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1 Introduction

The newcomer quotatives are said to trigger strong attitudes in linguists and laypeople alike. Blyth et al. (1991:224) report that "the respondents found ...the use of *like* to be indicative of middle class teenage girls. Typical epithets to describe...*like* were 'vacuous', 'silly', 'airheaded', 'California'". Importantly, a number of studies report that irrespective of the linguistic reality, US informants tend to perceive *like* as a feature of female speech (Romaine and Lange 1991, Dougherty and Strassel 1998). Quotative *go,* on the other hand, is clearly and stereotypically associated with lower class male speech style (Ferrara and Bell 1995). Blyth et al. (1991:224) inform us that "in general, respondents found the use of *go* to be indicative of uneducated, lower-class males....Typical epithets to describe the users of *go* were 'jocks', 'blue-collar', 'men like Rocky'".

However, with the exception of Dailey-O'Cain (2000), no study has ever systematically examined how lay attitudes to *go* and *like* fit with actual usage. Her work shows that US English speakers perceive *like* to be "female" and that *like*-guises are judged to be younger. To my knowledge, there have not been any perceptual studies on quotative *go*.

I suggest that it is especially illuminating to examine perceptions of *like* and *go* in varieties where *like* is clearly a recent addition to the quotative pool. We simply do not know whether, for example, British English speakers have borrowed the social attitudes reported above for US English along with the surface item *like*. This study fills the gap and investigates the conscious and subconscious attitudes involved in the perception of both quotatives, *like* and *go*, in British English. A comparison with Dailey-O'Cain's (2000) results will show whether the stereotypes associated with *like* and *go* have been taken over from the US or whether there has been a reallocation of attitudes, as has been suggested by Meyerhoff and Niedzielski (2002, 2003).

This study investigates folk perceptions in the UK in two stages. First, a matched guise test (Lambert et al. 1960) was administered in order to get at the somewhat more private, subconscious preconceptions of the informants. Second, a questionnaire was given to detect the overt attitudes or popular conceptions and stereotypes of the informant pool. Ladegaard (1998) has shown that the responses tapping into overt and covert associations can actu-

ally be very different. Finally, the survey data and impressionistic statements from the literature were compared with results from a corpus-based investigation into *like* and *go*'s real patterning in the UK.

It will be shown that reality and perception in British English are much less consistent than we might have supposed. Also, the social information associated with the new quotatives is not mapped into the strong social stereotypes linguists are usually so quick to associate with *like* and *go*.

2 Method

Kerswill and Williams (2002:176) and Laver and Trudgill (1979) point out that a study of dialect perception should either test or control for all factors involved. Hence, I needed to make sure that the respondents' attitudes to *like* and *go* were based solely on the existence or non-existence of the lexical stimuli. But Kerswill (2002) has shown that dialect perceptions rely on a whole range of criteria. Note that the present investigation aims at testing whether people perceive *like* and *go* as male or female, as British or US American. It seems impossible to keep all suprasegmental and subphonemic factors constant when testing for nationality. Furthermore, audio-stimuli do not lend themselves to the testing of stereotypes pertaining to the gender of a speaker (Sachs, Lieberman, and Erickson 1973). In order to avoid these problems, this study uses written stimuli for the matched guise test. Obviously, written texts are a very poor representation of spoken language (Preston 1982:304) and transcriptions are selective depictions that necessarily constitute interpretation (Macaulay 1991, Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998). But following Preston's claim that "patterns of stratification similar to that found in hearers can also be isolated in readers" (1985:334), two short transcripts of conversational interaction were chosen for the experiment. The chosen texts did not include any non-standard spellings and non-standard grammar, nor were there any notations of allegro speech (Labov and Fanshel 1977:115, Preston 1985). They were produced by a 17-year old WC woman from Newcastle and were judged by a jury of British native speakers for regional neutrality and nativeness. Both contained the same number of instances of reported speech.

