

The Local Spread of Globally Available Innovations: the discourse marker 'LIKE' around the world

by

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Relevance and research question

- Sociolinguists have only recently begun to look at globalization from a variationist perspective
(e.g. Meyerhoff & Niedzielski 2003; Buchstaller 2008; Buchstaller & D'Arcy 2009)

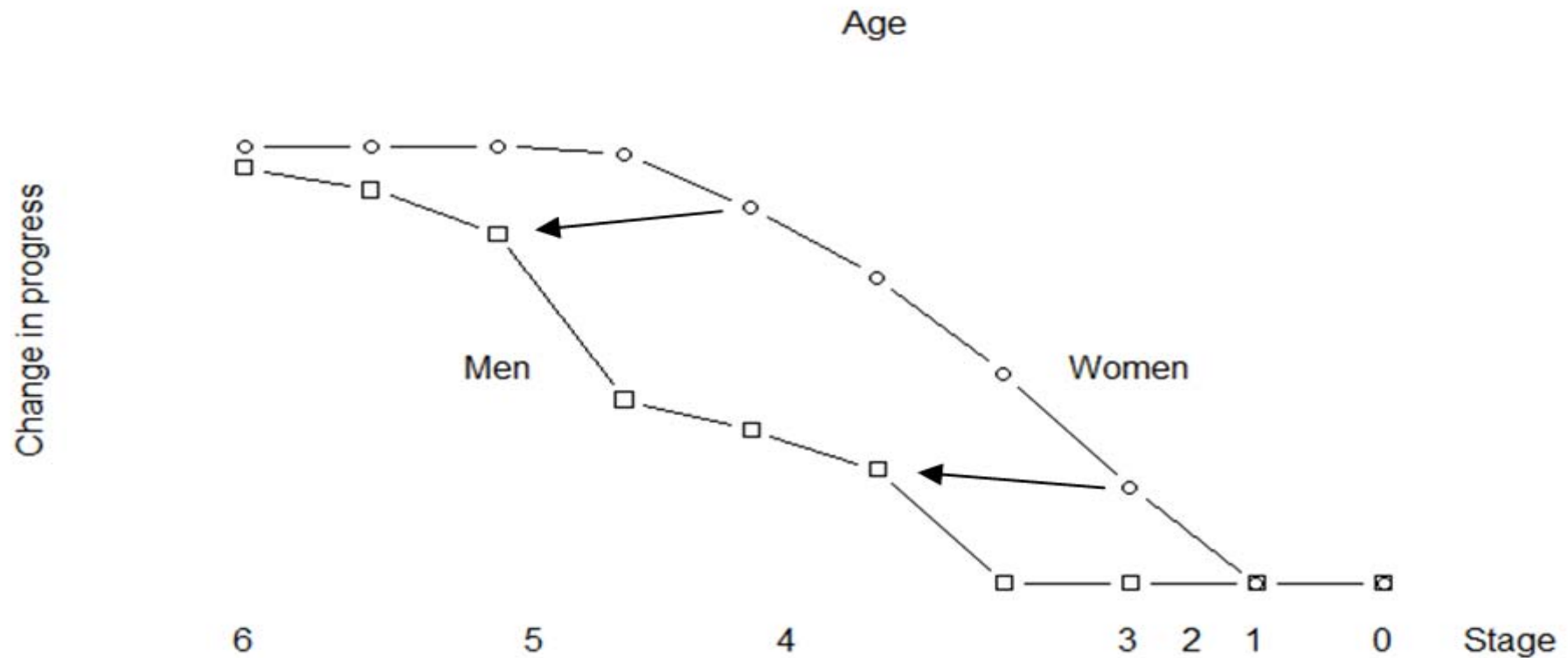
- Implications for the standard model of language change?

in other words...

How appropriate is the Labovian paradigm, i.e. the standard model, in cases of...

- dialect contact and multilingualism
- lexical change
- culturally diverse settings?

