-final position:
(i) In Ireland it is always like this. When you start one thing it leads to another thing yes? Especially with the Russian circle **LIKE** (Henryka, 1122).
(ii) yeah and that's what I heard. One guy tried to, to take off the t-shirt and he cut himself **LIKE** (Wieszek, 497).

A frequent feature was the use of discourse *like* in combination with *you know*.
(i) it was very easy **LIKE-you-know** (Gall, 1282; clause-final discourse *like*).
(ii) that's impossible in Poland for her **LIKE-you-know** (Wieszek, 772–776; clause-final discourse *like*).

39 Siemund et al., 'Towards a more fine-grained analysis'.

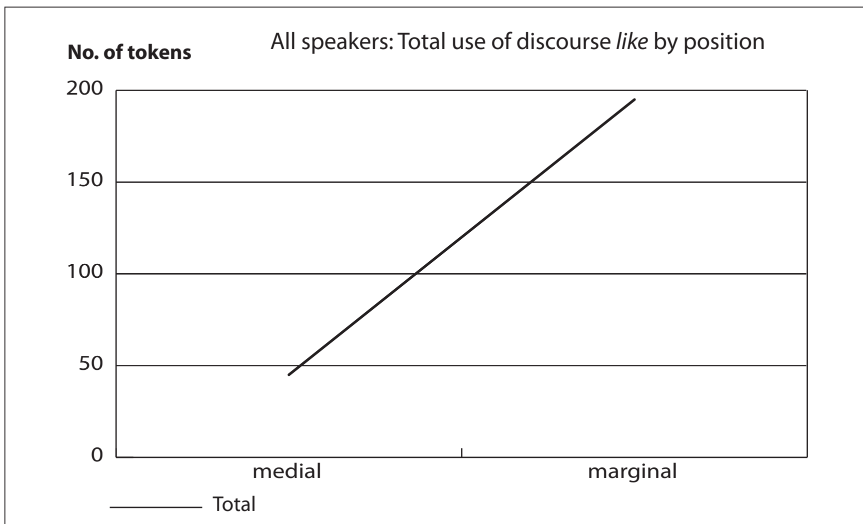
(iii) I think he did but **LIKE-you-know** it was just the ridiculous you know the whole whatever he came up with (Karolina, 1048; clause-initial discourse *like*).
(iv) yeah and **LIKE-you-know** dialect is completely different LIKE (Barbara, 869b; clause-initial discourse *like*).

Hickey notes *you know* as a 'typical pragmatic marker' in Irish English.[40] There were two variations of this in the Polish data: *like you know* or *you know like*.[41]

THE POLISH SPEAKERS AND IRISH ENGLISH: POSITION OF *LIKE* IN THE PHRASE

As well as examining the rates of usage of *like*, the more detailed picture of variation patterns in relation to *like* use was investigated. It is worth noting that there is no equivalent to English 'like' in Polish. So that the fact that the Polish speakers use it is interesting and may be due to its salience and ubiquitous presence in the Irish English input they receive. Figure 2 demonstrates that the speakers in this corpus follow the broad patterns for Irish English, as detailed in Siemund, Maier and Schweinberger.[42] Each occurrence of discourse *like* was examined for the position in which it occurred. Of the 231 tokens, 39 (16.9%) occurred in clause-medial position whereas 192 (83.1%) occurred in clause-marginal position.

Fig.7.2. All speakers: Total use of discourse *like* by position



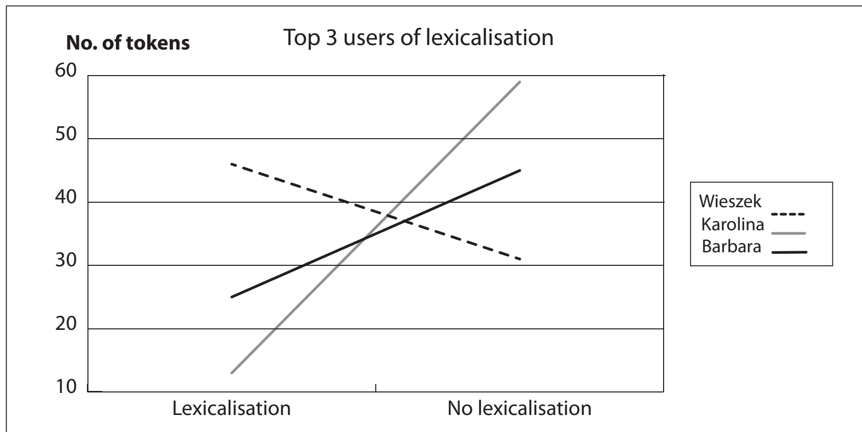
40 Hickey, *Irish English*, p. 375. **41** *Do you know like* did not occur in the data under analysis here but has occurred in the speech data from the broader project. **42** Siemund et al., 'Towards a more fine-grained analysis'.

