

# 1

## *Introduction: What's New about the New Quotatives?*

In 1996, the American punk rock band 'The Mr. T Experience' released a song entitled 'I'm Like Yeah, But She's All No'. Its refrain, which is reproduced in the snippet below, showcases three innovations that have recently started to be used for the reporting of one's own or other people's speech, namely *be like*, *be all* and *go*.

**'I'm Like Yeah, But She's All No' (from the album *Love Is Dead*)**

And I'm like 'yeah',  
but she's all 'no',  
and I'm all 'come on baby, let's go',  
and she's like 'I don't think so',  
and I'm going '...'

*Be like*, *go* and *be all* are the most notorious innovations for reporting speech, thought and activity in the English language. But they are by no means the only novel forms in this linguistic domain which is called *quotation*. Ever since the 1970s, speakers of English have witnessed a steady stream of innovative forms in this area of the grammar. Table 1.1 lists the wealth of new English quotative variants by date of first mention in the literature.

The list does not end here. Even newer quotative options, such as *kinda*, *sorta* and combinations of variants – *all like*, *go totally*, etc. – continue to get picked up in the literature (see De Smedt, Brems, and Davidse 2007; Margerie 2010; Vandelandotte 2012).<sup>1</sup> Obviously, quotation is an extraordinarily dynamic domain. However, except for *be like* and *go*, these quotative newcomers have received very little attention in the literature. This is probably due to two factors: (i) Most innovative variants are much less frequent than these two forms. (ii) Also, whereas *be like* and *go* have been reported from English-speaking communities all over the world (see Singler and Woods 2002), other quotative variants are – as of yet – geographically relatively restricted. Quotative *be all* seems to be heavily localized to California, where it was

Table 1.1 Non-canonical quotative forms by date of attestation

1970s	<i>here was I</i>	<i>Here was I</i>	'Then I must be hard of hearing or something you rapped the door and I didn't hear you' ( ... ) (Milroy and Milroy 1977: 54)
	<i>here's me</i>	<i>Here's me</i>	'Have youse took leave of your senses?' (Milroy and Milroy 1977: 54)
1980s	<i>go</i>	<i>She goes</i>	'No I had them bound in front of me' (Butters 1980: 304)
	<i>be all</i>	<i>S/he's all</i>	[with hands on hips and falsetto voice] 'Why don't you ever do what you're told!' (Alford 1982–83: 6)
	<i>I'm here</i>	<i>I'm here</i>	[feigned nonchalance] 'la-de-da-de-da' (Alford 1982–83: 6)
1990s	<i>I'm sittin' there</i>	<i>I'm sittin' there</i>	'Wow, dude! Slap bracelets!' (Stein 1990: 303)
	<i>be like</i>	<i>He was like</i>	'Let me say something' (Butters 1982: 149)
2000s	<i>this is + NP</i>	<i>This is my mum</i>	'What are you doing?' (Cheshire and Fox 2007)
	<i>be git</i>	<i>I was git</i>	'Aye do you know her?' (Norton 2008)
	<i>be just</i>	<i>Angela's just</i>	'Did you do anything last night?' (Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999: 155)
	<i>be pure</i>	<i>She's pure</i>	'You got it wrong' (Macaulay 2006: 275)

used extensively by younger speakers in the early 1990s, but appears to have fallen out of fashion since then (see Buchstaller et al. 2010; Rickford et al. 2007). The form is relatively infrequent in other areas of North America and rare or unattested elsewhere (Singler 2001; see also Chapter 3). *This is + speaker* has not been mentioned outside of the London area (Cheshire and Fox 2007) and quotative *be git* has only been recorded in the North East of England, especially in Sunderland (Norton 2008). Other forms that are attested in the literature, such as *I'm here* (California), *I'm sitting here* (Alabama), *here's + speaker* (Ireland), *be pure* (Scotland) and *be just* (reported with low frequencies in York and Glasgow) seem to be sporadic in nature.

Importantly, the recent emergence of new ways of re-enacting speech, thought, attitudes or physical activity is not restricted to the English language. Non-canonical quotative innovations have been attested in a range of typologically unrelated languages, such as Hebrew, German and Japanese. Also, the recent expansion in this grammatical domain has not gone unnoticed in the linguistic communities in which these innovative forms have appeared. In fact, their appearance has created quite a stir, not only in the academic literature but also in venues aimed at the general public, especially in the World Wide Web but also in educational circles. In Israel, for example, a whole generation has been named after their use of innovative Hebrew quotatives (the 'kaze-ke'ilu-generation'), which carry negative connotations and which are associated primarily with the language of adolescents (Maschler 2002: 245; Ziv 1998). In the US, a

range of liberal arts colleges have launched study skills programs aimed towards improving students' rhetorical skills and to effectively stamp out *be like* usage.

The constant incursion of innovative forms into the system of quotation raises a number of questions: Has the domain of speech and thought reporting always been the locus of such abundant creativity? Or is the stream of innovations we observe in Table 1.1 a relatively recent phenomenon? Also, we might want to ask about the outcome of the invasion into the quotative system: Are the newcomers pressing out older, less fashionable forms? Alternatively, the development might be additive, resulting in a richer system that incorporates incoming innovative forms. This would amount to a 'layering of variants' (Hopper 1991: 22) where older and younger forms coexist, a situation that has been argued to have occurred in the system of intensification (Ito and Tagliamonte 2003).

The rapid expansion of quotative variants also makes us wonder how exactly these innovations edge their way into the system of speech and thought reporting. Do innovative variants perform any specific linguistic functions that differentiate them from older forms? Or do they intrude into the same functional niches and thereby stand in direct competition with more conservative variants?

Moreover, the attitudes and ideologies attached to these newcomer quotatives are of crucial importance for our understanding of the emergence and promotion of innovative forms. Given that the press and other media outlets voice predominantly hostile attitudes towards these variants (consider Chapter 5), it seems surprising that they have been and continue to be embraced by some speakers. We need to find out more about these innovators, the primary users of emerging quotative forms: What is the social profile of the speakers who first adopted *be like*, *go* and other novel forms? Are these the same speakers in different localities? And why is it that people start using these innovative quotative variants? Do they want to tap into positive associations these forms might bear? If yes, what are these associations? And what about the non-users of *be like* and *go*, those speakers who choose not to adopt the innovative quotatives in spite of the fact that they hear them being used all around them. Do these people reject the novel quotative variants because of ideological considerations? More generally, we need to ask whether speakers' attitudes towards innovative quotatives are constant across time and space.

Finally, we must not forget to investigate the typological considerations that are evoked by the recent large-scale fluctuations in the quotative system. Why have these new forms of quotatives arisen in several languages simultaneously? Are there any cross-linguistic tendencies at work? One obvious hypothesis is that the innovations are due to repeated borrowing from one language into another. An alternative hypothesis is that the innovative forms of reporting might have arisen due to parallel but autonomous developments in different languages and speech communities. We need to examine innovative quotatives in typologically related and unrelated languages in order to establish whether the process that led to the creation of these quotative forms is the same on a global scale or whether we witness locally independent developments.

This book seeks to provide answers to the above questions. Chapter 1 sets the scene by tracing the recorded history of *be like* and *go* – the only two quotative variants about which we have consolidated diachronic knowledge. I will go on

to investigate the question to what extent the recent emergence of innovative quotative forms in the English language is an isolated phenomenon or whether the development we witness in English is part of a larger, cross-linguistic trend. Chapter 2 provides a thorough definition of quotation as a phenomenon, drawing on research in a range of linguistic subdisciplines (see also below). In Chapter 3, I examine the global attestation of innovative quotative forms, followed by an investigation of the longitudinal repercussions of their spread in Chapter 4. Attitudes and ideologies attached to newcomer quotatives are discussed in Chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 6 revisits the main findings of this book and puts them into a broader perspective.

Note that the main methodological framework I rely on throughout this book for the analysis of the quotative system is variationist (aka quantitative) sociolinguistics. But the argument will also draw on a range of other approaches, notably on linguistic typology, construction grammar, grammaticalization, corpus linguistics, discourse analysis and methods used in social psychology, such as social identity theory. This synthetic approach stems not from a 'lack of conviction in any method or theoretical framework, but rather out of strong conviction that the full picture ... requires explanations that eschew existing orthodoxies and assumptions of excessive modularity in the grammar' (Meyerhoff 2002: 356).

Furthermore, whereas the focus of the research presented here is on different varieties of English, I will also take into account typological, cross-linguistic considerations, especially in Chapters 1 and 6. Finally, while this book considers a range of innovative quotatives, it predominantly focuses on the two globally available forms *be like* and *go*. These two variants are unique in that they have developed into major players in the quotative domain, resulting in a large-scale reorganization of the system. They have also become part of the public consciousness, triggering extensive, often negative evaluative commentary. However, throughout this volume, I will examine these two prolific innovations within the system in which they occur, focusing on the continued interaction and competition between alternative forms within the pool of quotative variants as a whole.

## The History of Innovative Quotatives

A widespread hypothesis in the literature on quotation is that the variants in Table 1.1 are recent additions to the quotative pool. The reasoning behind this assumption – apart from the fact that they have only recently been mentioned in the literature – is relatively straightforward: since the main users of these forms are adolescents, the group who tends to be the first to pick up and advance (linguistic) innovations, these quotative variants must be new. However, as we will see below, this hypothesis is only partially accurate. Let us now investigate the history of non-canonical quotative variants.