By eliminating factors that could serve as cues (Yonezawa 2002), the texts were prepared so that the presence or absence of *like* or *go* was the only distinguishing factor between them. For the Matched Guise Study, both texts were used side by side as depicted in Figure 1. The two questionnaires, A and B, both consist of two texts (text 1 and 2), which each contained 12 turn constructional units (for the concept of a TCU, cf. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). As this test relies on informants noticing the stimulus, I

aimed at a high density of stimuli (3 slots per text).

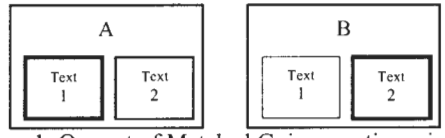

Figure 1: One set of Matched Guise questionnaires

In both Matched Guise questionnaires (A and B), one text contained three times the stimulus *like*. The other text contained two tokens of *say* (in the historical present) and one token of *asked*. In questionnaire A, the stimuli tokens of *like* were in text 1, whereas in questionnaire B, they were in text 2 (as indicated by the bold frames). The same set-up was used for *go*.[1] By swapping the stimuli tokens between text 1 and 2, independence from the carrier material was achieved. If the results turn out to be significant, the trigger can only be the stimulus because the effect cannot have been generated by any variables in the surrounding co-text.

The Matched Guise Test was administered in order to test the respondents' associations with respect to personality traits and social attitudes (as discussed below). For the collection of the personality traits, an ethnographic approach was assumed. A group of 45 undergraduate students at the University of Edinburgh was given the traits Dailey-O'Cain (2000) had used for her US informants. The students were asked which of the traits made sense in British English and which ones they would supplement. The final list of overwhelmingly chosen traits reads as follows: *calm-giddy, cool-old-fashioned, educated-uneducated, annoying-pleasant, British-non-British, animated-boring, intelligent-stupid, confident-non-confident, extroverted-introverted, professional-unambitious, glamorous-dull, popular-unpopular.* The traits were presented on a bi-polar 5–point scale with both poles given.

A group of respondents (which did not overlap with the aforementioned students) were asked to read the texts carefully and to assess the speakers on the basis of the personality traits. Demographic information of the respondents was collected to be used as independent variables. There were 89 male and 102 female informants, grouped into likely *like*-users, ages 15-30 (all of whom were students) and likely non-*like* users, age 31+. This procedure aimed at finding out whether the age effect found in production is replicated in perception. Bearing in mind that Labov (2001) has shown that occupation

[1]The informants were only given one set of surveys. No respondent completed both the *like* as well as the *go* questionnaire.

is the best single correlate of socio-economic status, the respondents were asked for their, their parents' and their partner's profession.[2] The informants were also asked how much TV they watched (to be ticked off on a 3 point scale). Lastly, they were asked to give their regional origin: 94 informants were from Scotland, 76 from England and 15 from Wales or Ireland.

Once the respondents had completed this task, they were given a Social Attitudes Questionnaire. This part of the survey made the informants aware of the item they were to assess (*like* or *go*) and asked them for their overt attitudes. They had to guess the age (4 given age brackets), gender, and social class of the speakers of texts 1 and 2. The survey also asked the respondents where they thought the speakers were from. Furthermore, I wanted to know whether they used it themselves. Lastly, there were two open ended questions: *What do you think of* like/go *in general?* And *Where do you think* like/go *comes from?* This was supposed to reveal whether the informants had any local associations with the stimuli. Especially with respect to *like*, which has purportedly been imported from the US (Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999, Singler and Woods 2002), it is of great interest to investigate lay informants' perceptions (Meyerhoff and Niezielski 2003).