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 17:05 Page 125

Clause-marginal position was further analysed to determine whether speakers were using more clause-initial or clause-final structures. There was very little difference in usage in the two positions: speakers used ninety-two tokens in clause-initial position and one hundred tokens in clause-final position. So, in general, as a group, the Polish speakers are using the specific local Irish English pattern, as opposed to the global English patterns.

Use of these phrases, (such as *you know like*), or lexicalized 'chunks' as they are described sometimes, revealed some interesting patterns. Of 231 occurrences of discourse *like* in this corpus, 103 were chunks. *Like you know* accounted for 102 of these; there was one occurrence of *you know like*. In total, chunks accounted for 44.6 per cent of all tokens of discourse *like*. With the exception of one token (by Gall), the occurrences of discourse *like* in combination with *you know* were all produced by the three most frequent users of discourse *like*: Karolina, Wieszek and Barbara.

Fig. 7.3. Top three users of chunks 'like you know' and 'you know like'



Second (and other, third, fourth and so on) language speakers are strongly influenced by the language they hear around them (or the input). Input in second language research has been found to play a central and crucial role in acquisition.[43] In the case of the participants in this study, these Polish speakers are presumably hearing native speakers of Irish English around them using these lexicalized phrases and reproducing what they hear. Previous research has shown that these fixed-type phrases have been found to serve as a sort of badge of nativeness for L2 speakers; a kind of 'short cut' which makes them sound like native speakers, and to index identity with community linguistic norms.[44]

43 Susan Gass, 'Input and interaction' in C. Doughty and M. Long (eds), *The handbook of second language acquisition* (Oxford, 2004), pp 224–55. **44** See for instance, Vera Regan, 'The acquisition of sociolinguistic native speech norms: effects of a year abroad on second language learners of French' in B. Freed (ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (Amsterdam, 1995) and Regan, 'Les apprenants avancés, la lexicalisation et l'acquisition de la compétence socio-

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 126

What is clear from Figure 3 is that the three most frequent users of discourse *like* are all frequent users of lexicalized chunks.

To further investigate this contrast in quantitative outcomes between the two groups of speakers, we turn now to the more qualitative description of the speakers to better explore their life stories and examine the links with the quantitative data.

Celtic Tiger Migration: The Global and the Local Response

Five of the participants – Jacek, Henryka, Gall, Ewelina and Grażyna – used few to no tokens of discourse *like*.[45] The similarity in the findings for these participants, on investigation, however, seems to be the outcome of very different linguistic practices. We now look at the different social factors that possibly may have combined to produce these differences.

The quantitative results of the speech of these Polish people living in Ireland today could be said to relate to the narrative of the Celtic Tiger. We have seen the group results which tell us that overall the Polish speakers use the same general patterns as Irish English speakers. However, there are also important individual responses of migrants to the experience of migration. As the earlier quotations testify, there are many stories embedded in these results. These include stories of 'old migration' (before 2004) and 'new migration' (Celtic Tiger migration); the 'global' response and the 'local' response; and even 'generational' migration (older people and younger people).

Two of the eight speakers can be categorized as pre-Celtic Tiger. Jacek is 76 years old and Henryka is 60 years old. They are two of the speakers with low rates of usage of *like*. They both used five tokens of discourse *like*. Their self-report, when asked about proficiency in English, is 'fluent'.[46] Jacek has lived in Ireland since the 1950s and, for much of this time, has worked in business. He married an Irish woman who died a number of years before he participated in the study. Henryka, on the other hand, moved to Ireland in the 1970s. She married an Irish man and worked in education for many years. Both Jacek and Henryka report that they use mostly English on a day-to-day basis and most of the activities they engage in (e.g., watching TV, listening to the radio, reading books, surfing the internet) are in English. Their low use of *like* is not at all surprising, due to their age and presumably a low rate of discourse *like* in the input from peers as well as social pressures which would prevent an uptake of discourse *like* (whether 'global' or 'Irish-English patterns) in their speech.

All of the other speakers may be categorized as Celtic Tiger migrants. In contrast to Henryka and Jacek, we would expect these younger and more recently arrived speakers to be big users of *like*. Some were, but, contrary to expectations, not all of these are big users of *like*; Gall, Ewelina and Grażyna, in fact, are all low users of *like*. Therefore a

linguistique: une approche variationniste', *AILE: acquisition et interaction en langue étrangère*, 9 (1997), 193–210. **45** All of the participants in the study took part freely in accordance with the ethical guidelines laid down by University College Dublin ethics policy. Their names are anonymised as are any of the places which might specifically identify them. **46** Participants were asked to

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 127

qualitative approach was used to tease out possible reasons for this somewhat surprising quantitative result.

