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Global diffusion and local implementation – the discourse particle LIKE around the world

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Relevance and research question

- Sociolinguists have only recently begun to look at globalization from a variatonist 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?

Labov's standard model

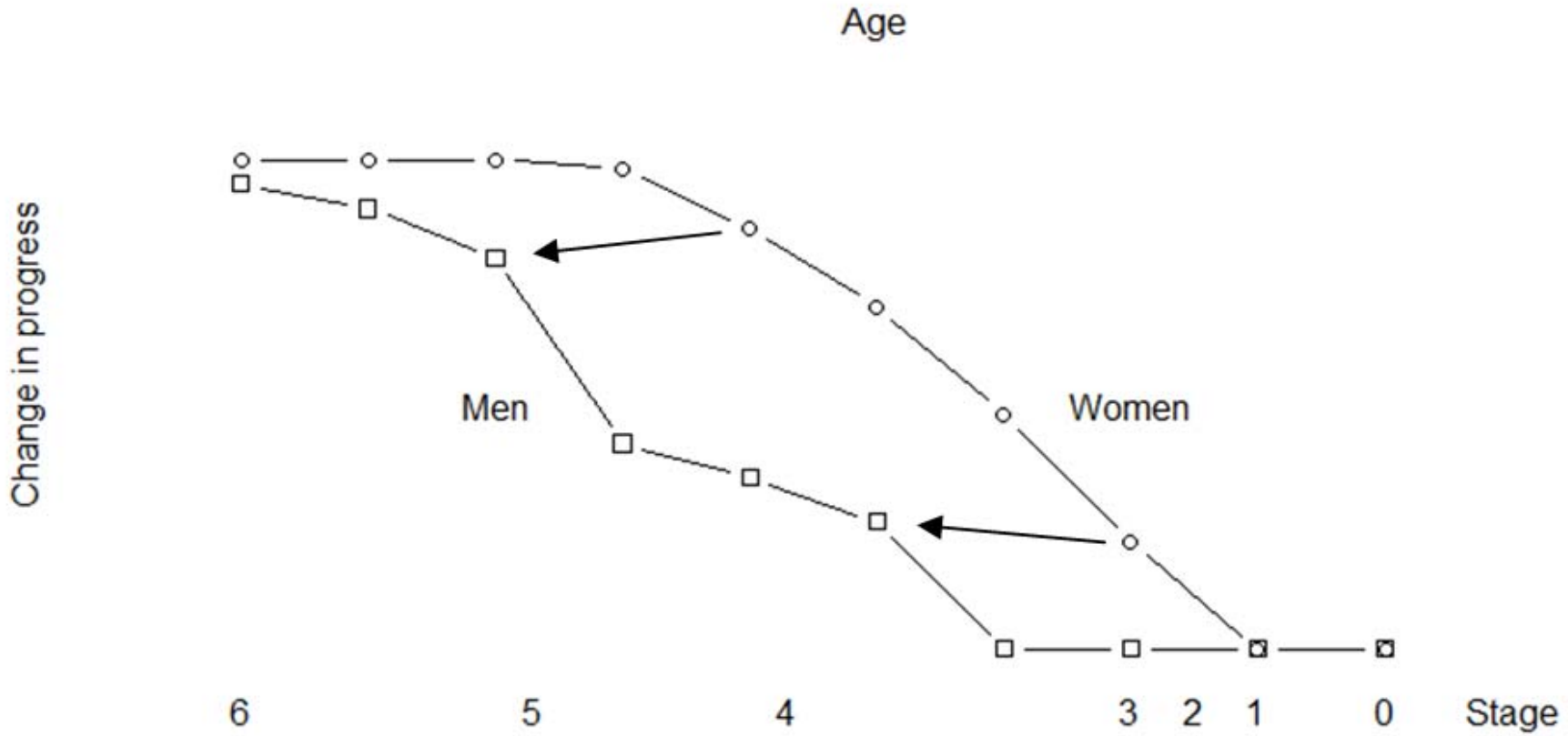

Figure 1: Six-stage model of gender relations in linguistic change from below (Labov 1994: 65)

The impact of gender

- 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 differenciation (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).

