SHE SAY, SHE GO, SHE BE LIKE: VERBS OF QUOTATION OVER TIME IN AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH

PATRICIA CUKOR-AVILA

University of North Texas

Sɪɴᴄᴇ ᴛʜᴇ ᴇᴀʀʟʏ 1980s, when Ronald Butters published his initial observations about the use of *go* 'say' by speakers born after 1955 to introduce direct speech in narratives (Butters 1980) and subsequent observations about the use of *be like* in narratives to quote "unuttered thoughts" (Butters 1982), there has been a steady stream of research investigating the ways speakers re-create the speech and thoughts of themselves and others, both in narrative discourse and in free conversation.[1] This research, outlined in the appendix, has come from varying data sets (some with examples of *be like* only, others with data from the full range of quotative forms), has been gathered with varying methodologies, has been analyzed in varying ways, and, not surprisingly, has resulted in different conclusions about the effects that gender, grammatical person, and discourse context have on quotative use across generations of speakers. There is a consensus in the research listed in the appendix, however, that *go* and *be like* are used more often by teenagers and young adults, while *say* occurs more frequently in data from speakers born before the 1950s.[2] In addition, *be like* has been shown to occur primarily in narrative contexts in American English (Tannen 1986; Blyth, Becktenwald, and Wang 1990; Ferrara and Bell 1995; Dailey-O'Cain 2000; Singler 2001) and Canadian and British English (Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999), and recently has been shown to have a Swedish equivalent, *ba*, that occurs in the narratives of preadolescents and adolescents (Eriksson 1995), and a German equivalent, *und ich so/und er so*, that marks climactic events in the stories of college-aged speakers (Golato 2000).

Research on the origins of quotative *be like* has suggested that it developed (or grammaticalized) from "focuser *like*," as in *We watched this John Wayne movie that was like really bad* (Underhill 1988; Romaine and Lange 1991; Eriksson 1995; Ferrara and Bell 1995; Buchstaller 2001).[3] However, what has not been adequately addressed in the literature is the demographic and racial diffusion of this new quotative form. As Ferrara and Bell (1995, 277) point out, the typical model of language diffusion involves

language spread from centers of influence, typically urban, what Trudgill (1974, 1986) and Bailey et al. (1993) refer to as "hierarchical diffusion." Demographic information from the most prolific *be like* users in Ferrara and Bell's study reveals that all but one speaker come from major metropolitan areas or their suburbs—use of *be like* by rural informants in their corpora was rare, less than 3%. Thus, they suggest that the use of quotative *be like* is an urban phenomenon that is slowly spreading to rural areas. However, information on quotative use in rural vernaculars is sparse since all of the existing research on these forms includes few if any rural speakers in the data sets; in fact, the majority of these data come from urban middle- and upper-middle-class whites.

Two recent studies, however, begin to address the ethnic diversity gap in the literature on quotatives. Ferrara and Bell (1995) include African Americans and Hispanics living in Texas, who comprise 6.5% and 14.0% of the data, respectively, from their Corpus Two collected in 1992. They report that both African American and Hispanic females and males are participating in the spread of *be like* (277); however, they do not provide details about use by grammatical person or discourse context or the distribution of *be like* within the quotative paradigm. Research by Sánchez and Charity (1999) on quotative use in a predominantly African American neighborhood in Philadelphia suggests that *be like* has become the most frequent quotative for Philadelphia African American Vernacular English (AAVE) speakers under age 30, occurring almost 67% of the time, while *say*, which is the most frequent quotative for speakers over 30, occurs at a rate of just under 19%. Their data show an equal distribution of first and third person *be like* for younger speakers, and, similar to the findings in Blyth, Becktenwald, and Wang (1990), males lead in the use of this form.

The present study extends the research initiated by Sánchez and Charity (1999) through an investigation of verbs of quotation in real- and apparent-time data from African Americans and whites living in the rural community of Springville, Texas. In addition, this study is a first attempt at documenting the acquisition and spread of *be like* as a quotative form in the speech of rural African American adolescents as their social networks develop and change over a 12-year period.

THE RESEARCH SITE

The east-central Texas community of Springville has been the focus of an ongoing longitudinal ethnolinguistic study, now in its 13th year, designed to document linguistic variation and change in rural Southern speech over time (see Cukor-Avila 1995 and Cukor-Avila and Bailey 1995a for a com-

plete discussion of the history of Springville and the methodology of the Springville project). Springville is a contemporary relic of the plantation agriculture that developed during tenancy and was typical of the post–Civil War South; in fact, many of the community's approximately 150 residents either worked as tenant farmers or are their descendants. Today, although the tenant farming system is no longer operative in Springville, the organization of the community still bears its imprint: most of the land and almost all of the houses are owned by one woman, who also owns the only store in town and, until she retired in 2000, had been the postmaster for some 40 years. She maintains financial control over much of the community—many residents pay their utility bills directly to her, borrow money, and purchase items from the store on "credit," reconciling their tabs on the first of the month after she cashes their government checks.[4]

Springville has one school for prekindergarten through 10th grade. Prior to 1998, children from Springville attended high school in Attmore, a neighboring town of some 5,000 residents, about nine miles away. This fact has played an important role in the acquisition and development of vernacular features in the speech of Springville adolescents, as previous analyses have shown (see Cukor-Avila 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001; Cukor-Avila and Bailey 1995b, 1996, 2001) and as will be evident in the present analysis of the use of *be like* over time. During the school year 2000–2001 students attended grades 11 and 12 in Attmore; however, Springville School added 11th grade in fall 2001 and plans to add 12th grade in fall 2002. When the project began in 1988, there were a total of 66 students in pre-K through 8th grade in the Springville school, putting the school in danger of being closed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) because of low enrollment; however, by the 1994–95 school year the student population had doubled. This dramatic rise in students was due not to an increase in the population of Springville, which has changed little since World War II, but to an influx of transfer students, mainly from Attmore, who began attending the Springville school because it is perceived to be safer and better than the schools in their district. A new school was built in Springville in 1997 (right next to the old one), on land donated by the owner of the store, and a third building opened in the fall of 2001. Student enrollment has continued to rise, and for the 2000–2001 academic year 371 students attended school in Springville, over twice the community's total population.

The demographics of the school have changed dramatically over the past decade as well. TEA enrollment records from 1994 to 2000 show that the percentages of African American, Hispanic, and white students remained fairly stable from 1994 to 1998, but since that time the percentages of African Americans and Hispanics have steadily declined, while the percentage of whites has dramatically increased (see table 1). Even more

TABLE 1
Demographic Makeup of Springville, Texas, over Seven Years

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
African American	18.8%	17.7%	20.1%	17.3%	15.1%	13.3%	12.1%
Hispanic	49.5%	54.8%	45.0%	54.5%	54.7%	43.6%	41.8%
White	31.7%	27.4%	34.9%	28.2%	30.2%	43.2%	46.2%
Economically disadvantaged	91.1%	93.5%	89.3%	87.2%	86.5%	78.8%	76.2%

significant is the decline in the percentage of students identified as "economically disadvantaged," from a high of 93.5% in 1995, right about the time of the first wave of transfer students, to 76.2% in 2000. These changes in the enrollment and demographic makeup of the Springville school will surely have an effect on the rural vernacular of the children of Springville, who no longer will have to wait until high school to develop their urban speech networks.

METHODS

In order to investigate the range and distribution of verbs of quotation in Springville, every passage of direct speech (both constructed dialogues and inner thoughts) was extracted from conversational recordings with 14 African American residents born between 1907 and 1982. The recordings represent a variety of interview contexts: individual, peer group, site studies, community field-worker, and diary studies (see Cukor-Avila and Bailey 1995a for a description and in-depth analysis of site studies). The community field-worker and diary studies are a set of recordings done in 1996, 1998, and 1999 by a teenage girl, Brandy, born in 1982.[5] In 1996 she was given a tape recorder and tapes so she could record her family and friends, similar to the kinds of recordings that the field-workers had been doing in the community over the years. At first she used the tape recorder like a talking diary (hence the term "diary studies"), recording a series of tapes on which she talked about her daily activities and gossip among her friends. Later on she began to record herself with her brother and her peers—these are the series of community field-worker recordings done in 1998 and 1999.