Theoretical background

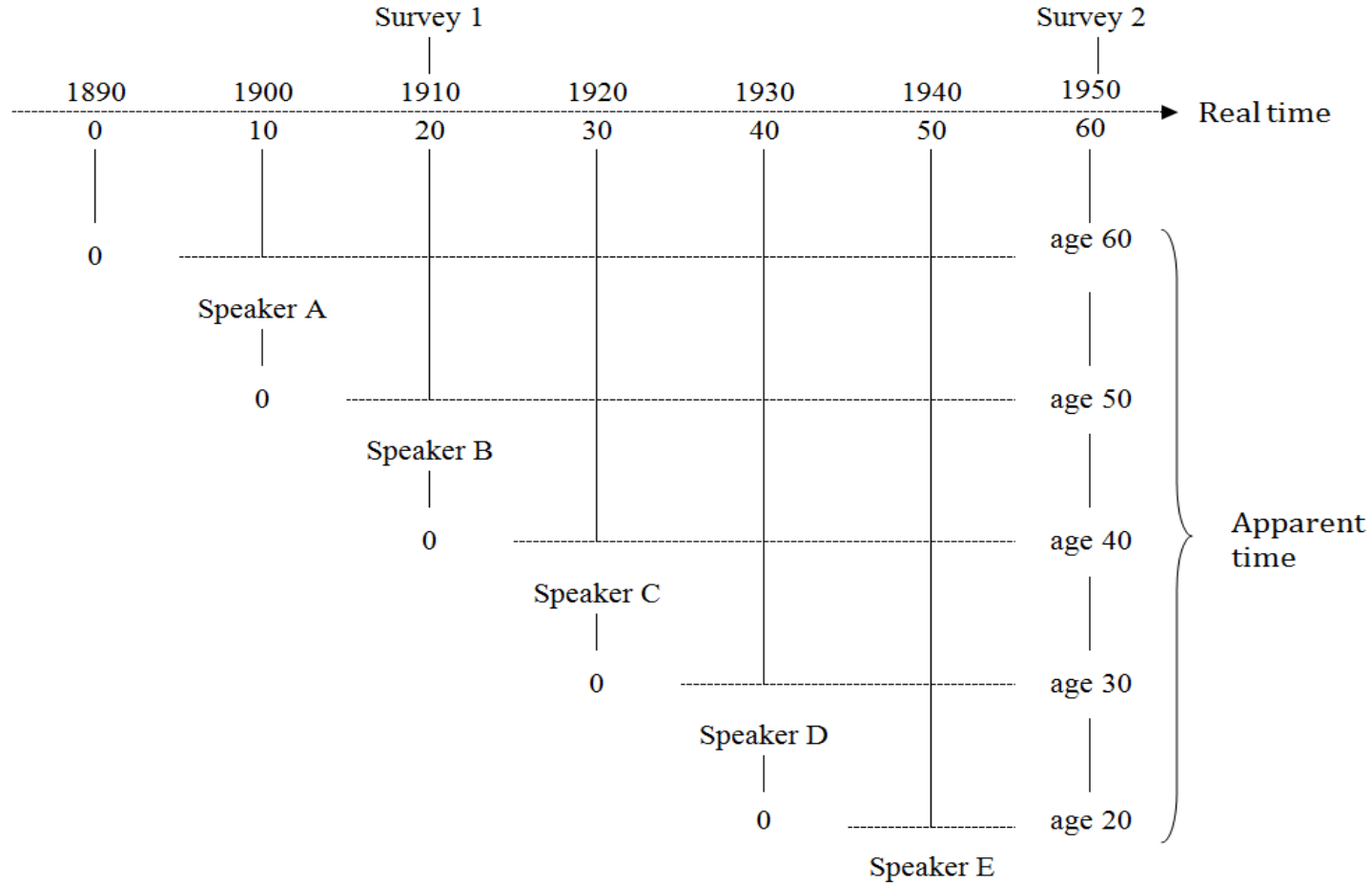


Six-stage model of gender relations in linguistic change from below (Labov 1994: 65)

Theoretical background

- Impact of gender and social class
 - Most of the linguistic changes which have been studied in the 2nd half of the 20th century show a high degree of social stratification and gender differentiation (Labov 1994, 2002).
 - The role of women is especially crucial at the onset of change as they serve as initiators while males adopt incoming forms only later in the process.
 - As a general tendency, females are approximately one generation ahead of males in their rates of incoming variants (Labov 2001: 294).

