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Ústav anglického jazyka a didaktiky

**Non-standard uses of "like" in spoken discourse**

Nestandardní funkce slova "like" v mluveném projevu

**Bakalářská práce**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně, že jsem řádně citovala všechny použité prameny a literaturu a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

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## Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá nestandardními funkcemi slova *like* v mluveném projevu. Cílem práce je utřídit nestandardní funkce *like*, které byly v posledních 30 letech popsány, a vytvořit tak přehled, který by se mohl stát vodítkem pro další zkoumání tohoto jevu. Teoretická část práce nabízí přehled standardních a nestandardních funkcí, které může *like* v mluvené řeči představovat. Jako nestandardní funkce byly určeny ty, které mají velmi redukovanou významovou složku a jejich vyjmutí z promluvy neovlivní strukturu věty nebo její slovní obsah. Co však může být ovlivněno, je pragmatický význam promluvy.

Nestandardní funkce *like* jsou vytýkací částice, výrazy uvozujícího přímou řeč, prostředek zmírňující dopad promluvy a diskurzní částice. Z korpusu současné americké angličtiny (COCA) bylo vyselektováno 100 příkladů nestandardního užití *like*. Postup selekce je popsán v metodologické části. Tyto příklady byly poté zkoumány v analytické části a řazeny podle teoretického rámce ustanoveného v teoretické části práce. V rámci analýzy bylo také popsáno prostředí, ve kterém se *like* nejčastěji objevuje a jeho kolokace. Výsledkem práce je příklady potvrzený přehled nestandardních funkcí, rozšířený o další konstrukci určenou k uvozování přímé řeči, detailnější rozdělení použití prostředku zmírňujícího dopad promluvy a vytýkací částice také a potvrzení, že *like* rozhodně není jen prázdným výplňkovým slovem, nýbrž multifunkčním, stále se ještě vyvíjejícím, prostředkem, díky kterému mají mluvčí možnost různými způsoby modifikovat pragmatickou složku svých promluv.

## Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the non-standard functions of the word *like* in spoken discourse. The aim of this thesis is to categorize the non-standard functions that had been described in the past 30 years and create a comprehensive overview, which might serve as a guideline for further research. The theoretical part of the thesis offers a compilation of standard and non-standard functions that *like* may represent in spoken discourse. As a non-standard function is considered the use of *like* as a focus marker, hedge, quotative marker and a discourse marker. The second, methodological, part describes the method of extraction of the sample of 100 instances from the COCA. The following part then contains analysis of the extracted instances, which are categorized according to the theoretical frame created in the theoretical part of this thesis. The analysis also concerns the position of *like* in the utterance and frequent collocations. The result of this thesis is a confirmed theoretical frame containing the non-standard functions of *like* extended by an additional quotative construction, more detailed description of the hedge and the focus marker *like* and also a confirmation that non-standard *like* is certainly not only an empty intrusive word but a multifunctional, ever-developing, device with which the speakers may modify the pragmatic function of their utterances.

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## List of abbreviations

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| AdjP  | Adjectival phrase                       |
| AdvP  | Adverbial phrase                        |
| COCA  | Corpus of Contemporary American English |
| NP    | Noun phrase                             |
| PrepP | Prepositional phrase                    |
| VP    | Verb phrase                             |

# 1. Introduction

The word *like* received quite an intensive attention from scholars in the past thirty years. The increasing interest in studying the word *like* in the past three decades was not triggered only by its gradual omnipresence in the spoken discourse but also by the various new uses that have been acknowledged and described during this time, the latest one being introduced in 2010<sup>1</sup>. The proneness of the word *like* to acquisition of new functions makes it an interesting subject to revisit and re-examine after some time with a new analysis.

The primary aim of the thesis is not to hunt for new functions but to gather those already examined and create a comprehensive overview of the various non-standard functions which *like* can acquire in spoken discourse. Nevertheless, the possibility of discovering some new, not yet described function while extracting examples from the corpus will not be ruled out, as the data of the corpus that will be used was collected in the years from 1990 – 2012, making it possible to observe further changes in the use of *like* in the recent years.

The crucial part of the thesis, before any further research is possible, is to distinguish which functions will be regarded as standard and which will be considered non-standard, since only the non-standard uses will be examined in the practical part of the thesis. The basic standard functions which are currently in use will be mentioned as well, along with examples, to serve as a reference for further analysis of the data from the corpus and categorization of the results.

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<sup>1</sup> Fox and Robles, "It's like *mmm*: Enactments with *it's like*", where they established the *it's+like*-enactment as an individual new function of *like*.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1. Spoken discourse

Discourse is defined as a continuous stretch of language, larger than a clause – a set of utterances which compose any recognizable speech event i.e. a conversation, a joke, an interview (Crystal, 2008: 148). The primary function of a spoken discourse and particularly a conversation is to establish and maintain social cohesion through the sharing of experience or exchange of information (Biber et al., 1999: 1041).

Spoken discourse can be distinguished from written in several important features, which stem primarily from its spontaneous nature. The spontaneity of spoken discourse implies so called "normal disfluency", which is a fragmentation of discourse caused by silent or filled pauses, use of hesitators, repetition and reformulations (Biber et al., 1999: 1048)<sup>2</sup>. Feature that often accompanies normal disfluency is the presence of discourse markers, which are elements "loosely attached to the clause which facilitate ongoing interaction" or other syntactically unbound elements used to signal pragmatic role of the utterances (Biber et al., 1999: 1046). These may be present in the discourse filling said pauses, marking hesitation, reformulation or providing a link between otherwise dissimilar units. Spoken discourse is also characteristic for its low lexical density and low degree of grammatical elaboration, i.e. the lexical words are spread out over a number of sentences and the sentences tend to be simpler and shorter than in written types of discourse. It also avoids specificity in meaning (Biber et al., 1999: 1044) which can be supported by a high frequency of stance adverbs or hedges, which are essentially epistemic stance adverbs expressing imprecision (Biber et al., 1999: 557).

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<sup>2</sup> Biber et al. also calls them "false starts".

Another recurring feature in spoken discourse is reporting of direct speech, which allows the speaker to implement someone else's or their own, more or less verbatim, speech into his own discourse (Biber et al., 1999: 1118). The variability of lexical elements is also lower with inclination to use of well-known word sequences or, for example, modal verbs. Additionally, the style of spoken discourse is typically informal, which can be observed for example in lexical choices, the use of contractions or situational ellipsis of words of low information value (Biber et al., 1999: 1048).

Grammar and vocabulary are undoubtedly an indispensable part of any spoken discourse and its interpretation but the key characteristics that distinguishes spoken discourse from many written types of discourse is the fact that spoken discourse relies heavily on contextual information, as for example shared contextual knowledge and background or attitude, and prosody. Unfortunately the prosodic information, i.e. varying stress or intonation patterns are rarely present in the transcripts of spoken language in the corpus (Biber et al., 1999:1041).

## **2.2. Propositional vs. pragmatic meaning**

Generally, an utterance within a spoken discourse has two kinds of meaning. One of them is a propositional meaning, which is the basic meaning a sentence expresses conveyed by the particular word and structures, which the utterance contains. Pragmatic meaning (also illocutionary meaning) is the effect the utterance may have on the listener or the effect the speaker wants the utterance to have on the listener (Richardson and Schmidt, 2010: 542). The majority of standard functions of *like* contribute to the propositional meaning and cannot be omitted without affecting the grammatical structure and the propositional meaning of the sentence in which it appears. This statement is supported by the examples provided in the following section, which deals in detail with the standard functions of *like*.

The non-standard functions of *like* often do not contribute to the propositional meaning of the utterance, since their semantic content is very low but may influence the pragmatic meaning of the utterance. Support for this claim can be found in the analytical part of this thesis.

### 2.3. Semantic core

Before turning to the detailed categorization of various functions *like* may represent in spoken discourse it is important to note, that all of the functions share the same semantic core. Buchstaller offers the following chart showing the synchronic semantic field of *like*:

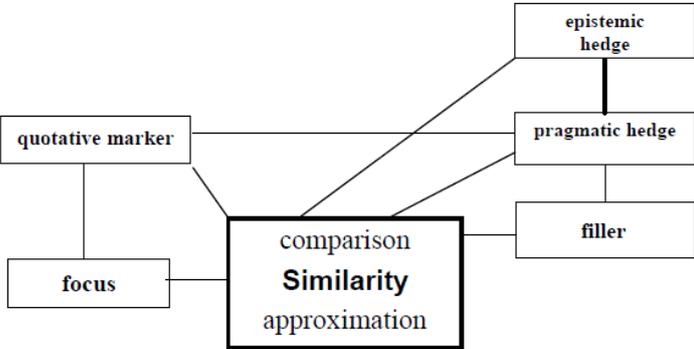


Figure 1 - Semantic field of *like*, (Buchstaller, 2001: 32)

According to Buchstaller the semantic core of *like* is a notion of similarity, which is also the base of comparison and approximation. This semantic core, which comprises all the standard functions of *like*, then serves as a basis for other, non-standard, functions of *like* and shows that they all are actually interconnected (Buchstaller, 2001: 32).

## 2.4. Standard functions

As standard functions of *like* have been for the purposes of the thesis taken non-discursive instances where *like* appears in its function as a noun, preposition, conjunction and a lexical verb. These instances can be semantically described as sharing the same general meaning or function which expresses similarity and bear a sense of "similar to" or "approximately". These examples have a lexical and semantic component and if omitted in a sentence, it will lose its intended propositional meaning or become completely ungrammatical (Meehan, 1991: 39).

### 2.3.1. Comparative uses

This category contains all the standard functions which can be framed and explained in the sense of "similar to".

#### 2.2.1.1. Preposition

Prepositions introduce prepositional phrases which can be considered as links serving to connect noun phrases to other structures. *Like* almost always appears in a clause as a free preposition as it has its own meaning and is not dependent on any specific surrounding words. (Biber et al., 1999: 74) When used as a preposition *like* means "in or after the manner of; in the same manner or to the same extent as; as in the case of" (OED).

*She sings like her, laughs like her, talks like her.* (OED)

Another function of the preposition *like* is so called "exemplifying" function, where the preposition *like* is paraphrasable with the phrase "for example"<sup>3</sup> (Andersen, 2001:236). Furthermore the OED mentions, in the entry for *like*, its use as the substitution for the

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<sup>3</sup> Oxford Learner's Dictionary also lists the function in the sense of "for example" in the entry for *like* as a preposition.

idiomatic expression "such as", which is to "introduce a particular example of a class, respecting which something is predicated" (Andersen, 2001:240).

*cos, erm, I need to do some stuff today, **like** I need to get some rope.*

(Andersen, 2001:240)

The example above shows that the speaker has some "stuff" to do, which represents the whole class of items and then lists one particular item from that class, in this case the action of acquiring some rope. Such use of *like* is categorized among the standard functions because it contains lexical meaning and this meaning still rises from the semantic core of similarity and comparison.

### **2.3.1.2. Conjunction**

When used as a conjunction *like* is paraphrasable with "as", a fairly common usage which the OED deems vulgar and slovenly. The following example introduces an unabridged sentence:

***Like** I said, it was one o'clock... everybody claims they were asleep. (OED)*

*They look at me **like** I'm dirt. (OED)*

The second example shows the usage as a subordinate conjunction paraphrasable with "as if", marked as dialectical in the OED. Both of these examples illustrate a change that *like* went through. It slowly replaces, by analogy with the preposition *like*, the conjunction *as* and even though it still may be regarded as ungrammatical it has its rather firm position in the English language (Romaine and Lange, 1991: 244).

### **2.3.1.3. Noun**

*Like* in a form of noun appears with qualifying possessive pronoun or its analogue and has a meaning of a counterpart, equal, match etc. (OED)

*Two men, whose like will scarcely ever be found in the world.* (OED)

#### **2.3.1.4. Suffix**

Another function of *like* is that of a suffix<sup>4</sup> forming adjectives and adverbs, when appended to nouns or adjectives, with the meaning of having the qualities of or an approximation to the sense of the word to which it is added. Strictly speaking, the words containing this suffix are compounds (OED). Furthermore *like* gradually came to be felt as an independent suffix which could be added to nouns (Romaine and Lange, 1991: 244-245).

*It was a low **square-like** room.* (OED)

In this case the suffix is added to a descriptive adjective and emulates a meaning in the sense of "having the appearance of being [something]" (OED).

#### **2.3.2. Verb**

The current and most frequent use of the lexical verb *like* is its exclusively transitive form, whose meaning comprises: to find agreeable or congenial; to feel attracted to or favourably impressed by (a person); to have a taste or fancy for, take pleasure in (a thing, an action, a condition, etc.) (OED). It is considered a mental verb and denotes emotional or attitudinal states (Biber et al., 1991: 63, 387).

*I'll do it again, and you'll stand by and **like** it.* (OED)

The example shows *like* in the function of a transitive verb.

#### **2.3.3. Approximation**

So called approximators are essentially hedges (cf. section 2.3.3.) that modify numerical or other quantifying expressions. These hedges are described as very common with

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<sup>4</sup> The same function is often referred to as to "combining form".

numbers, measurements and quantities (Biber et al., 1999: 557) and reportedly there is nothing particularly abnormal about them (Underhill, 1988: 241), which is the reason why they are categorized among the standard functions.

*It was during Christmas vacation last year...and a group of us people there was **like** um twelve of us, (Underhill, 1988: 235)*

*They were suing Kurt for **like** seventy thousand dollar. (Biber et. al, 1999: 557)*

These two examples suggest that the numeric expressions following *like* are of estimative nature and the precise number or amount is not known.

## 2.5. Non-standard functions

The word *like* is stigmatized by various presumptions in regard to its use outside the standard functions as described in the previous section. It is particularly the myth that it is a meaningless and intrusive word able to occur anywhere in a clause, which has no specific function other than signalling inarticulateness on the part of the speaker. (D'Arcy, 2007: 388). These presumptions cannot be farther from truth, which will be evident in the detailed categorization of various non-standard functions of *like*, which is offered below.