To the extent that we can trace their diachronic development, most forms in Table 1.1 seem to be relatively recent arrivals in the quotative system. *Be all* was first mentioned in *The Newsletter of Transpersonal Linguistics* edited at the University of California at Berkeley (Alford 1982–83), and diachronic research has revealed

that it is indeed an innovative variant originating in California (Buchstaller and Traugott 2007; Waksler 2001). *This is me* seems not to have been around before London adolescents started using it in the early 2000s (Cheshire and Fox 2007). Other low frequency quotative forms have only been attested once or twice (such as *here was I* or *I'm sittin' there*, see Table 1.1), which makes it impossible to trace their historical development. The history of *go*, however, is completely dissimilar, starting a great deal earlier and taking a different, much broader, geographical route. I will turn to the case of quotative *go* below. But let us first dig into the linguistic history of *be like*, which, due to its vigorous global spread, has become the poster child for rapid language change phenomena (Tagliamonte and D'Arcy 2009; Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999).

The earliest attestation of *be like* in quotative function is Butters (1982: 149), who reports that American speakers use 'to be (usually followed by *like*) where what is quoted is an unuttered thought, as in *And he was like "Let me say something" or I thought I was going to drown and I was (like) "Let me live, Lord"'* (see also Schourup 1982a/b). In an article published shortly after (Tannen 1986), *be like* amounts to 4 per cent in American English, but we are not told when the data was collected or where the speakers are from. Hence, in all evidence, quotative *be like* seems to have arisen at some point in the early 1980s in the US. What further corroborates this hypothesis – apart from the fact that the form has not been mentioned in the literature prior to Butters (1982) – is that most authoritative dictionaries have only recently picked up on the quotative use of the lexeme *like*. For example, the first edition of the Random House Webster does not mention *like* in this function. But the second edition, which appeared in 1999, incorporates the new use as 'informal (used esp. after forms of "to be" to introduce reported speech or thought) (3) She's like "I don't believe it," and I'm like "No, it's true"' (1999: 768). Also the OED was slow to pick up on the quotative innovation. Before the newest set of additions were added in 2010, the only entry for *like* in connection with quotation is classified as a 'less analysable construction'<sup>2</sup> and one of the examples features *like* in a collocate construction with another quotative verb, *think*.

*N. Amer. colloq.* Followed by an adj.: in the manner of one who is \_\_\_\_\_. Cf. *like crazy* (...), *like mad* (...). Also in less analysable constructions. (...) 1970 *Time* 31 Aug. 19 Afterward, a girl came up to me and said, 'You kinda look interested in this; did you know there are civil rights for women?' And I *thought like* wow, this is for me. (OED online, **emphasis mine**).

The OED entry is correct in pointing out that in quote introductory function, the lexeme *like* can co-occur with verbs of quotations (such as *think like* in the citation above). Most frequently, however, *like* collocates with the verb *to be*.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in this volume, I will refer to the quotative variant as *be like*, bearing in mind that this is not the only form in which it can be used (the same also holds for quotative *be all*).

The OED draft addition of June 2010 finally adds an entry that recognizes the quotative use of *like*. This definition gives examples dating back to 1982 (see 1a–e).

*colloq.* (orig. *U.S.*). to be like: used to report direct speech (often paraphrased, interpreted, or imagined speech expressing a reaction, attitude, emotion, etc.); to

say, utter; (also) to say to oneself. Also with *all*. Freq. in the historic present (...). Sometimes also used to introduce a gesture or facial expression evocative of the speaker's feelings.

- (1) a 1982 F. Zappa & M. U. Zappa *Valley Girl* (song) in F. Zappa *Ship Arriving Too Late to Save a Drowning Witch* (CD lyrics booklet) (1995) 435/2 She's like *Oh my God*.
- b 1986 *N.Y. Mag.* 14 July 37, I was like, '*She's got a new dress?!?*' (...)
- c 1992 *San Francisco Chron.* (Nexis) 17 Nov. (Final ed.) a9 'It makes me so mad to see him like that,' one girl says. 'I'm all like, God, what happened to him?'
- d 1998 T. R. Tangherlini *Talking Trauma* vi. 146 And Darryl's like, 'Who's this fellow?' She goes, 'That's my husband.' He's like, 'Do you have a car?'..The guy says, 'Well, I don't got any gas.' (...)
- e 2008 *Daily Tel. (Sydney, Austral.)* (Nexis) (State ed.) 7 June (Sport section) 88 When it came to the contract he cut it back a quarter, so I'm like, whatever, it's still more than what I was asking for.

The OED thus supports Butters' (1982) and Macaulay's (2001) hypothesis that the quotative use of *like* first appeared in the early 1980s in California: Example (1a) is taken from Frank and Moon Unit Zappa's 1982 song 'Valley Girl', a satire of young Californian girls' way of speaking which, apart from *be like*, features a number of iconic Californian linguistic features such as *for sure*, *totally* as well as *Oh my God*. The OED also illustrates *be like* in a combined form with *all* (see 1c) as well as in alternation with quotative *go* (1d). Note also that the OED captures the global spread of the form since the 2008 citation (1e) stems from an Australian source, hence outside of its American epicentre.

As regards the chronology of the global use of the form, Miller and Weinert (1995) report no quotative *be like* in Scottish English prior to 1980 and Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) state that the form is unattested in Britain until the early 1990s. But we know that by 1993, *be like* has found its way into the use of London teenagers because Andersen (1996) is the first to note its occurrence in the Corpus of London Teenage Language (COLT).<sup>4</sup> Buchstaller (2004) reports the use of *be like* in Derby and Newcastle in 1994. Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) attest *be like* for their 1995–96 data in York and in Canada and Macaulay (2001) writes that Glasgow Scots speakers use *be like* in 1997. D'Arcy (2010, 2012) discusses its usage in New Zealand and Winter (2002) in Australia, both with data from the 1990s. In the years to follow, quotative *be like* was spotted in a multitude of varieties of English world wide (including Singapore, India and South Africa; see Chapter 3; D'Arcy 2013; Singler and Woods 2002). Crucially, the novel form not only extends its remit geographically – it also increases dramatically in frequency. Countless studies have reported the rampant expansion of quotative *be like* in global varieties of English (see for example Buchstaller 2011; Cukor-Avila 2011; D'Arcy 2012, 2013; Tagliamonte and D'Arcy 2009). Chapter 4 further investigates the diachronic development of *be like* as well as its impact on the quotative system in the North of England in the past 40 years.

The literature on innovative quotative variants contains an – at times quite fervent – discussion as regards the types of quotes *be like* tends to introduce. The general consensus seems to be that the variant has entered the system framing reported thought, attitudes or stance. Consider, for example, Butters' (1982: 149; highlighting mine) claim that '*to be* (usually followed by *like*) where what is quoted is an unuttered thought, as in *And he was like "Let me say something"*'. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the earliest reported examples of the form (see 1a and 1c above from the OED) tend to frame reported inner monologue, thoughts, attitudes and point of view (see Haddican et al. 2012; Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999). By the early to mid-1990s, however, we find *be like* introducing speech as well as thought re-enactments. This means that the newcomer must have expanded its functional niche to encode outwardly occurring speech relatively quickly. The examples in (2) and (3) illustrate these two types of speech act. In (2), the speaker expresses his thoughts in a situation in which he felt trapped. He conveys his feelings or attitude towards this situation by uttering a non-linguistic sound effect, *ahhhh*, which he frames with *be like*.

- (2) Reported Thought (UK English 1994, Buchstaller 2008: 24)  
 I mean I was like trapped,  
 rather like being a rabbit in the headlight you know,  
 it was like 'ahhhh'.

Given that the quote contains no linguistic content and with no one present to whom *ahhhh* could have been addressed, I would suggest that this quote very likely expresses the speaker's mental state, attitude and opinion rather than an outwardly realized speech act (see also Fox and Robles 2010; Vincent and Dubois 1996; Vincent and Perris 1999). Example (3), on the other hand, demonstrates quotative *be like* with reported speech. The snippet contains two quotes, one framed by *be like* and one without a lexical quote-introducer (depicted by the symbol Ø). Both introduce outwardly occurring speech acts.

- (3) Reported Speech (US English 1988–92, Buchstaller 2008: 24)  
 My daughter's like 'Mommy can I help you with the laundry?'  
 Ø 'Of course you can'

Is there any evidence that the quotes in example (3) frame outwardly realized speech rather than unuttered thought or inner monologue? The sequential structure of the mother–daughter conversation gives important clues for our interpretation of the verbal interaction: the two quotes are realized as a question and answer sequence: Question: *Can I help you with the laundry?* Answer: *Of course you can*. A key structural characteristic of question and answer combinations is that they are paired action sequences. This means that the second pair part – the answer – is structurally contingent on the occurrence of the first pair part – the question (for the concept of the 'adjacency pairs' and the 'next turn proof procedure' used in conversation analysis, see Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998 *inter alia*). What does this mean for the quotes in example (3)? Well, the sequential structure of the interaction



supports my claim that the quote framed by *be like* is reported speech rather than merely inwardly occurring thought: the mother's answer *Of course you can* is structurally contingent on the occurrence of the daughter's question, *Mommy can I help you with the laundry?* This leads me to conclude that the quote framed by *be like* – namely the daughter's question – must have been an outwardly realized speech act. Note that in example (2), by contrast, no such contingency relationship exists. The exclamatory nature and the lack of an interlocutor to whom *ahhhh* could have been directed suggest that this quote depicts inner thought rather than outwardly realized speech.