Twelve of the 14 informants included in the present study were recorded over time, and all but 1 was recorded multiple times in several of the contexts mentioned above. Additional quotative data from three White

English Vernacular (WEV)–speaking members of the community representing three generations were also analyzed for comparative purposes. The following analysis comes from 3,202 quotative forms (1,100 from pre-World War II speakers, and 2,103 from post–Wold War II speakers). These forms were categorized as follows: *say/said, be like, go*, zero, and *other*. The following are examples of each of the forms:

1. *say/said*: 'Cause HE TOLD ME, he SAY, "LaShonda." I SAID, "Huh?" He SAID, "Can I please listen to your Walkman?" I SAID, "What'd you say?" Ø "Can I please listen to your Walkman?" I SAY, "A. C. did you say please?" He SAY, "Yeah I said please." I SAY, "Here you go buddy." I SAID, "You can keep it all day." I was surprised at A. C. [LaShonda, 1997]

2. *be like*: 'Cause when I met him I say, "What?" I WAS LIKE, "What's your name?" He said, "Pookadu." An' I WAS LIKE, "Pookadu?" An' he say, "Yeah." An' I WAS LIKE, "Pookadu." An' he WAS LIKE, "Yeah." An' I WAS LIKE, "What is your real name?" He say, "I don't like to tell nobody my real name." An' I WAS LIKE, "Why?" An' he say, "'Cause it's ugly." I was with him the other day an' he finally told me. I said, "That is not ugly." But he would rather people call him Pookadu. An' all that—an' I, I be spellin' it wrong. [Sheila, 1998]

3. *go*: An' I came home from work one day an' there's his collar open with his tag layin' there an' my dog is gone. An' I'M GOIN', "God! I hope they figure out he's deaf because if you turn him loose you can't call him." [Pam, 1996]

4. Zero: I wen' back to the house she say, "You think you grown?" Ø "No ma'am." Ø "Well, if, if you grown you gonna either go to school or get out on your own." Ø "I'd rather get out on my own. I don' wanna go to school no more." So she said, "Yeah you goin' to school. I done been outta . . ." See in those days you had to buy books. Ø "I done spent all that money for your books." Say, "You're goin' to school." [Mary, 1988]

5. Other verbs: I had dropped 'em all over the porch an' I say, uh Sassy she was jus' eatin' 'em. She jus', but I don' think she jus' started goin' crazy. Anthony TALKIN' ABOUT, "Sassy!" Anthony jus' kep' HOLLERIN', "Get outta the sprinkler!" an' all that. Man she started chasin' 'em around the house. [Brandy, 1994]

QUOTATIVE *GO* IN SPRINGVILLE

In his argument against the divergence hypothesis (Bailey 1987; Bailey and Maynor 1989), Butters (1989) suggests that several phonological and grammatical features are converging in black and white speech—one of the features discussed is *go* 'say'. He notes that quotative *go* is "firmly entrenched" (148) not only in the speech of white middle-class Americans under 50, but also in the speech of working-class adolescents in Reading,

England (Cheshire 1982). He hypothesizes that quotative *go* has spread from white vernacular to African American vernacular speech and finds it odd that none of the earlier studies that describe AAVE syntax (Labov et al. 1968; Labov 1972; Wolfram and Fasold 1974) mentions the use of quotative *go*. Quotative *go* was not overlooked, however, as Labov (1972, 372) states: "In BEV, objects that do not speak but that make noises are not said *to go X* but *to say X*. In Boot's narrative 1, *the rock say shhh!* and in 3 *the girl says powww!* whereas in White vernacular, *people go powww!* with their fists." Unfortunately, Butters does not provide quantitative evidence of quotative *go* to support his convergence hypothesis; he cites only two examples of quotative *go* from African Americans recorded in the early 1970s, one adolescent male and one female (age unspecified).

An unpublished analysis of quotative *go* from the Springville data in the fourth year of the project (Bailey and Cukor-Avila 1991) suggests that it could not be considered a convergent feature, since at that time it had not spread from white to African American vernacular speech. Data from recordings of two close friends—Vanessa, who is African American, and Lucy, who is white—show that Vanessa never uses quotative *go*, while Lucy does. Example (6) is from these data:

6. Vanessa: I went straight. An' it was gettin' muddier an' muddier! I almos' got stuck. I thought, "Ohhh, Lor', don' let me get stuck here!"
    Lucy: I have done that before, I have done that before.
    V: Girl I was prayin' 'cause it had . . .
    L: An' that road don't never stop. It finally stops like way at the end an' like there ain't nothin' but woods at . . .
    V: I, figured that out. I SAID, "This is where I s'pose been turn." I SAID, "Lor', please!" I was at the wrong place, the wrong time too. I SAID, "Please don' let me get stuck!"
    L: I know it. I, I've had that feeling.
    V: Girl it was gettin' muddier an' muddier right there at the en'.
    L: But the firs' time. See whenever I firs' found that road I was in Leela's car. It was before me an' AJ had a car an' she had let us use her car. An' uh, me an' AJ got into a fight so I jus' took Leela's car because she left it with me. So the way I figured it was my car. So I'm gonna take it. So I took it an' went for a ride. An' that's how I found that road. An' I did the same thing you did. An' I was in Lisa's car an' I WAS GOIN', "Oh my God!" [at Vanessa's house, 12 Jan. 1991]

In this passage both women are reporting their inner thoughts (it can be safely assumed that none of the quoted passages was actually said out loud), yet they do so using different quotative forms. Ten years later, the evidence from Springville on quotative *go* is more conclusive: *go* 'say' is rare for AAVE

speakers, yet it occurs frequently in the speech of two of the WEV speakers included in the present study on quotative use (the other WEV speaker is a woman born in 1911, who, not surprisingly, does not use this form). Example (7) illustrates two examples of *go* used to introduce inner speech from Pam, a WEV speaker born in 1949, while (8) contrasts quotative use by Brandy (who is African American) and her best friend, April (who is white), both born in 1982, when each girl is reconstructing the dialogue of another person.

7. Pam: An' that's what I found out after payin' a lady forty dollars because I couldn't find the forms for IRS. An' I called 'em an' they didn't send 'em, an' they didn't send 'em. An hell we couldn't even get 'em for here. So I went an' paid the lady forty dollars to do my taxes an' then I found out uh, a couple of days after I got 'em, to call the library to check those forms jus' to Xerox.
  Field-worker: Oh yeah. Yeah.
  P: An' so I went, "Well shit!" Because I didn' know how to uh, how you defer it for five years because they don't let you so I didn't, I coulda, I knew, I had already done. All she did was type it an' put it on the forms.
  FW: Yeah right, right.
  P: I had all of the stuff all worked out, figured up. An' I was goin', "Well shit I paid her forty dollars for her typing." God! But anyway. . . . [at the Springville Store, 14 Mar. 1996]
8. April: Mama called her. She goes, "Next time you got a problem with my kids, you call me at work or you can either wait till I get home." She goes, "Next time I hear you fuss at my kids," she goes, "I'll be down at your house!" Wooo.
 An' Miss H. told us, "Yall go home an' tell your parents." So mama tried to get 'em to come. She told Austin, she goes, "Don't call 'em an' tell 'em you're comin'." She goes, "Jus' come." I guess they had got rid of 'em by then or he hid it pretty good or somethin'. I don't know what he did 'cause he didn't get caught. Mama's been tryin' forever. She's probably gonna keep tryin' till all her kids are outta this school.
  Brandy: They was jus', they was dingy lookin', they was dirty, they was lookin' bad. Tried to go back an' return them. The woman talkin' about, "I'm sorry ma'am but you can't return these." 'Cause she didn' even have a receipt or anything. Said, "These been worn more than once." Talkin' like, "It's 'cause I washed 'em." [at a restaurant, 27 June 1996]

A comparative analysis of *go* as a percentage of all verbs of quotation over time for a subset of the post–World War II speakers in the Springville corpus, shown in figure 1, strongly suggests that *go* for *say* is not (and has never been) a convergent feature, at least for these rural Texas AAVE