The non-standard functions are the core of the thesis. All the different functions have been compiled from other works dedicated to this subject; it includes (Fox and Robles 2010, Andersen 2001, Biber et al. 1999, Buschtaller 1991, Romaine and Lange 1991, Meehan 1991, Blyth 1990, Underhill 1988). The categories of non-standard functions as gathered for the purpose of this thesis may be described as containing pragmatic markers, i.e. of various functions. The categories comprise quotative markers (which introduce direct speech or thought), focus markers (which highlight a constituent or a clause as a whole), hedges (which may be regarded as markers of imprecision, distance from the uttered information or uncertainty), and discourse markers (words used "to monitor and organize ongoing discourse" (Richards and Schmidt, 2010: 175)).

These non-standard instances of *like* tend to possess much lesser degree of semantic meaning and act more like grammatical elements in a clause than lexical ones. Even though, generally, they do not contribute to the propositional meaning of the utterance, they do contribute quite strongly to the pragmatic one. In most cases, if omitted from a sentence, there is no disturbance in its structure, it will not become ungrammatical, however the pragmatic meaning may be altered or lost, which may lead to misunderstanding.

### 2.5.1. Focus marker

Generally, the focus of a clause is the most significant new information, which usually appears towards the end of the sentence (Underhill, 1988: 238). *Like* can put focus on various parts of a sentence, ranging from a simple noun phrase to an entire clause. Focus marker *like* can thus be regarded as a device that can help to structure an utterance in terms of functional sentence perspective, i.e. mark the rheme. Additional feature of *like* as a focus marker is the possibility to omit it without rendering the sentence ungrammatical, however if omitted, it may cause some pragmatic difficulties, since less focus will be placed on the specific part of the utterance (Meehan, 1991: 43). The focusing function seems to have originated in the sense of *like* meaning "approximately" (Meehan, 1991: 45).

#### 2.5.1.2. Marking focus in declarative sentences

*Like* as a marker in declarative sentences, where it either introduces the new information which is the basis for further development of the conversation or marks the most important element in the utterance. The most significant new information is also often the point of the sentence and usually appears near or at the end (Underhill, 1988: 238).

*Student coming in for help on a homework assignment: "I had problems **like** on the second question." (Underhill, 1988: 238)*

This example clearly shows that *like* marks the most important element of the utterance, which is the information what question was difficult for the student.

*Like* in declarative sentences, which represent an answer to a question, can further specify and highlight which part of the clause is the most relevant for answering the question.

*Interviewer: What do you think about the program? Student: Oh, it's great! Interviewer: What do you like about it? Student: Well, if we were in another program **like** we wouldn't be able to do what we were doing. (Underhill, 1988: 240)*

*One student to another (in response to something the recorder did not hear): **Like, I don't know.** I told you. [Somewhat annoyed] (Underhill, 1988: 240)*

The first instance of *like* in the example additionally highlights the part of the answer which contains the most relevant information. The second instance shows that even an answer that apparently does not contain any significant information and is as vague as "I don't know" can be focused as the message is that there is no answer. (Underhill, 1988: 240)

### **2.5.1.2 Marking focus in questions**

Questions generally contain focused information, since a question has to have a point that needs to be answered. *Like* seems to appear frequently within questions either strengthening the focus or specifying the focused information in order to facilitate the process of communication between the speaker and the listener. Focus marker allows the speaker to highlight a specific part of the question, for example, to express different attitudes or in cases where there are multiple interpretations possible.

*(Referring to pens): Don't you have **like** a red one?* (Underhill, 1988: 239)

The example represents the case where the focus is put on specific information in the clause and its replacement might alter the way the clause is interpreted by the listener. The speaker is asking if the listener has a red pen, i.e. a pen that is red. The focus is put on the noun phrase "a red one" and implies a situation, in which the speaker sees pens of different colours and inquires if the listener has a pen that is red. However, this example would allow an option of putting the focus marker before the verb "have", which would alter the situation. It would suggest that the listener wants to borrow a red pen but the speaker retorts with the example question indicating annoyance.

### **2.5.2. Quotative marker**

There are numerous expressions in the English language that are used to introduce reported speech and thought. *Like* can be frequently seen in a construction with the auxiliary verb "be", where it precedes a clause that can be interpreted as a quotation.

### 2.5.2.1. *Be + like*

The quotative construction *be+like* is often compared with verbs used to introduce direct speech in a similar way as "say" and "go" or "think".

The main difference between these verbs and *be+like* seems to be in greater versatility of the latter as the quote following *be+like* does not have to be interpreted only as a direct speech actually uttered (*say* and *go*) but it may also be represented by a thought, a state of mind, or inner monologue (*think*), i.e. it may have never been actually uttered (Blyth, 1990: 222). The use of the *be+like* quotative construction also allows the speaker to retain the vividness of direct speech and thought while preserving the pragmatic force of indirect speech (Romaine and Lange, 1991: 228).

Furthermore only *be+like* may be either perfective or imperfective according to its discourse function and thus indicate what is being introduced. When *be+ like* is interpreted as imperfective it introduces a thought or an inner monologue; when perfective it introduces direct speech. However, it has been mentioned that *be+like* still has some of the pragmatic force of indirect speech, it cannot introduce it as such (Blyth, 1990: 222).

The position of the quotative *like* is fixed and that is before an embedded clause which can be interpreted as a quote. The origin is suggested to be in the sense of "as if" (Meehan, 1991: 46-47).

*I'm like, 'Just name a kind, and I'll tell you if I have it or not,' and he named something exotic.* (Blyth, 1990: 223)

In the example the quotative marker introduces direct speech that was most certainly actually uttered, since we have the evidence of a response that followed after that and can be labelled as perfective.

*I'm like, "God, my family comes to visit me, and Tom and Clotilda are going to want to evict me because they're so noisy!"* (Blyth, 1990: 222)

In this case the sentence that is introduced by *I'm like* could be interpreted as a representation of inner monologue, which was not actually uttered, particularly because of the use of *be+like* construction (Blyth, 1990: 222). Since the example sentence was not uttered and it is not considered direct speech, it is labelled as imperfective.

#### **2.5.2.2. *It's + like* - enactment**

Another construction that has reportedly recently emerged is the combination of the pronoun *it* which functions as a non-human subject in the construction *be + like + response cry + (clause)*, where the response cry is for example *oh*, *wow*, *mmm* or *oh no* i.e. expressions with little meaning. Fox and Robles (2010) refer to this construction as *it's like – enactment*. The cases containing this quotative construction re-enact the thought, feeling or attitude rather than describing it (Fox and Robles, 2010: 716). Furthermore, this quotative-like enactment is not attributed to a human speaker; there is no human subject that could be the agent of the enactment. It shares many qualities with the *be+like* construction, however *it's like*-enactments are unique in their impersonal syntax which results in the possibility of more generalized attribution, or non-attribution, of the feeling, thought, attitude, or speech enacted, and thus conveying a sense of "anyone in this situation" (Fox and Robles, 2010:734). In addition, while personal uses of *be+ like* have moved strongly into the reporting of purportedly actual dialogue (Tagliamonte and D'Arcy, 2004), *it's+ like-enactments* do not have this function. (Fox and Robles, 2010:717).

*It's like, "Hah Hah. You're about to get in trouble."* (Romaine and Lange, 1991: 230)

The constructions *be+like* and *it's like* operate as grammaticalised fixed units which stand in place of lexical verbs of thinking or saying, i.e. their omission may cause loss of propositional meaning or render the sentence ungrammatical (Andersen, 2001: 261).

This feature distinguishes them from the other functions listed as non-standard. The quotative *like* was included into the category of non-standard uses primarily for its versatility in comparison to other items used to introduce direct speech. Finally, it is important to note that the quotative marker *like* also stems from the common semantic core, particularly from the notion of similarity or approximation.

### **2.5.3. Hedge**

Another function of *like* is a hedge, which is described as the means through which the speakers can make their speech "fuzzier". The fuzziness refers to the truth conditions and allows the speakers to modify the truth conditions of their utterances (Lakoff, 1972: 458). The hedge *like* provides speakers with a device to signal that the utterance which will follow is not meant to be taken too literally and that there may be a discrepancy between what is actually uttered and what the speaker had originally in mind (Andersen, 2001: 295) This also suggests that *like* as a hedge still draws its meaning from the basic semantic core, which is a notion of similarity in the sense of "somewhat resembling" (Buchstaller, 2001:23), since a comparison can be drawn between what the speaker said and what he/she had in mind. Furthermore it may allow speakers to avoid full commitment to the expressions they choose to employ, either out of the reason of uncertainty of the appropriateness in given context or lack of knowledge of a proper expression. Finally, it has been suggested that *like*, especially functioning as an epistemic hedge, may, in contrast to other pragmatic markers affect truth-conditions of the utterance or again to express the lack of commitment to the truth of a statement (Richards and Schmidt, 2010: 257). Hedges are quite common in conversational language and the reason of this is that speakers tend to avoid specificity and show tendency towards vagueness. The frequent use of *like* as a conversational hedge is a good example of this feature of spoken discourse (Biber et al., 1999: 1044).

### 2.5.3.1 Indicating imprecision or uncertainty

*Like* in a function of a hedge can be formally classified as an epistemic stance adverb of conversation, i.e. it modifies the degree of truth present in the element that follows the hedge. Hedging *like* can introduce various words and phrases, for example:

*They'd bring **like** a little flaming fire thing.* (Biber et al., 1999: 557)

In this example the adverbial *like* modifies the whole noun phrase that follows and indicates imprecision and uncertainty of the proper expression within given situation (Biber et al., 1999: 557).

Another example shows modification of an adjective:

*Angie's one is really **like** hot and will dry things.* (Biber et al., 1999: 563)

This example represents the modification in the degree to which the quality of the proposed adjective applies to the noun. It suggests that it is somewhat "hot", which is a fuzzy expression that is consequently specified by the statement that it "will dry things". It is paraphrasable by the hedge "sort of".

### 2.5.3.2. Avoiding commitment

The hedge *like* also provides speakers with a device, that allows them to avoid full commitment to their utterances.

*One sister asking another: Could I **like** borrow your sweater?* (Underhill, 1988: 241)

Underhill explains the function of the hedge *like* as a device with which the speaker not only softens the impact of the request but distances herself from it to shield herself in case the request is denied (Underhill, 1988: 241). On top of marking information that should show some degree of imprecision, make utterances fuzzier or to allow speakers to avoid commitment the utterances or elements they produce, Underhill adds two more functions of the hedge *like* which share the notion of unreality:

### 2.5.3.3 Setting off unusual notions

*Like* can also mark information that is unusual and in result the ideas should not be taken literally. In this category proposed by Underhill, the focusing function merges with the hedging function.

*A very tired teacher: I'm so tired. I'm really going to rest this weekend. I mean **like** stay in bed all day Saturday and Sunday.* (Underhill, 1988: 241)

In this case the information is not that unusual as it is exaggerated, the speaker probably does not plan to spend two whole days literally only lying in bed.

### 2.5.3.4 Setting off a stereotyped expression

Last function of *like* within the frame of hedges is introducing a stereotyped expression which, as the previous function, should not be taken seriously. It also somewhat overlaps with the focusing function of *like* as the stereotyped expression is carrying the focus of the utterance.

*One young woman to another: Today I had to ask this girl for a quarter and I mean, **like** my pride, where is it?!* (Underhill, 1988:242)

The speaker in the example provided describes a situation where she had to borrow a small amount of money from a stranger, which she obviously considers an act below her level. To describe the event as such she uses a somewhat stereotyped expression "where is my pride" which is not meant to be taken literally. Even though *like* functioning as a hedge might be omitted without rendering the sentence in which it appears ungrammatical, it might lead to some pragmatic anomaly, especially in cases where *like* has truth-conditional implications (Andersen, 2001:228).

## 2.5.4. Discourse marker

Discourse markers are defined as elements that have no particular lexical meaning and are characteristic of a spoken language. They have loose attachment to the sentence in which they appear. *Like* as a discourse marker has textual function and may express hesitation, fill a pause if the speaker encounters some planning difficulties during a conversation, it accompanies false starts and self-repairs or help structure the discourse, for example in providing a discourse link between syntactically distinct units (Andersen, 2001: 265). Furthermore it has been also described as a result of lexical indecision (Siegel, 2002:46-47)<sup>5</sup>. Discourse markers do not affect the propositional meaning of a sentence (Biber et al., 1999: 140).

### 2.5.4.1. Hesitation or a pause filler

In this function *like* serves as a filler of a pause, during which the speaker appears to plan what to say next (Biber et al., 1999: 1053), or as a device indicating to other participants in a conversation that the utterance will continue further (Andersen, 2001: 256).

*Alright. Erm, well like, I usually take the train about ... twenty past.*

(Andersen, 2001: 270)

This example contains discourse marker *like*, which appears before a clause in a cluster of other discourse markers indicating hesitation or planning difficulties, which would, without the use of discourse markers, create a gap that would interrupt the ongoing utterance. Apart from the functions of a filler of a hesitation pause Andersen proposes following classification (Andersen, 2001:255):

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<sup>5</sup> As cited in D'Arcy, 2005: ii

#### 2.5.4.2. False starts and self-repairs

The term false start or a retrace-and-repair sequence applies to situations where the speaker begins with saying something, then retraces what has been said and starts again with different sequence of words (Biber et al., 1999: 1062).

*But like it's different if you've got a really bad cold and [sometimes you have to, you can't] **like**...sometimes you can hide it but I don't go in front of someone [...]*  
(Andersen, 2001:255)

In the example provided above, the speaker discontinues the utterance and resumes with different syntactic structure. (Andersen, 2001: 255).

Self-repair happens where the speaker "makes a minor correction within an otherwise syntactically coherent discourse unit" (Andersen, 2001: 255).