Hence, the available evidence suggests that *be like*, when it first emerged, predominantly framed thoughts, stances and inner monologues within the English quotative system. But it quickly broadened its remit to introduce quotations of both speech and thought reports. In present-day usage, *be like* is ambiguous as regards the outward occurrence of the quote. This indeterminacy can be exploited by speakers in real occurring conversations: prefacing a quote with *be like*, we do not commit ourselves as to whether or not the quoted utterance was actually spoken out aloud or whether what is reported is only a mental commentary on the situation, an inner thought or an expression of stance (see Buchstaller 2011; Jones and Schieffelin 2009). The usefulness of its non-committal nature is illustrated in example (4), which was uttered by a college-age American woman in the mid-1990s reporting on her experience in high school.

- (4) (US English, Buchstaller 1997: 13)  
 He's [= the teacher] ah he's **like** 'I've lived in Chinatown  
 and I know the Chinese'. ha ha  
 And I'm **like, like, like** 'You do?  
 Ah sure'

The narrator's *You do? Ah sure* amounts to a confrontational retort that undermines the teacher's authority. If it had been uttered audibly, we would expect some form of reaction from the teacher, such as a response that puts the student in her place, a witty reply or – alternatively – a comment by the student that the teacher was brushing over her unacceptable behaviour. Given the absence of any reportable reaction to the student's remark, I have previously suggested that what the speaker in (4) is actually doing is presenting her opinion **as if it could have been** a real speech act 'in order to verbalise what was in her mind and in order to make the teacher look (...) ridiculous' (Buchstaller 1997: 13). Hence, while her speech act **could have been** outwardly realized, the narrative context suggests that it was probably rather inward, 'a verbalisation of what she thought' (ibid.).

By leaving open the possibility that she might have in fact confronted the teacher, the speaker portrays herself as audacious and cheeky. However, note that by using *be like* the speaker does not commit herself as to the outward realization of the speech act at any point. The epistemic stance of the quoted material is left completely unspecified. In doing so, the speaker is hedging her bet, forestalling potential objections such as *you didn't say that!* (see also Jones and Schieffelin 2009). Surprisingly, maybe, speakers are very seldomly confronted as to whether they actually uttered a quote aloud or not.<sup>5</sup> But by framing an utterance with *be like*, we can



avoid committing ourselves as to whether or not a quote was actually uttered aloud. Indeed, I have argued elsewhere that it is exactly because of this ‘wild card’ status that *be like* has enjoyed such a rapid growth in the quotative system (Buchstaller 2004, 2008). I will further elaborate on this discussion in Chapters 3 and 4.

Let us now turn our attention to quotative *go*, which tends to be referred to in the literature as the slightly older but equally innovative fellow of *be like*. Historical evidence, however, suggests that quotative *go* has been around a while, if largely unnoticed. Looking up *go* in the OED yields a number of borderline cases, where the construction is ambiguous between a quotative introducer and its older use as a story introducer (as in *this is the way the story goes [STORY]*). With clearly quotative-introductory function the form is attested from 1791 onwards (see examples 5a–c).

- (5) a 1791 COWPER *Retired Cat* 79 His noble heart went pit-a-pat. (OED)
- b 1812 H. & J. SMITH *Rej. Addr., Theatre* 25 Tang goes the harpsichord.  
         (OED)
- c 1891 *Daily News* 24 Oct. 5/3 A tyre . . . that will [not] go pop all of a  
         sudden. (OED)

The fact that *go* has been used in quotative function since at least the eighteenth century means that the variant cannot be described as an innovation per se. Crucially, however, as Butters (1980) points out, the form was initially restricted to mimetic quotes, which refers to the re-enactment of previous events based on voice, sound or gesture (Goffman 1981; Wierzbicka 1974). This hypothesis is corroborated by the OED entry ‘with imitative interjections or verb-stems used adverbially, e.g. *to go bang, clatter, cluck, crack, crash, patter, smash, snap, tang, whirr*’. Indeed, as examples (5a–c, from 179–1891) demonstrate, in all early citations given by the OED, *go* occurs exclusively with onomatopoeic sound effects.

The sociolinguistic literature usually refers to Butters (1980) as the earliest attestation of quotative *go* with linguistic quotes. He notes that ‘in informal narrative, the usage had been commonplace among younger Americans, who seem unconscious that it is in any way new’ (ibid.: 305). Yet, the first study I know of that mentions *go* as framing reported speech rather than sound or voice effects is Partee (1973: 412), who gives the following example: ‘The parrot went “Molly wants a cracker”’. Partee points out that, for her, *go* can only frame mimetic re-enactments, even if they are well-formed sentences, such as parrots mimicking speech or tape-recordings. She also suggests that *go* can frame ‘otherwise normal speech that mimics deviant intonation’ (ibid.). Hence, it seems that Partee’s examples capture the link between the reporting of mimetic quotes and the introduction of speech. In a study published in 1981, Schifffrin reports 10 per cent *go* within the pool of quotative verbs for her American speakers but we do not know how many of these tokens occur with voice or sound effects and how many with linguistic quotes, a problem that is endemic to all early studies that mention the variant.

The 1993–97 addition series to the OED acknowledges the extension of *go* to non-expressive quotes. The entry now reads as follows: ‘to utter (the noise indicated); with direct speech: to say, utter in speech. Now often in the historic

present. *colloq*'. Contrary to the older examples, the quotes in the new entry are now produced by human speakers (see 6a–c). Note, however, that the only example with a non-sound quote the OED provides is from 1988, hence after Butters' mention of its functional expansion (see 6c).

- (6) a 1836 DICKENS *Pickw.* (1837) ix. 85 He was roused by a loud shouting of the post-boy on the leader. 'Yo-yo-yo-yo-yoe,' went the first boy. 'Yo-yo-yo-yoe!' went the second. (OED 1993)
- b 1975 in C. Allen *Plain Tales from Raj* xix. 201 'What's the trouble? Why did you hit him?' 'Oh,' he says, 'I was walking down the platform and he twirled his little moustache and went, "Hmm, hmm!"' (OED 1993)
- c 1988 J. MCINERNEY *Story of my Life* vii. 127 Alison? he goes. Are you all right? (OED 1993).

The available evidence thus suggests that *go* has only started to occur with non-mimetic quotes in the twentieth century, in all probability in the latter half (see also D'Arcy 2012 for the expansion of *go* from sound to speech).<sup>6</sup> Hence while *go* as a quotative variant is not an innovation per se, its use with speech representation is. The snippet in (7), illustrates a more recent example of *go* in this use. Here, the variant introduces linguistic material, such as '*do you want to dance*', '*what*' and '*no, no*', again in question and answer sequences, attributing these quotes to two human agents.

- (7) (US English 1988–1992, see Buchstaller 2004: 150)

A: the other day I went into a bar,  
and this guy asked me to dance.  
all he saw was my hair,  
and he goes 'do you want to dance'?  
I turn around and go 'what'?  
he goes 'do you want to dance'?  
I go 'no no'.  
he goes 'oh oh I'm sorry',  
I go 'yeah, you better be'.  
I go '[you better be'.  
B: [that's hilarious,

Crucially, *go* has not lost its ability to encode mimetic reports. In contemporary data, the variant continues to frame quotes containing non-linguistic material, which for many is considered its more prototypical use (see also D'Arcy 2012; Macaulay 2001; Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999). This function is exemplified in (8–9) below, where *go* encodes sound effects.

- (8) (US English 1988–1992, Buchstaller 2004: 151)

B: my kid didn't care,  
A: I know,  
B: He picks up a stick and goes 'bang',

(9) (British English 1994, Buchstaller 2004: 151)

B: and I have got home and after dinner,  
and you are just kind of **going** 'urghhhhh',

Given its time-depth, it is not surprising that quotative *go* has been attested in a range of English varieties. The earliest piece of research I could locate that mentions *go* as a full quotative outside the US is Cheshire (1982) with data collected in Reading, UK in the late 1970s. Andersen (1996) finds it widely used with linguistic quotes in the Corpus of London Teenage Language (COLT) collected in 1993 and Buchstaller (2004), from which example (9) is taken, reports its use in data from Derby and Newcastle collected in 1994. For Scottish English, Macaulay (2001) confirms its existence as a full quotative in 1997 data. In D'Arcy's (2012) New Zealand data collected in the 1990s the form is used with linguistic quotes by speakers born in the first decades of the twentieth century. It is thus an outstanding question how far back we can trace the full quotative function of *go* in varieties outside of the US.

Crucially, while the form occurs frequently in nursery rhymes or in folklore depicting animals as making onomatopoeic noises (as in *the cow went 'moooo'*, or *how does the dog go?*),<sup>7</sup> there is considerable variation as to whether the *cow goes moo* or whether it actually *says moo*. A quick Google search reveals 27,800 results for 'the cow goes moo' and 293,000 results for 'the cow says moo' (on 29 July 2011). Indeed, there is reason to believe that the use of *go* to enquote animal noises is not universal.<sup>8</sup> Gupta (1994) reports on a three and a half year old Singaporean boy with whom she reads the story 'The Haunted House' (Cowley and Melzer 1982), in which a series of scary creatures (a ghost, a spook owl and a monster) each give an appropriate noise, using the repeated structure: *I am a [X]. A big scary [X]. I live in the haunted house and I go [appropriate sound]*. The boy seems to be unfamiliar with the quotative construction, replacing it with a construction that relies on *go* as a verb of movement (Gupta 1994: 98). The following snippet exemplifies his 'reading' of the book:

(10) (Singapore English, from Gupta 1994: 98)

B: Haunted House. [4 secs]

Haunted House.