FIGURE 1
Go as a Percentage of All Dialogue Introducers for Springville Post-WWII Speakers
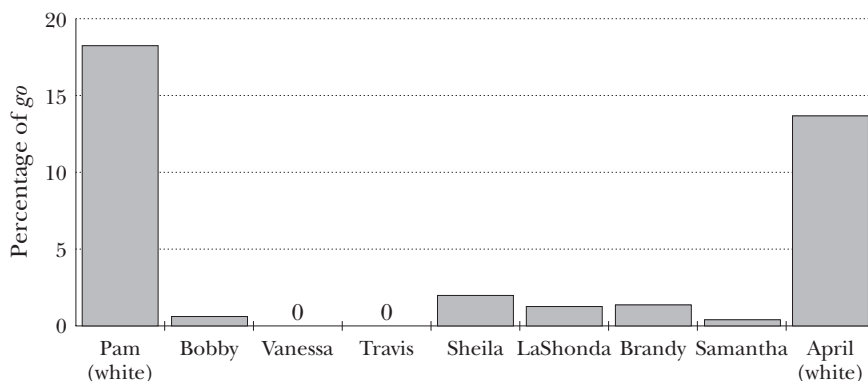
speakers. The aggregate data in figure 1, however, actually obscure the magnitude of the difference in quotative *go* use between Springville AAVE and WEV speakers. Figure 2 shows the distribution of quotatives in the speech of the three youngest informants, Brandy, Samantha, and April, all born in 1982. The data in this figure come from peer group recordings of these three close friends, often referred to as "the Three Musketeers," during 1995 and 1996, before they entered high school. As figure 2 shows, *go* is the second most frequent quotative for April (18/131), while it occurs only twice during the same time period for Brandy (2/215) and is never used by Samantha (0/44). Furthermore, as the following analysis over time shows, quotative *go* never occurs in the data for Brandy and Samantha, even

FIGURE 2
Distribution of Dialogue Introducers for Three Springville Adolescents in 1995–96
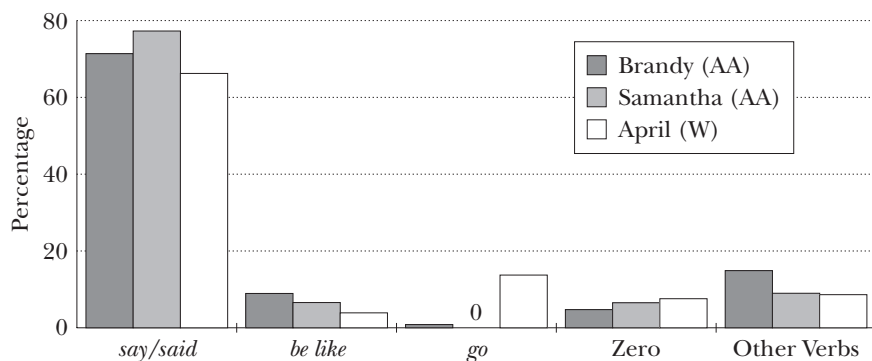
when they leave Springville School and develop new peer networks in a neighboring urban community.

QUOTATIVE USE IN SPRINGVILLE

Table 2 gives the overall distribution of quotatives for each of the 14 African American Springville informants. The data are listed in sections by generations: the first six speakers represent the post-1970 generation, the next three the post–World War II generation, the following two the pre–World War II generation, and the last three the pre–World War I generation. At first glance, the data from Springville AAVE speakers seem fairly similar to the data presented in previous quotative studies: there is a strong preference for *say* as the main verb of quotation, and only the speakers from the youngest generation are using *be like* as a quotative form.[6] The proportion of *be like* in the speech of the post-1970 generation is significantly lower than the 67% Sánchez and Charity (1999) report for the 16–22-year-olds in their study. This suggests that Ferrara and Bell's (1995) diffusion hypothesis for this feature is correct—data over time from three of the post-1970 informants, presented below, will shed additional light on this subject.

Another distinguishing aspect of the Springville data is the high percentage of zero quotatives used by both pre– and post–World War II speakers. Sánchez and Charity (1999) also report a substantial number of zero forms (approximately 16%) in their data and suggest that "the use of zero quotatives and semantically rich verbs of quotation (scream, holler, wonder, etc.) all increase with age."[7] They report that the group over 30 years of age used twice as many zero quotatives as did the group under 30;[8] however, their conclusions are somewhat premature, since the data from the oldest speakers in their study, 66 and 70 years old, are sparse, with only six quotative examples overall. Moreover, out of the five speakers in this age group, the two who produced 22% of the zero quotatives in their age group are not African American.

The Springville data suggest that age is not a factor for the use of zero quotatives; rather, zero tends to be used for dramatic effect (Mathis and Yule 1994) when re-creating the speech of others.[9] Examples (9)–(12) suggest two main discourse functions for zero quotatives when they are used by Springville speakers to introduce direct speech—these discourse functions more than likely account for the high proportion of this form across generations.

TABLE 2
Overall Distribution of Dialogue Introducers for Springville AAVE Speakers

Speaker	Born	N	say/said	be like	go	Zero	Other
Post-1970							
Brandy	1982	592	68.6%	14.7%	1.4%	6.8%	8.6%
Samantha	1982	231	61.0%	18.6%	0.4%	10.8%	9.1%
LaShonda	1981	156	66.0%	6.4%	1.3%	17.3%	9.0%
Sheila	1979	256	71.5%	10.2%	2.0%	9.0%	7.4%
Rolanda	1978	25	52.0%	12.0%	4.0%	8.0%	24.0%
Lamar	1976	86	62.8%	—	4.7%	23.3%	9.3%
Post-WWII							
Travis	1965	75	86.7%	—	—	2.7%	10.7%
Vanessa	1961	361	93.4%	—	—	3.6%	2.5%
Bobby	1949	321	75.4%	0.9%	0.6%	20.6%	2.5%
Pre-WWII							
Lois	1941	42	90.5%	—	—	7.1%	2.4%
Slim	1932	100	91.0%	—	1.0%	4.0%	4.0%
Pre-WWI							
Mary	1913	256	69.1%	—	—	26.6%	4.3%
Wallace	1913	653	76.6%	—	0.2%	17.5%	5.8%
Audrey	1907	49	83.7%	—	—	8.2%	8.2%

First, zero occurs frequently in re-created dialogues, similar to the written representation of dialogue in novels. Example (9) comes from Wallace, born in 1913.

9. I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do." She said, "What?" Ø "I'm gonna let you answer to the ol' lady." Ø "I don't wanna talk to her. I wanna talk to you." I handed M. the phone. I said, "You talk to her." She said, "Lady I'm sorry. You got the wrong, you got the wrong number." Ø "No, no this here's Wallace's house." Ø "You know you got the wrong number." She still called till M. got mad an' then M. cussed her out an' she didn' call no more.

The recordings from Wallace include numerous personal experience narratives in which he uses direct, rather than indirect quotes, to report the speech of others. Johnstone (1990, 1993) suggests that women use more direct speech than men in narrative contexts; however, this is not the case for Springville men. Both young and old Springville men frequently use direct speech in their narratives, especially Bobby, born in 1949, who is a gifted storyteller. A sample of his speech is shown in (10).

10. Well if they jus' see me walk out here, Ø "What you got?" Ø "Nothin'." Ø "O.K." Before I can get goin', somebody, Ø "Whatcha got?" That jus' people.

The second context where zero quotatives are common is where speakers are imitating or mimicking the person whose speech is reported in the constructed dialogue. Example (11), from Bobby, and (12), from LaShonda, born in 1981, are typical of how imitated speech is represented in Springville by adults, young teens, and even older speakers like Wallace.

11. It ain' never opened up. For a certain reason it never opened up. They opened it—that buildin' been over a year now an' it ain't opened up yet. But the folks sittin' on some money like that—what do I need with a fruit stand? Ø "My wife" [pause], Ø [mimics] "I'm gonna try to get somein' for my wife to do." Ø "Nuh uh! You better be gettin' somein' for you to do. She the one got burnt." It her money, you know.
12. Like when that, like when, like them little girls in school, the white girls, [mimics] Ø "Yall do not like us 'cause we are white." I say, I say, "Well I got a white auntie." [mimics] Ø "Well how can you explain that?"