The impact of gender

- "[G]irls must rely more on symbolic manifestations of social membership than boys" (Eckert 1989: 265; cf. also Eckert 1999, 2003, 2004)
  - Female adolescents are expected to show a preference for linguistic means to indicate group membership
  - Male adolescents are expected to express group membership …
    - less than females
    - through non-linguistic means .
- Labov's (1994, 2002, 2010) model and Eckert's (1989, 2003. 2004) analyses both predict that innovations are adopted first by female adolescents.

Labov's standard model (1994, 2002, 2010)

- 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)

Outline

- Theoretical background
- The discourse marker LIKE
- Data cleaning, editing & processing
- Statistical design
- Results
- Summary & Discussion
- Conclusion, outlook & final remarks
- References

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 words, not clauses and sentences)
  - Globally available innovation (occurs in almost all regional varieties)

Data editing & processing

- *International Corpus of English* (ICE)
  - Distinct regional components
    - Santa Barbara Corpus of Colloquial American English
    - ICE Canada
    - ICE Ireland
    - ICE New Zealand
  - Matching standardized design
  - Most informal register (S1A): face-to-face conversation, telephone calls (highest frequency of non-standard and discourse features)

Data editing & processing

- *International Corpus of English 2.0*
  - Extraction of the word counts for each speaker using PERL
  - Using the word counts, it was possible to calculate the per-1,000-word frequencies of clause-medial LIKE for each speaker
  - Making use of the available speaker information provided by the ICE teams the normalized frequencies of clause-medial LIKE could be correlated with extra-linguistic factors (speaker age, gender, occupation, current place of residence, education level, etc)

Data cleaning, editing & processing

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**

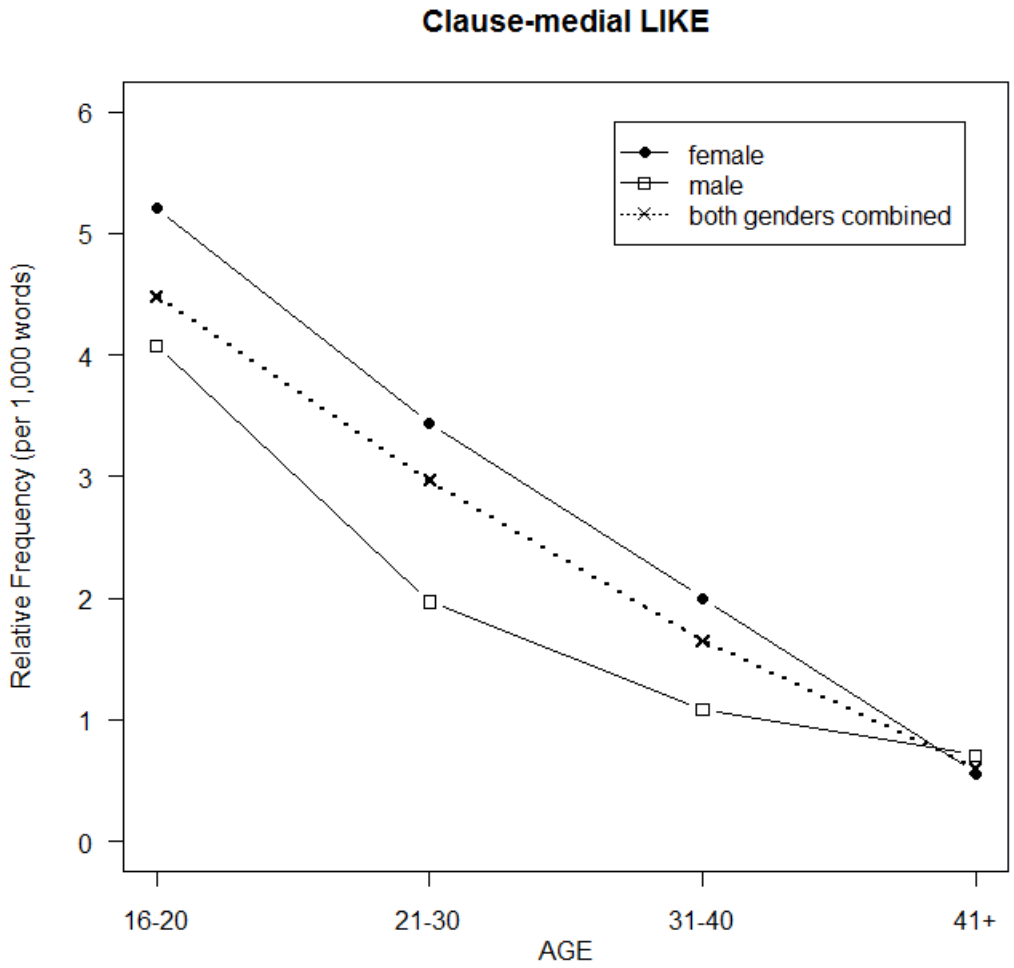
Table 3: Overview of the data used for the present analysis