I am the ghost

[laughs] [2 secs]

And I go where?

[turns page]

/u:::/.

AG: [gasps]

B: I am the spook owl [laughs]

And I go where? /u:::/ [laughs]

I am big monster. [laughs]

AG: And I go where? [2 secs]

B: And I go where? [3 secs]

Boooo.

AG: [gasps]

Gupta (1994) argues that this book has been accurately read aloud to the boy by his mother and his elder brother. However, she surmises that since the use of *go* to introduce reported speech was not common in Singapore English at the time (neither in Standard Singaporean English nor in Singaporean Creole English), the boy is converting it into the familiar question *I go where?* plus the appropriate sound (*I am (the) [X]. And/then I go where? [sound]*). Note that since Gupta's research, quotative *go* has been attested in Singaporean English (see D'Arcy 2013; Singler and Woods 2002), which means the boy might have told a very different story if we had interviewed him now.

We are left to wonder: Was quotative *go* with mimetic effects not around at all in Singapore at the time Gupta conducted her research? Or was the boy simply not aware of the construction, possibly due to its low frequency of occurrence in this variety? This question haunts research on quotative *go* more generally, since, as I will discuss in more detail in later chapters, the form is inherently unstable, fluctuating wildly in terms of frequency of occurrence across age groups as well as localities (see also Buchstaller 2006). Thus, as we will see in Chapter 3, which investigates the patterning of *go* on both sides of the Atlantic, while the variant certainly goes back several centuries, it is difficult if not impossible to establish overreaching tendencies that capture its use more generally.

In conclusion, the claim that quotative *go* is 'new' holds insofar as the form has only recently undergone an extension of complement type – from para- and non-linguistic quotes to linguistic ones – in some varieties of English. I will henceforth refer to *go* in its full functional coverage, when it has the potential to encode the whole range of quotative complements, namely voice, sounds, gesture as well as linguistic elements, as a 'full' quotative. This effectively means that when I refer to *be like* and *go* as 'new quotatives', the attribute 'new' pertains to slightly different degrees for the two quotative options.

## Why?

The flurry of innovative speech, sound and thought introducers that have come to light in the past 20 years begs the question why quotation has recently become the locus of such fervent productivity. In this section I explore a number of hypotheses, drawing on textual, pragmatic, structural as well as typological explanations. I will argue that, most probably, the current productiveness in the quotative frame is the result of a confluence of factors, where different tendencies work in tandem to produce an environment that is conducive to heightened linguistic creativity.

First of all, quotation is a key performance feature in storytelling sequences. Successful narratives capture the listeners' attention and engage the audience. To this aim, good storytellers make use of a range of dramatic features, such as voice and sound effects, reported speech, as well as repetition and rhetorical questions. Quotation is a particularly effective storytelling device since it allows the narrator to give a voice to the stories' protagonists themselves. Consider the following example, in which Zack tells a story about a run-in with his teacher.

(11) (British English, from Fox 2012: 249)

- 1     **Zack:** no it was like- it was the end of school yeh so that school's  
finished yeh  
2     and everyone was going home  
3     and I was getting my bike from the bike rack  
4     and I was going out  
5     and I was riding my bike  
6     and he stopped my bike.  
7     I was like 'yeh'  
8     and he goes 'get off the bike'  
9     I was like 'why am I getting off the bike I'm going home like  
I've gotta go home' yeh  
10    he was like 'no get off the bike walk the bike outside of school'  
11    I was like 'what's the point?'  
12    yeh cos like it's quite far like to get out the school from the  
entrance like in the school yeh  
13    and he goes 'ah no get off the bike' yeh  
14    so like he kind of shoved me off the bike  
15    so I dropped it but I didn't fall over like but I kind of stumbled  
yeh  
16    and he put his. he tried to take my bike up to his office like he  
was gonna keep my bike there.  
17    I was like 'no' like  
18    and this time everyone was gathering round cos we were shouting  
at each other yeh  
19    he was like 'no I'm taking your bike upstairs'  
20    I was like 'what's the point in that when I'm just gonna take it  
back downstairs'  
21    so I must have pulled the bike off him yeh  
22    and I put it. I put it I leant it up against the wall yeh  
23    and I walked over to him  
24    and **this is me** 'what. what's your. what's your problem?'  
25    and he goes 'I don't like you'  
26    I was like 'I don't like you' yeh  
27    so I just swung for him and then we like.  
28    but we had a fight though. [S: did you] and I got kicked out of  
school.  
29    like I weren't allowed into any school that's why I came here last  
year

The storyline in example (11), rather than merely being told from the perspective of the narrator, is re-enacted via the words (thoughts, sounds and gestures) of the main characters. And so, the audience hears the events first hand, as told through the mouths of the protagonists, and experience how the characters themselves experienced the situation. Wierzbicka (1974) has famously likened narratives with

performed quotation to a piece of theatre in which all roles are enacted by the narrator, the effect of which is that of a role play (see also Buchstaller's 2003 radio play metaphor).

Hearing the story told by the protagonists themselves (in this case Zack and the teacher) conveys a more holistic, emotion-based rather than a factual rendering of the storyline, especially when individual characters' voices are recreated in terms of accent and prosodic features. Also the change of vantage point from the narrator to the characters adds to the vividness of the narrative. Hence, storytelling via re-enactment involves the audience more directly than a mere recounting of the events from the perspective of the storyteller. Wolfson (1978: 216) has similarly argued that 'performance [allows the narrator] to structure the experience from the point of view of the speaker[s] and to dramatise it' (see also Clark and Gerrig 1990; Golato 2000: 43 *inter alia*).<sup>9</sup> It is thus not surprising that we tend to find plenty of quotation in storytelling sequences – indeed, most of the literature considers narratives the prime genre for the occurrence of quotation (see for example Fox 2012; Koven 2001; Tagliamonte and D'Arcy 2007).

Given the dramatizing function of quotations, we might expect reported action sequences to be particularly frequently located around the narrative climax. Indeed, some researchers have argued that quotation 'highlights (...) a particularly dramatic peak in the performing of a story' (Fox 2012: 231). This effectively means that quotative re-enactment can have an important textual structuring function: by demarcating key narrative events from non-focal narrative sequences (such as orientation or evaluative elements, see Labov 1972), quotation can be used as a guide to the listener, drawing their attention to the crucial events in the narrative. This finding ties in with Moore's interpretation of quotation as markers which 'heighten the audience's sensation of closeness to the action at particularly dramatic points' (2011: 137). Especially innovative quotative forms, which are themselves stylistically marked, seem to be an efficient technique to focus on key aspects in the progression of the storyline. Thus, novel quotative variants can function as 'focus quotatives ... (which) introduce quotes with emotionally-heightened material' (Buchstaller 2003: 9). This structuring effect of quotatives – and more particularly the focusing effect of innovative quotative forms – is illustrated in example (11 from Fox 2012). The first time Zack employs reported speech indicates the event that triggered the denouement of events: The teacher asking him to stop cycling. It is at this point in time that the two protagonists spar for the first time with each other (in lines 7ff, *I was like 'yeh' and he goes 'get off the bike'*). The story reaches its dramatic climax when the situation moves from verbal squabble to physical confrontation in line 21. At this moment in the narration Zack and the teacher come head to head with each other and it is also at this moment that Zack, a Londoner, switches to the most innovative London quotative, *This is me*, in line 24. The fracas finally results in Zack hitting the teacher (in 27 *so I just swung for him*), with the effect of him being excluded from school (see Labov's 1972 question of 'so what?' in storytelling).

The narrative in (11) thus nicely illustrates the strategic use of reported action sequences. Quotation is recruited by the speaker to delineate significant episodes in the storyline, focusing the attention of the listener on the progressive escalation of

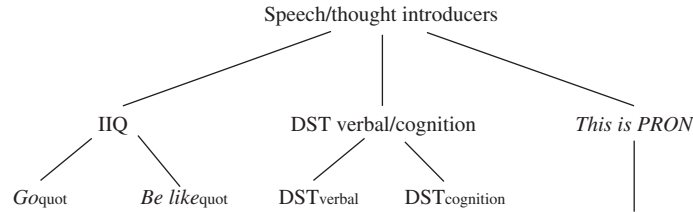
the conflict between the two protagonists. Hence, quotation can serve to demarcate key points in the storyline. Note particularly that it is the most innovative and most salient quotative form, *this is me*, which signposts the narrative climax, the point at which Zack physically confronts the teacher. Thus, quotative forms, and particularly those which are salient – due to their novelty or their particular semantics – are a useful discourse strategy: they allow storytellers to involve the listeners in the narrative and at the same time to draw their attention to particularly strategic events (see Moore 2011).