Theoretical background



Real and apparent time in language change (Downes 1998: 238)

Theoretical background

- Types of change (Labov 1994: 84)
 - *Age-grading*
Individuals change their linguistic behaviour throughout their lifetimes, but the community as a whole does not change.
 - *Generational change*
“Individual speakers enter the community with a characteristic frequency for a particular variable, maintained throughout their lives; but regular increases in the values adopted by individuals, often incremented by generations, lead to linguistic change for the community.”
 - *Communal change*
“In communal change all members of the community alter their frequencies together or acquire new forms simultaneously.”

Theoretical background

- Advantages
 - Based on many studies (highly stable)
 - High predictive and explanatory power
- Problems
 - Based mostly on studies of AmE and EngE
 - Focus on phonological changes
 - Neglect of dialect contact and multilingualism
 - (Overemphasizing generational change, the apparent time construct and face-to-face contact)

The discourse marker LIKE

(1) Clause-initial LIKE

- a. *Like* every time we spend a decent amount of time together i think i'm so happy. (ICE New Zealand: S1A-055\$A)

Clause-medial LIKE

- b. No the one where they were uhm they were *like* worshipping that golden cow or something that they have made. (ICE Philippines: S1A-007\$B)

Clause-final LIKE

- c. That's amazing *like*. (ICE Ireland: S1A-036\$A)

Non-clausal LIKE

- d. I mean I love American crap especially comedies *like* crap comedies that everybody thinks are crap. (ICE GB: S1A-041\$A)

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The discourse marker LIKE

- (2) Clause-medial LIKE
 - a. Should I make *like* tartar sauce or something really decadent?
(Santa Barbara Corpus: sbc003\$Marilyn)
 - b. Cos he just won a place to *like* <,> Canterbury Cathedral Choir School.
(ICE-Canada: S1A-051\$A)
- Properties
 - Modifies element to its right (rightward scope)
 - Hedges or focuses lower level constructions
(phrases and verbs, not clauses and sentences)
 - Globally available innovation (occurs in almost all regional varieties)

The discourse marker LIKE

- Which instances of *like* are discourse markers/particles?
 - Syntactically optional
 - Not verb, noun, adverb, comparative preposition, ...
- What was not included?
 - General extenders, lexicalizations (something *like* that, it's *like*, ...)
 - *like* before numerical expressions (There's *like* two of them.)
 - Quotative BE LIKE (And he was like 'What's going on')
 - Ambiguous cases (I've had *like* ... and everything was fine)

Data – the ICE 2.0

- ICE components
 - Canada (ICE Canada)
 - American English (Santa Barbara Corpus)
 - Irish English (ICE Ireland 2.1)
 - New Zealand English (ICE New Zealand)
- Most informal register (S1A)
- Calculated the word counts of each speaker using PERL.
- Used the available speaker information to calculate the per-1,000-word frequencies of each form for each speaker.