3 Comparing Perceptions and Reality

This section investigates British lay respondents' perceptions of *like* and *go* and contrasts these perceptions with the variables' patterning in real data. In this way, folk perceptions are put to the reality test. Table 1 presents *like* and *go*'s patterning by age, gender and class in a corpus of British English.[3]

	age		gender		class	
	young	old	female	male	MC	WC
like (N=141)	**6.78**	**0.4**	4.28	4.81	4.69	4.36
go (N=291)	**18.84**	**1.89**	**14.87**	**9.86**	**16.29**	**10.02**

Table 1: Percentage of use of *go* and *like* in BrE, shown by age, gender and class of speakers, as calculated by a chi-square analysis.
Statistically ($p < .01$) significant results are in bold. Overall token number of quotatives is 2231.

[2]This paper reports on highly educated speakers only. All have university education. An analysis of speakers with a lower educational standard is in progress.

[3]The data for this analysis are taken from two urban dialects of British English, Derby and Newcastle (Milroy, L. et al. 1997). It was recorded in 1994/5 and comprises 64 speakers, both male and female, working and middle class, and of an age range from 17 to 71, grouped into two age groups.

This table is to be read as follows: Of all quotatives used by young people, 6.78 % are framed by *like*. Of all quotatives used by old people, 0.4% are framed by *like*, etc. These results show that in the British data, there is no gender and class effect for *like*. But *like* and *go* pattern by age. Younger speakers use more of both variants. Also, *go* is used more by female and middle class speakers. These results are significant at the .01 level.

Next I will investigate what British English respondents think about *like* and *go*'s patterning with respect to social variables. First, I will discuss the Matched Guise Test results, which show the informants' subconscious attitudes towards *like*. Table 2 compares the scores of the text with *like* and of the text without.

	Guise	Frequencies	p-value
gender	Like	female: 61%	.250
	Not	female: 53%	
age	Like	1: 41% 2: 38% 3: 21% 4: 3%	.000
	Not	1: 16% 2: 34% 3: 28% 4: 16%	
class	Like	WC: 53%	.724
	Not	WC: 51%	

Table 2: Matched Guise test results for *like* (in % frequency) in the guise containing the stimulus (Like) and the guise without (Not), N=101

My respondents judged *like* to be patterning by age. The guise containing *like* was significantly judged younger ($p < .001$). Hence, *like*-use makes speakers sound younger. But there was no significant effect between the *like*-containing and the non-*like* containing guise regarding gender and class ($p_{gender} = .250$, $p_{class} = .724$, n.s.). The presence or absence of *like* in a text of written speech does not trigger any associations with respect to these social categories. These results suggest that British informants are divided about the gender and class of principal *like*-users. Associations with respect to *like* are not as strong as sociolinguists may have suggested in the past.

A comparison of the Matched Guise results with *like*'s patterning in British English conversation (Table 1) reveals that *like* does not pattern significantly with respect to gender and class in reality either. Perceptions and reality match. As Table 1 indicates, *like* does pattern by age. Again, we have a perfect fit between perception and reality. The corpus-based analysis and the Matched Guise test produce the same results.

As a next step, I will compare these results with the respondents' overt attitudes as revealed by the Social Attitudes Questionnaire. Table 3 contrasts the linguistic reality with covert (Matched Guise Test) and overt attitudes

(Social Attitudes Questionnaire).

	Reality	Covert Attitudes Matched Guise	Overt Attitudes Questionnaire	"Don't know"
gender	n.s.	n.s.	male: 7% female: 34%	59%
age	.000	.000	young: 93% old: 1%	6%
class	n.s.	n.s.	WC: 31% MC: 11%	59%

Table 3: Reality, Matched Guise results and Overt Attitudes for *like*, (N=101).

The columns labeled 'Reality' and 'Covert Attitudes, Matched Guise' show again the perfect fit between real and perceived patterning. The subsequent columns depict the overt attitudes collected via a Social Attitudes Questionnaire. The frequencies in these columns indicate the distribution of answers given to the question *Do you associate this expression with: younger people or older people, female speech or male speech, MC speakers or WC speakers?* We see that many informants associate *like* with female, younger and working class speakers (with 34%, 93% and 31% respectively). But fifty-nine percent of the answers for class and gender are "I don't know". This result indicates that my respondents are quite divided concerning their gender and class affiliations for *like*. But the one social stereotype the lay respondents have a high consensus on is the age of *like*-users. This outcome underlines the results for the covert attitudes.