*If I leave half past ten it's gon=, it's gonna be **like** take us time to go home cos it's down the village innit* (Andersen, 2001: 227)

In this example *like* appears in the place where the speaker cuts off a verb phrase and then continues with a different lexical verb (Andersen, 2001: 227). False starts and self-repairs are the product of the speaker's state within the process of planning an utterance, which can be described as "I have something on my mind, but I don't know how to put it" (Andersen, 2001:249).

#### 2.5.4.3. Terminated utterance

The termination of an utterance before it reaches completion may be caused by self-repair, interruption, repair by another interlocutor or abandonment of the utterance.

*Grace: Just tape conversations for school. Teacher wants to know about conversations, **like***  
*Dawn: Is it still running?*  
*Grace: Yeah.* (Andersen, 2001: 255)

In this case the speaker terminated the utterance before finishing it, in this case probably due to interruption on the part of the other participant in the conversation.

#### **2.5.4.4. Discourse link**

*Like* functioning as a discourse link may connect syntactically or even thematically unrelated structures. (Andersen, 2001: 255)

*I know and like...on Friday yeah I mean we're gonna be there for about an hour and a half probably yeah, and I wanna* (Andersen, 2001: 255)

As seen in the example the structures linked by *like* are unrelated and the discourse marker provides the speaker with a link that ensures continuity of the discourse.

## **2.6. Position and introduced elements**

The position of non-standard *like* in an utterance and the rules governing its distribution is a complex theme and was examined extensively, yet the results are far from satisfactory. Generally, *like*, may appear in a clause-initial, medial and final position. The clause-initial position is either the first position in a clause or the position immediately following a coordinating conjunction or a discourse marker. Medial position means that *like* occurs in a position where it is preceded and followed by any constituent other than a coordinating conjunction or another discourse marker and by final position is meant a position followed by no constituent other than a terminal tag (Macaulay, 1991: 156).

Another distinction is possible and that is if *like* appears as a syntactically bound or syntactically unbound element. Syntactically bound *like* is bound to a dependent and functions as a pragmatic qualifier of the expression that follows. The functions considered to be syntactically bound are the quotative marker, focus marker and the hedge. The discourse marker is considered to be a syntactically unbound (parenthetical) element, i.e. not bound to a dependent (Andersen, 2001:273).

Furthermore, the study conducted by Underhill on focus markers and hedging *like* (1988: 242) mentions that they tend to appear most often in the environment of a verb phrase or a noun phrase, to which Andersen (2001: 279) adds, that *like* is more prone to appear before a noun phrase and within a verb phrase. Underhill furthermore claims that the position of *like* is not random and that the pragmatics as well as syntax of *like* has to follow certain rules, i.e. it has to introduce a constituent. Distributional scope of *like* varies between a single word to a whole clause (Underhill, 1988: 243).

*Like* proves to be very versatile regarding its syntactic position, since it can appear between clause constituents and within phrases and there is no restriction as to which clause elements can be modified. Nevertheless the distribution is probably not random and some restrictions may apply. Andersen mentions that *like* is not likely to enter, for example, compound nouns, to separate constituents of prepositional and phrasal verbs or to enter fixed idiomatic expressions (Andersen, 2001:275). *Like* appearing in the constructions which have the function of a quotative marker is different, since they always appear before an embedded clause, which is interpreted as a quote. It means that its position is syntactically more fixed (Meehan, 1991: 46) in comparison to the other functions of a focus marker, hedge and a discourse marker.

## **2.7. Collocations**

Non-standard *like* seems to frequently appear in company of other words, which are then seen as collocations. Collocations can be described as a "habitual juxtaposition of a particular word with another word or words with a frequency greater than chance" (OED). Frequent collocations, especially to the syntactically unbound *like* (discourse marker), comprise other discourse markers or clusters of markers. For example markers *I mean*, *you know* and *well* or conjunctions *and*, *but* or *because*.

Furthermore the collocations *and like*, *but like* and *I mean like* appear to have developed into somewhat fixed formulaic expressions. (Andersen, 2001: 285). As for the syntactically bound *like*, it seems to frequently collocate with markers *kind of* and *sort of*, especially in the function of *like* as a hedge, since these markers only strengthen the notion of vagueness and imprecision of the information that follows. These expressions may be also viewed as somewhat fixed (Andersen, 2001:286).

## 2.8. Grammaticalization of *like*

The word *like* has been and currently still is undergoing the process of change called grammaticalization, which is a gradual process during which a lexical item may either change into a grammatical one or shift from less grammatical to a more grammatical one (Meehan, 1991: 37). The lexical item gradually loses its meaning in the early stage of grammaticalization and if the process continues, the full original meaning is substituted by the newer uses (Meehan, 1991: 50).

The process and its influence on development of meaning and uses of *like* can be seen on the chart below, as suggested by Meehan (1991). The chart below shows the diachronic development of *like*:

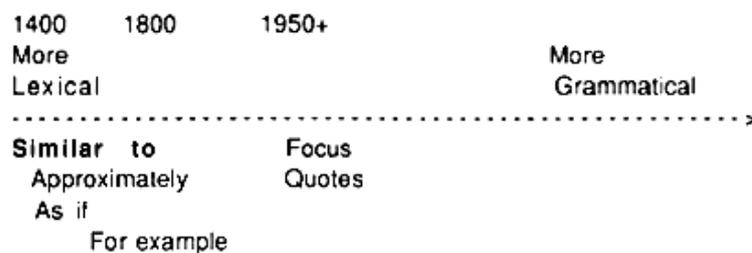


Figure 2 - diachronic development of "like", (Meehan, 1991: 50)

It is possible to say that the uses which are more lexical are later categorized as the standard functions in the thesis and the instances that show more of grammatical function are considered to be the non-standard functions.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the process of grammaticalization and further development of new meanings of *like* do not supplant the existing functions. It rather expands on existing meanings and creates a multi-layered structure where the functions to some extent overlap while they stay connected to one shared semantic core. (Buchstaller, 2001: 22) *Like* is thus considered to be in the early stage of grammaticalization, since its lexical meanings co-exist with the newer, more grammatical forms (Meehan, 1991: 49-50).

Having distinguished the standard and non-standard functions of *like*, it is important to keep in mind Buchstaller's notion of the semantic core of comparison and/or approximation which is shared by all of the above mentioned categories. It may serve as a reminder that multiple functions can be assigned to a single instance of *like* that will appear in an utterance, which may give a way to an extensive analysis of each extracted example from the corpus but it can also cause immense difficulties while trying to classify the results properly according to the above proposed categories.

### 3. Methodology

The methodological part focuses on the features of the corpus used for the purposes of this thesis along with the method used to extract the sample of 100 relevant instances of the non-standard functions of *like* and describes in detail the process of assortment of the individual instances.

#### 3.1. The corpus

The research serving as the basis of the thesis was carried out in the Corpus of contemporary American English (COCA), which was compiled by Mark Davies from the University of Birmingham. It is the only large and balanced corpus of American English. It contains more than 450 million words of text and is equally divided among spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic texts. The corpus included 20 million words each year from 1990-2012 and was updated regularly up until summer of 2012 (<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>).

COCA was ultimately selected for the purposes of the thesis, which attempts to analyze the word *like* and its non-standard functions in spoken language, for two reasons. Firstly, it was for the size of the spoken corpus which is incomparable to other available corpora. The amount of data collected in COCA exceeds other corpora, (the spoken portion of the corpus contains approximately 95 million words – in comparison with BNC, where it is "only" about 10 million words) and it is also the only corpus suitable for observing current and ongoing changes in the language (<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>). The data of the period from 1990 – 2012 will allow me to observe the non-standard functions of *like*, which gradually emerged and are ever so present in the language of contemporary speakers.

Secondly, it was selected due to the nature of the examined phenomenon, which is considered to be, originally, an Americanism (Andersen, 2001: 224), at least in the function of a quotative marker (D'Arcy, 2006: 406). However it is important to note that the non-standard use of *like* is not restricted to American English and appears in many other varieties of English.<sup>6</sup>

The spoken portion of COCA also differs from its predecessors in the method of data collection, which allowed it to amass significantly more data than any other corpus of spoken language. The method used by other corpora of spoken language, for example the BNC, was sending out real people with recorders<sup>7</sup>, attempting to capture natural speech on the streets, which was very time consuming and expensive. COCA chose another approach. It uses transcripts, which were already in electronic form from unscripted conversations on TV or radio programs. The question of authenticity of such data may arise, but even though there might be scripted portions of conversation present, majority of the data is presumed to be unscripted and genuine spoken language. The author of COCA claims that not even the previous method of recording brought 100% natural language results since it will not be that way as long as people will not know they are being recorded.

([http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/help/spoken\\_e.asp](http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/help/spoken_e.asp)).

### **3.2. The corpus search**

The corpus serves as the main instrument, which allows us to extract a representative number of instances which can be further analysed. The basic goal was to obtain 100 relevant instances of *like*, which were consequently assessed, sorted and described according to the categories proposed in section 2.5. *Non-standard functions*.

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. D'Arcy, 2005: 6-7 for details

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.pearsonlongman.com/dictionaries/corpus/spoken-bnc.html>

Apart from sorting the results into categories, I have also examined their syntactic position and the environment in which the individual instances appear and added the most frequent collocates to the overall analysis.

The basis for a corpus based research is to compile a precise query, suitable for the subject of research. In the case of the thesis, it was desirable to input a query that would exclude as many irrelevant instances of *like* as possible, since the researched word *like* is a very common word with a high frequency in the COCA (2,682.50 instances per one million words), while leaving sufficiently large amount of data to be assessed. This task proved to be much more difficult than expected. Taking into account the nature of the researched word and its non-standard functions it is not restricted in any way as for its syntactic position. The word *like*, especially when appearing as a discourse marker, can appear in any position in a clause, which deemed elimination of irrelevant instances by specification of syntactic position, as it would be for example possible, if the research was concerned about *like* only as a quotative marker, impossible. The same unsatisfactory conclusion was reached when trying to eliminate irrelevant instances of *like* with the use of the feature that is capable of tagging each individual word in the corpus as a part of speech. The only suitable option, while using this feature, would be a query that would only exclude *like* appearing as a verb, since the verbal form of *like* does not appear as or overlap with any of the non-standard functions. Unfortunately such a query is not possible within the COCA. Due to the conditions mentioned above the search was ultimately conducted using a simple query consisting only of the exact word "*like*".

### 3.3. Extraction of relevant data

The aim was to obtain 100 instances of the non-standard use of *like*. Since there was no possibility of narrowing down the results with a use of a detailed query, the final 100 instances had to be extracted manually.

For the reason that the focus of the thesis is only on spoken language, the search was restricted only to the spoken part of the COCA. Consequently the option of a sample of 100 examples was selected, which presented me with 100 randomly selected instances of *like* in context. Every instance out of these 100 examples was analysed, while the relevant ones were extracted. I have repeated this procedure until a list of 100 relevant instances was compiled.

I have been able to extract 100 relevant instances of the word *like* out of 456 instances of *like* taken from the spoken part of the COCA. This means that, statistically, every 4,56<sup>th</sup> *like* in the sample was a non-standard *like*. Since there are 256 353 instances of *like* in the spoken part of the COCA, the number of examples needed to extract 100 relevant instances would suggest that more than a quarter of instances (56 217 out of 256 353) in the spoken part of the corpus is *like* appearing in a non-standard function. What is, in my opinion, also remarkable about the sample extracted from the corpus is the scope of various functions it contained. This fact consequently allowed me to carry out the analysis according to the theoretical frame created for the purposes of the thesis, since majority of functions described there were present in the sample.

Finally, it is important to note that the individual extracted examples may, in fact, contain more instances of *like*, nevertheless, only one instance in an example was selected to be assessed. The selected instance, which was consequently the subject of analysis, is highlighted with bold type. Furthermore, if the function of *like* suggested a dependency to a clause or a clause constituent, then the relevant element was underlined.

### 3.4. Assessment and sorting

The procedure of manually extracting relevant instances was based on the categories proposed in section 2.4. *Standard functions*. If the instance of the word *like* suited one of the described standard uses, it was automatically eliminated. The relevant instances were divided according to their function (i.e. focus marker, quotative marker, hedge, discourse marker) into categories and assigned a unique label consisting of a capital letter indicating its function and a number. However the categorization is not fixed in some of the instances, since their primary function overlaps or merges with another one (cf. section 4.1.). Apart from categorizing the instances according to the theoretical frame, their position in an utterance is analysed as well as possible collocations. The collocations will be searched in the environment of two words to the left and two words to the right from the non-standard *like*.

Furthermore, it is important to say that since I had to rely on transcripts of spoken language without marked intonation patterns or stresses and also limited context available in the corpus, the assessment and categorization, especially in the case of hedges, focus markers and discourse markers, i.e. categories, where *like* does not appear within any distinguishable structure, is subjective and open to discussion.

The following are examples of *like* that were not included in the final sample of 100 relevant instances taken from the initial selection of 456 instances.

### 3.4.1 Comparative functions

- (1) *When we return, the prosecutor builds his case, claiming Dr. Greineder started acting like a suspect just minutes after his wife's murder. (S1)*
- (2) *Mr. FLAY: Well, it has the flavor of, like, a skirt steak or a flank steak. And when I say the flavor, it's got more flavor than, like, a filet mignon. It's not just tender. (S2)*
- (3) *Ms. RABY: No, I don't care. I don't think, like I said before, it will change my life or the things that are close [...]. (S3)*
- (4) *Michael Jackson only gave me a limited waiver of attorney-client privilege. The judge looked like he was just hit by a thunderbolt. (S4)*

In example (1) the speaker describes the manner in which Dr. Greineder acted, using *like* as a preposition conveying the meaning of "a manner similar to", which results in likening the behaviour of Dr. Greineder to that of a suspect. Example (2) shows two instances where *like* acts as a preposition and is by the expression of exemplification "for example". Examples (3) and (4) show *like* in a function of a conjunction, where (3) is paraphrasable with "as" or "like as" and (4) can be replaced by the more formal conjunction "as if".