Multivariate statistics

- 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

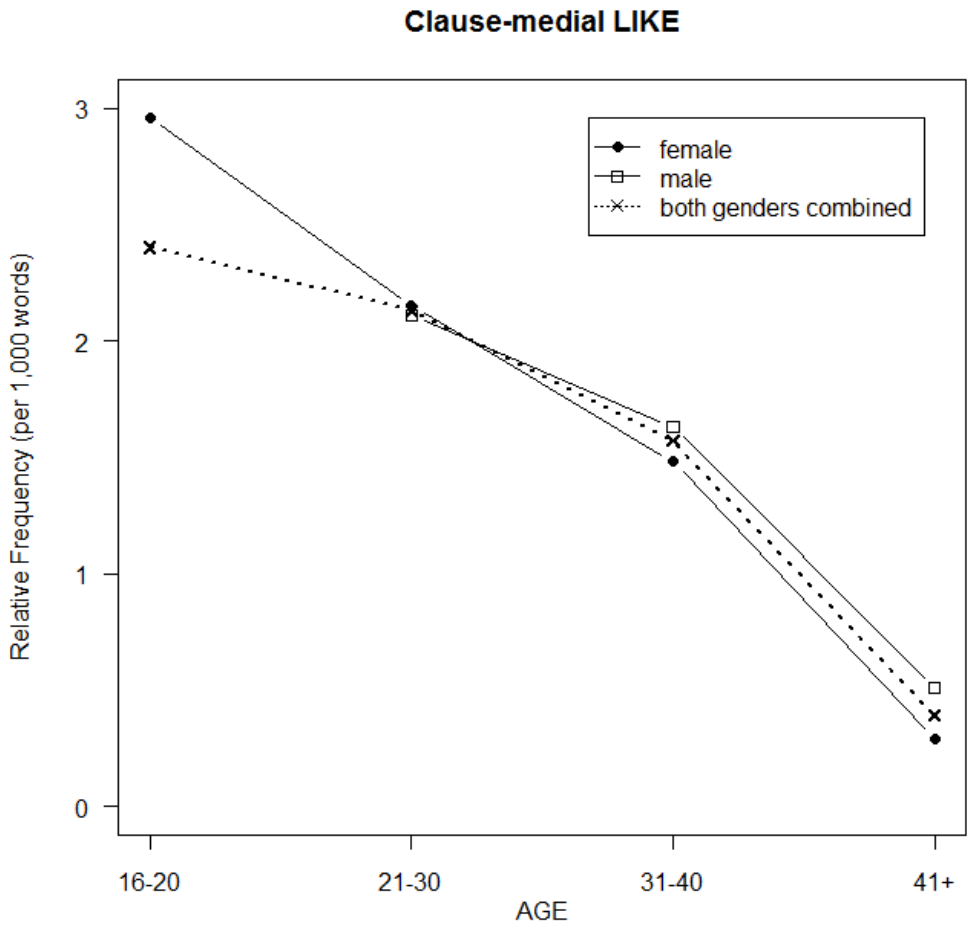
Canadian English

Real-time analysis of LIKE use in CanE comparing data compiled from 1990 to 1994 to data compiled 2001 to 2005. (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.