What happens, we might want to ask, when these innovative quotative forms get picked up by a broader spectrum of the population, as has been the case in a number of communities with *be like*? Fox (2012) argues that once a novel form has been around for a while, being used by more and more people for a wider range of functions, it loses its salience (a process referred to as ‘bleaching’ in the literature, see Hopper and Traugott 2003; Sweetser 1988 *inter alia*). What this effectively means is that as an innovative quotative generalizes both socially as well as in terms of its discourse-structuring function, its pragmatic force diminishes. This might trigger the emergence of a new, more salient, quotative to fulfil these textual functions – and history repeats itself in a constant process of innovation, bleaching of pragmatic force and renewal. This line of argumentation, which relies on speakers’ deliberate and strategic use of innovative forms which then lose their saliency through routinization, can be situated in the tradition of research on grammaticalization (see Haspelmath 1998, 1999: 1055; Keller 1994; Koch 1999; Traugott and Dasher 2002). Note that a similar argument for renewal in the quotative domain has been put forward by Buck (1915) and Moore (2011).

Whereas the above line of argumentation considers pragmatic and textual effects in order to motivate the recent influx of innovative quotatives, let us now turn our attention to an important structural aspect of the quotative frame: in everyday spoken conversation, speech and thought re-enactment tends to be encoded via highly conventionalized structures. Indeed, prior to the incursion of innovative forms, English quotative frames almost exclusively consisted of an agent in the form of a personal pronoun (very rarely a full NP) plus a transitive reportative verb (such as *say*, *think*, *ask* etc.). We can depict speech and thought reproduction schematically as follows: NOUN PHRASE + TRANSITIVE VERB OF REPORTING + QUOTE.<sup>10</sup> Hence, quotation is a construction, a routinized sequence of words used together to express a certain meaning, in this case reportativity (see Bybee 2010; Croft 2001; Goldberg 2006).<sup>11</sup>

Recently, speakers of English have started to recruit different linguistic material for the introduction of speech and thought representation, relying on the intransitive verb *to go* as well as on the copula verb *to be* (in sequences such as *be like/all*). These innovative ways of reporting have since become conventionalized through frequent repetition, which means that they themselves now form constructions in the sense of conventionalized pairings of form and meaning (see Vandelanotte 2012; Vandelanotte and Davidse 2009). Figure 1.1 (slightly adapted from Vandelanotte 2012) presents a simplified taxonomy of present-day English speech and thought introducers. The left-hand side of the graph encompasses quotes containing *go* and *be like/all*, which Vandelanotte terms ‘Innovative Intransitive Quotative’ (IIQ)





**Figure 1.1** Partial taxonomy of English direct speech and thought constructions adapted from Vandelanotte 2012:188

constructions. These IIQ constructions have been added to the more canonical constructions involving both verbs of outward verbalization such as *say* and *ask* as well as cognition verbs such as *think* (which are subsumed into the category ‘Direct speech/thought constructions’, DST). The more recent London innovation *this is* + *pronoun* forms its own construction for direct speech/thought introduction.

What this effectively means is that, apart from traditional verbs of saying, the family of quotative constructions nowadays includes construction types that hinge on intransitive non-reportative verbs (such as *go*), the copular verb *to be* (such as *be like/all*) as well as deictic elements (*This is PRON*, but also sequences such as *Here mas I*). Thus, at the moment, speakers of English use a range of form-meaning pairings for reporting or re-enacting (such as NOUN PHRASE + *go* + QUOTE, NOUN PHRASE + *be* + *like* + QUOTE, NOUN PHRASE + TRANSITIVE VERB OF REPORTING + QUOTE, DEICTIC + *be* + QUOTE).<sup>12</sup>

Note that Figure 1.1 does not depict different subconstructions within the *go* and *be like* families (such as *go like*, *be all*, etc.), nor does it show the relations these constructions entertain with, for instance, non-quotative *go*, *be like* or *this is*... constructions. What Vandelanotte’s taxonomy of quotative constructions does, however, is provide an explanatory basis for the recent flurry of innovative quotative constructions: one important tenet in construction grammar as a heuristic framework is that constructions are productive. This means that the lexical slots in a construction can be filled with new material, normally via analogical extension (so that the transitive verb in the DST<sub>verbal</sub> can, for example, be *say* or *ask* or *declare*). Usually, new items that are attracted into the position are synonyms or near-synonyms to the lexical item(s) already used in the construction. Often, though, the group of items that is recruited into the same lexical slot has less rigidly defined commonalities which can be better understood in terms of family resemblances or as clusters of lexical items that are related on the basis of more general semantic-pragmatic properties (see Bybee 2010; Goldberg 2006 *inter alia*).

With respect to the family of quotative constructions, it appears that the subconstruction type NOUN PHRASE + *be* + *like* + QUOTE has, since its earliest attestation in the 1980s, provided a fertile template for the creation of new forms. Looking at the innovative quotatives presented in Table 1.1, we note that *like* is not the only entry that can fill the lexical slot of the construction. Rather, a vast amount of innovative quotatives (*be like*, *be all*, *be kinda*, *be git*, *be totally*, *be just*, *be pure*, etc.) follow the same schematic sequence: An agent NP (usually a personal pronoun) followed by

NOUN PHRASE	[Be]	DISCOURSE MARKER	QUOTE
$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{She} \\ \text{He} \\ \text{I} \\ \text{My mum} \end{array} \right\}$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{'s} \\ \text{was} \\ \text{'m} \\ \text{was} \end{array} \right\}$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{all} \\ \text{like} \\ \text{git} \\ \text{totally} \end{array} \right\}$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{"..."} \\ \text{"..."} \\ \text{"..."} \\ \text{"..."} \end{array} \right\}$

Figure 1.2 Constructional template for the new quotatives based on a form of *to be*

a form of the verb *to be* followed by a particle (or short phrase) with variable scope that has discourse organizational and/or interpersonal function. These discourse-sensitive and syntactically under-defined particles tend to be referred to as discourse markers in the literature (see Brinton 1996; Kroon 1995; Schiffrin 1987, 2001).

What I would like to suggest here is that the recent emergence of a whole cluster of structurally similar quotative variants is the result of analogical extension from the template NOUN PHRASE + *be* + *like* + QUOTE. Forms such as *be git*, *be all*, *be kinda* are created by attracting new lexical material into the lexical slot in the innovative quotative construction. Figure 1.2 schematizes the syntagmatic string that characterizes the family of innovative quotative constructions (or at least a large number of them).

We can further generalize this construction type. As I have pointed out above, the verbal slot in the innovative quotative construction sequence is usually filled by a copula verb, most often by a form of *to be*. But whereas *be* is certainly the most canonical copula in the English language, a number of other copula verbs – such as *feel*, *seem* and *sound* – can also occur in the quotative frame.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, as we have seen above, *go*, which can function as a copula, frequently fills the verbal slot in the quotative construction. We can thus envision a more general template for innovative quotative constructions that includes all syntactic strings of the form NOUN PHRASE + COPULA + (DISCOURSE MARKER) + QUOTE (see Figure 1.3). Note that the lexical slot filled by a form of *to be* has now been replaced by a more schematic slot for copula verbs, which has attracted a number of different lexical items. Brackets around the slot for discourse marker indicate that this element is optional.

This more schematic construction has the advantage that it is maximally generalized in the sense that it covers both the construction type which relies on the lexical item *go* (NOUN PHRASE + *go* + QUOTE) as well as the family of subconstructions centring around the sequence NOUN PHRASE + *be* + DISCOURSE MARKER + QUOTE. Crucially, the template also captures two important distributional facts.

NOUN PHRASE	COPULA	(DISCOURSE MARKER)	QUOTE
$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{She} \\ \text{He} \\ \text{I} \\ \text{My mum} \end{array} \right\}$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{'s} \\ \text{goes} \\ \text{'m} \\ \text{feels} \end{array} \right\}$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{all} \\ \text{like} \\ \text{git} \\ \text{kinda} \end{array} \right\}$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{"..."} \\ \text{"..."} \\ \text{"..."} \\ \text{"..."} \end{array} \right\}$

Figure 1.3 Constructional template for the new quotatives based on copular verbs

Firstly, speakers regularly produce quotative frames that consist of a copula without the discourse marker (as exemplified in 12). In the analysis proposed here, these variants are analysed as sequences in which the discourse marker slot is unfilled.

(12) and I was ‘Oh so this is Helen’ (Macaulay 2001: 16)

While the exact time-depth of this construction is unknown, there is evidence to suggest that it has been around for quite a while. In the earliest report of quotative *be like*, Butters (1982) points out that the quotative frame can consist of a form of the verb *to be* only, without the discourse marker: ‘*to be* (usually followed by *like*) where what is quoted is an unuttered thought . . .’. Clark and Gerrig (1990: 772) similarly point out that ‘the use of the copula alone ( . . . ) is a form we have recorded many instances of’ (see also Macaulay 2001 for Glaswegian Scots; Cameron 1998 for Spanish). This finding suggests that the more general schema in Figure 1.3 is indeed the construction that has given rise to the flurry of quotative variants we witness in the English language today.

Secondly, the template in Figure 1.3 can account for cases such as *go all like*, or *be so totally*, analysing them as a case of stacking, whereby the discourse marker slot is filled twice. The family of innovative quotatives can thus be described as a highly conventionalized construction consisting of an agent (normally encoded in a pronoun) in combination with a copula verb plus (a) discourse sensitive particle(s).