A Matched Guise Test for *go* comes out non-significant for all social factors. Table 4 shows the results for the guise containing the stimulus (Go) and the guise without (Not).

	Guise	Frequencies	p-value
gender	Go	female: 53%	.250
	Not	female: 54%	
age	Go	1: 21% 2: 52% 3: 12% 4: 13%	.683
	Not	1: 21% 2: 31% 3: 27% 4: 18%	
class	Go	WC: 61%	.139
	Not	WC: 49%	

Table 4: Matched Guise Test results for *go* (in % frequency) in the guise containing the stimulus (Go) and the guise without (Not), N=90

The Matched Guise Test does not yield significant results for *go*'s associa-

tion with any social category (with p-values of .250, .683, .139, all n.s.).[4] This finding suggests that British English respondents do not have any strong covert attitudes with respect to *go*'s social patterning at all. Such an outcome is very interesting given the strong negative attitudes towards *go* that have been reported in the sociolinguistic literature. However, these mainly referred to US English. Note furthermore the stark contrast between *go*'s real and perceived patterning. Table 1 has shown that *go*'s patterning is statistically significant with respect to all three social variables: gender, age and class. Table 4 now indicates that none of these variables was selected with any level of significance by the respondents in the Matched Guise study.

Table 5 contrasts covert (Matched Guise test) and overt attitudes (Social Attitudes Questionnaire) with *go*'s social reality.

	Reality	Covert Attitudes Matched Guise	Overt attitudes Questionnaire	"Don't know"
gender	.000	n.s.	male: 16% female: 23%	61%
age	.000	n.s.	young: 77% older: 6%	18%
class	.000	n.s.	WC: 56 % MC: 8%	37%

Table 5: Reality, Matched Guise and Overt Attitudes results for *go*, (N=90)

Columns 2 and 3 show the above mentioned contrast between perception and reality. The subsequent columns depict the respondents' overt attitudes. When asked for their conscious attitudes, the respondents do not know which gender to associate with *go*. Most of the responses are "I don't know" (61%). But the respondents agree that *go* is a feature of younger people's speech. Only a few responses are *I don't know* (18%). Furthermore, the respondents seem to see *go* as a feature of working class speech (56% versus 8%). Note that this is directly contrary to who uses *go* in reality, namely middle class speakers (cf. Table 1).

In sum, *like* does not have a very noteworthy stratification in British English. The only factor that achieves significance is age. On the contrary, *go* patterns with respect to all three variables, age, gender and class. A comparison between a Matched Guise Test—which investigates people's covert attitudes—and the quotatives' social reality reveals the following. (1) There is a perfect match for *like*. Only the factor age achieves significance both in reality and perception. (2) There is no match for *go*. While *go* patterns with all three factors in reality, none of them achieves significance in the Matched

[4]A high ratio of stimulus (3 tokens per 12 TCUs) makes the conclusion that this non-significant effect is due to a poverty of stimulus very unlikely.

Guise Test. Overall, my respondents are divided in their overt attitudes (61% "I don't know"). The only exception to this trend is the factor age; *like* and *go* are associated with younger speakers.

With an eye on *like*'s patterning across the Atlantic, I suggest that we need to review claims made by the literature to date. Even if the surface form *like* has been borrowed from the US, as has been suggested by Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) and Macaulay (2001), we are now in a position to say that the strong attitudes attested in the US have not been carried across to British English speakers.

4 Personality Traits

This section investigates whether *like* and *go* trigger associations with respect to personality traits in British English. Moreover, it remains to be seen whether Dailey-O'Cain's (2000) finding that US American informants have strong associations towards *like* can be extended to British English respondents. A pilot questionnaire was run in order to avoid the problem of ambiguous traits, identified by Dailey-O'Cain (2000:73,13f).