Earlier research in Springville has shown that aggregate data can mask fundamental differences in the use of grammatical forms across generations of speakers as well as obscure the evidence of change over time for younger speakers (Cukor-Avila 1995, 1999). Table 2 shows that overall, Brandy, Samantha, and Sheila use *be like* more than other quotative forms besides *say*; however, these percentages are not an accurate reflection of real-time changes in the distribution of verbs of quotation in their speech. Previous analyses of habitual *be*, copula absence, verbal *-s* absence, and *had* + past in adolescent speech (Cukor-Avila 1995, 1997, 1999; Cukor-Avila and Bailey 1995b, 1996) suggest a strong correlation between the development of peer networks outside Springville and the acquisition of these vernacular features (Milroy 1987). For Brandy, this occurs during her first and second years of high school in 1996–97 and 1997–98; for Samantha, this occurs when she temporarily moves to urban Attmore in 1997 and subsequently drops out of high school; and for Sheila, this occurs when she drops out of school in 1993 and moves 15 miles away to the urban town of Wilson. Therefore, table 3 presents real-time data from Brandy, Samantha, and Sheila separated into three time periods in order to investigate whether the distribution of quotatives in their speech, specifically the use of *be like*, has changed over time. As table 3 shows, there is a steady increase in the use of *be like* over time for all three girls; moreover, as their use of *be like* increases, the occurrence of the most frequently used quotative in their

TABLE 3
Quotatives over Time for Three Springville African American Teenagers

Speaker	N	say/said	be like	go	Zero	Other
Brandy						
1995–96	215	71.2%	8.4%	0.9%	4.7%	14.9%
1997–98	188	71.8%	12.8%	1.1%	8.5%	5.9%
1999	189	62.4%	23.8%	2.1%	7.4%	4.2%
Samantha						
1995–96	44	77.3%	6.8%	0%	6.8%	9.1%
1997–98	85[a]	56.5%	17.6%	0%	11.8%	14.1%
1999	102	57.8%	24.5%	1.0%	11.8%	4.9%
Sheila						
1988–92	44	70.5%	2.3%	11.4%	11.4%	4.5%
1996–97	161	73.9%	6.8%	0%	10.6%	8.7%
1998	51	64.7%	27.5%	0%	2.0%	5.9%

a. The 1997 data for Samantha include two tokens of copula + locative, as in *Mica there, "Well I'm laughin' with yall."*

speech, *say*, decreases. This is illustrated more clearly when the data from all three girls are combined into three time periods—early, middle, and late—as in table 4, and in figures 3 and 4. In fact, over time *be like* has become the second most frequent verb of quotation in their speech, as table 4 shows.

Real-time data from two Springville adults, Vanessa and Bobby, presented in table 5, confirm the overall percentages of verbs of quotation shown for these speakers in table 2: the distribution of quotatives for them remains virtually unchanged over time. Thus, these data suggest that (1) the use of quotative *be like* in Springville is associated with young adolescents and (2) *be like* increases over time as young Springville speakers develop and maintain peer networks apart from their rural roots. However,

TABLE 4
Quotatives over Time for Three Springville African American Teenagers Combined

	N	say/said	be like	go	Zero	Other
Early	303	71.9%	7.3%	2.3%	5.9%	12.5%
Middle	434[a]	69.6%	11.5%	0.5%	9.9%	8.5%
Late	342	61.4%	24.6%	1.5%	7.9%	4.7%

a. The 1997 data for Samantha include two tokens of copula + locative, as in *Mica there, "Well I'm laughin' with yall."*

FIGURE 3
Quotative *be like* over Time for Three Springville African American Teenagers
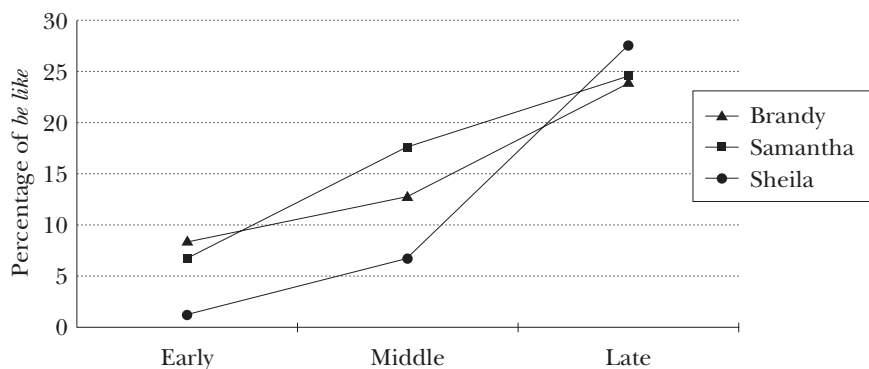

FIGURE 4
Quotative *say/said* over Time for Three Springville African American Teenagers
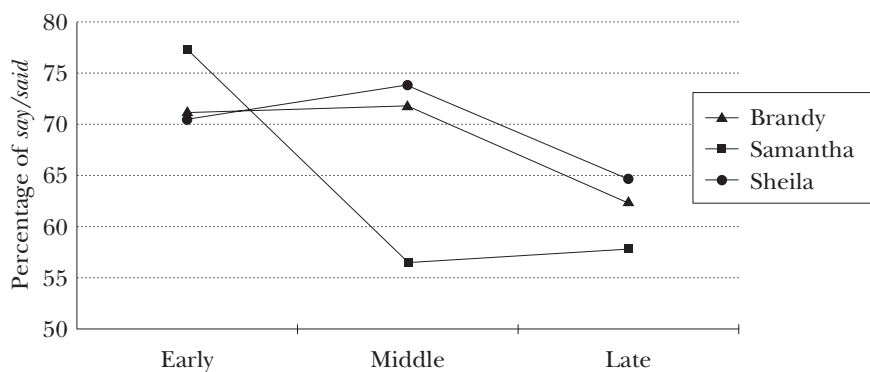

TABLE 5
Dialogue Introducers for Vanessa and Bobby over Time

	say/said	*be like*	*go*	*Zero*	*Other*
Vanessa					
1988–92	94.2%	0%	0%	3.1%	2.6%
1996–99	93.5%	0%	0%	4.1%	2.4%
Bobby					
1988–89	74.5%	2.1%	0%	17.0%	6.4%
1995	76.8%	0%	0%	21.1%	2.1%
1997	74.2%	1.5%	1.5%	21.2%	1.5%

this situation may change in the near future as more students from neighboring urban areas transfer into the Springville school, bringing their urban speech patterns with them (cf. Trudgill 1974, 1986; Bailey et al. 1993).

THE EXPANSION OF *BE LIKE* OVER TIME IN SPRINGVILLE ADOLESCENT SPEECH

While there is general consensus in the literature that *be like* first evolved in the quotative system to introduce a speaker's inner speech or unuttered thoughts (cf. Butters 1982; Blyth, Becktenwald, and Wang 1990; Romaine and Lange 1991), there are conflicting reports about the spread of this form to other grammatical and discourse contexts. Ferrara and Bell (1995) report an increase over time in the use of third person *be like* from 33% in their 1992 corpus to 47% in their 1994 corpus. They further suggest that as *be like* grammaticalizes (Traugott and Heine 1991; Hopper and Traugott 1993), it "extends into new discourse realms where construction of the thoughts, speech, or gestures of a third person are [*sic*] being reported" (Ferrara and Bell 1995, 278). In contrast, Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) report a statistically significant preference by young Canadian and British speakers for *be like* to occur in the first person and to precede quoted internal dialogue and nonlexicalized sounds (such as *whoosh* or *bloop*).[10] Many factors could contribute to the discrepancies in the results of these two studies—sample size, demographic differences, or fieldwork strategies; however, as Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) point out, methodological considerations more than likely account for the differences. In their analysis of change over time, Ferrara and Bell (1995) do not calculate *be like* as a percentage of all third person quotatives; thus, "the higher percentage of third person *be like* could have resulted from a larger amount of third person subjects in the data base" (Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999, 169). Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999), on the other hand, provide data on the entire range of quotatives in their sample and analyze the probability of the occurrence of all forms by grammatical person and discourse environment.

   In order to examine possible syntactic and semantic changes over time for quotative *be like* in Springville, the *be like* data from Brandy, Samantha, and Sheila, shown in table 4, were extracted and analyzed by grammatical and discourse context over time. In addition, a variable rule analysis using GoldVarb (Rand and Sankoff 1990) was conducted to determine the effects of grammatical person and discourse context on these data.[11] These

results are shown in tables 6–8 below. The data in table 6 suggest that over time Springville adolescents are using *be like* more often both in first and third person contexts. In other words, as their overall use of quotative *be like* increases (table 4), it increases throughout the grammatical system. Moreover, the VARBRUL analysis suggests that grammatical person has never had a significant effect on the use of *be like.* A similar pattern emerges when the data are analyzed by discourse context, as shown in table 7. The percentage of *be like* to introduce quoted dialogue and unspoken inner speech increases over time; however, in this case, the VARBRUL analysis shows that inner speech is highly favored over constructed dialogue in

TABLE 6

Effect of Grammatical Person on the Use of *be like* as a Quotative Form
over Time for Three Springville African American Teenagers

	N	*be like*	*Probability*
Early			
First person	132	10.6%	.52
Third person	168	3.6%	.49
Middle			
First person	178	15.2%	.52
Third person	248	8.9%	.49
Late			
First person	164	34.8%	.53
Third person	174	15.5%	.47

TABLE 7

Effect of Discourse Context on the Use of *be like* as a Quotative Form
over Time for Three Springville African American Teenagers

	N	*be like*	*Probability*
Early			
Dialogue	271	1.5%	.40
Inner speech	29	55.2%	.98*
Middle			
Dialogue	385	7.5%	.44
Inner speech	41	48.8%	.90*
Late			
Dialogue	302	16.7%	.42
Inner speech	36	80.0%	.93*

* Statistically significant.