### 3.4.2 Verb

*Like* functioning as an exclusively transitive verb carries the meaning of "finding something agreeable" in example (5), as the participants mentioned in the clause find the actions of the Congress agreeable.

- (5) *Just 13 percent of participants like what Congress is doing. Eighty-three percent do not. (S5)*

### 3.4.3 Approximation

- (6) [...] *not when you toss it, but when you spin it, you have something like 66 percent of, let's say, heads.* (S6)

The approximative function of *like* followed by numeric expression was categorized under standard uses, even though it is technically a hedge, on the basis of Biber's notion that "[these] hedges are described as very common with numbers, measurements and quantities" (Biber et al., 1999: 557) and Underhill's statement that "there is nothing particularly abnormal about them" (Underhill, 1988: 241). It expresses an estimative nature of the numeric expression, as can be seen in the example above.

After eliminating all the instances of *like* that suited the categories above from the total number of 456 instances extracted from the corpus, what was left was the final batch of 100 relevant instances, which was the subject of the analysis in this thesis.

## 4. Analysis

The analytical part is following the structure of categories as compiled in section 2.5. *Non-standard functions* and the sample of 100 relevant instances is assorted according to the function *like* in individual instances into tables (cf. section 9. Appendix). The analysis then focuses on detailed classification of the instances within the four categories based on the specific function of *like* in each instance.

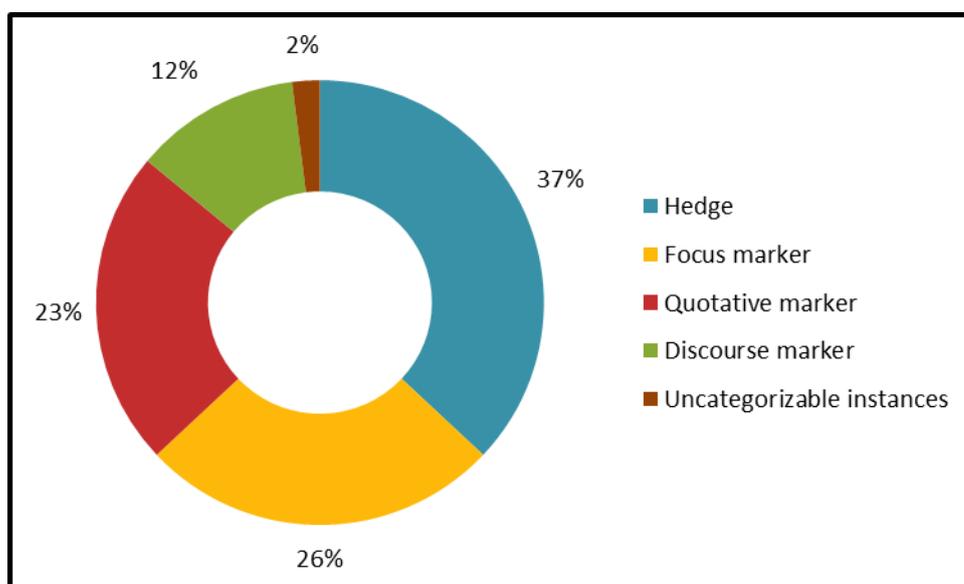


Figure 3 - distribution of functions

Figure 4 shows the distribution of functions of *like* in the sample of 100 instances. The most frequent function of *like* in the data was a hedge appearing in total of 37 instances. The second most frequent function was a focus marker (26 instances), closely followed by quotative marker (23 instances). *Like* as a discourse marker was the least frequent function appearing only in 12 instances. The remaining two examples of non-standard use of *like* were regarded as not belonging to any of the proposed categories and thus labelled as uncategorizable.

## 4.1. Overlapping functions

Each instance of *like* from the final sample of 100 relevant instances was assessed individually and consequently categorized according to the function the word *like* embodied most prominently. Nevertheless the categorization cannot be regarded as final and fixed. The reason for this is the multifunctionality of *like*. A single instance of *like* may be regarded as representing several functions at once.

This issue was most apparent in *like* functioning as a hedge because in majority of such cases the word *like* can be simultaneously regarded as also having the function of a focus marker. The majority of instances labelled as hedges have also a focusing function.

- (7) *PHILLIS: So Braille is easy. McCLAIN: Yes, it is easy to read PHILLIPS: Yes? McCLAIN: It's some -- there's kind of, like, hard words in there PHILLIPS: Like, what's a hard word? McCLAIN: Like, I can't pronounce, like, "Chicago, " so I have to pronounce it, like, " Chic-ago. " So anyway, it's, like -- I just... (18H)*

Example (7) shows a conversation between a blind person, who shares her experiences with reading a book in Braille, and an interviewer. She claims that reading Braille is easy with the exception of some "hard words". The clause where she introduces the concept of "hard words" contains a false start, which is followed by a different construction with existential *there* followed by a hedge *kind of* and then the word *like*, which was for the purposes of the thesis marked also as a hedge. The expression "hard words" is quite vague and may imply various definitions and the hedges preceding it mark it automatically as imprecise. The fact that the interviewer immediately demands explanation of the term may support this claim. However, taking into account that the expression sparks further discussion, the word *like* may be also viewed as a focus marker which introduces the most important and focused information in the clause. These two functions seem to overlap without being mutually exclusive and may be regarded as complementary. Finally, it would be also possible to assess the word *like* as a discourse marker, particularly for the reason that there already is one

hedging expression present in the clause and another one might seem as redundant. In addition the false start of the clause might indicate some difficulties in planning on the part of the speaker, who might use the discourse marker to fill a pause to gain time to think the response through. Nevertheless, the vagueness of the expression "hard words" seems to contradict such theory.

The focusing function is also implied in instances where *like* serves as a quotative marker. In view of the fact that *like* in the function of a quotative marker is a part of somewhat fixed constructions (*be+like, it's +like-enactment, lexical verb + like*) and always introduces a clause, it cannot be possibly mistaken for a hedge or a discourse marker. The focusing function seems to be embedded naturally in the quotative marker, as the clause it introduces will always be the most important and focused element.

- (8) *She says, yeah, you know. I said, what, **she's like**, well, you know, he was struggling. I said, you mean struggling with like the emotions? She's like, no. (Q11)*

The example (8) illustrates the overlapping functions in a quotative marker. The *be+like* construction introduces direct speech or thought, which contains the new and most important information that leads to further discussion of the subject, which is that the person in question was struggling. Focusing function is not the only one which seems to be implied in the quotative construction with *like*. There also appears to be a hint of a hedge present, indicating that the report of the direct speech may not be precise and allows the speaker a slight divergence from what was actually uttered.

The last case of overlapping functions involves the focus marker *like* in clause-initial position. It concerns instances 1F, 3F, 7F, 13F, 16F, 22F, and 26F. Even though these instances are categorized among focus markers they might be regarded, due to their position, as somewhat detached from the syntactic structure of the utterance that follows them and thus considered a discourse marker.

- (9) *But if you let yesterday defeat London, there's no point. **Like**, the actions of yesterday were horrendous. And by not traveling or not going on with your routine, you're just kind of giving in to what they want. (7F)*

The marker *like* in the example (9) stands in the clause-initial position and appears to be syntactically unbound. On one hand it can be seen as a discourse marker, used by the speaker to seamlessly introduce a statement into his utterance. On the other hand it can be regarded as a focus marker highlighting the most important information in the utterance. The speaker talks about the bombings that took place in London and explains that people must continue with their daily routine. The focus that is put on the whole clause highlights the statement, which is the most important within that utterance and that is condemning the act in order to avoid misinterpretation. Therefore it can be said that these examples of *like*, which appear in clause-initial position represent another subcategory of the focus marker, i.e. a focus marker with an implied discourse linking function, which will be added to the final overview of non-standard functions. To conclude the topic of overlapping functions it is important to note that *like* as a discourse marker appears to be the only function which usually does not imply either a hedge or focus in the utterance in which it appears.

Having described the difficulties encountered during the assortment of the results due to the multifunctionality of non-standard *like*, the analytical part of the thesis will now offer categorization of the instances extracted from the corpus based on the theoretical frame described in section 2.5. It comprises all the main categories, i.e. a focus marker, quotative marker, hedge and a discourse marker. Some of the sub-categories described in the theoretical part were not represented in the data collected, e.g. a hedge that would introduce an unusual notion (cf. section 2.5.3.3.), however other were further specified or added. Nevertheless, they all serve as the basis for the proposed final comprehensive overview of non-standard functions of *like* (cf. Table 7).

## 4.2. Focus marker

*Like* appearing as a device used to mark focus in a clause or an utterance appeared in the sample extracted from the corpus in 26 instances. These 26 instances were assorted according to the categorization introduced in section 2.5.1. It is important to note that all the instances labelled as focus markers share the same function, which is highlighting the most significant information in the utterance. It may be either the newest and most important information presented or simply an element speakers want to point out in order to communicate the objective of their utterances to the other participants in a conversation. By focusing certain information in an utterance, the speaker affects the structure of the discourse. Finally, unlike the other functions described in the analytical part of this thesis the position of the focus marker in an utterance seems to alter or rather add to its function as was already mentioned (cf. section 4.1.).

| Focus marker        |  |  |                            |   |              |
|---------------------|--|--|----------------------------|---|--------------|
| Function            | marking focus in declarative sentences |  | marking focus in questions |   | Total (%)    |
| Position            | clause-medial                          | clause-initial<br>(discourse marker implied) | clause- medial             | lause-initial<br>(discourse marker implied) | 26<br>(100%) |
| Number of instances | 13<br>(50,00 %)                        | 7<br>(26,92 %)                               | 5<br>(19,23 %)             | 1<br>(3,85 %)                               |              |

Table 1 - Focus marker; function, position, and number of instances

### 4.2.1. Marking focus in declarative sentences

Twenty instances can be described as employing *like* as a focus marker to mark focused or new information in declarative sentences. The instances where the focus marker stands in a clause-medial position highlights a specific information in the clause. The highlighted information occurs in the majority of instances at the end of the clause.

There is only one example where the clause-medial *like* focused an information that occurred in the middle of the utterance (15F). The function of the instances where the focus marker appeared clause-initially were already mentioned (cf. section 4.1.) and they are considered to have an additional discourse linking function, which is described in example (9).

- (10) *So you sent in this story -- this story to Glamour on a whim? Ms-ALEXA-RAAD: Right. I was working pretty late, and I must have been delirious with lack of sleep, because I was on Glamour magazine Web site and I sent in one of my stories. And this was based on when I was in Berlin and I was just writing, like, my thoughts and my experiences with friends. And then when they called me and said 'You're a semifinalist,' I didn't believe them. WINFREY: Really? Ms-RAAD: They had to actually send me my story and I was like, 'Yeah, that looks like my story.'* (4F)

The example (10) shows *like* introducing the noun phrase as the new and the most significant information in the utterance. The speaker mentions that she sent one of her stories to a magazine competition and even though it concerned only her thoughts and personal experiences, it was a success. The focus marker *like* highlights the most significant information and probably further puts it in contrast with more serious themes that might have been a more likely topic, at least for the speaker, to be selected to the competition.

#### 4.2.2. Marking focus in questions

Instances where *like* marks focus in a question are 6F, 10F, 12F, 18F, 20F and 26F. Generally, a question can be regarded as containing focused information, without the need to use focus markers. It contains a point which will be, ideally, answered by the other participant in a conversation. Nevertheless it is possible to use the focus marker *like* as the means to highlight an element or part of the question, which then suggests listener exactly on what to focus the answer. The majority of instances (five in total) represent the case where *like* appears clause-medially and modifies a specific element.

- (11) *KOTB: But do you think there's a big distinction between, like, a female boss and a male boss? GIFFORD: Having -- I can't even think of one.* (20F)

Example (11) shows a clear example of specific focused information in a question.

The focus is put on the inquiry whether there is a (big) distinction between bosses of different genders or not and the following reply answers exactly that. Nevertheless it would be possible to put focus on other elements in the question without changing its structure, simply by replacing the focus marker *like*. Furthermore, the focused element would not have to be placed in the clause-final position. If, for example, the marker is placed before the noun phrase "a big distinction", it would modify the adjective, indicating to the other participant to focus there and the resulting reply would probably not focus on the distinction between the genders but rather whether there is any (big) distinction in the first place.

The one instance where the focus marker appeared clause-initially again implies discourse linking function.

- (12) *KING: What do you -- how do you feel about all this public attention?*  
*L-MARTIN: We would like it to be over. KING: Well **like**, what are you doing with your life? Let's get us up to date on each of you. Rachael, what are you doing in your life now? (26F)*

The speaker starts his utterance with a discourse marker "well", which allows him to continue with the interview with a completely different topic and continues with the focusing *like*, that alerts the interviewee that either a change or an important material is being introduced. Nevertheless, it would be possible to identify the function of *like* as a discourse marker, probably sharing the function of the discourse marker "well". It is thus considered a focus marker with discourse linking function.

#### **4.2.5. Position and modified elements**

*Like* in the function of a focus marker appeared in clause-medial position in eighteen examples (2F, 4F, 5F, 6F, 8F, 9F, 10F, 11F, 12F, 14F, 15F, 17F, 18F, 19F, 20F, 21F, 24F and 25F). The remaining eight instances represent *like* occurring in clause-initial position (1F, 3F, 7F, 13F, 16F, 22F, 23F and 26F).

| Introduced element  | NP              | clause         | VP             | AdvP          | Total        |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Number of instances | 12<br>(46,15 %) | 8<br>(30,77 %) | 5<br>(19,23 %) | 1<br>(3,85 %) | 26<br>(100%) |

Table 2- Focus marker; introduced elements

*Like* as a focus marker was observed to introduce various constituents in the data collected. It put focus on noun phrases (4F, 5F, 6F, 9F, 10F, 12F, 14F, 15F, 19F, 20F, 24F, 25F) in which it entered the noun phrase only in one instance (9F). The next constituent was a verb phrase (2F, 11F, 17F, 18F, 21F), where *like* entered the phrase in two instances. Instances where *like* appeared clause-initially are considered to put focus on the clause as a whole (1F, 3F, 7F, 13F, 16F, 22F, 23F, 26F). The remaining instance of *like* (8F) represents a focused adverbial phrase.