For the statistical evaluation of the personality traits, paired sample t-tests were run. Five traits—about half of the overall set—achieved significance ($p < .05$) for *like*. For the British English respondents, *like*-use makes the speaker sound more giddy. Also, the speaker of the *like*-guise is judged to be more ambitious. Note in this respect that the presence of *like* is not picked up as an indicator of class (cf. Table 2). I would argue that the significant outcome for the trait ambitious can be explained by the fact that university students are the main group perceived to be primary *like*-users. The non-use of *like* is associated with speakers being more pleasant but also more old-fashioned and more boring.

One of the objectives of this study was to find out whether any independent variables play into the personality judgements. To this aim, a linear regression analysis was performed. The independent factors included in the run were age, gender, whether the speakers say they like the variable, whether they claim they use it,[5] the amount of TV watched, and the provenance of the speakers (English versus other). The results were as follows: there was a significant age effect for the traits ambitious and educated. Older speakers think that the speaker of the *like*-guise is less educated and less am-

[5]Obviously, real usage can be and indeed is orthogonal to reported usage. Several of the respondents who claimed that they never use the stimuli, do indeed use them regularly and frequently. Hence, the factor use pertains to reported usage and not real usage.

bitious. Hence, the age-gap in *like*-production manifests itself in the different perception of the variable. In the same vein as Kerswill and Williams (2002), the present study underlines the influence of the mass media in folk perceptions. The more respondents watch TV, the more non-British they judge the speakers of the *like*-guise to be. I would suggest that the more contact with American movies and soaps the respondents have, the more likely they are to associate the occurrence of *like* with the actors and stars featured in these programs. Another effect involving the media is that the more TV respondents watch, the more they take the person using *like* to be introverted. I will discuss possible explanations for this result later.

Male informants judge *like*-users to be significantly more boring. And the less the respondents claim they use *like*, the more likely they are to judge speakers using it as dull. Overall, these results give evidence that other independent social factors play into the evaluation of the Matched Guise Test.

Moving on to the results for *go*, we notice that only one trait comes out as significant. The *go*-guise is evaluated as more introverted. Indeed, studies such as Buchstaller (2001) and Singler (2001), which investigate the functional distribution amongst the quotative variants, have revealed that *go* and *like* often frame unvoiced attitude such as *oops, wow* and *gosh*. These expressions of opinion and point of view take on the form of inner monologue. The results presented here suggest that the respondents demonstrate subconscious knowledge of the fact that *go* is often associated with expressions of inner emotions such as *wow* and *oops*. It might be the case that lay respondents indicate knowledge of *go*'s distribution by judging its use indicative of introversion.

Note that this explanation does not generally apply to *like*. On the contrary, the fact that *like*-use is also associated with giddiness seems to point to a different explanation. I suggest that my informants generally link *like*-use to a certain type of animated, outspoken youth (whence the high rankings for giddy and the low rankings for boring). But note that informants with high TV-ratings can be expected to be more familiar with sitcoms and series from the US, a variety in which *like* is especially frequently used to frame thought and inner monologue (Buchstaller 2002). These respondents, who spend more time watching TV and who can consequently be presumed to have a greater implicit awareness of *like*'s use as a quotative for inner speech, associate it significantly more with the trait introverted.

Several social variables are involved in the association of *go* with personality traits. Respondents who classify themselves as *go*-users find the *go*-guise more pleasant. Scottish (and Irish and Welsh) informants find *go*-use indicative of a less boring and less ambitious speaker. Also, younger people find *go*-users significantly more confident and ambitious.