TABLE 8
Effect of Grammatical Person by Discourse Context on the Use of *be like* as a
Quotative Form over Time for Three Springville African American Teenagers

	Dialogue			Inner Speech		
	N	be like	Prob.	N	be like	Prob.
Early						
First person	110	1.8%	.48	22	54.5%	.98*
Third person	161	1.2%	.38	7	57.1%	—
Middle						
First person	148	7.4%	.45	30	53.5%	.92*
Third person	237	7.6%	.46	11	36.4%	—
Late						
First person	133	18.8%	.48	31	29.9%	.93*
Third person	169	14.2%	.40	5	100.0%	—

* Statistically significant.

every time period for use of this form. The data were then analyzed for the
combined effect of grammatical person and discourse context, as shown in
table 8.[12] The only constraint on quotative *be like* that is significant over time
is first person inner speech, even though its use in this environment
declines in the late time period by almost 24%. There is a substantial
increase in the percentage of *be like* in first and third person dialogue;
however, neither of these combinations has a significant effect on the
occurrence of this quotative form.

STATUS OF QUOTATIVE *SAY* IN SPRINGVILLE
ADOLESCENT SPEECH

As Springville adolescents acquire the use of *be like*, their use of *say* as a
quotative decreases over time from 71.9% in the early period to 61.4% in
the late period (see table 4). In order to examine in more detail the
relationship between these two quotative forms, the grammatical and
discourse contexts for *say* were analyzed in the same manner as shown
above for *be like*. Tables 9–11 present the data from these analyses. The data
in table 9 reveal a slight but steady decrease over time for quotative *say* in
both first and third person contexts, while during the same time frame
maintaining a strong first person constraint on the use of this form.
Similarly, table 10 shows a decline over time in the use of *say* in both
discourse contexts; however, the fact that it is highly favored before con-
structed dialogue remains constant across all time periods. The analysis of
the effect of grammatical person by discourse context, shown in table 11,

TABLE 9
Effect of Grammatical Person on the Use of *say* as a Quotative Form
over Time for Three Springville African American Teenagers

	N	say	Probability
Early			
First person	132	77.3%	.63*
Third person	168	69.0%	.39
Middle			
First person	178	78.7%	.68*
Third person	248	62.5%	.37
Late			
First person	164	64.6%	.60*
Third person	174	60.9%	.40

* Statistically significant.

TABLE 10
Effect of Discourse Context on the Use of *say* as a Quotative Form
over Time for Three Springville African American Teenagers

	N	be like	Probability
Early			
Dialogue	271	76.4%	.56*
Inner speech	29	37.9%	.10
Middle			
Dialogue	385	72.7%	.55*
Inner speech	41	36.6%	.15
Late			
Dialogue	302	68.5%	.58*
Inner speech	36	13.9%	.07

* Statistically significant.

suggests that the first person dialogue constraint for *say* holds over time even as the use of *say* in all contexts decreases, especially in first person inner speech, where the use of *be like* is highly favored (see table 8).

DISCUSSION

The Springville AAVE quotative data, then, do not support the claim by Ferrara and Bell (1995) that the use of *be like* in third person constructed dialogue contexts is increasing over time. Rather, these data suggest a grammatical and discourse distribution for *be like* similar to that found in

Effect of Grammatical Person by Discourse Context on the Use of *say* as a
Quotative Form over Time for Three Springville African American Teenagers

| | Dialogue | | | Inner Speech | | |
	N	say	Prob.	N	say	Prob.
Early						
First person	110	84.2%	.65*	22	40.9%	.19
Third person	161	70.8%	.45	7	28.6%	—
Middle						
First person	148	87.2%	.72*	30	36.7%	.18
Third person	237	63.7%	.40	11	36.4%	—
Late						
First person	133	75.9%	.64*	31	16.1%	.10
Third person	169	62.7%	.49	5	0%	—

* Statistically significant.

previous quotative studies on American English spoken by middle-class
whites (Romaine and Lange 1991; Yule and Mathis 1992; Dailey-O'Cain
2000) and to that found for British and Canadian English speakers
(Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999, 166): *be like* is used primarily by speakers
born after 1970; it occurs more frequently in first person contexts; and it is
favored before internal dialogue and nonlexicalized sounds. The fact that
the frequency of *be like* used by young African Americans in Springville is
significantly lower than the 67% reported by Sánchez and Charity (1999)
for urban AAVE speakers in this same age group, that *be like* increases after
Springville adolescents develop urban peer networks, and that 30–45-year-
old African Americans and whites in Springville rarely use this form sup-
ports the claim by Ferrara and Bell (1995) that quotative *be like* is hierar-
chically diffusing from urban to rural speech. The Springville data also
support the quantitative results from urban AAVE speech (Sánchez and
Charity 1999), which suggest that (1) grammatical person is not a significant
factor for the use of *be like* or *say*; (2) *be like* is favored before expressions of
inner speech or thought; and (3) *say* is favored when quoting direct
speech or constructed dialogue.

In addition, the longitudinal data from Springville adolescents reveal
that as the use of *be like* increases, it is used more often in all quotative
contexts, and, more importantly, the grammatical and discourse constraints
on its occurrence remain constant. Similarly, the grammatical and dis-
course constraints for quotative *say* remain constant over time. Thus, the
data on change over time for *be like* and *say* lend strong support to the
constant-rate hypothesis (Kroch 1989, 208), which states that "although

the rate of use of grammatical options in competition will generally differ across contexts at each period in time, the rate of change will be the same across contexts." Kroch contends that favoring and disfavoring contexts play a minor role in syntactic change, since, according to the hypothesis, "disfavoring contexts acquire new forms no later than favoring ones, though at lower initial frequencies" (238). Prior to the present study, data to support the constant-rate hypothesis had come from studies of historical change in standard varieties of English, Portuguese, and French. The quotative data from Springville provide important evidence that adds a new dimension to Kroch's hypothesis, suggesting that the constant-rate effect may also hold for real-time change in vernacular varieties of speech.

Finally, the fact that the analysis of *be like* in three diverse sets of data—Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999), Sánchez and Charity (1999), and the present data from Springville—reveals no significant changes from previous quotative studies for the effects of grammatical person and discourse context suggests that other conditioning factors contribute to the increased use of this form. Data from further longitudinal studies of the kind discussed above should shed more light on this issue.

AGE GRADING, CHANGE IN PROGRESS, OR SOCIOLECTAL ADJUSTMENT?

The possibility that the use of innovative linguistic forms by adolescents is age graded is perhaps one of the most hotly debated issues in studies of language variation and change. All of the previous research on *be like* has shown that the principal users of this dialogue introducer are teenagers and young adults, with a small percentage of use documented for speakers aged 30 to 45. And with the exception of Ferrara and Bell (1995), no previous studies have documented the use of *be like* over time, which is precisely the kind of data needed to address the age-grading issue. Moreover, because the use of *be like* is subject to individual variation (Ferrara and Bell 1995, 285), it is difficult to determine to what extent this form has spread throughout the speech community. The longitudinal data from Springville African American adolescents suggest that *be like* is not age-graded; however, these data are limited, since they come from teenagers only. Thus, in order to adequately address the age-grading issue, more data will need to be collected from these same speakers as they mature into their 20s and 30s.