From a diachronic point of view, the genesis of alternative quotative subconstructions such as NOUN PHRASE + *go* + QUOTE and NOUN PHRASE + *be* + *like* + QUOTE has had important consequences for the quotative paradigm as a whole. After a period of relative stability in the quotative system (Buck 1915; see also Buchstaller 2008; D’Arcy 2012), these innovative variants have introduced a new copula-based construction type into the functional domain of quotation. Over time, and via repeated usage, this new schematic sequence has become routinized in speech, starting to expand its paradigm by attracting suitable material into the penultimate schematic slot. Importantly, the extension from more entrenched exemplars to new material is motivated by a semantic-pragmatic link: the discourse markers recruited into this construction tend to stem from two general fields: hedging (*like*, *kinda*, *sorta*) or intensifying (*git*, *all*, *pure*).<sup>14</sup>

Let us now put this hypothesis to the test: if the quotative construction in Figure 1.3 is indeed productive and if it expands via analogical extension along the lines I have suggested, we would expect to encounter new, previously unattested, variants which are formed on the basis of the general schema but which recruit new lexical material from these two semantic-pragmatic sources, intensifiers and hedges. A quick Google search can reveal whether such variants are indeed being used. Note that, since the standard Google search tool is not sensitive to punctuation, such as quotation marks, it is impossible to provide quantitative results (see Buchstaller et al. 2009). However, a simple search for new forms containing intensifiers, such as ‘*he was totally*’ or ‘*I’m so*’ (where quotation marks instruct Google to search for the exact string) reveals a number of hits containing previously unattested quotatives (see the examples in 13). Regarding the recruitment of hedging material into the template depicted in Figure 1.3, I am indebted to Tom Wasow (p.c. 18.06.2011)

for sending me the snippet in (14), which he overheard in 2011 at TheatreWorks in Mountain View, California. The characters using the quotative were supposed to be 30ish New Yorkers.

- (13) a Coming home today, he **was totally**, ‘Oh, I’m glad you’re home, let’s go sit down’ (<http://www.dogbanter.com/41499-kiba-seperation-anxiety.html>)  
 b So for a long time I **was so** ‘Oh no, goggles, blergh . . .’ until threadbangers inspired me to do some steampunk goggles! ([http://www.cutoutandkeep.net/projects/streampunk\\_customgoggles](http://www.cutoutandkeep.net/projects/streampunk_customgoggles))

- (14) I **was a little bit** ‘What the fuck?!’

These examples support the hypothesis that the innovative quotative construction schematized in Figure 1.3 is indeed productive, expanding to more and more strings that fit the general template NOUN PHRASE + COPULA + DISCOURSE MARKER + QUOTE, where the schematic slot discourse marker is filled by items with hedging or intensifying semantics. This observation sits well with the general finding that constructions tend to expand via local analogies to existing exemplars, motivated by the shared semantic-pragmatic properties of the lexical items in one paradigmatic slot.

After having investigated both textual and structural factors that might have motivated the emergence of innovative quotatives in the English language, let us now turn our attention to the cross-linguistic tendencies in the creation of innovative quotative constructions. As I have pointed out above, novel forms for reporting speech, thought or mimesis have been reported across a large number of languages. This raises the question of why these typologically related as well as unrelated language families are undergoing a simultaneous parallel development. One possibility is that the quotative innovations might have been borrowed from one language into another. After all, as some might argue, the globalized world we live in provides plenty of opportunities for language contact. If it was indeed the case that the occurrence of innovative quotatives in languages as diverse as Hebrew and Dutch is due to borrowing, this process would involve the transfer of a function (namely quotation) but not of the specific forms used to express it. This would be an exciting finding, because such a scenario is not well recognized either in current theories of language change (e.g. Campbell 2004; Hock 1991; Lass 1997 *inter alia*) or in theories of contact-induced transfer (Meyerhoff 2009).<sup>15</sup> Alternatively, these innovative quotations might have arisen due to independent but parallel developments in different languages. If this was the case, we would need to ask whether we can establish any typological tendencies that motivate these autonomous developments.

In the preceding paragraphs I have argued that many innovative quotative constructions in the English language contain material relating to two semantic-pragmatic fields, namely hedging and intensification. Let us now continue this line of enquiry and investigate the lexical sources for quotative constructions from a cross-linguistic perspective. Can we postulate any generalizations as regards the source constructions for quotative newcomer variants?

In the following, I discuss the results of a cross-linguistic survey conducted by Buchstaller and Van Alphen (2012) that explored the key semantic bases for new ways of reporting speech, thought and sound effects. Note that the objective of this survey was not to provide a complete and exhaustive inventory of innovative quotatives. Rather, we sought to illustrate general, cross-linguistic trends in the recruitment of semantic-pragmatic sources as innovative quotative constructions. We further aimed to demonstrate the typological spread of these constructions across related and unrelated languages. A closer look at Table 1.2 reveals that there are indeed general cross-linguistic tendencies as regards the origins of innovative quotative variants. ‘The lexical elements that have recently taken on ( . . . ) quotative function largely derive from a limited number of sources’ (Buchstaller and Van Alphen 2012: xiii). In what follows, I will briefly discuss these semantic-pragmatic bases for the development of quotatives, focusing on the cross-linguistic trends that might have motivated their recruitment into the pool of speech and thought introducers.

The source of the vast majority of new quotatives – not only in the Indo-European language family but also in a range of typologically unrelated languages – are lexical items that denote comparison, similarity or approximation. Examples (15a–c) illustrate quotations of this kind in Scottish English, Hebrew and Japanese.

**Table 1.2** New<sup>16</sup> quotatives and their semantic sources (from Buchstaller and Van Alphen 2012: xiv)<sup>17</sup>

- 
- |      |  |
|------|--|
| i.   | <i>Comparative (similarity/approximation):</i><br>Afrikaans <i>soos</i> ‘so+as’, Czech <i>jako</i> ( <i>že</i> ) ‘as’, Buang ( <i>na</i> ) <i>be</i> ‘like’, Dutch <i>van</i> ‘like’, English <i>like</i> , Estonian <i>nagu</i> ‘like’, Finnish <i>niinku</i> ( <i>niin kuin</i> ) ‘as if’, <i>ihan et</i> ‘like’, French <i>comme</i> ‘like’, <i>genre</i> ‘kind (of)’, <i>style</i> ‘style’, Frisian <i>fân</i> ‘like’, Greek <i>tipou</i> ‘type’, Hebrew <i>ke’ilu</i> ‘as if’, <i>kaze</i> ‘like+this’, Italian <i>tipo</i> ‘type’, <i>como</i> ‘like’, <i>stile</i> ‘style’, <i>genere</i> ‘kind’, Japanese <i>mitai-na</i> ‘like’, Croatian <i>kao</i> ‘like’, <i>tipa</i> ‘type’, Swedish <i>typ</i> ‘type’, <i>liksom</i> ‘like+as’, Norwegian <i>typ</i> ‘type’, <i>liksom</i> ‘like+as’, Russian <i>tipa</i> ‘type’, Polish <i>w tipu</i> ‘type’, Portuguese <i>tipo</i> ‘type’, Brazilian Portuguese <i>tipo+assim</i> ‘type+so’, Spanish <i>como</i> ‘like, as’, Thai <i>bœ:p</i> ‘like’. |
| ii.  | <i>Demonstrative deictic:</i><br>Afrikaans <i>soos</i> ‘so+as’, Czech <i>na to</i> ‘on this’, Danish <i>sådan, sån</i> ‘such+like+this’, Dutch <i>zo</i> ‘so’, London English <i>this/here is NP</i> , Bequia Creole English <i>here NP</i> , Finnish <i>siihen et(tä)</i> ‘to-that’, German <i>so</i> ‘so’, Hebrew <i>kaze</i> ‘like+this’, Croatian <i>ono</i> ‘that’, <i>ono kao</i> ‘that+like’, Polish <i>na to</i> ‘on this’, (Brazilian) Portuguese ( <i>tipo+</i> ) <i>assim</i> ‘(type+) so’, Russian <i>takoj</i> ‘such+like+this/that’, Spanish <i>así</i> ‘so’, Norwegian <i>sånn</i> ‘such+like+this/that’, Swedish <i>såhär (sär)</i> ‘such+like+this/that’, French <i>NP est là</i> X. ‘NP is there’.   |
| iii. | <i>Quantifiers:</i><br>Dutch <i>helemaal</i> ‘all’, English <i>all</i> , Estonian <i>täiega</i> ‘totally’, Finnish <i>vaa(n)</i> ‘just’, Norwegian/Danish/Icelandic <i>bara</i> ‘just, only’, Swedish <i>ba(ra)</i> ‘just, only’.  |
| iv.  | <i>Generic verbs of motion and action:</i><br>English <i>go</i> , Dutch <i>komen</i> ‘to come’, Swedish <i>komma</i> ‘to come’, Greek <i>kano</i> ‘do’, Puerto Rican Spanish <i>hacer</i> ‘do, make’.  |
-

- (15) a I'm **like** 'No that's a stick' (Scottish English, Macaulay 2001: 9)  
 b Hu pitóm ómer li **kazé** 'eh . . . titxatní ítí '?' (Hebrew: Maschler 2001)  
 [He suddenly says to me **like** 'eh . . . will you marry me?']  
 c Demo, Hiroshi-wa 'Ore-ni-wa kankei-nai' **mitai-na**.  
 [But Hiroshi was **like**, 'That's not my business'.] (Japanese: Oshima p.c.)