The focus marker *like* appeared in the majority of instances before the constituents and interrupted the structure of the phrase it introduced only in two instances (9F and 11F) where the focus marker appeared within a noun phrase, before the post modification that is realized by a prepositional phrase but after the preposition (9F). The other instance (11F) shows the focus marker between the auxiliary and the lexical verb in a verb phrase.

#### 4.2.6. Collocations

The focus marker *like* was accompanied by the adverb with additional focusing function "just"<sup>8</sup> in two instances (4F and 24F). There were two instances where there appeared additional discourse marker next to the focus marker; namely "I mean" (23F) and "well" (26F) and one instance (16F) where *like* appeared in company of the coordinator "and".

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<sup>8</sup> "Used to place the focus on a particular word or phrase plus having the meaning of *simply* or *merely*." (OED)

### 4.3. Quotative marker

There are 23 instances of *like* functioning as a quotative marker introducing reported speech or thoughts in the final sample of 100 relevant instances. These 23 instances can be further divided into those employing the *be+like* construction which appeared in ten instances, then the *be+like-enactment* construction, which appeared in eight instances and six instances, where *like* has the formal features of a quotative marker but the structure is different.

| Quotative marker    |                 |                      |                   |              |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Structure           | be+like         | it+be+like-enactment | lexical verb+like | Total (%)    |
| Number of instances | 10<br>(43,48 %) | 7<br>(30,43 %)       | 5<br>(21,74 %)    | 23<br>(100%) |

Table 3- Quotative marker; structure and number of instances

#### 4.3.1. *Be+like*

The quotative marker with the *be+like* structure appeared ten times among the data collected. There were no anomalies among those ten instances (Q1, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q11, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17).

(13) *I mean, I quit my job. I'm, like, 'I gave up my doorman job.'* (Q6)

In example (13) the *be+like* quotative marker is used to introduce speech that the speaker uttered in the past and is reporting the situation some time later.

As for the distinction between perfective and imperfective aspect of the utterances that are being reported, applicable for the *be+like* construction, instances Q6, Q8, Q11 and Q16 can be labelled with certainty as perfective, i.e. they were actually uttered.

The evidence for such a label is that these reported utterances are either themselves a response following a question or a statement or are followed by a response, as in example (14):

- (14) *Well, well, I'm pregnant, you know? "And **I was like**," Oh, really?" You know?*  
(Q8)

Instances Q7, Q15, Q17 can be labelled as imperfective, i.e. that they represent an inner monologue or a thought, which was never actually uttered and cannot be considered a representation of direct speech.

- (15) *I think it was calculated. COLLINS: When I first heard it, **I was like**, this woman is a genius.* (Q15)

Finally instances Q1 and Q4 may be interpreted either as perfective or as imperfective, depending on extra textual factors.

- (16) *DOUG TILTON: **She's like**, you know,' Play with the audience, but don't- you know, don't do too much and don't forget to bring in scandal, and we want to make it look like that Mitch is jealous.'* (Q1)

#### 4.3.2. *It+ be+ like-enactment*

I propose a slightly modified label for the quotative construction previously referred to as to the *it's +like+ enactment* due to the fact that in my data there occurred instances where the auxiliary "be" appeared in its past form "was". The label *it+ be+like-enactment* is more accurate because it allows the inclusion of the instances with the tensed auxiliary.

There are seven instances that use the construction *it+be+like-enactment* out of the 23 labelled as quotative markers. Instances Qe2, Qe23 show the full structure of the construction (cf. 2.5.2.2.), i.e. *it+be+like+response cry+ (clause)*.

- (17) *And a film with that kind of promotion, because the thing is, as it is right now **it's like**, ooh, controversy, right? Which in itself promotes, right?* (Qe23)

The remaining five instances (Qe3, Qe5, Qe10, Qe12, Qe18) lack the response cry and introduce only a clause instead.

- (18) *And you're -- **it's just like** there's no way that nobody would have heard from her by 4:30 in the afternoon. (Qe18)*

Finally, there were three examples (Qe3, Qe12 and Qe13) where the structure of the quotative construction differed in the tense of the auxiliary verb "be".

- (19) *'No, I don't want to go.' And **it was, like,** 'Captain, you know, this is your job. This is your duty for the good old red, white and blue.' (Qe3)*

### 4.3.3. Lexical verb + like

The instances QL9, QL19, QL20, QL21 and QL22 are those which differ in structure and have to be assessed independently on the proposed categories. It contains examples where the auxiliary "be" is substituted by a lexical verb, which further allows the speaker to specify the attitude accompanying of the quoted material.

- (20) *[...] told me some girl came in there and just freaking out like, you know, I need some bath salts, you know, like I'll strip for you guys.' (QL9)*

The example (20) contains construction "freaking out + like", which helps the speaker to communicate the situation and manner in which was the quoted material performed (the original speaker was upset) to the listener. The example also contains ellipsis, where the pronoun *she* and the auxiliary verb *be* is actually omitted after the coordinating conjunction *and*. Without the omission the clause would appear as follows: "and she was just freaking out like". Consequently, this structure can be seen as a modification of the *be + like* construction through ellipsis, where the lexical verb takes the function of the auxiliary.

### 4.3.4. Position and introduced element

The position of quotative *like* can be described as clause-medial, since it is bound to the left, i.e. to the rest of the quotative construction. The quotative *like* occurred always in the slot immediately before an embedded clause it introduced, with the exception of cases where there is a discourse marker inserted between them.

### 4.3.5. Collocations

In regard to the environment in which *like* in its function of a quotative marker appears it was possible to observe a frequent neighbour, which is the focusing particle with additional focusing function "just". I was considering the environment of two words to the left before the quotative marker and anything between the construction *be+like* or *be+like-enactment* and the actual reported information. Out of 23 instances, five contained the adverb "just" (Q9, Qe13, Q14, Q16, Q18), which has the ability to put additional focus on the direct speech introduced by *like*<sup>9</sup>. The focusing particle "just" appeared within the quotative construction, i.e. after the auxiliary verb and before *like* in four cases. The only case where "just" did not enter between the verb and *like* was the instance Q9, where "just" preceded the lexical verb that was a part of the quotative marker. Another recurring neighbour can be seen in three instances of *like* as a quotative marker (Q1, Q4, and Qs9), where it was accompanied by the discourse marker "you know". The discourse marker "you know" stands in the same position in all three instances, i.e. after the quotative marker but before the quote and has its function would probably be a pause filler.

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<sup>9</sup> The same particle can be seen in the neighbourhood of focus *like* (cf. 4.2.6)

## 4.4. Hedge

*Like* appearing in a function a hedge, i.e. an element that adds a certain degree of imprecision and vagueness to the clause elements it introduces, was present in the final sample in 37 instances, which makes it the most frequent function in the examined sample.

| Hedge               |                                       |                     |                                    |              |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Function            | indicating imprecision or uncertainty | avoiding commitment | setting off stereotyped expression | Total (%)    |
| Number of instances | 11<br>(29,73 %)                       | 24<br>(64,86 %)     | 2<br>(5,41 %)                      | 37<br>(100%) |

Table 4- Hedge; function and number of instances

### 4.4.1. Indicating imprecision or uncertainty

Total of eleven instances (1H, 2H, 5H, 8H, 18H, 26H, 27H, 28H, 32H, 33H, 37H) can be described as implying some degree of imprecision or uncertainty, or leaving the statement "slightly open" (Underhill, 1988:241). Instances 1H, 18H, 32H and 33H best describe the imprecision of the information given, which is based probably on the lack of knowledge of a specific word suitable in a particular situation at the time the speech act took place:

(22) *KOTB: Wait, this is important. This is a thing that you're doing where you put **like** a laser thing on your stomach...GIFFORD: Yes.* (33H)

In the example (22) the hosts talk about a fat reducing procedure one of them underwent and not knowing the proper scientific name of the device used in the procedure she chooses to call it "a laser thing"; a vague term that is acceptable to use since it follows the hedge *like*, which marks it automatically as imprecise and indicates that it should not be taken seriously.

The example (23) represents a different case of imprecision. *Like* in this example modifies an adverbial of place, which is realized by a prepositional phrase.

- (23) *DAKOTA-1HOMELESS-# I was 16. I went and I waited and, **like at McDonald's or something**, and I saw her pull out [...]* (5H)

The speaker in this example recalls a situation that happened in the past and mentions that she waited "like at McDonald's or something". Since the name of the establishment is followed by the expression "or something" it strongly implies that the name of the fast-food restaurant serves as a general term for any similar establishment. The hedging *like* alerts the listener, that the information that will follow will be imprecise, which indicates that the name of the place does not matter and the listener is then aware that this information will not be crucial for understanding the propositional meaning of the speakers utterance. However, the pragmatic meaning, i.e. the generalization will be weakened with the omission of the hedge *like*.

Furthermore, there is one instance (24) which represents a case where the speaker employed hedging *like* before an adverbial phrase indicating a position or a place. In this example *like* served as a device to indicate uncertainty caused by the lack of precise knowledge caused by circumstances:

- (24) *I saw somebody that had a gunshot wound **to like the abdomen area** and a police SUV cruiser came flying up to the scene [...]* (8H)

The speaker was present when a shooting occurred and he recalls seeing somebody being shot. He is not exactly sure where was the person shot due to the stressful circumstances, so he generalizes the location to "somewhere in the area of the abdomen" with the use of the hedge *like*.

#### **4.4.2. Avoiding commitment**

24 instances (4H, 6H, 7H, 9H, 10H, 11H, 12H, 13H, 14H, 15H, 16H, 17H, 19H, 20H, 21H, 23H, 22H, 24H, 25H, 27H, 29H, 30H, 35H and 36H) represent the instances where *like* somewhat distances the speakers from the words uttered and allows them to avoid full commitment to their utterances.

The reason for the speakers to employ a hedge in order to distance themselves from their utterances may be politeness, lack of knowledge, constraint etc.

- (25) *RIVERA: But has he ever murdered anybody? Ms-LEE: No, he just... RIVERA: Not one, two, three, thirteen people? Ms-LEE: No, he's just, **like**, a pig. RIVERA: He's a pig. What's Richard Ramirez?* (29H)

The example (25) shows an excerpt of a conversation between the host (Rivera) and the guest (Ms. Lee), discussing Lee's abusive ex-husband. Lee addresses her ex-husband as being a pig. She is not likening him to a pig but instead uses the word as an expletive from which she distances herself by using the hedge *like*, possibly because of constraint. The expression is immediately repeated by Rivera which renders it valid in the situation. Similar example can be seen in the example (26), where the speaker employs the hedge *like* accompanied by the adverb "just"<sup>10</sup> to modify the whole clause and to prepare the listener for an information she must know is controversial, hence the use of hedging, to somewhat distance herself from the statement in order to shield herself:

- (26) *And without question, our viewers believe what this mother did, injecting her little girl with Botox for so-called wrinkles, was wrong. But yet, so many more questions for us. Is this a crime? Could Britney be taken away from her mother? And how could a little girl look in the mirror and see anything but innocence? BRITNEY-CAMPBELL-# I just, **like**, don't, like, think wrinkles are nice for a little girl.* (35H)

In (27) the hedge *like* introduces an idiomatic adjective that means "extremely poor" (OED), which is again not meant to be taken literally.

- (27) [...] *you know, we're not -- we're not by any means, **like**, dirt-poor, but we're not, you know, rich either and, [...]* (4H)

The speaker mentions this extreme to establish a contrast between being poor and rich, but at the same time provides her with a distance from such a harsh statement by using the hedge *like*. Similar example can be seen in the instance 15H.

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. section 4.1.1.

Finally, there was a large group of instances in which the hedge *like* indicates the speaker's non-commitment to what was uttered and signals to the listener that the information is not to be taken literally. What is interesting about these instances is that they represent somewhat exaggerated information. This use of the hedging *like* was not explicitly mentioned in any of the previous studies of *like* and will be added to the list of possible uses of the non-standard *like*. It contains ten instances of hedging *like* (6H, 10H, 11H, 19H, 21H, 23H, 27H, 30H, 31H and 36H), where it precedes either a noun phrase, adjectival phrase or adverbial phrase where the head element was further modified by an intensifier "really" (19H and 23H) or "very" (21H and 27H) or determined by "never" (30H), "every" (11H, 31H). Furthermore an instance in which the head element was modified by an adjective in superlative form (6H) and lastly an instance where *like* modified an adverb with superlative meaning (10H). Finally it seems that all of these examples represent the cases in which is there is modified the truth-condition of the utterances, i.e. the degree to which these utterances are perceived as true or not.

(28) *My arm's are, **like**, really red, like, just, like, mainly my wrists.* (19H)

(29) *JENNA-MISCAVIGE-HI# I must have been like eight years old. We were all told to watch it. And we **like** never watched TV.* (30H)

In examples (28) and (29) the constituent preceded by the hedge *like* is modified in terms of the speaker's commitment to the truth of the information presented in them. Without the hedge, the statements can be perceived as true, i.e. the speaker's arms in (28) were actually extremely red and that the speaker in (29) never watched television. Nevertheless the hedge alters this perception and automatically modifies the degree of truth of the statements indicating that they may be true only to some extent.