If we first contrast the highest user of *like* (Karolina) with the lowest (Grażyna), we see an interesting contrast emerging from two cases which initially seem very similar. These speakers are both young women; Karolina is 26 years old and Grażyna is 39. They had both been in Ireland for three years at the time of interview and both live in the same rural area there. Both women came to Ireland for economic reasons, because of the difficulty of making a living in Poland. In both cases, their husbands came to Ireland first and they joined them subsequently. Grażyna has one son of 14 years and Karolina would like to have children later. In fact, they share many characteristics of migrant people's lives in the twenty-first century in their general circumstances.

If we investigate the factors which might possibly affect the very great difference in usage of this particular variable *like* in the speech of the two women, we can identify one in particular. Grażyna is less proficient than Karolina, who had spent three years in the US before arriving in Ireland. This is not untypical for many Polish migrants in the twenty first century who tend to move easily from country to country depending on circumstances and economic factors. However, proficiency does not always account for use of vernacular variants, as has been shown in second language acquisition research.[47] On a closer look at the lives of the two women it appears that they make different choices in relation to language. Both are heavily invested in acquiring English,[48] and both have taken English classes. They are both quite metalinguistically aware and both comment on how people speak and on differences in speech in English (both) and in Polish (Karolina).

However, Grażyna seems to have opted for a global variety of English. She uses very few informal variants in general in her speech and no use at all of *like* even when interviewed by a speaker who used it liberally. She contrasts 'good' English with the sort of English she hears around her in the rural area in which she lives: 'they have different accents than people in Dublin or Northern Ireland'. She says she and her husband want to speak 'very correct English'. They watch TV to learn 'correct' English, especially documentaries which she deems suitable for learning good English. (TV in Ireland can use speakers of both standard English English and Standard Irish English.) Grażyna works daily from a standard British English textbook in order to improve her English. In her interview she notes that they had Polish TV when they first arrived but got rid of it so they would learn more English. She is acutely aware that her teenage son's English is a local variety which is different from her own and is heavily invested in her son's education in Ireland and is very keen that he learn English. Furthermore she expresses her pleasure in her son receiving extra English classes in school: 'but you know it's em good that he have the possibility to learn more and more because he will

choose between 'fluent', 'good', 'medium', 'weak', 'not at all'. **47** Vera Regan,'Variation in French interlanguage: a longitudinal study of sociolinguistic competence' in R. Bayley and D. Preston (eds), *Second language acquisition and linguistic variation* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1996). **48** Bonny Norton and K. Toohey, 'Identity and language learning' in R. Kaplan (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of applied linguistics* (Oxford, 2002).

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 128

need good English in his future'. She is very strict with her son in relation to his education and thinks that his association with other Polish youngsters in a 'Polish club' just results in them getting up to mischief instead of concentrating on their studies. This is even though she is aware that the economy in Ireland is not as good as it was when she arrived 'not so good, but em em we don't think about come back to Poland mm the main reason is school of our son'. She has some part-time work in a dental surgery as a receptionist.

So Grażyna is committed to English but not the English of Ireland (and not necessarily Ireland either).[49] Her aim is for her son to acquire a standard global English so that he can move easily about the world and not know the economic difficulties she and her husband had in Poland, 'because in Poland I was working and my husband was working and we always were short of money'.

Karolina, whom we have seen to have a similar profile to Grażyna in many ways, has a different attitude to English. Where Grażyna is committed to a standard global English, Karolina seems to be committed to a local English, in fact the English used in the community in the west of Ireland where she is living. This is despite the fact that she had been in the US for some years and exposed presumably to a global version of *like* usage. She uses a more vernacular Irish English in general, with phrases such as 'in all fairness', and lexical items from Irish English, such as 'grand'. Examples of vernacular Irish English in the corpus are: 'He said grand', 'Jesus', 'I was like gobsmacked', 'You know yourself like'. Like Grażyna, she is sensitive to language use, and very aware of it, 'but Dubliners are really good. I remember when I went to Dublin the first time I thought you know they have absolutely beautiful English cos they are really clear they pronounce all the words properly' and says she could not understand Cork people at all. Nevertheless she seems to have adopted the local community norms with great enthusiasm. She characterizes herself as outgoing (for example in comparison with her husband), and works in a haulage company where she speaks to Irish people frequently. Like Grażyna, she says she has no interest in returning to Poland, and likes a more western European life. She also notes that while there is an initial welcome for people when they first return to Poland ('People love you for a few minutes'), this rapidly evaporates, she believes.