The recruitment of lexical material with comparative-approximative semantics into the quotative frame is motivated by the fact that any attempt to reproduce other speakers' words, thoughts or mimetic action is unavoidably compromised by the reporters' accent, style, prosody (and, importantly, memory, see Chapter 2; Clark and Gerrig 1990; Macaulay 1987). And so, every time we try to quote someone else (or indeed ourselves), the resulting report is inevitably an approximative rendition of the original. Indeed, our inability to faithfully reproduce an original speech act is even more apparent when we try to imitate non-linguistic features, such as gestures, sounds, body stances and facial expressions. It might thus not come as a surprise that reporters strategically recruit lexical material with comparative/similative semantics (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998) in order to highlight the approximative value of the quotation and acknowledge their own limitations. What this effectively means is that the use of lexical material with comparative/similative semantics allows speakers to shield themselves from potential criticism as regards the inexact reproduction of original speech or mimesis. This hedging effect is explicitly recognized in Tannen's (1986) notion of 'constructed dialogue'. In a similar vein, it has been reported that the hedging function of approximative/comparative quotative frames is especially useful for the reporting of stance, feelings or attitudes, opinions or point of view (see also Buchstaller 2011; Jones and Schieffelin 2009; Romaine and Lange 1991; Van Alphen 2006, 2008).

The semantic-pragmatic link between markers of comparison, similarity/approximation and quotation is supported by a wealth of cross-linguistic evidence (see also Buchstaller 2004; Meyerhoff 2002; Schourup 1982a/b). Furthermore, the recruitment of items with similative or comparative semantics for speech, thought and mimesis reporting, while relatively new in a range of languages including English (see Table 1.2), is not without historical precedent. Reported historical cases are Sanskrit *iti* 'thus' (Hock 1982) and Old Georgian (*rame*)*tu/vitarmed* (which both mean 'thus', see Güldemann 2008: 321; Hewitt 1985: 15–17). In the same vein, Schourup (1982a, 32) mentions Sierra Miwok, Lahu and Raluana, in which lexemes with comparative-similative semantics function as quotative markers.

The second major source for innovative quotatives in Table 1.2 are lexical items with demonstrative or deictic function (see examples in 16).

- (16) a Und er **so** 'Joa ich wollt mal gucken ob ihr Probleme habt' (German, Golato 2000: 43)  
 [and he **thus/like** 'yeah I wanted to see whether you have any problems']  
 b Mä vaan **siihen** että 'buhuu' (Finnish, Saara Huhmarniemi/Anders Holmberg, p.c.)  
 [I just to-that that 'boohoo']

The recruitment of deictic lexemes into quotative constructions is not surprising if we consider the line of research that regards quotations as ‘demonstrations’ of an original mimetic act. Clark and Gerrig (1990: 802) have famously proposed that quotations are demonstrations which enable the ‘*hearer* to *SEE for himself* what it is, that is to say, in a way, [the person quoting] shows this content’ (see also Fox 2012). Wierzbicka (1974: 282) provides a similar motivation by likening narratives with performed quotation to a piece of theatre: deictic pointers focus the hearer’s attention on the performed voices and allow the performative aspects of the enactment to take centre stage. And so, by using lexical material with deictic semantics, reporting speakers can refer away from themselves, moving entirely into the background and simply pointing to the actors (or their speech acts) within the space of the reported narrative (I am indebted to Ingrid van Alphen for this observation).

Note that, except for Finnish, Estonian and Hebrew, all innovative deictic quotatives from Table 1.2 stem from languages within the Indo-European language family. However, the use of deictic quotatives has been previously reported for other, typologically unrelated languages, such as Shona, Plains Cree and Bengali (see Blain and Déchaine 2007; Güldemann 2002; van der Wurff 1996: 270). But since the quotative forms have not been flagged up as new in these languages, we have not included them into Table 1.2.

The third source for new quotative variants are elements with quantificational semantics. What these lexemes have in common is that they move the constituent over which they scope up or down an imaginary scale (see Buchstaller and Traugott 2006). Many quantificational lexemes in our cross-linguistic survey move their constituent to the extreme end of the scale, scaling either to a ‘maximum’ (such as English *all*, Estonian *täiega* ‘totally’) or to a minimum (as in Norwegian *bara* ‘just’, English *just*, see Buchstaller and Van Alphen 2012). This finding is supported by Güldemann (2008: 362) who, based on a large-scale investigation of lexical sources for quotation in African languages, suggests that semantic opposites might be recruited for quotation because of their potential foregrounding function. Note, however, that some other lexical sources, such as *like*, *kinda*, seem to be situated somewhere in the middle of the quantificational scale.

In Buchstaller and Van Alphen (2012) we have suggested that the use of quantifiers in quotative constructions might also be motivated by the fact that speakers tend to express epistemic stances and attitudinal positions towards the quoted material. For example, speakers might choose to use elements with boosting, high-scaling function in order to upgrade the evidential value of the report, portraying themselves as reporting ‘first-hand’ information (Clift 2006; Golato 2012). Such strategies might also be useful for speakers who want to express the fact that they are fully committed to the accuracy or the appropriateness of the quotation, or that they are emotionally involved (often superimposing evaluative features, see Labov’s 1972 concept of internal evaluation. Consider also Bucholtz 2004; Spronck 2012; Vincent and Perris 1999). On the other hand, the use of downtoners allows speakers to show minimal commitment to the form or indeed to the occurrence of the quote (see Maschler’s 2002 discussion of the *ke ilu* generation; Lucy 1993).



Our typological survey has revealed a fourth group of source lexemes that have recently developed into quotation introduction strategies, namely generic verbs (including *to do* and *to make*). Zuckermann (2006) reports on a colloquial Hebrew quotative construction which is based on the verb *asot* ('do'). Similarly, Güldemann (2008: 310) mentions quotation introduction in Pastaza Quechua via *rana* 'do, make' and in Biron via *ye* 'do'. Above, I proposed that the copula function of *be* and *go* has given rise to their recruitment in the quotative frame. The advantage of such an analysis is that it allows us to integrate the occurrence of structures containing *be like* and *go* into a construction that captures the large majority of innovative quotatives in the English language (NOUN PHRASE + COPULA + (DISCOURSE MARKER) + QUOTE). The cross-linguistic evidence provided in Table 1.2 now gives further weight to this hypothesis, since groups (iii) and (iv) include both generic verbs (a group into which copula verbs can be subsumed) as well as lexemes that function as discourse markers.

Note that the occurrence of generic verbs in routinized constructions is a contentious issue in the literature. On the one hand, Goldberg (2006) hesitates to impose implausible verb senses onto lexemes in constructions that develop new meanings. Similarly, Güldemann (2001, 2008) suggests that a meaning like 'do' may actually be a descriptive confession that a monosemous account is impossible because of the extreme semantic-functional versatility of the item. On the other hand, the use of generic verbs in quotative constructions can be motivated via a number of well-known metaphors. Sweetser (1987) points out that the lexical fields of physical motion, action, location and of mental states and speech acts are metaphorically connected. Indeed, the recruitment of verbs of motion taps into a range of metaphors which conceptualize the speaker as the deictic centre and the quoted vocalization as being projected outward and forward (see Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Romaine and Lange 1991: 266). It thus seems surprising that the grammaticalization of motion verbs into quotative constructions is such a rare development. Whereas Dutch speakers can use *komen* 'to come', the only non-Indo-European language in which a motion verb has been attested as being used in quotative constructions is Dongala *án* 'go, become' (see Armbruster 1960).<sup>18</sup> What this effectively means is that there might be two underlying motivations for the recruitment of *go* into the quotative system: its use as a copula verb as well as its movement semantics. In Chapter 2, I will consider the plausibility of these two routes of development in more detail.

Buchstaller and Van Alphen (2012) propose a metaphor that motivates the choice of generic action verbs (such as *to do* and *to make*) as sources for quotative constructions: conversation can be 'work', i.e. an interactional achievement that has to be accomplished and maintained. Support for this hypothesis can be found predominantly in the literature on language and gender, which has pointed out the vast amounts of conversational work women do (Fishman 1983; Ochs and Taylor 1996 inter alia). We can thus conceptualize the reproduction of speech acts as 'doing' reporting, and hence as a conversational task the speaker is performing. At the same time, the use of equative lexemes in quotative constructions can be motivated by a pervasive metonymical relationship between what we say and who we are. Indeed, the very concept of personhood in rhetoric is closely tied to the equation of a speaker with their speech acts. As pointed out by Perlman (1986: 4),

‘persona is the Latin word for the masks used in the Greek drama. It meant the actor was heard and his identity recognized by others through the sounds that issued from the open mask mouth’ (consider also the discussion above, where I consider the role of quotation as a performative element in narration).

In sum, the typology of source constructions for novel quotative variants proposed by Ingrid Van Alphen and myself (2012) suggests that the lexemes that have recently been recruited into the quotative construction in the English language have parallels in a range of related and unrelated languages. In fact, there are clear cross-linguistic trends as regards the recruitment of lexical source material for innovative quotative variants. What this effectively means is that the expansion in the English quotative system is not an isolated development but forms part of a set of larger, cross-linguistic tendencies giving rise to parallel developments in different languages. This finding should not strike us as surprising since ‘grammaticalisation is going on in all language at all times ( . . . ) across languages, lexemes with similar meanings enter into the process and give rise to ( . . . ) [constructions] that have very similar meanings’ (Bybee 2010: 107).<sup>19</sup>

Importantly, the taxonomy of innovative quotative forms proposed here and in Buchstaller and Van Alphen (2012) is supported by research on the semantic roots of older quotatives in a number of language families (Güldemann 2008). In fact, none of the recent developments depicted in Table 1.2 are particularly surprising if we check them against the cross-linguistically attested sources of quotative constructions. Hence, the development of innovative quotatives fits into the larger picture, following general trends for the creation of quotative constructions out of similar semantic/pragmatic sources. Overall, the findings presented here suggest that quotation is a highly productive linguistic domain encompassing a number of constructions that are constantly expanding their remit by recruiting elements according to larger, semantically motivated cross-linguistic trends.