(30) *TRACI-HOVEL-1ACTR# Why (inaudible)? KARA-*

*1BEACHGOER2# That's **like**, possibly, the craziest thing I've ever seen.* (6H)

The hedge *like*, as used in the example (30), also modifies the truth conditions of the clause. The speaker says that a certain thing is the craziest he has ever seen. The function of *like* as an epistemic hedge is further strengthened by the following adverb "possibly", which has the same function. This example further supports the claim that hedging *like* can affect, unlike any other non-standard function of *like*, the truth-conditions of an utterance.

#### 4.4.3. Setting off stereotyped expressions

There were two instances (3H, 34H) in the data collected, where *like* introduces stereotyped expressions, which are not meant to be taken literally.

31. *At that time, Erica avoided focusing on the Olympics. ERICA-SORGI: Pretty much I'm kind of, I guess I could say, taking it, like, one step at a time, but obviously the Olympics would be, like, very nice to go to, and hopefully I would do well if I ever went there. (34H)*

The example (31) contains the idiomatic expression "one step at a time" which denotes a gradual and regular progress.<sup>11</sup> The expression is not meant to be taken literally, because the speaker is certainly not undertaking a gradual process towards getting to compete at the Olympics, as much as she is focusing on something else. In this case the hedge *like* and the stereotyped expression represent a euphemism, since the speaker probably does not want to say directly, that she is not preparing for the Olympic Games at all.

#### 4.4.4. Position and introduced elements

All of the instances, in which *like* was identified as a hedge, are syntactically bound, i.e. bound on the element on which they depend, whether the element was a clause constituent or a whole clause. Its position was clause-medial, except for one instance where it occurred clause-initially.

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<sup>11</sup> OED entry *step by step*

If omitted, the propositional meaning of the utterance remains the same, however the pragmatic meaning may be lost and the interpretation of the utterance may stray from the originally intended one.

| Introduced elements | NP              |        | AdjP           | VP             |        | AdvP         | PrepP        |        | clause        | Total (%)    |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------|----------------|----------------|--------|--------------|--------------|--------|---------------|--------------|
|                     | before          | within |                | before         | within |              | before       | within |               |              |
| Position            | 15              | 1      | before         | 5              | 1      | before       | 1            | 2      | before        | 37<br>(100%) |
| Number of instances | 16<br>(43,24 %) |        | 8<br>(21,62 %) | 6<br>(16,22 %) |        | 3<br>(8,11%) | 3<br>(8,11%) |        | 1<br>(2,70 %) |              |

Table 5- Hedge; introduced elements and position

In sixteen instances *like* precedes a noun phrase (1H, 6H, 7H, 11H, 13H, 16H, 18H, 21H, 22H, 24H, 25H, 29H, 33H, 34H and 37H), where it appears before the NP, except for one instance (32H) where it enters the phrase and occurred between the determiner and the head noun. The total of eight instances represents the hedge *like* introducing adjectival phrase (2H, 3H, 4H, 15H, 17H, 19H, 23H and 26H). There are also five instances where it precedes a verb phrase (9H, 20H, 28H, 30H and 35H) and one instance where it enters it (14H). Three instances show *like* standing before an adverbial phrase (10H, 27H and 36H). Furthermore, three instances of the hedge *like* introduces a prepositional phrase (5H, 8H and 31H), where it enters the phrase and appears after the preposition in two instances (8H and 31H). Finally, there is one example in which *like* introduces the whole clause (12H).

#### 4.4.5. Collocations

In total of seven examples (1H, 9H, 13H, 16H, 18H, 20H and 28H) the hedging *like* was accompanied by another hedge – "kind of", either forming the somewhat formulaic expression "kind of like", or appearing after the word *like*.

The examples 9H and 16H were not only followed by "kind of" but also preceded by "sort of", which formed the formulaic expression "sort of like". It resulted in a cluster "sort of like kind of", i.e. there are three hedging expressions preceding the element that follows them. In addition to these hedging expressions, there were two instances (6H, 17H) where like was either preceded or followed by epistemic stance adverbs "possibly" and "actually", functioning as a further reinforcement of the hedge *like*.

## 4.5. Discourse marker

After categoring all the instances that suited in the categories as described in sections 4.1., 4.2., and 4.3., a number of fourteen instances of non-standard *like* was left to be assessed. Twelve instances were consequently labelled as discourse markers. The discourse markers proved to have primarily the function of a device that helps structure the discourse and which has little to no propositional or pragmatic meaning.

| Discourse marker    |                              |                |                      |                           |              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Function            | hesitation or a pause filler | discourse link | terminated utterance | accompanying false starts | Total (%)    |
| Number of instances | 8<br>(66,67 %)               | 2<br>(16,67 %) | 1<br>(8,33 %)        | 1<br>(8,33 %)             | 12<br>(100%) |

Table 6- Discourse marker; function

### 4.5.1. Hesitation or a pause filler

Total of eight instances (1D, 3D,5D, 6D, 7D, 10D ,11D, 12D) was labelled as a discourse marker functioning as a filler of a pause.

- (32) *Mr. WHITE: They would back away, they would call me names, and they'd throw themselves up against a locker, you know, like, and they couldn't get close to me for any reason, they couldn't walk in the same hall. (3D)*

The example (32) contains two discourse markers inserted between two clauses, which are otherwise connected by the coordinating conjunction "and".

These discourse markers probably serve as pause fillers, indicating a brief hesitation or a pause the speaker employed to gain some time to plan the rest of the utterance. If those discourse markers are omitted from the example, neither the propositional nor the pragmatic meaning is influenced.

- (33) *Mr-LEE: I was kind of losing my (censored) mind and I was drinking a lot of (censored) booze just to deal. I was, **like**, you know, lots and lots of vodka, probably about a gallon of vodka a week. (7D)*

The example (33) proves to be more difficult to assess, since there appears to be an ellipsis of a lexical verb; in this case possibly the verb "drinking", as used in the previous sentence of the example. Nevertheless the function of *like* seems to be of a pause filler, since it is accompanied by another discourse marker, "you know" used to fill pauses and its omission, provided that the lexical word would not be ellipted, would again affect neither propositional nor pragmatic meaning of the clause.

#### **4.5.2. False starts**

Example (34) serves as the only instance of a false start, which is a case where the speaker says something and then retraces it to begin again with a set of new words.

- (34) *Because, you know, she's four, you know, and she's, **like**, you know, when her dad calls her or she's always wanting to call her dad and everything else, you know... (2D)*

The speaker in (34) talks about his step-daughter and her relationship to her biological father. He starts explaining that because of her age, she still wants to interact with her biological father. The speaker begins to explain that but he stops in the middle of his utterance, retraces what has been said and introduces the new start with the discourse marker *like* with a help of another one, in this case "you know".

### 4.5.3. Terminated utterance

- (35) *Ms-RAY: Make mom's cheeks rosy. WINFREY: Make sure you do that. Ms-RAY: And then I would slide, like... WINFREY: That'll make... Ms-RAY:... an Oprah magazine in there so she could read in bed. (4D)*

In example (35) the speaker's utterance is not only interrupted by the other participant in the conversation but the speaker probably hesitated, which allowed the other participant to commence her turn, which was then interrupted or rather completed by the speaker. The intended function of *like* is impossible to distinguish due to insufficient contextual information.

### 4.5.4. Discourse link

Two instances (8D, 9D) represent the function of a discourse link, a device that provides a connection between two syntactically or thematically different units.

- (36) *We're sort of atavistic in allowing instincts that were appropriate for an earlier period, like , I mean, anything that is strange you had to say strange, enemy, danger, destroy, you know. (9D)*

The speaker talks about denying certain instincts, when he suddenly interrupts his utterance by inserting two discourse markers and continues with a new syntactic unit. The discourse marker *like* and "you now" then serve as a link between those two units and assure a certain degree of continuity of the speakers utterance.

### 4.5.6. Position and modified elements

*Like* occurring as a discourse marker is not bound to a dependent in an utterance, however its position can be described as either clause-initial, clause-medial or clause-final.

| Position            | clause-final position | clause-initial position | clause-medial position | Total (%)    |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Number of instances | 9<br>(75,00 %)        | 2<br>(16,67 %)          | 1<br>(8,33 %)          | 12<br>(100%) |

Table 7 - Discourse marker; position

The position of *like* is assessed according to Macaulay's description (cf. section 2.6). *Like* as a discourse marker appeared most often in a clause-final position (1D, 2D, 3D, 4D, 6D, 7D, 8D, 9D and 10D). In two examples it appeared in clause-initial position (5D and 11D) and in one instance in clause medial-position (12D).

The discourse marker is not dependent on any syntactic element and its omission does not influence the propositional and the pragmatic meaning of the utterance. Removing the marker from an utterance might cause, in some cases, a disturbance to their continuity and fluency and might result in awkward unfilled pauses and fragmented discourse.

#### **4.5.7. Collocations**

*Like* functioning as a discourse marker was the function the most prone to appear in company of other markers (nine instances out of twelve). The majority of instances (2D, 3D, 6D, 7D, 8D, 10D, and 11D) were accompanied by another discourse marker, which was in all these cases the discourse marker "you know". The instance 9D represents *like* accompanied by the discourse marker "I mean". Furthermore two instances contain clusters of markers: 5D contains the discourse marker "I mean" and another *like* in the same function, which together appear in a cluster of markers further accompanied by the hedge "sort of" and similar situation can be observed in instance 11D, where a cluster of discourse markers precedes the clause containing propositional meaning.

## 4.6. Uncategorizable instances

The remaining two instances were impossible to categorize according to the categories compiled in the theoretical part of the thesis. The first instance (37) contains the word *like* as a part of a phrase. The function of *like* in this instance comes the closest to a hedge introducing stereotyped information.

- (37) *But, of course, the President-elect will have to take a limousine because everything is so closed off around here right now.  
I'm looking at fences and security **like** you wouldn't believe.* (U1)

The whole phrase "like you wouldn't believe" modifies the noun phrase "fences and security" in a sense that there were unbelievable security measures provided for the safety of the President-elect. It seems that the phrase, which appears as a predicative modifier of the preceding noun phrase, substitutes the attributive adjective "unbelievable", which would be a valid option in the given context. The reason for that might be explained by Biber's claim, that attributive adjectives appear much rarely in spoken discourse in comparison to written registers and if they appear, they tend to be simple and monosyllabic (Biber et al., 1999: 1044). Biber does not explain why such a trend occurs in spoken discourse apart from his notion of "non-elaboration", i.e. the speakers tend to avoid difficult words and structures in general. In the example the presumed adjective "unbelievable" would consist of five syllables and it is substituted by a phrase, which also consists of five syllables. Nevertheless, these five syllables are spread among a sequence of simpler and shorter words, which is probably easier for the speaker to pronounce.

Even though there is no proof from a dictionary or a grammar, as to the validity and fixedness of the phrase "like you wouldn't believe" a further research in the COCA resulted in eleven additional instances where the exact same phrase appears and is more or less paraphrasable by the attributive adjective "unbelievable" or the adverb "unbelievably".

The second instance (38) might be seen as a focus marker, nevertheless the reason why it is assessed separately is the fact that *like* in this clause stands for the preposition "except for".

(38) *Wow. Your family would get food, like stale cookies and cakes and things, from a bakery because you had no food, **like**, stale cream puffs. And that's what you survived on. (U2)*

Even though *like* functioning as a preposition in a sentence is regarded as a standard function and thus is not examined in the thesis, this case proves to be a non-standard use of *like*. *Like* as a preposition describes concepts on the basis of similarity, comparison or approximation (cf. section 2.4.). In this case *like* takes the meaning of the preposition "except for" and strays from the standard semantic core. Furthermore, if *like* is omitted from the sentence, the structure is automatically affected and rendered ungrammatical. This test signals that in this case *like* is a lexical word and rules out possible confusion with, for example, a discourse marker, hedge or a focus marker, all of which may be omitted from a sentence without affecting its grammatical structure. Such use of *like* is not documented in the available literature or OED, nevertheless further research would be required to determine if such use of *like* is a newly acquired function or simply a one-time phenomenon.

## 5. Summary of results

| Non-standard function                   | Description of use  |   |  | Total<br>100 (%) |  |
|---|---|---|--|------------------|--|
| Hedge                                   | indicating that the information modified by the hedge <i>like</i> is not meant to be taken literally                          |   |  | 37 (%)           |  |
|   | avoiding commitment<br>- lack of knowledge<br>- exaggeration  | marking imprecise or uncertain information<br>- lack of knowledge<br>- generalization | marking stereotyped information                      |                  |  |
|   | 24  | 11  | 2  |                  |  |
| Focus marker                            | marking the new and most significant information<br>(clause-initial instances have an implied function of a discourse marker) |   |  | 26 (%)           |  |
|   | declarative clauses   | declarative clauses<br>(clause-initial position)                                      | questions  |                  | questions<br>(clause-initial position) |
|   | 13  | 7   | 5  |                  | 1                                      |
|   | 20  |   | 6  |                  |  |
| Quotative marker                        | introducing direct speech, thoughts and attitudes either with or without human agent <sup>12</sup>                            |   |  | 23 (%)           |  |
|   | <i>be+like</i>  | <i>it+be+like</i> -enactment  | lexical verb+ <i>like</i>                            |                  |  |
|   | 10  | 8   | 5  |                  |  |
| Discourse marker                        | filling pauses  | accompanying false starts/terminated utterance  | linking syntactically or thematically distinct units | 12 (%)           |  |
|   | 8   | 2   | 2  |                  |  |
| Uncategorizable instances <sup>13</sup> | phrase " <i>like you wouldn't believe</i> "   |   | standing in place of "except for"                    | 2 (%)            |  |
|   | 1   |   | 1  |                  |  |

Table 8 - Detailed distribution of results according to their function

<sup>12</sup> *It+be+like*-enactment represents examples without a human agent

<sup>13</sup> The two instances labelled as uncategorizable did not fit in any of the categories compiled in the theoretical, nor analytical part of the thesis. Detailed analysis of those instances can be found in section 4.5

Table 8 offers an overview of the non-standard functions *like* can have in spoken discourse, based on the framework described in theoretical part and as gathered from the data collected from the corpus.