Karolina is very positive about Ireland, likes her employers very much, likes Irish attitudes to work and compares them favourably with what she perceives as apathy on the part of Poles in Poland and their tendency to be overwhelmed by minor problems. In her comments, she draws explicit comparisons between the positive attitudes to work she found in the US, on the one hand, and Polish attitudes, which she found anything but positive, on the other. Her interview also includes some detailed comparisons between the Irish and Polish educational systems. Finding the Irish system preferable, she relates that, in Poland, the children are expected to learn material by rote, and; 'they just forget after Matura'; she remembers 'learning by heart all the rivers and coalmines in the world'. She also points out that in contrast, children in Ireland like

49 See Alastair Pennycook, *Language as a local practice* (London, 2010).

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 129

going to school: In Ireland, 'kids like to go to school … in Poland you just don't like school'.

The principal difference between these two women in relation to the use of this variable is a different stance taken by each of them in relation to language diversity. While both see English as a valuable commodity in their future prosperity and that of their children, they represent different versions of globalization. Karolina, while she wishes to be able to travel throughout the world, is also desirous of adapting her speech to local usage, wherever that happens to be (in the US, for instance, where she spent time in the past, or Ireland, where she is at present), and is committed to her current life in Ireland. The other two high users of the Irish-English pattern of *like* provided similar narratives about their commitment to a life in Ireland. Grażyna, on the contrary, also has no immediate desire to return to Poland, but has a less long-term commitment to herself (and particularly her son) staying in Ireland. She has a more one-dimensional view of English, and perceives language as a commodity which can be transported unchanged from place to place. She prefers to acquire the global standard as opposed to the local version of English available to her.

CONCLUSION

This analysis of the language use of Polish L1 speakers in Ireland has shown the importance of variation and diversity in the speech of the group. First we saw, on the basis of a quantitative analysis, that the Polish speakers were using *like* variably in their speech. By and large they were following the same rates and patterns of use as the Irish English speakers they interact with daily. This would seem to indicate a willingness to participate in the community speech norms around them (clearly the degree of agency can only be gauged by the qualitative analysis suggested above). However, some rather surprising inter-individual variability within the quantitative overall figures instigated a qualitative investigation. This revealed details about the individual lives of the speakers that suggested that the individual variation could be accounted for by a degree of agency on the part of the speakers. The highest and lowest users of *like* were both women speakers with very similar profiles; where they could have followed the norms for rates and patterns of variation in their speech, they instead displayed different usage patterns for *like*. An examination of the narratives they provide about themselves indicates that they have made considered choices relating to language use reflecting their perception of 'global' and local patterns in relation to this particular variable. The contrast between these two is also seen in differing patterns of *like* usage amongst all five younger migrants and similar narratives from all five. These choices represent a micro-study of possibilities open to L2 speakers all over the world. They can exploit their speech repertoires to support their individual stances in relation to identity work (are they Irish or Polish or both?), their future plans and the usefulness of a global vs a local variety of English. Their attitudes towards Irish English, as opposed to 'standard'

Quebec07_Layout 1 21/01/2016 16:23 Page 130

English, may also affect their willingness or otherwise to use the local variety including both rates and specific Irish English pattern (clause-marginal).

What emerges here are two different views of migration; one which sees the migration trajectory as having an end point (in this case, residence in Ireland and no intention of subsequent movement) versus migration as a never-ending process (in which Ireland is a temporary stop on a continuing journey).

The life stories and choices made by the speakers were especially revealing in relation to language attitudes and practices. Grażyna's global English was seen by her as a useful commodity in terms of education and career advancement, which would enable her (and her son) to succeed anywhere in the world. Karolina's use of local Irish-English validated and supported her participation in the local community. These two speakers deviated from the average figures in the group, but, by and large, they did not differ in socio-demographic characteristics. It is their divergent attitudes to the migration process, rather than anything else, which seem to account for divergent language practices, thus indicating that a degree of agency formed part of these linguistic practices.

The data in this study suggest that, in newly multicultural and multilingual Ireland, there is increased diversity at an individual level (see also the studies of contemporary Irish culture and society by Connolly and Lonergan, both in this volume). Choices are made on an individual level between the local and the global, in both the individual's life choices and in their language use. Just as people move physically between the global and the local, so also do they choose among the local and global linguistic possibilities available to them, and the linguistic choices they make both indicate and construct their position along the local-global continuum.