More generally, the above discussion has disproved a pervasive stereotype, namely that the prototypical quotative frame consists of a speaker plus speech verb. Indeed, Güldemann’s (2008) large overview of quotative structures in African languages has revealed that elements that are used in quotative constructions originate far less frequently in speech verbs than is commonly assumed: ‘The overall picture is quite unequivocal for the sample: The ratio of speech verbs vs. other items regarding their recruitment for regular non-lexical function in QIs (quotative indexes) and beyond is almost 1:5’ (2008: 372).

The wealth of options speakers have at their disposition to encode speech, thought and mimesis calls for an encompassing definition of what we actually mean by quotation. And so, Chapter 2 will consider the phenomenon ‘quotation’ taking on board structural, typological, cognitive and sociolinguistic perspectives.

## Notes

- 1 Note that the fact that these non-canonical forms of reporting have been pointed out in the literature in the last few decades does not preclude the possibility that they might

have been around long before anyone ever noticed and mentioned their existence, see Buchstaller and Traugott (2006), Güldemann (2008), Zwicky (2005).

- 2 I would like to thank Miriam Meyerhoff for pointing out that ‘*The New Yorker* has always had trouble with how to represent it [*like*, IB] orthographically and still (in 2012) uses commas, thus ‘and I thought, like, “Wow . . .”’ or ‘He said, like, “No . . .”’
- 3 The observant reader might wonder whether *like* in its earliest attestations might have co-occurred with other verba dicendi, such as *think like* in the example from the OED. From what we know of its history, this does not seem to be the case. Chapter 4 will investigate the diachronic development of the variant in more detail.
- 4 ‘The Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language (COLT) . . . was collected in 1993 and consists of the spoken language of 13- to 17-year-old teenagers from different boroughs of London. The . . . corpus is a constituent of the British National Corpus’ (University of Bergen, <http://www.hit.uib.no/colt>).
- 5 What we do encounter from time to time, however, is speakers themselves clarifying the epistemic status of their utterance. The example below is a case in point:

(British English, Newcastle)

- A: I deliberately chased this poor fat whale around the yard and I chased her onto the mud and halved her when she was on the mud and I had to go to the head teacher’s office.
- C: How did they punish you?
- A: She was just like ‘Why have you done this? You could get suspended for this’ I was like ‘Suspend me? I dare you, I dare you to suspend us’ and she was like ‘I wouldn’t dare’
- B: Did she?
- A: That never happened, I was really apologetic and crying and she let us off.

- 6 Butters sees imitative *go* as the developmentally primary, narrower function: ‘The imitative *go*, present in the language for centuries, would seem in a more general way the most likely candidate for the source of the semantic extension ( . . . ) it is actually just a small movement from this specialized use to the broader one’ (1980: 307). Güldemann (2001), while agreeing on the diachronic scenario traced by Butters, reverses its interpretation. He claims that while *go* originated as a mimesis marker, its use as a quotative of direct discourse is the more specialized function.
- 7 Butters (1980) refers to the nursery rhyme ‘This little piggy’, which finishes as follows: *and this little piggy went ‘Wee! Wee! Wee!’ all the way home* in the version published in *The Famous Tommy Thumb’s Little Story-Book* in London about 1760 (Opie and Opie 1964).
- 8 I am grateful to Matthew O. Grenby for pointing out that most ‘respectable’ children’s authors of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century would have avoided using *go* as a quotative verb for animals, both because of the anthropomorphism and the lack of grammatical rigour implied in the lexical choice. ‘Although children’s animals stories were common in the 18th century (following the fable tradition), there was anxiety that children would be led into falsehoods, e.g. that animals were like humans, could talk, etc. Authors and commentators were worried in case this bred up children in irrationality or gave them the idea that the divine hierarchy was not quite so rigid (God at the top, then humans, then animals)’ (Grenby, p.c.). He thus suspects that ‘animals going *woof*, *miaow*, *oink*, etc. would be something one finds in nursery rhymes, chapbooks, etc. – not the respectable end of children’s literature. ( . . . ) Obviously the

- most famous example will be [the nursery rhyme] ‘I bought me a cat’, with its *com goes moo, moo, duck goes quack, quack*, etc.’. This rhyme can be found in Aaron Copeland’s 1950 ‘Old American Songs’, so it may be American.
- 9 Wolfson (1978) argues that the degree to which a story can be said to be performed depends both on the number of performance features it contains as well as on the amount that each performance feature is used. The list of features she gives are similar to those found routinely in actual theatrical performance, namely (i) direct speech, (ii) asides, (iii) repetition, (iv) expressive sounds, (v) sound effects and (vi) motions and gestures.
  - 10 I follow the convention in the construction grammar literature to indicate schematic positions via small caps (see for example Bybee 2010). Schematic positions are those slots which are not lexically specific and which can be filled with a category of lexically defined items, such as verbs of reporting.
  - 11 See also Moore (2011: 54), who argues that ‘The quotative use of *say*-clauses . . . is an example of grammaticalisation of constructions’. Moore suggests that in the process of constructionalization, quotative clauses lose ideational meaning and acquire more textual meaning (see Traugott and König 1991). They ‘operate primarily as markers, ( . . . ) act[ing] in an auxiliary fashion rather than as the central action of the sentence . . . [where they] serve ( . . . ) no function other than as a marker of the onset of speech’ (Moore 2011: 53–54).
  - 12 As Haddican et al. (2012: 323) point out, quotative constructions, such as *be like/all*, show different syntactic behaviour to canonical quotative frames in that they hardly ever occur in the progressive *The cat is going ‘meow’*, or as participial adjuncts *And he was standing there thinking ‘Ooh not again girls’*: ‘The near categorical absence of *be like* in these environments suggests an important limit on extent to which . . . [this form has] come to be reanalyzed as a quotative on a par with accomplishment verbs like *say* and *go* etc.’. Indeed, as the authors suggest, an increase of the innovative quotative constructions in these syntactic contexts would be a clear sign of their further grammaticalization.
  - 13 Copula verbs have been defined as verbs ‘of incomplete predication, i.e. a verb that requires a complement’ (Visser 1963: 189). Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 263–264) list as English copula verbs the following: verbs with depictive predicative complements (current copulas), namely *feel, continue, appear, look, keep, seem, smell, remain, sound, stay, prove* and *taste*, as well as verbs with resultative predicative complements (resulting copulas), which are *become, grow, come, turn, fall, get* and *go*. Most of these verbs are attested in the quotative frame, if only very infrequently. Similarly, Güldemann (2008: 306) reports that in Bedauey, *an*, which is apparently identical with one of several equational verb stems, can occur in quotative constructions.
  - 14 Some of these particles can have both hedging and intensifying force, such as *just* (see Erman 1996).
  - 15 I would like to thank William van der Wurff for this idea.
  - 16 The list presented here was collated on the basis of reports in the literature as well as discussions with colleagues and informants of the languages represented. Thus, the choice to include certain quotative forms into the ‘innovative’ list is based on our informants’ (and our) perceptions that the forms are ‘new’. In later chapters, I will argue that we are not always very good judges when it comes to estimating the time depth of linguistic forms. This means that it is very well possible that some of the forms included in Table 1.2 date much further back than we or our informants thought. Given that my aim here is to collate the semantic sources of non-canonical quotative forms which

have been neglected in the literature and/or which are perceived by the speakers of the respective language as only having arisen recently, this potential source of inaccuracy does not invalidate my argument.

- 17 As we pointed out in Buchstaller and Van Alphen (2012: xiv), quotative markers can obviously collocate, resulting in constructions such as *He went like this 'Quote'*, which combines a motion verb, a marker of similarity as well as a deictic marker. At the same time, one item can combine several semantic traits, such as Hebrew *kaze* 'like this', which combines the features deixis as well as similarity.
- 18 *Än* is not a new quotative, hence it is not included in Table 1.2.
- 19 I am grateful to Björn Wiemer (p.c.) for raising the question of where to draw the line between verbs that we recognize as having quote introductory function, serving as conventionalized devices for direct speech and those that do not (yet). To this question we have answered that paralinguistic verbs (such as *smile*, *nod*, see Ware 1993: 169), most performance verbs (such as *throw*, *put*, etc.) and many other types of verbs can be recruited to introduce quotation – and we do indeed find isolated cases of such usage in the literature and in our spoken data. This is not surprising given the existence of a number of cross-linguistically viable and synchronically productive constructions which can recruit new lexical material into the verbal slot. The big question, a familiar one in construction grammar, is the following: How do we delimit the discussion? What is a new conventionalizing form that needs to be taken account of and what are just cases of creative language use where speakers apply a productive construction to other verbs (see Goldberg 1995)? Our answer to this conundrum is that Ingrid van Alphen and myself have decided to consider only types/groups of verbs in the typology in Table 1.2 that occur frequently enough in the English language and in typologically unrelated languages that we can assume that their use is not just a creative one-off but that they are actually conventionalizing, cross-linguistically sustained trends. We fully accept that it is impossible to make a sharp distinction between conventionalising language trends and creative language use.

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