Recently, Labov (pers. com., 22 June 2000 and 5 Aug. 2000) described the expansion of *be like* in spontaneous speech as "one of the most striking

and dramatic linguistic changes of the past three decades, offering sociolinguists an opportunity to study rapid language change in progress on a large scale in order to address the general questions on the mechanism, the causation, and the consequences of change."[13] Yet not all sociolinguists are convinced that *be like* will survive. Guy Bailey (pers. com., Dec. 2000) has expressed skepticism that *be like* will actually remain the principal quotative form for adolescents and young adults as they get older, primarily because he feels that *be like* is a lexical, rather than a grammatical, change and that these types of lexical changes are tied to social correlates in society—to what's popular.[14] Rather than a change in progress, Bailey regards the use of *be like* as a sociolectal adjustment (Chambers 1995) by young speakers who choose to identify and want to fit in with the latest trends in society. He points to the fact that quotative *be like* is socially stigmatized by society at large, as Dailey-O'Cain's (2000) research reveals, suggesting that as speakers' social orientations and attitudes change, so will their use of stigmatized discourse phenomena. For Bailey, and probably for many others, the use of *be like* has the negative effect of making the speaker sound "like an airhead."

However, despite the negative attitudes of society toward *be like* and the people who use it, this quotative form appears to be maintaining its foothold in varieties of English around the world. In fact, *be like* is not restricted to spoken language—it has occurred in mainstream television commercials and in newspapers and magazines (Ferrara and Bell 1995), where, interestingly enough, the distinction between constructed dialogue and inner speech is maintained through punctuation. This distinction is shown in examples from the *New York Times Magazine*.

13. "I'm a Christian—I'M LIKE, how could God possibly do this to me?" he said. "My mother's always saying, 'It'll be so wonderful when you meet that beautiful Christian girl and have lots of grandchildren,' and every time she said that, I WAS LIKE, That's it: my life is going to be hell." [Jennifer Egan, "<lonely gay teen seeking same> How Jeffrey Found Friendship, Sex, Heartache—and Himself—Online," *New York Times Magazine*, 10 Dec. 2000, 110]

14. But as his online friendships deepened, the phony elements of Jeffrey's story began to oppress him: "I WAS LIKE, I can't be myself in real life, and I come on the Internet and I still can't be myself." [113]

15. Eventually the two had it out. "He's LIKE: 'You're really running this into the ground. We never met. It's not that hard to get over,'" Jeffrey recalled. "I WAS LIKE, 'It's obviously a lot harder for me than it is for you.' He's LIKE, 'I'm sorry, things change.'" [129]

16. "We'd talked for months. . . . He always told me, I have black hair and brown eyes. When I got his picture I WAS LIKE: Oh my God. He was black."

C., too seemed taken aback by what he saw. "He said, 'You look very intimidating,'" Jeffrey recalls. "He's LIKE, 'It's gonna take me a long time to put a face with the voice.'" [129]

17. Someone was talking to people who had watched me, and they WERE LIKE, She's the one with the normal hair. Which meant that it was sometimes sticking out. [Rory Evans, "Questions for Doris Kearns Goodwin: The Pundit of Potus," *New York Times Magazine,* 14 Jan. 2001, 15]

Examples (13)–(16), excerpted from an article that includes extended quotes from an interview with a teenage boy, illustrate that when the passage is considered to be a re-creation of the boy's thoughts (in small capitals), no quotation marks are used. In contrast, single quotes surround passages that are to be interpreted by readers as re-created dialogue. As these examples and example (17), from an article that reproduces an interview with a woman in her early 50s, show, punctuation conventions preceding *be like* have yet to be set. Figure 5 comes from the *Zits* comic strip that appeared in the *Washington Post* on 6 January 2001.[15] Here, the creators, Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman, have captured the "airhead" quality that older generations associate with the use of both focuser and quotative *be like* by adolescents (specifically female) and young adults.

The spread of *be like* is strikingly similar to the spread of another stigmatized form—the use of *yall* outside the South (Tillery, Wikle, and Bailey 2000), a form that most Southerners would never equate with being an "airhead." Tillery, Wikle, and Bailey suggest that the extension of *you* from the plural into the singular in Early Modern English has left the Modern English pronoun paradigm defective, mainly because it requires that one form have two functions. They hypothesize that dialects of English then developed periphrastic structures such as *you-all, you guys, youse guys,* and *you-uns* as second person plural pronouns in order to distinguish

FIGURE 5
Example of *be like* in Writing

© 2001 ZITS Partnership. Distributed by King Features Syndicate.
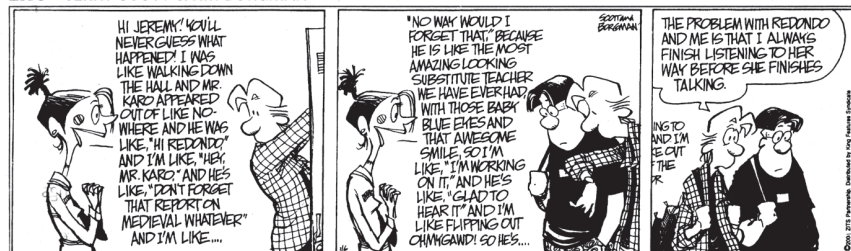
singular from plural. They further suggest that the development of the single lexeme *yall* as a second person plural was motivated by the fact that it parallels the other personal pronouns in form, which they argue is the primary motivating factor behind the increased use of *yall* by younger generations of both Southern and Northern speakers (290). A similar argument has already been made for the usefulness of quotative *go* (Schourup 1982) as a means of disambiguating indirect from quoted speech. As younger speakers replace *go* with *be like*, they will undoubtedly continue to preserve this distinction, in effect, preserving the form/function relationship in the quotative paradigm. Data from additional real-time studies of quotative use by a variety of speakers in both rural and urban settings should provide key evidence needed to piece together the many facets of the *be like* puzzle.

APPENDIX
Overview of Research from Selected Studies on Verbs of Quotation

BUTTERS (1980) observes that *go* is frequently used in place of *say* as an introducer of direct speech for speakers under age 35 (born after 1945).

SCHOURUP (1982) observes that direct quotes with *say* can be ambiguous, as with *John said, I was responsible for Lauren's failure* (without the benefit of quotation marks, a listener might not know if John or the speaker is the one responsible for Lauren's failure), and suggests that the use of *go* to introduce direct speech eliminates this ambiguity.

BUTTERS (1982) observes that in addition to the use of *go* 'say', younger speakers are using *be like* to introduce "unuttered thoughts."

TANNEN (1986) uses the term "constructed dialogue" to describe quoted speech in narratives; hence the verbs that precede are termed "dialogue introducers." Data from English include 18 conversational stories and examples from novels. Results reveal that *say* is the primary dialogue introducer for both data sets and that variation with *go* and *be like* occurs in the spoken data only.

BUTTERS (1989) observes that quotative *go* occurs in AAVE as well and offers this as evidence for convergence.

BLYTH, BECKTENWALD, AND WANG (1990) investigate the use of *be like* in ten hours of recorded speech from 20 female and 10 male speakers from New York. (No totals are given.) Data suggest that (1) *be like* is used primarily by speakers born after 1965 (they found no use of this feature by speakers born before 1952); (2) males use more *be like* than females; and (3) *be like* is rarely used outside of the first person singular.

ROMAINE AND LANGE (1991) investigate the use of *be like* in Washington, D.C., adults and teenagers from recordings, observations, and media examples (*N* = 80). Their data suggest that *be like* is more common in female speech and is used almost exclusively in first person singular environments.

YULE AND MATHIS (1992) investigate how reported speech (typically indirect speech) and constructed dialogue function within different conversational topics and the roles that different quotative forms play in backgrounded and foregrounded events. Data come from a 60-minute recording over dinner of four women aged 20–27. Data suggest that (1) lexical choice (quotative form) and morphological choice (tense distinctions) play a role in establishing the relative importance of topics; and (2) *said* is preferred when introducing reported speech, while other quotative forms, including *be like*, occur more often in historical-present contexts.

MATHIS AND YULE (1994) investigate the function of zero quotatives as direct speech introducers. Data come from four hours of recorded informal conversation between four white, lower-middle-class women in their 20s from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Results suggest that zero quotatives function differently from other quotative forms such as *say*, *go*, and *be like* in that they (1) signal character turns in reported speech, usually with exaggerated prosodic shifts; (2) create dramatic effect (performing rather than reporting); (3) represent the attitude of interlocutors; (4) echo feelings between interlocutors; and (5) allow speakers to merge their voices to construct (rather than report) the speech of absent participants.