The analysis has shown that the most frequent function of *like* is the function of a hedge, which can be possibly explained by the general tendency of speakers towards vagueness and imprecision in spoken discourse (cf. section 2.1.). The second most frequent function is a focus marker, which appeared in 26 instances and can be explained by the tendency of speakers to highlight important information in their utterances, either with the use of prosodic devices such as stress or a change in intonation or with the use of pragmatic devices such as the focus marker *like*, in order to facilitate the process of interpretation of the pragmatic meaning of their utterances. The third place belongs to the quotative marker, which is represented by 23 instances, which supports the claim that one of the recurring features of spoken discourse is frequent reporting of direct speech. The last place belongs to *like* in a function of a discourse marker. As was mentioned before, one of the core features of spontaneous spoken discourse is so called normal disfluency, which suggests the presence of pauses, false starts, reformulations etc. (Biber et al., 1999: 1048). Discourse marker *like* is said to be prone to appear to fill said pauses and to accompany false starts and reformulations. The spontaneity of spoken discourse might suggest a high ratio of such features. Nevertheless, in the data collected, this function, which is the one with the lowest degree of pragmatic meaning and the one most easily omissible without affecting the utterance, fell behind those with higher pragmatic content.

It is important to mention the multifunctionality of the non-standard *like*. The analysis of the data collected from the corpus proves that a single instance of *like* may represent several functions in a clause at once. The most commonly shared functions were a hedge combined with an implied focus and quotative marker with the implication of focusing

function and hedging. Such a result might support the notion that speakers prefer to employ *like* more often as a marker which is able to modify the pragmatic content of their utterances than as an empty discourse marker filling pauses and linking clauses.

## 5.1. Position and introduced elements

The instances of non-standard *like* can be generally separated into those instances that are syntactically bound and those that are syntactically unbound. *Like* can be described as syntactically bound when it appears in the function of a hedge, focus marker or a quotative marker. Discourse marker *like* appeared in my data as always syntactically unbound, i.e. not depended on any syntactic structure.

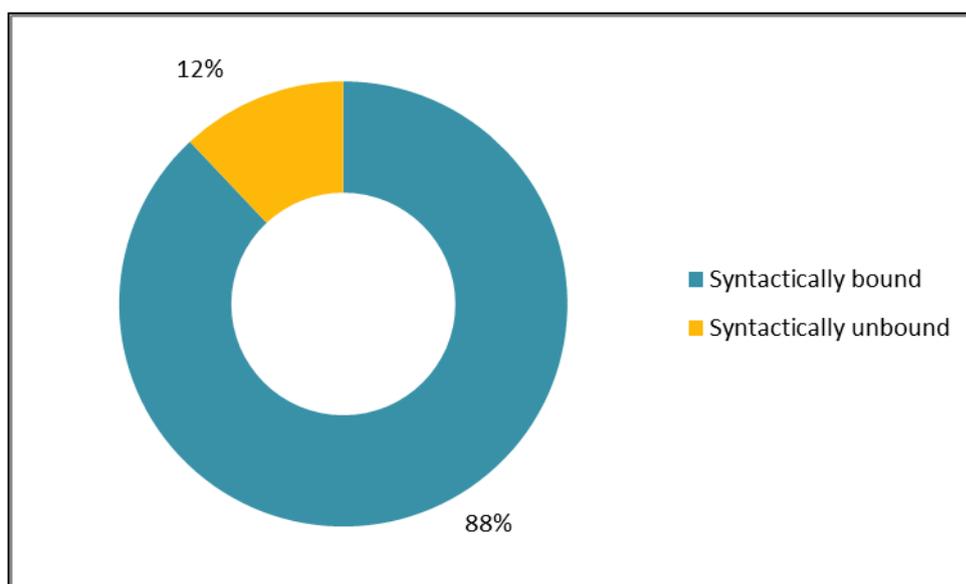


Figure 4 - Syntactic boundedness

Example (39) represents syntactically bound *like*, which appears between constituents and modifies one of them, in this case the post modification realized by an adverb.

39. *Mr. ROTHENBERG: I've tried to. It happened, like, instantaneously, after a conversation, you know. (10H)*

Example (40) shows a syntactically unbound *like*, i.e. not dependent on any syntactical structure.

40. *Mr. SIMMONS: Well, you know, like, you know, when we're both, like, in jacuzzis in heaven there'll be somebody here.' Hi, my name is 'Dave Harold' of the 'Dave Harold Show' [...] (11D)*

Further distinction can be made among the instances of *like* described as syntactically bound, since there is always an element that is introduced and further modified by the marker.

The following table offers the distribution of elements introduced by the non-standard *like*.

|                            | Clause          | NP              | VP              | AdjP          | AdvP          | PrepP         | Total (%)    |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| <b>Hedge</b>               | 1               | 16              | 6               | 8             | 3             | 3             | 86<br>(100%) |
| <b>Focus marker</b>        | 8               | 12              | 5               | -             | 1             | -             |              |
| <b>Quotative marker</b>    | 23              | -               | -               | -             | -             | -             |              |
| <b>Number of instances</b> | 32<br>(37,21 %) | 28<br>(32,56 %) | 11<br>(12,79 %) | 8<br>(9,30 %) | 4<br>(4,65 %) | 3<br>(3,49 %) |              |

Table 9 - Distribution of "like" according to the introduced element

*Like* in the function of a quotative marker (23 instances) is bound to the left only and always introduces a clause. Syntactically unbound *like*, i.e. *like* in the function of a discourse marker appeared in twelve instances and cannot be described in terms of which element is introduced or influenced by its presence, since it has no such function. Nevertheless the classification of its position in the utterance was described in *Table 7*. Finally, the two uncategorizable instances were excluded from the distributional analysis.

The results concerning the distribution of non-standard *like* show that the most frequently introduced element was a whole clause (32 instances) or a noun phrase (28 instances) which is somewhat at variance with the results of, for example, Underhill (1988), whose most frequently introduced element was a verb phrase and a noun phrase in the second place, and the results of Andersen (2001), whose most frequently introduced elements were a noun phrase followed by a verb phrase in the second place. The results obtained from the sample extracted from the corpus for the purposes of this thesis show similar outcome as for the frequency of noun phrases introduced by *like*, nevertheless, there appears to be quite a large difference to the number of instances introducing verb phrases, which is very common in the studies of others, however in my data it was represented only by 11 instances.

The position of non-standard *like*, which is syntactically bound can be generally described as appearing before the element on which it is dependent (whether it is a part of phrase, clause constituent or a whole clause). Syntactically not bound use of non-standard *like*, i.e. discourse marker is syntactically unbound and occurred most often in clause-final position. These results prove that *like* is not neither a meaningless nor an intrusive word that can appear virtually anywhere in a clause. It is, in majority of the instances, bound to a specific element of the syntactic structure of the utterance.

## 5.2. Collocations

This section offers an overview of the most common collocations found in the data collected for the purposes of this thesis.

|  | Hedge          | Focus marker    | Quotative marker | Discourse marker | Uncategorizable instances | Total        |
|--|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| you know                                     | -              | -               | 3                | 7                | -                         | 10           |
| sort of/kind of                              | 7              | -               | -                | 1                | -                         | 8            |
| just   | -              | 2               | 5                | -                | -                         | 7            |
| and  | 1              | 1               | -                | -                | -                         | 2            |
| I mean                                       | -              | 1               | -                | 1                | -                         | 2            |
| well   | -              | 1               | -                | -                | -                         | 1            |
| <b>Number of instances with collocations</b> | 8<br>(21,62 %) | 5<br>( 19,23 %) | 8<br>(34,78 %)   | 9<br>( 75,00 %)  | 0<br>(0%)                 | 30<br>(100%) |

Table 10 - Summary of the most frequent collocations

The data collected suggest that *like* tends to collocate quite often with expressions that bear similar function in an utterance. Discourse *like* appeared in company or even in a cluster of other discourse markers in nine out of twelve of instances (75%) making it, statistically, the function that is the most prone to appear with collocates of the same function in the data collected. Quotative *like* collocated either with the focusing particle "just" (in five instances) which shares the focusing function implied in the quotative marker and in three instances with the discourse marker "you know". Hedging *like* was accompanied by another hedge in seven instances out of 37 and in one example collocated with "and", forming a formulaic expression "and like". The function which was the least prone to collocate with expressions of similar function was the focus marker *like*, whose only collocate of the same function appeared to be the focusing particle "just", accompanying *like* in two instances out of 26.

In addition to that in three examples the focus marker *like* occurred in company of "and", "well" and "I mean". These were all clause-initial uses of the focus marker, which were described as having discourse linking function, which is confirmed by these collocations. The instances labelled as uncategorizable did not appear in the proximity of any collocation.

## 6. Conclusions

The sample of 100 instances extracted from the spoken part of COCA served as the basis for the examination of non-standard functions of the word *like* in spoken discourse. The objective was to compile a comprehensive overview of, possibly, all the functions *like* can serve in a spoken discourse, that were examined by scholars in the previous 30 years. The theoretical frame created in the theoretical part of this thesis was proven as accurate, since all of the functions and majority of its subcategories were represented in the extracted sample. The most frequent non-standard function of *like* in my data was a hedge (37%) followed by a focus marker (26%) with the quotative marker in third place in frequency (23%) and the least frequent function in my data was a discourse marker (12%) the remaining 2% belongs to the uncategorizable instances. No definite proof of another, not yet discovered, function emerged in the analysed data. Nevertheless new extensions were added to the main functions. There is an additional construction of the quotative *like*, which replaces the auxiliary "be" with a lexical verb, hedge marking exaggeration and focus *like* in clause-initial position that implies discourse linking function. Finally one of the uncategorizable instances where *like* was used in place of the preposition "except for" might possibly represent a new function, however further research would be required to determine whether it was a only a one time (miss)use or an emerging new usage.

According to the analysis of the data collected *like* proved to be highly multifunctional, having the ability to perform several roles in an utterance at once, for example a quotative marker may, in addition, imply focusing and hedging functions. In regard to the position and elements introduced by *like* in spoken discourse, it most frequently preceded a clause (32 instances) and a noun phrase (28 instances).

Turning to collocations, which share the same function as *like*, the most frequently accompanied function was a discourse marker (75% of instances of the discourse marking *like*) and the most frequent collocation according to the data collected was expression "you know", which appeared in 10 instances.

The perception of *like* as an empty intrusive word was shattered by the results especially by the low frequency of *like* appearing in the function of a discourse marker and the rules that seem to govern its distribution. Apart from the discourse marker, which is regarded as syntactically unbound, and thus not dependent on any constituent or syntactical structure in an utterance and the two uncategorizable instances not included in the distributional analysis, the results showed that *like* always introduces a constituent or a whole clause in the discourse and cannot be placed anywhere. Furthermore the results show that *like* tends to collocate with specific words, which have the same function as the word *like*, i.e. discourse marker *like* tends to collocate with other expressions functioning as a discourse marker. The scope of functions and the fact that their use shows regularity (e.g. position) supports the claim that *like* is indeed undergoing a process of grammaticalization, since the non-standard functions have little semantic meaning (in comparison to preposition, conjunction or verb *like*) but have a pragmatic role that is far greater than that of a more or less empty pause filler or discourse link. The process of grammaticalization is further supported by the fact that the standard function co-exist with the non-standard ones that still contain traces of the common semantic core. Since the grammaticalization of *like* is still under development, it depends solely on the users of the language if it will acquire new functions in the future and if future revisiting of this issue will bring new additions to the proposed list of functions.

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## **7.1. Corpus used**

Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA):

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## **7.2. Dictionary used**

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## 8. Resumé

Bakalářská práce se zabývá nestandardními funkcemi anglického slova *like* v mluveném diskurzu. Cílem práce je utřídit nestandardní funkce *like*, které byly v posledních 30 letech popsány a vytvořit tak přehled, který by se mohl stát vodítkem pro další zkoumání tohoto jevu. Vzhledem k tomu, že *like* vykazuje příznaky probíhající gramatikalizace a tedy i dalšího vývoje v oblasti svých nestandardních funkcí, byl jako zdroj zkoumaného materiálu vybrán korpus současné americké angličtiny (COCA), jehož část obsahující přepisy mluvené řeči je nejobsáhlejší a nejaktuálnější z dostupných korpusů. Teoretická část práce rozděluje jednotlivé funkce na standardní a nestandardní, na jejichž základě je poté provedena extrakce relevantních vzorků z korpusu. Mezi standardní funkce byly zařazeny v první řadě ty, ve kterých se *like* objevuje jako slovo se sémantickým obsahem. Tato slova, pokud jsou vyjmuta z věty ve které se objevují, mají za příčinu to, že rozruší větnou strukturu a tato věta pak buď není gramaticky správná nebo je úplně nesmyslná. K těmto případům byly dále přidány funkce *like* jako aproximátoru, t.j. výrazu, který předchází číslovky a má za úkol naznačit nepřesnost uvedené informace a dále *like* zastupující předložku "například". Na základě tohoto dělení byla provedena extrakce 100 relevantních vzorků, postup této extrakce je poté popsán v metodické části. Postup extrakce byl následovný: nejprve bylo v mluvené části COCA zadáno vyhledávané heslo, které muselo být, kvůli variabilitě výskytu zkoumaného slova, pouze samostatné slovo *like* bez jakéhokoli omezení. Zobrazené výsledky pak byly pomocí funkce vzorku v korpusu náhodně seřazeny. Z toho náhodného výběru poté probíhala extrakce relevantních příkladů eliminací standardních funkcí. Po dosažení 100 relevantních příkladů byla extrakce ukončena.

