

Dialectology in the age of facebook *likes*: Using questionnaires to chart change in discourse markers and quotative forms

Mercedes Durham
Cardiff University

This paper will present findings based on over a 1000 responses to a dialectology survey conducted in the United Kingdom examining the use of three different, but partly related, forms of *like*. Alongside more traditional lexical questions, respondents to the survey were given a range of sentences and asked whether a) they would use sentences with that structure b) they wouldn't use them themselves but had heard them in their area c) the structure wasn't used in their area but they had heard it d) they'd never heard such a structure before.

One set focused on three different types of *like* (examples 1-3)

1. It was so boring like.
2. It was like so boring.
3. She was like "It's so boring!"

The clause final discourse marker *like* in (1) is regionally restricted (including in South Wales, where the bulk of the respondents were from) and associated with older speakers, while the discourse marker in (2) is a newer form said to be used more by younger speakers. Quotative *like*, similarly to (2), is an incoming form associated with younger (female) speakers.

The analysis of the three *likes* demonstrates that while respondents appear accurate in their self-reported use for forms that are associated with their age, sex and/or region, some groups are less aware of features that they do not use themselves: many of the oldest respondents claimed never to have heard instances of quotative *like*, which given its ubiquity nowadays is somewhat improbable. Younger respondents, on the other hand, did recognise the older, local form. This underlines the degree to which features may be present but unnoticed by speakers who do not use them themselves and means that surveys need to allow for this when interpreting self-reports of local usage.