FERRARA AND BELL (1995) investigate the use of *be like* in elicited personal-experience narratives recorded in 1990, 1992, and 1994 from 405 Texas informants aged 6–86 ($N = 284$). The 1990 data suggest a slight gender difference in the use of *be like*, with females in the lead. The 1992 data suggest that (1) no gender preference holds for *be like*; (2) the use of *be like* is mainly an urban phenomenon; and (3) *be like* has begun to spread to third person singular usage and to the introduction of dialogue rather than just internal thought. The 1994 data support points (1) and (2) from the 1992 data and provide further evidence for the spread of *be like* outside of first person singular—over half of the occurrences of *be like* occur in third person environments. The data also suggest that *be like* is used by urban Hispanics and African Americans.

ERIKSSON (1995) analyzes the grammaticalization of the Swedish word *bara* (pronounced *ba*, equivalent to English 'just, only') from an adverbial to a quotative form in narrative speech. Data come from three corpora of stories extracted from conversations of 18 speakers aged 10–14 recorded in the 1970s and 1980s. Results suggest that the grammaticalization of *ba* occurred in a two-stage process: (1) the association of *ba* with foregrounded central events in narratives; and (2) the development of *ba* from the foregrounding function to introduce quoted speech. Similar to *be like*, *ba* is mainly used by adolescents, but it is also found sporadically in the speech of young adults in their 30s, leading Eriksson to hypothesize that its development as a quotative began in the 1970s.

TAGLIAMONTE AND HUDSON (1999) investigate quotatives in British and Canadian speech in recorded personal-experience narratives from 66 informants born between 1968 and 1978 ($N = 1,277$ quotative forms). Results show that (1) *say*

is the most favored quotative form in both data sets, and *be like* is more frequent and more diffused across speakers in Britain than in Canada; (2) *go* is favored by males in Canada, and *be like* is favored by females in Britain; and (3) *be like* is favored in first person contexts by both British and Canadian speakers. (They found no evidence for Ferrara and Bell's claim for the significant expansion of *be like* to third person contexts.)

SÁNCHEZ AND CHARITY (1999) conduct the first full-scale study of verbs of quotation in three generations of urban AAVE speakers. Data ($N = 1,551$ quotative forms) come from 26 hours of recordings with 14 speakers (10 African American, 2 biracial, and 2 Anglo) aged 9–70. Results show that (1) for the total sample, *be like* is the most frequently used quotative form, followed by *say*, bald (zero), other verbs, and *go*; (2) the highest frequency of *be like* is seen in the 16–22-year-old group, and use of this feature decreases with age; (3) males use *be like* more than females; and (4) *be like* is found equally in first and third person contexts.

DAILEY-O'CAIN (2000) conducts an apparent-time study on focuser *like* and quotative *be like* ($N = 95$) with data from 30 middle- and upper-middle-class Michigan informants (females and males born between 1926 and 1981). Results show that (1) *be like* is used more by younger speakers; (2) *be like* is used more frequently as a marker of internal thought; and (3) gender variation is not significant with respect to the use of *be like*. A follow-up study on attitudes about the use of focuser *like* and quotative *be like* was conducted with 40 highly educated middle- and upper-middle-class informants. Results from this study reveal (1) the belief that these forms are used more by younger than older speakers; (2) the belief that women use both forms more than men; and (3) the belief that both forms are highly stigmatized.

GOLATO (2000) does a comparative analysis of the German quotative *und ich so/und er so* 'and I'm like/and he's like' to the English quotative *be like* with data from 17 hours of video- and 9 hours of audiotaped conversations from 48 urban middle- and upper-middle-class speakers. No data on other quotative forms are discussed. Results show that (1) all instances ($N = 22$) of *und ich so* occurred in the videotaped conversations; (2) similar to the English *be like*, *und ich so* introduces speech, emotions, and gestures, but it occurs less frequently and is used exclusively in storytelling situations at the climax of the story; (3) *und ich so* is used primarily by college-aged speakers and sporadically by speakers born between 1946 and 1960; and (4) *und ich so* is used mainly in the first person singular.

SINGLER (2001) investigates the use of three quotatives, *like*, *go*, and *all*, from speakers aged 9–51 ($N = 5,895$ total quotative forms). Data come from informal conversations between field-workers and subjects recorded between 1995 and 1999 in New York City. Results parallel previous studies: (1) there is a strong correlation between age and quotative form (*like* and *all* occur mostly with younger speakers and infrequently for speakers over 35); (2) *go* is the primary quotative for speakers over 35; (3) speaker sex is significant for *go*

(favored by males) but not for *like*; (4) female conversational dyads favor *like*, and male and mixed-sex dyads disfavor *like*; (5) overall, *like* is favored by Asian Americans and disfavored by African Americans; however, the use of *like* is significantly greater for African Americans aged 9–15 than for speakers over 18. In addition, Singler suggests that VARBRUL analyses of quotative data are inappropriate due to the constraints on quotative use and the lack of equivalency in meaning between quotative forms.

BUCHSTALLER (2001) discusses an alternative model of grammaticalization for *go* and *be like* to that proposed by Romaine and Lange (1991). Her hypothesis is supported with data from the University of Pennsylvania Linguistic Data Consortium and the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken English. Results suggest that *go* and *be like* are not simply pleonastic forms used by young speakers to be cool but have distinct linguistic functions and social significance.

NOTES

1. These "constructed dialogues" transform experience into drama as storytellers create an interpersonal involvement between themselves and their audience (Tannen 1986, 312). Since constructed dialogues occur in discourse as direct speech, they are typically introduced by a verb of quotation (VQ), i.e., *say, think, tell,* or *shout*; however, it is the frequency and discourse distribution of the more recent quotative forms, *go* and *be like*, that have dominated the research for the past two decades.

2. Of course, discourse context may play a role in the amount of *be like* quotatives used by speakers, especially in a limited data set (cf. Yule and Mathis 1992). Moreover, methodological decisions can have an effect on the distribution of quotative forms across generations. For example, Blyth, Becktenwald, and Wang (1990) divide the speakers in their study into three age groups according to their use of quotative *be like* and not according equal age ranges: Group 1 (20–24), Group 2 (27–32), and Group 3 (38–72). As these research-

ers note, these age divisions more than likely skew the figures for *go* and *say* in Groups 2 and 3 (219).

3. Data on the use of "focuser *like*" are not included in the present analysis.

4. The country store in the post–Civil War South played a major part in shaping the lives of rural people and served as the foundation for the economy of the New South (Clark 1944). As the role of the country store became increasingly important in the lives of Southern planters, so did the role of storekeepers, who were no longer just the purveyors of merchandise but were also the agents of credit and the collectors of debts. Naturally, with this new role came a type of power over the members of communities never before held by country merchants (cf. Atherton 1949; Ayers 1992). This type of power brokering is still very much a part of the relationship between the owner of the Springville Store and the community's residents, a situation that has remained virtually unchanged since the time of tenancy, when her father was the owner and postmaster.

5. The names of the informants are all pseudonyms.

6. The fact that Lamar never uses *be like* can be explained by his strong orientation to rural speech patterns typical of older-generation Springville residents (Cukor-Avila 1995). The percentage of other urban AAVE features in his speech is also significantly lower than for anyone else in his generation. Moreover, he is the only informant who was recorded once, in 1988, so there is a strong possibility that his speech has become more urbanized since then.

7. This quotation is taken from the abstract to Sánchez and Charity (1999).

8. Singler (2001) reports similar results with older New York City speakers.

9. A complete analysis of the range of grammatical and discourse factors affecting the use of zero quotatives is not a part of the present study but certainly merits further attention.

10. Similar results are found for young middle-class speakers from Michigan (Dailey-O'Cain 2000), who primarily use *be like* as a marker of internal thought. This study, however, does not report on the use of *be like* by grammatical person.

11. Singler (2001) argues that VARBRUL analyses of quotative data are inappropriate because the various forms do not have equivalent meanings and are therefore not interchangeable. He states that "the change in quotatives has not simply been a change as to which quotative gets used; rather a more fundamental change has occurred, a change in the domain of usage" (264). Singler suggests that there are constraints on where quotatives can occur. For example, he proposes that *like*, *all*, and *go* can all introduce gestures, facial expressions, or nonspeech sounds but that *say* cannot. The Springville data, however, include examples of *say* used to introduce facial expressions and sounds: "I looked at him, I said, [makes face], like that. I seen her teeth missin', I said, 'Wooo.' Pumpkin say, 'Ughhh!' I say, 'Ahhh.'" (Brandy). Singler further suggests that all instances of *it's like* should be factored out of quantitative analyses, because *like* is the only quotative that can be used when the

subject is dummy *it*. Since there are only three tokens of *it's like* in the Springville data, this factor did not alter the results of the analysis.