Overall, British English informants are even more divided in their evaluation of *go* than of *like*. Even though an ethnographic approach was chosen (De Houwer and Wölck 1997), which should lead to terms that are appropriate in the community in question, only one trait was chosen at a level of significance for *go*. My British respondents do not have strong stereotypes towards *go* with respect to social traits. This finding underlines the Matched Guise and Social Attitudes Questionnaire results. The results for *like* were slightly more revealing but did not yield many significant outcomes either. Overall, the range of variance of the responses indicates that people do not seem to have as strong and consistent attitudes towards *like* and *go* as has been suggested by the sociolinguistic literature to date. Finally, this study has shown that character trait judgements are dependent on various independent variables (Kerswill and Williams 2002:198).

5 Regional Affiliation

In the US, people associate *like* with California. But do people in the UK associate *like* with the US, or even California? And where do they think *go* comes from? To date, no research has been done on *go*'s regional affiliation.

This section reports on the regional associations triggered by *like* and *go*. The Matched Guise Test did not show any significant difference in British English informants' subconscious attitudes with respect to the provenance of the speakers of the two guises (p_{like}= .132, n.s., p_{go}= .765, n.s). The question remains whether the informants have clear overt attitudes concerning the regional affiliations of *like* and *go*. The following table depicts the results from the question *where do you think* go/like *comes from*?

	go			like		
	overall N=89	like_it N=69	hate_it N=20	**overall N=101**	young N=63	older N=37
US	**10**	10	10	**39**	41	35
British	**6**	1	20	**3**	5	0
Other	**8**	9	5	**3**	3	3
No idea	**76**	80	65	**56**	51	62
p-values		.017			.466	

Table 6: Associations of *go* and *like* with locality (in % frequency). Significant social factors as established by means of a linear regression.[6]

[6]Note: In the run were the factors age (2 age groups), gender, whether or not the respondents said they like the stimulus, the amount of TV watched per week, whether

Table 6 shows that 10% of the respondents think that *go* comes from the US. Only 6% think that it is British. Eight percent offer some other regional origin (Latin with 3 tokens, Japanese with 1 token, foreign with 1 token). However, 76% of the respondents answer that they have no idea or give comments which pertain to *go*'s sociolinguistic distribution or its pragmatics (*bad education, not proper, yahs*[7] *say it a lot, only in speech*). "No idea" responses and answers which did not give any local affiliation were grouped into one category because they imply that the respondents do not have any salient local associations with respect to the stimulus. For these respondents, *go*-use is not associated with any regional concept. The high frequency of responses in this category (76%), which were called for practicality reasons 'no idea', shows that respondents in Britain consider *go* neither overwhelmingly foreign nor do they claim its local origin themselves. To them, it seems to be thoroughly embedded within the all-English system and does not trigger any strong local associations.

A linear regression analysis reveals that whether or not people have a positive attitude towards quotative *go* makes a significant difference on how it is perceived locality-wise. Respondents who report that they strongly dislike it, associate it much more strongly with British English ($p = .017$). We might conclude that only when people associate *go*-use with their own national variety do they harbor strong negative evaluative feelings for it. On the other hand, when people do not have any particular local associations with *go*, it is less likely to trigger strong reactions.[8]

And where does *like* come from? Table 6 reveals that my respondents have much more of an opinion about *like*'s local association (compare 56% with the corresponding 76% for *go*). Yet, more than half of the informants respond that they have no idea where *like* comes from or give an answer which does not link *like* to any local area. A variety of answers without regional associations were given, such as *posh, slang, youth culture, TV*. Informants who indicate that they have an opinion associate *like* overwhelmingly with the US (39%). Amongst these responses, 6 tokens are 'California' (plus one 'valley girl'). Additionally, four respondents said they associate *like* with US soaps and teen movies. No other national variety achieves such

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or not the respondents said they use the stimulus, the provenance of the informant (England, other UK).

[7]According to UrbanDictionary.com, a yah is "an arrogant upper class / middle class lady or gent, typically a student in an otherwise charming Scottish town or city".