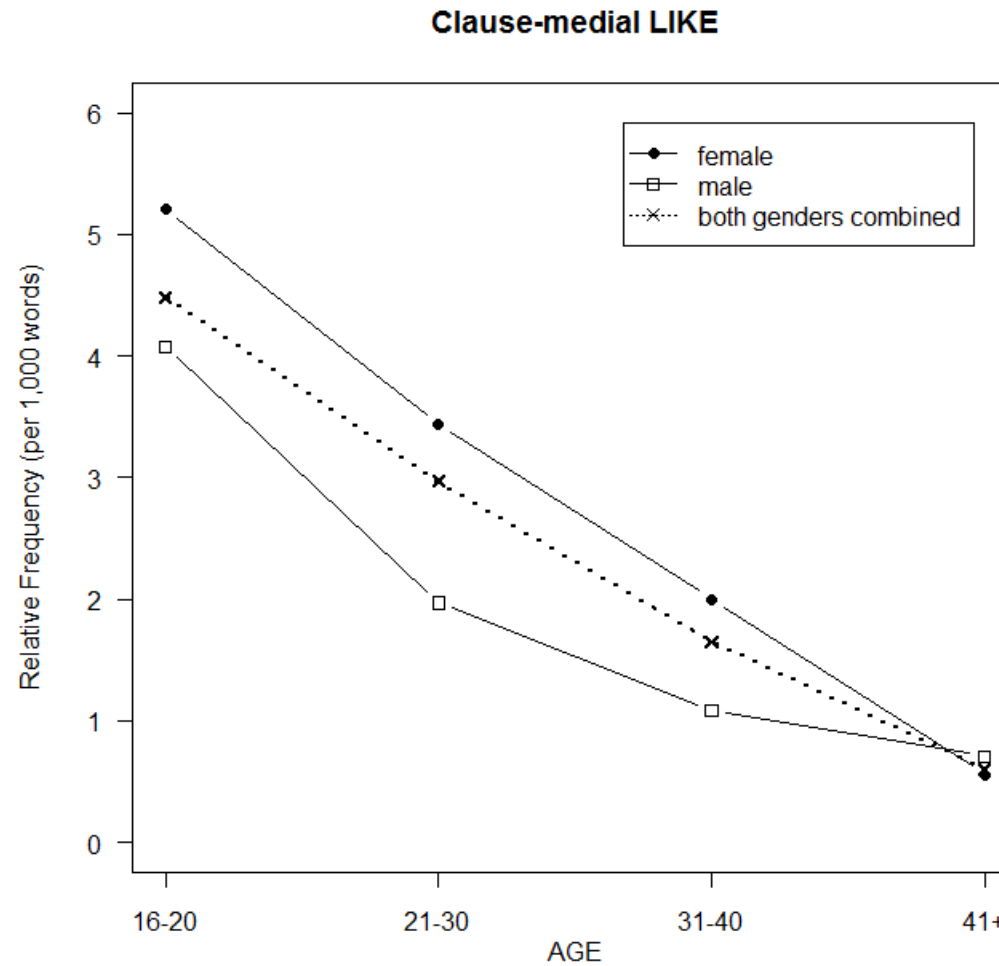
Data – the ICE 2.0

Variety (ICE component)	Words (SUM)	Speaker (N)	INI (N)	MED (N)	FIN (N)	NON (N)	NA (N)	ALL (N)
Canada	194,574	244	368	381	26	112	13	900
Santa Barbara C.	246,258	163	220	390	1	234	15	860
Ireland	189,787	309	249	237	318	118	14	936
New Zealand	229,193	227	209	183	20	115	2	529
SUM	859,812	943	1,046	1,191	365	579	44	3,225

Methodology

- Multivariate regression model (Quasi-Poisson Regression)
- Dependent Variable
 - Clause-medial LIKE per 1,000 words (counts)
- Independent Variables
 - Age (nominal: age group 1, 2, 3, or 4; 1 = dummy)
 - Sex/Gender (nominal: m/f)
 - PAI (priming, accommodation, Idiosyncratic overuse; numeric)
(to save-guard against over-estimating extra-linguistic variables)