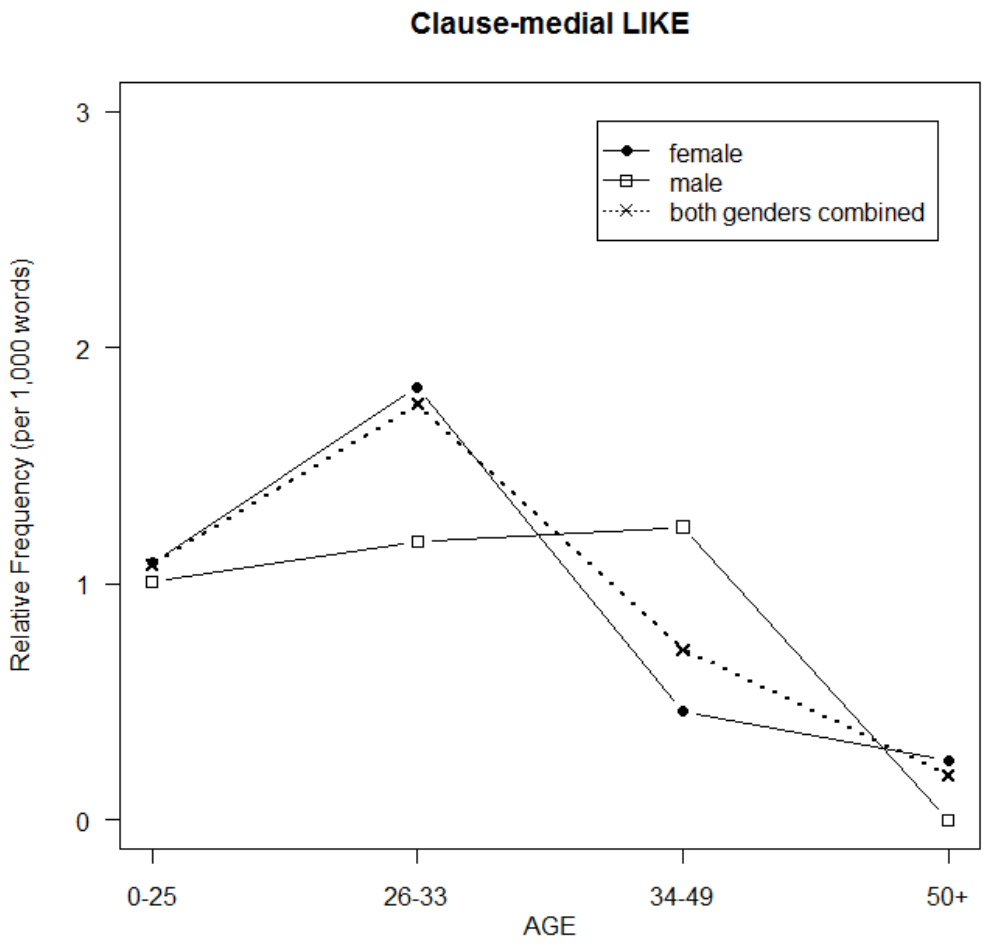
Results

American English



Results

Irish English

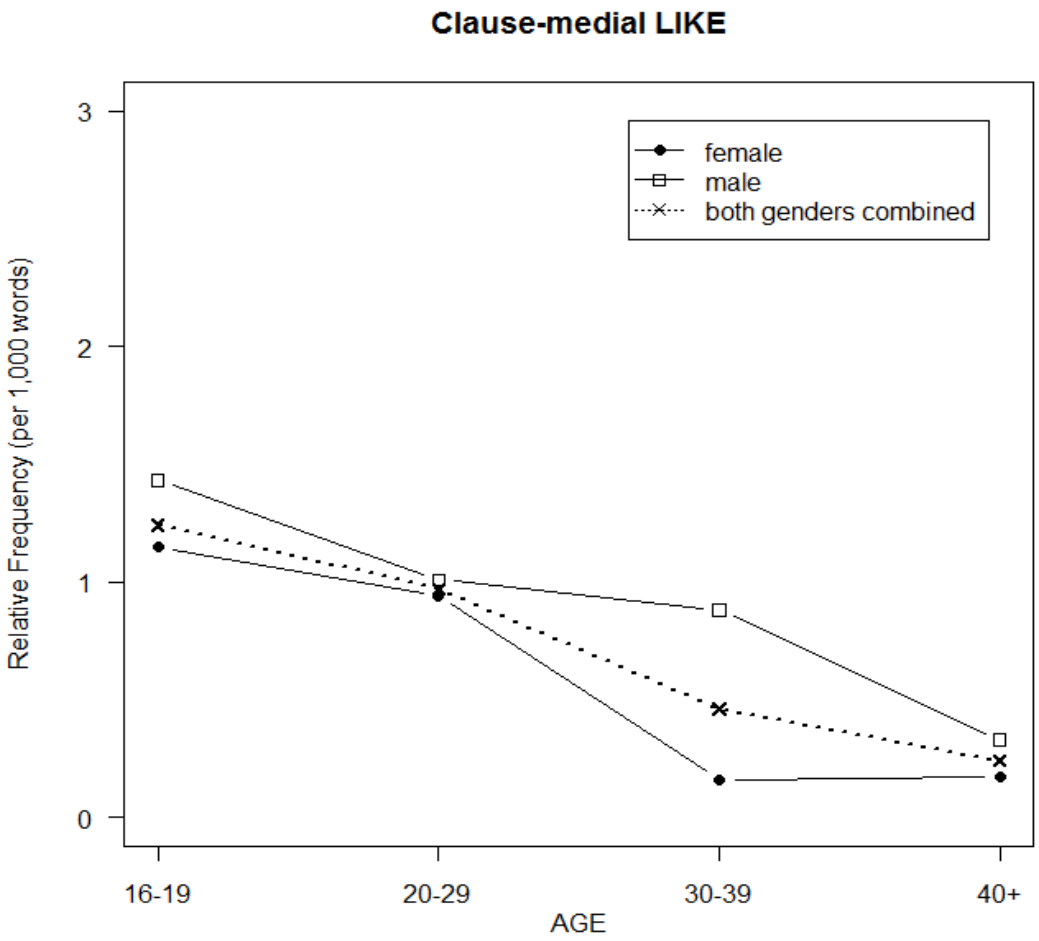


Irish English

Real-time analysis of LIKE use in IrE comparing data compiled from 1990 to 1994 to data compiled 2001 to 2005. . (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.

New Zealand English



Summary

- Age distributions are highly stable across varieties of English
- The effect of gender is variety specific and not universal (findings challenge biological approaches; cf. Chambers 2003: 132)
- Less gender differentiation than predicted by the standard model and by Eckert (1989, 2003, 2004)
- 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)

Summary & Discussion

- Supra-locally stable patterns
  - Monotonic recess with age

    The results confirm 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).

Summary & Discussion

- Phonological change (transmission)
  - 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 (diffusion)
  - (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)

Summary & Discussion

- Focus on gender
  - Why is there no (near) universal effect of gender?
    - Social meaning of LIKE is variable and culture-dependent

      It might not be desireable to identify with Californian „Valley girls“
      - Then why should males use it at all?
    - LIKE is not an innovation in the strict sense since similar variants (clause-final LIKE) had already been in use in Britain, Ireland and New Zealand for at least a century. Therefore, adolescent speakers might regard it as archaic rather than hip.
      - Then why do we observe the monotonic age distribution?

Summary & Discussion

- Focus on gender
  - Why is there no (near) universal effect of gender?
    - Randomness?

      Not satisfactory since it does not provide predictions

      Contradicts Eckert's (1989) hypothesis that females are more prone to expressing category membership by symbolic means.
    - More analyses are needed…

Conclusion, outlook and final remarks

- The present investigation ...
  - 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.
- The larger study represents the first micro-level, sociolinguistic study which analyzes ongoing change from a truly global perspective
  - It could be expanded to investigate the diffusion of innovations through the web similar to epidemiological studies.

Thank you very much for LIKE your attention

and

I would like to thank the committee for inviting me!