[8]Note that age, gender, how much TV is being watched, whether the informants claim they use it or not, and the provenance of the informant (English or Scottish/Welsh/Irish) are not significant as independent variables.

high frequency responses. This result shows that while the US is indeed the locality with which *like* is most frequently associated, it only achieves 39% of the responses. Fifty-six percent of the informants say they have no idea or have no particular local affiliation for it. Hence, even though we have heard over and over again that *like* spread from the United States into other varieties, British speakers do not seem to perceive it overwhelmingly that way.

Preston (1988) and Demirci and Kleiner (1999) have shown that an age-related pattern may be involved in the evaluations of regional varieties. Given *like*'s huge production-gap, there is reason to assume that there might be an age-effect in judging *like*'s local affiliation. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the fact that the variable 'age' came out significant in the Matched Guise Test and for the Attitudes Questionnaire. But Table 6 shows that while younger respondents indeed have fewer 'no idea' responses (51% versus 63%), they associate *like* only slightly more with the US than the older informants (p= .466, n.s.). Overall, there is no significant age-effect with respect to *like*'s local associations. Even the generation of *like*-users do not have any systematic regional associations with respect to *like*.[9]

6 Conclusion

This article tests British informants' attitudes towards two linguistic items that have only recently acquired full quotative function: *like*, which has been claimed to be a recent import from the US, and *go*. The sociolinguistic literature has previously claimed that there are strong stereotypes associated with *like* and *go* and that the two new quotatives pattern with respect to social categories. An investigation of *like* and *go*'s correlation with social factors in a corpus of British English has revealed that *like* does not have a very noteworthy social patterning. The only factor that came out significant is age. *Go* on the other hand patterns with respect to age, gender and class.

Using *like* and *go*'s social patterning as a benchmark, British informants' attitudes were tested. The comparison revealed that stereotypes concerning *like* and *go* are not very strong amongst British respondents. This finding is especially surprising given a) *go*'s highly significant patterning with all three social variables and b) the amount of strong stereotypes reported from the US on both *like* and *go*. However, the results from the Matched Guise Test and the Social Attitudes Questionnaire reveal that, contrary to situation in the US, the social stereotypes associated with *like* and *go* in Britain are much less noteworthy than has been previously assumed. Fur-

[9]All social variables (age, gender, the amount of TV watched, whether or not the informants say they use it , and the provenance of the informant) were not significant.

thermore, the social information associated with the new quotatives does not map robustly onto social stereotypes. Reality and perceptions in British English are much less closely tied than we may have supposed.

These findings lead me to conclude that if *like* has been imported from the US, British speakers have not borrowed the social attitudes attached to *like* along with the surface item. Rather, just as a reallocation of linguistic form is well attested (Britain 2002, Britain and Trudgill 1999), this study shows a reallocation of stereotypes. As has been argued by Meyerhoff and Niedzielski (2002), social information is redistributed as linguistic items cross the Atlantic. In the case of *like,* this means that the stereotypes reported from the US have not been picked up by British informants.

Given the fact that *like* is a relatively new addition to the quotative pool of British English, further research concerning *like*'s future in British English will be needed. Will social attitudes get attached to this linguistic item in Britain over the course of time? And if so, which attitudes? The ones we know from the US? Or will social reality and perception be consolidated in Britain? These questions can only be investigated in a real time study. Also, it is of great interest to the study of perceptual dialectology to investigate whether the attitudes of the generation of *like* users persist or change as they grow older.

Finally, the present article verifies Kerswill and Williams' (2002:198) finding that the relationship between dialect perception and production is not straightforward, but affected by many social factors. The independent variables that have come out as statistically significant in this study are age, gender, favorable or disfavorable attitude towards the stimulus, whether the informants claim they use it themselves, their provenance, and the amount of TV watched. For further research in the transmission of social information, it would be interesting to try to tease out the nature of contact with the supposed donor—in this case the US. Future independent variables could consist of questions about the nature of the TV programmes watched, the strength, duration and impact of individual personal contact with US citizens, and the amount of time spent in the US.

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