Results – Canadian English

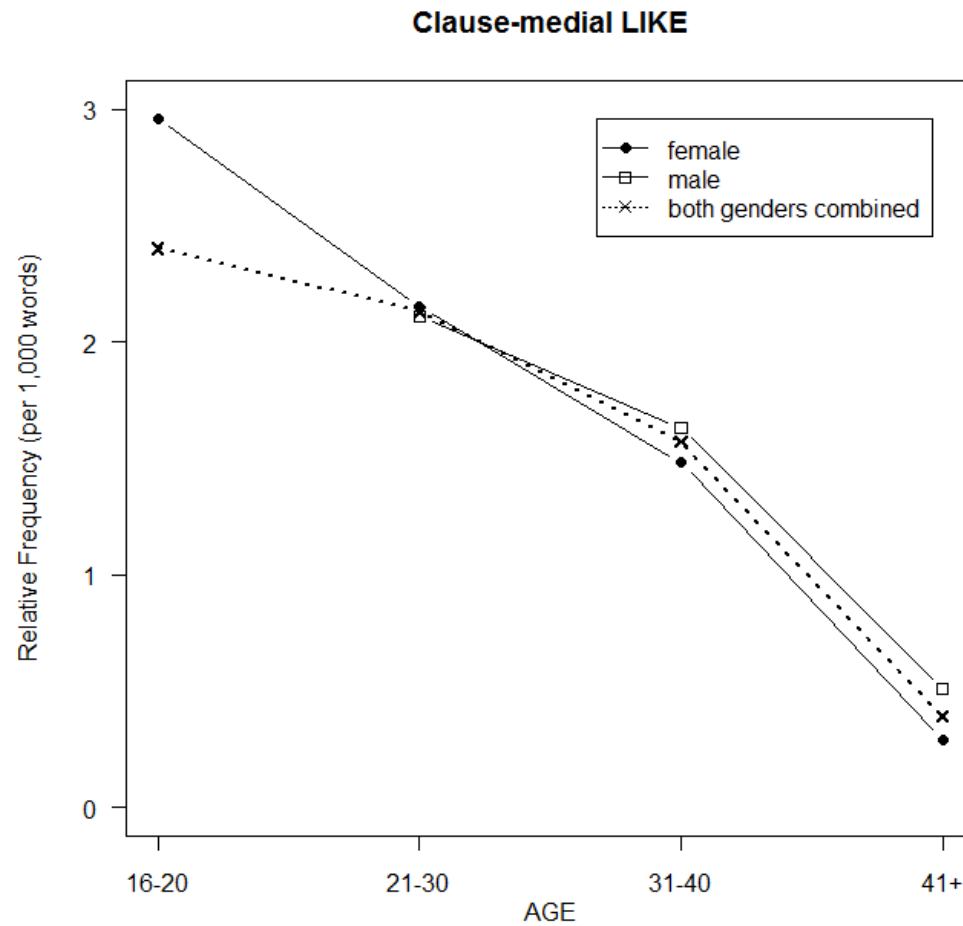


Results – Canadian English

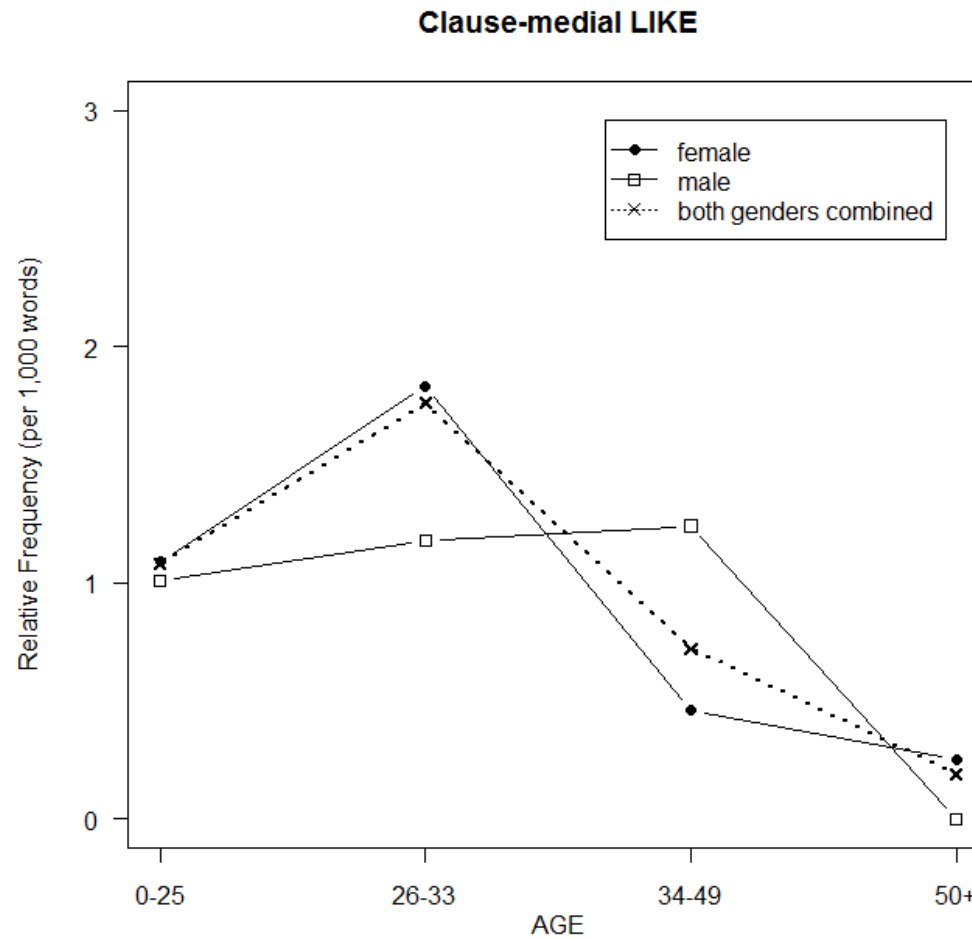
Real-time analysis of LIKE use in CanE. (non-parametric t-tests)

	A1 (16-20)	A2 (21-30)	A3 (31-40)	A4 (41+)
ALL	n.s.	N.A.	n.s.	n.s.
INI	n.s.	N.A.	n.s.	n.s.
MED	n.s.	N.A.	n.s.	n.s.
FIN	n.s.	N.A.	n.s.	n.s.
NON	-1.607.	N.A.	n.s.	n.s.