12. The third person inner speech data were factored out of this VARBRUL analysis because of the infrequent use of *be like* in this context.

13. This quotation is excerpted from e-mail messages sent by Labov to linguists attending the October 2000 NWAVE conference in East Lansing, Michigan. His e-mail correspondence outlined a proposed research agenda for a wide-scale cross-linguistic study of verbs of quotation, tentatively titled "The Tsunami Project."

14. Buchstaller (2001) argues against this notion and suggests that *go* and *be like* are not simply pleonastic forms used by young speakers to be cool; rather, both forms have distinct linguistic functions and social significance.

15. I want to thank Ceil Lucas for handing me this comic strip the day after my ADS presentation in Washington, D.C.

REFERENCES

Atherton, Lewis. 1949. *The Southern Country Store 1800–1860*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press.

Ayers, Edward L. 1992. *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

Bailey, Guy. 1987. Part 4 of "Are Black and White Vernaculars Diverging? Papers from the NWAVE XIV Panel Discussion." *American Speech* 62: 32–40.

Bailey, Guy, and Patricia Cukor-Avila. 1991. "The Evidence for Convergence." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Conference on Linguistics (SECOL), Knoxville, Tenn., 5–6 Apr.

Bailey, Guy, and Natalie Maynor. 1989. "The Divergence Controversy." *American Speech* 64: 12–39.

Bailey, Guy, Tom Wikle, Jan Tillery, and Lori Sand. 1993. "Some Patterns of Linguistic Diffusion." *Language Variation and Change* 5: 359–90.

Blyth, Carl, Sigrid Becktenwald, and Jenny Wang. 1990. "I'm like, 'Say what?!' A New Quotative in American Oral Narrative." *American Speech* 65: 215–27.

Buchstaller, Isabelle. 2001. "*He goes* and *I'm like*: The New Quotatives Re-visited." Paper presented at the 30th annual meeting on New Ways of Analyzing Variation (NWAV 30), Raleigh, N.C., 11–14 Oct.

Butters, Ronald R. 1980. "Narrative *go* 'say'." *American Speech* 55: 304–7.

⸻. 1982. Editor's note to Schourup (1982). *American Speech* 57: 149.

⸻. 1989. *The Death of Black English: Divergence and Convergence in Black and White Vernaculars*. Bamberger Beiträge zur englischen Sprachwissenschaft 25. Frankfurt am Main: Lang.

Chambers, J. K. 1995. *Sociolinguistic Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Cheshire, Jenny. 1982. *Variation in an English Dialect: A Sociolinguistic Study*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Clark, Thomas D. 1944. *Pills, Petticoats, and Plows: The Southern Country Store*. New York: Bobbs-Merrill.

Cukor-Avila, Patricia. 1995. "The Evolution of AAVE in a Rural Texas Community: An Ethnolinguistic Study." Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Michigan.

———. 1997. "Change and Stability in the Use of Verbal *-s* over Time in AAVE." In *Englishes around the World: Studies in Honour of Manfred Görlach*, vol. 1, *General Studies, British Isles, North America*, ed. Edgar W. Schneider, 295–306. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

———. 1999. "Stativity and Copula Absence in AAVE: Grammatical Constraints at the Sub-Categorical Level." *Journal of English Linguistics* 27: 341–55.

———. 2001. "Co-existing Grammars: The Relationship between the Evolution of African American Vernacular English and White Vernacular English in the South." In *Sociocultural and Historical Contexts of African American English*, ed. Sonja Lanehart, 93–127. Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Cukor-Avila, Patricia, and Guy Bailey. 1995a. "An Approach to Sociolinguistic Fieldwork: A Site Study of Rural AAVE in a Texas Community." *English World-Wide* 16: 159–93.

———. 1995b. "Grammaticalization in AAVE." In *Proceedings of the Twenty-first Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society*, ed. Jocelyn Ahlers, Leela Bilmes, Joshua S. Guenter, Barbara A. Kaiser, and Ju Namkung, 401–13. Berkeley: Dept. of Linguistics, Univ. of California.

———. 1996. "The Spread of Urban AAVE: A Case Study." In *Sociolinguistic Variation: Data, Theory, and Analysis: Selected Papers from NWAV-23 at Stanford*, ed. Jennifer Arnold, Renee Blake, Brad Davidson, Scott Schwenter, and Julie Solomon, 469–85. Stanford, Calif.: Center for the Study of Language and Information.

———. 2001. "The Effects of the Race of the Interviewer on Sociolinguistic Fieldwork." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5: 254–70.

Dailey-O'Cain, Jennifer. 2000. "The Sociolinguistic Distribution of and Attitudes toward Focuser *like* and Quotative *like*." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4: 60–80.

Eriksson, Mats. 1995. "A Case of Grammaticalization in Modern Swedish: The Use of *ba* in Adolescent Speech." *Language Sciences* 17: 19–48.

Ferrara, Kathleen, and Barbara Bell. 1995. "Sociolinguistic Variation and Discourse Function of Constructed Dialogue Introducers: The Case of *be + like*." *American Speech* 70: 265–90.

Golato, Andrea. 2000. "An Innovative German Quotative for Reporting on Embodied Actions: *Und ich so/und er so* 'and I'm like/and he's like'." *Journal of Pragmatics* 32: 29–54.

Hopper, Paul, and Elisabeth Closs Traugott. 1993. *Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Johnstone, Barbara. 1990. *Stories, Community, and Place: Narratives from Middle America*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.

———. 1993. "Community and Contest: Midwestern Men and Women Creating Their Worlds in Conversational Storytelling." In *Gender and Conversational*

Interaction, ed. Deborah Tannen, 62–80. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

Kroch, Anthony S. 1989. "Reflexes of Grammar in Patterns of Language Change." *Language Variation and Change* 1: 199–244.

Labov, William. 1972. *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press.

Labov, William, Paul Cohen, Clarence Robins, and John Lewis. 1968. *A Study of the Non-standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City*. Philadelphia: U.S. Regional Survey.

Mathis, Terrie, and George Yule. 1994. "Zero Quotatives." *Discourse Processes* 18: 63–76.

Milroy, Leslie. 1987. *Language and Social Networks*. New York: Blackwell.

Rand, David, and David Sankoff. 1990. *GoldVarb: A Variable Rule Application for the Macintosh* (Version 2). Montreal: Centre de Recherches Mathématiques, Université de Montréal.

Romaine, Suzanne, and Deborah Lange. 1991. "The Use of *like* as a Marker of Reported Speech and Thought: A Case of Grammaticalization in Progress." *American Speech* 66: 227–79.

Sánchez, Tara, and Anne Charity. 1999. "Use of *be like* and Other Verbs of Quotation in a Predominantly African-American Community." Paper presented at the 28th meeting on New Ways of Analyzing Variation in English (NWAVE 28), Toronto, 14–17 Oct.

Schourup, Lawrence. 1982. "Quoting with *go* 'say'." *American Speech* 57: 148–49.

Singler, John Victor. 2001. "Why You Can't Do a VARBRUL Study of Quotatives and What Such a Study Can Show Us." *University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics* 7: 257–78.

Tagliamonte, Sali, and Rachel Hudson. 1999. "*Be like* et al. beyond America: The Quotative System in British and Canadian Youth." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 3: 147–72.

Tannen, Deborah. 1986. "Introducing Constructed Dialogue in Greek and American Conversational and Literary Narrative." In *Direct and Indirect Speech*, ed. Florian Coulmas, 311–32. New York: de Gruyter.

Tillery, Jan, Tom Wikle, and Guy Bailey. 2000. "The Nationalization of a Southernism." *Journal of English Linguistics* 28: 280–94.

Traugott, Elisabeth Closs, and Bernd Heine, eds. 1991. *Approaches to Grammaticalization*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Trudgill, Peter. 1974. "Linguistic Change and Diffusion: Description and Explanation in Sociolinguistic Dialectology." *Language in Society* 3: 215–46.

———. 1986. *Dialects in Contact*. New York: Blackwell.

Underhill, Robert. 1988. "Like Is, Like, Focus." *American Speech* 63: 234–46.

Wolfram, Walt, and Ralph Fasold. 1974. *The Study of Social Dialects in American English*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Yule, George, and Terrie Mathis. 1992. "The Role of Staging and Constructed Dialogue in Establishing Speaker's Topic." *Linguistics* 30: 199–215.