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Appendix

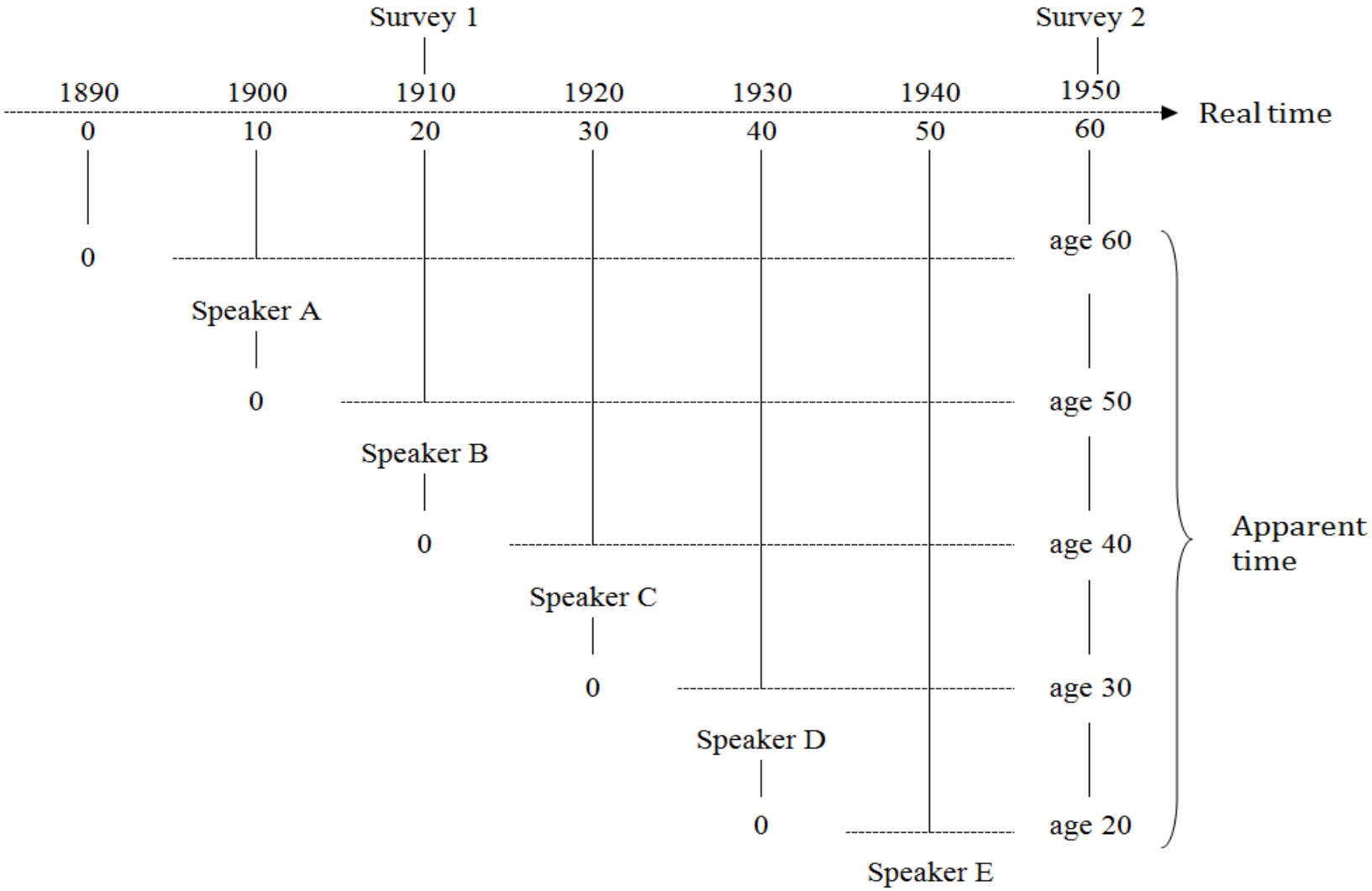

Figure 2: Real and apparent time in language change (Downes 1998: 238)

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."

Data cleaning

- 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)