Results – American English



Results – Irish English

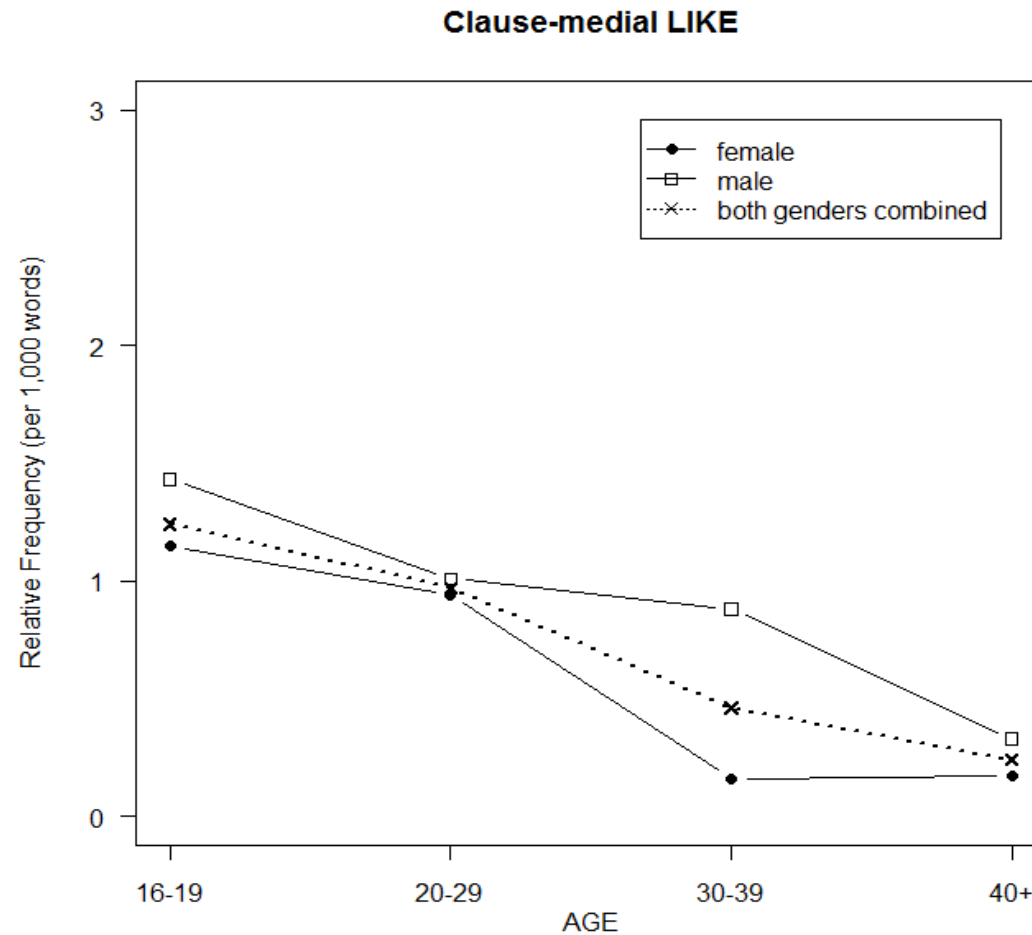


Results – Irish English

Real-time analysis of LIKE use in IrE. (non-parametric t-tests)

	A1 (0-25)	A2 (26-33)	A3 (34-49)	A4 (50+)
ALL	-1.36·	-3.13**	n.s.	n.s.
INI	-1.60·	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
MED	-1.48·	-3.00**	-1.50·	n.s.
FIN	1.39·	-3.22**	n.s.	n.s.
NON	-2.29*	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

Results – New Zealand English



Summary & Discussion

- Age distributions are highly stable across varieties of English
- The effect of gender (and social class) are variety specific and not universal (findings challenge biological approaches; cf. Chambers 2003: 132)
- Less social stratification and gender differentiation than expected
- Generational change too slow to account for the drastic increase observed in IrE: not the only type of change involved (additional communal change)
- Real time change in some though not all varieties (confined to younger cohorts in IrE)

Discussion

- Supra-locally stable patterns

- Monotonic recess with age

The results strongly suggest that “the association of like with younger speakers seems to hold across the English-speaking world” (D’Arcy 2007: 391).

- Variety-specific patterns

- Degree and direction of gender differences

“These trends show that sex differences [...] are developmental, and are learned. They do not appear to be endemic to the features themselves, but are created in the speech community, within the peer group” (Tagliamonte 2005: 1912-1913).

Discussion

- Phonological change
 - generational change (slow)
 - Distinct social stratification and gender differentiation
 - High quality of face-to-face contact required: Media are negligible with respect to transmission (Labov 2001: 2001: 228-229, 362-363, 385)
- Lexical change
 - (partial) communal change (rapid)
 - Less social stratification and gender differentiation
 - No high quality of face-to-face contact required
 - Transmission via mass-media (Muhr 2003)

Conclusion, outlook and final remarks

- The present investigation ...
 - illustrates that the ICE components represent valuable datasets for analyzing linguistic variation and change on a global scale.
 - has shown that lexical and phonological changes differ notably with respect to the stability, direction and effect size of key factors.
 - strongly suggests that impact of cultural diversity and dialect contact need to be considered in cases of both local and global analyses of language change and variation.
- In fact, this study represents the first micro-level, sociolinguistic study which analyzes ongoing change from a truly global perspective .

Thank you very much for LIKE your attention

and

I would like to thank the symposium organizers for inviting me and the ICE teams for providing the speaker information!

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