Analytická část poté rozebírá tyto příklady vyňaté z korpusu a dělí je podle teoretického rámce vytvořeného v teoretické části. Tento teoretický rámec obsahuje nestandardní *like* ve funkci vytýkacího částice, výrazu uvozujícího přímou řeč, prostředku

zmírňujícího dopad promluvy a diskurzní částice. *Like* v těchto nestandardních funkcích lze z věty ve většině případů vyjmout, aniž by toto mělo vliv na její strukturu či slovní obsah. Co však může být ovlivněno, je pragmatická funkce promluvy. Výsledky získané z korpusu ukazují, že nejhojnější funkcí *like* je výraz zmírňující dopad promluvy (37%), následuje vytýkácí částice (26%), poté výraz uvádějící přímou řeč (23%) a vůbec nejméně se objevilo případů *like* jako diskurzní částice (12%). Zbývající 2 %, což se rovná 2 výskytům *like*, byla označena jako “nezařaditelné” a jsou zkoumána samostatně. V prvním z těchto dvou případů se slovo *like* objevilo v zastoupení výrazu “except for”, což se vymyká společnému sémantickému jádru, které ostatní funkce, jak standardní, tak nestandardní sdílejí. K ověření toho, zda se jedná o novou funkci nebo jen ojedinělý výskyt by potom byl třeba další výzkum. Druhým případem byl výskyt *like* v rámci fráze “like you wouldn’t believe”, která jak se zdá, zastupuje adjektivum “unbelievable” nebo adverbium “unbelievably”, takovéto použití může být vysvětleno tendencí mluvčích vyhýbat se v mluvené řeči víceslabičným adjektivům v atributivní funkci.

Mimo rozdělení příkladů do kategorií dle jejich funkce byla také zkoumána jejich pozice v promluvě a časté kolokace. Z výsledků vyplývá, že nejčastěji se slovo *like* objevuje v pozici, kdy je vázané na určitý element v syntaktické struktuře promluvy (88%) a tudíž jeho vynechání bude mít vliv na pragmatický obsah dané promluvy. Ve 12% případů pak *like* vázáno na syntaktickou strukturu promluvy nebylo a ve všech těchto případech se jednalo o funkci diskurzní částice. Co se týče uvozovaných elementů v promluvě se *like* nečastěji objevovalo před celou větou jako takovou (32 případů). Jako druhý nejčastěji uvozovaný konstituent se potom ve výsledcích objevovala substantivní fráze (28 případů), což se liší od výsledků, které je možné najít v ostatních pracech, kde byla nejčastěji uvozovaným konstituentem verbální fráze. Verbální fráze ve výsledcích této práce, týkajících se pozice, zastoupena 11 případy.

Posledním zkoumaným jevem byly kolokace, u kterých se ukázalo, že *like* v určité funkci má tendenci objevovat se společně s dalšími slovy zastupující totožnou funkci, což má za výsledek následné posílení této funkce. Například *like* ve funkci prostředku zmírňujícího dopad promluvy se objevovalo ve společnosti dalších takových výrazů jako je “kind of” nebo “sort of”.

Z analyzovaných příkladů vyplývá, že rámec navržený v teoretické části a ověřený příklady v části analytické reprezentuje valnou většinu do této doby popsaných nestandardních funkcí, které *like* může v mluveném diskurzu zastávat. Přehled těchto funkcí je obsažen v části 5. Výsledky dále dokládají, že použití *like* není ve většině případů ani nahodilé ani postrádající (pragmatický) význam, tak jako to může být u diskurzních částic, které jsou dle dosažených výsledků nejméně častou funkcí. Dle dosažených výsledků je možné říci, že užití nestandardních funkcí *like* není v žádném případě pouze nahodilým jevem, ale že jej mluvčí hojně využívají k modifikaci pragmatické složky promluvy, ať už se jedná o vytknutí specifické informace, zmírnění dopadu či distancování se od promluvy, uvedení přímé řeči nebo jen naznačení váhání či udržení souvislé řeči vyplněním pauzy v promluvě. Množství těchto nestandardních funkcí a fakt, že koexistují s funkcemi standardními dále dokládá skutečnost, že *like* prochází procesem gramatikalizace a jeho pragmatické funkce, tedy ty které postrádají sémantickou složku, se mohou dále vyvíjet. Proces gramatikalizace je dále potvrzen i tím, že se výskyt *like* v promluvě řídí určitými pravidly, což je nejmarkantnější u konstrukcí uvozujících přímou řeč.

## 9. APPENDIX

The appendix comprises of six tables, where one table contains the examples that were used to describe the standard functions, i.e. those that were not the subject of the thesis. These examples are used in section 3.4. to depict which instances of *like* were eliminated in the first place during the extraction of relevant instances of *like* from the corpus. The other five tables contain relevant instances, which represent the non-standard uses of *like*. The instances are categorized according to the function they represent.

### 9.1. Standard functions of *like*

|           |      |              |   |
|-----------|------|--------------|---|
| <b>S1</b> | 2002 | NBC Dateline | When we return, the prosecutor builds his case, claiming <u>Dr. Greineder started acting <b>like</b> a suspect</u> just minutes after his wife's murder.  |
| <b>S2</b> | 2007 | CBS_Early    | Mr. FLAY: Well, it has the flavor of, <b>like</b> , <u>a skirt steak or a flank steak</u> . And when I say the flavor, it's got more flavor than, like, <u>a filet mignon</u> . It's not just tender. |
| <b>S3</b> | 1992 | FOX Crier    | Ms. RABY: No, I don't care. I don't think, <u><b>like</b> I said</u> before, it will change my life or the things that are close [...]  |
| <b>S4</b> | 2005 | CNN Grace    | Michael Jackson only gave me a limited waiver of attorney-client privilege. <u>The judge looked <b>like</b> he was just hit by a thunderbolt</u> .  |
| <b>S5</b> | 2010 | FOX Baier    | <u>Just 13 percent of participants <b>like</b> what Congress is doing</u> . Eighty-three percent do not.  |
| <b>S6</b> | 2002 | NPR Saturday | [...] not when you toss it, but when you spin it, <u>you have something <b>like</b> 66 percent of, let's say, heads</u> . SIMON: OK.  |

## 9.2. Non-standard functions of *like*

### 9.2.1. Focus marker

|      |      |               |  |
|------|------|---------------|--|
| 1Fa  | 1994 | Ind_Geraldo   | All right. How much money do you come off with each time you jack somebody? NOVELLA: <b>Like</b> , <u>we come off with different things</u> , like jewelry, sometimes money, sometimes [...]   |
| 2F   | 2006 | CBS_Morning   | Each student has a personal mantra, a sound they internalize. Goal: to calm the mind. Unidentified Boy 2: I am somewhat hyper. And, like, if I have chocolate or anything, I, <b>like</b> , <u>completely change</u> .   |
| 3Fa  | 2005 | CNN_King      | SEACREST And they don't try to step in and fix the relationship, step in and fix the relation between you and Paris? RICHIE: Well, we're adults. And to be honest with you, I promise you, it's not a feud -- <b>like</b> <u>we're not enemies</u> .   |
| 4F   | 2006 | Ind_Oprah     | So you sent in this story -- this story to Glamour on a whim? Ms-ALEXA-RAAD: Right. I was working pretty late, and I must have been delirious with lack of sleep, because I was on Glamour magazine Web site and I sent in one of my stories. And this was based on when I was in Berlin and I was just writing, <b>like</b> , <u>my thoughts and my experiences with friends</u> . And then when they called me and said 'You're a semifinalist,' I didn't believe them. WINFREY: Really? Ms-RAAD: They had to actually send me my story and I was like: Yeah, that looks like my story.' |
| 5F   | 2005 | NPR_Daybreak  | To calm myself down, I would play, <b>like</b> , <u>open strings</u> , you know, just like... (Soundbite-of-cello) Ms-KEATING: And I could do that for hours and hours, really [...]   |
| 6Fq  | 1991 | CNN_King      | [...] what I'm thinking about now is more about writing than about acting KING You're going to write, <b>like</b> , <u>novels</u> ? Ms. MacGRAW: I'd like to.  |
| 7F   | 2005 | CNN_Event     | But if you let yesterday defeat London, there's no point. <b>Like</b> , <u>the actions of yesterday were horrendous</u> . And by not traveling or not going on with your routine, you're just kind of giving in to what they want.   |
| 8F   | 2006 | CBS_Rather    | COWAN: But when Lance's father was killed outside Baghdad in April, that Camaro sat as a sad reminder of a host of unfinished dreams. LANCE-COLTON-SON: I feel most sad, <b>like</b> , <u>around the car</u> . COWAN-1on-camera: How come? L-COLTON: I guess, its the place we spent the most time together.   |
| 9F   | 1998 | CNN_King_Wknd | I do the commuting thing. Well you know what that's all about. KING: I know, but I go once every -- but it would be crazy to live <u>a life of</u> , <b>like</b> , <u>going to work every day</u> . You come in for three days, home for four days?  |
| 10Fq | 2010 | CNN_Behar     | He's the most toxic man out there. BEHAR: Right. Is he <b>like</b> <u>the top of your list</u> -- GLASS: He's number one.  |
| 11F  | 2008 | ABC_20/20     | They were up - they were - up here. They were <b>like</b> <u>trying to surround me</u> . ELIZABETH-VARGAS-# (Off-camera) Were you on the White's property? THOMAS-MALONEY-1D# No.  |
| 12Fq | 2010 | NPR_Science   | Is there, <b>like</b> , <u>a legal reason why</u> ? Nothing? Ms. SKLOOT: No, there's not. It's because no one does. You know, the patenting of cells didn't really start until the, like, late-' 60s.  |
| 13Fa | 2005 | CNN_King      | And you know, I think that if I'm at a party or if I'm shopping or eating at the Ivy and there's paparazzi, you know what? <b>Like</b> <u>that's expected</u> . But to sit outside my house every day, I do think is a little much [...]   |
| 14F  | 2012 | ABC_20/20     | LUCCHINO-INATALIE# I think my mom's more cool than , <b>like</b> , <u>other moms</u> .   |
| 15Fa | 1997 | Ind_Geraldo   | RIVERA: Can you get married before they come for you? MARGIE: I don't know. We haven't gathered any, <b>like</b> , <u>money to get a house</u> or anything yet, so that's why I'm waiting around.  |
| 16F  | 2008 | ABC_PrimeTime | I noticed he was tall, but he didn't stick out that much. He was just really a fun kid to hang out with. SIERRA-DUNN-1FRIE# He's really nice. And, <b>like</b> , <u>he coached the seventh and</u>   |

|      |      |             |   |
|------|------|-------------|---|
|      |      |             | <u>eight grade football team</u> . So, he made, like, a lot of friends there.   |
| 17F  | 2008 | NPR_Park    | MARTIN: You know, it was interesting. They did a profile on her in the New York Times when this album dropped and it had a picture of her in her Brooklyn apartment, which I was shocked to see is so sparse, so modest. STEWART: Yeah. MARTIN: She's a big star, and she <u>like has got a mattress on the ground, and tapestries on the wall.</u> |
| 18Fq | 2006 | CBS_Morning | SMITH: Now, after you did that high-five, didn't you, <u>like, run away?</u> Mr-C-KRATT: No. Mr-M-KRATT: And then we ran!   |
| 19F  | 2007 | CBS_Early   | SMITH: Yeah. Mr-GRINT: And I just thought why not? It just -- it's really cool as well. It's got, <u>like, a freezer, and some sinks.</u>   |
| 20Fq | 2011 | NBC_Today   | KOTB: But do you think there's a big distinction between, <u>like, a female boss and a male boss?</u> GIFFORD: Having -- I can't even think of one.   |
| 21F  | 1993 | CBS_Morning | Mr-THOMAS: No. I -- I think I was -- I was a teen-ager when she was on TV, even though I'm older than she is. No, I never did. I did fantasize about her <u>like , of course, you do.</u> McEWEN: Like we all do.   |
| 22F  | 2009 | NBC_Today   | According to the Society -- a woman's group, companies are turning a blind eye to these sort of sex clubs. <u>Like, they say they're basically green-lighting it.</u>   |
| 23F  | 2009 | CBS_Early   | [...] Stuffing is in the North. HARRY-SMITH: Like everywhere else. MICHAEL-WHITE: <u>Like, I mean, everywhere else.</u>   |
| 24F  | 1998 | ABC_GMA     | EMERIL LAGASSE: You can smell the soil, and it's, <u>like, just this wonderful, wonderful flavors.</u>  |
| 25F  | 1992 | Ind_Geraldo | But the third year, there I was, to make my daddy proud, and I got one hit to first base, and they gave me, <u>like , a standing ovation.</u> It was like, Huh! Go into the theater.'   |
| 26Fq | 1999 | CNN_King    | KING: What do you -- how do you feel about all this public attention? L-MARTIN: We would like it to be over. KING: Well <u>like, what are you doing with your life?</u> Let's get us up to date on each of you. Rachael, what are you doing in your life now?   |

### 9.2.2. Hedge

|    |      |                |  |
|----|------|----------------|--|
| 1H | 2004 | NPR_FreshAir   | Is there something going on in the brain? Is it some kind of, <u>like, biochemical thing?</u> Dr-VOLKMAR: Actually, there's some data that would very strongly suggest a big role for genetic factors. |
| 2H | 2003 | CBS_48Hours    | A-SCOTT: I do nt have anything. The hair color, obviously I lightened it, but mine is, <u>like, black,</u> like that. ! STAHL: So, actually it is the same. ! A-SCOTT: Well, yes, it is the same. !    |
| 3H | 2010 | NBC_Today      | YEARWOOD: I probably would be, <u>like, politically correct to say,</u> no, they should sit wherever they want.  |
| 4H | 1993 | CBS_Eye to Eye | [...] you know, we're not -- we're not by any means, <u>like, dirt-poor,</u> but we're not, you know, rich either and, [...]   |
| 5H | 2011 | ABC_20/20      | DAKOTA-1HOMELESS-# I was 16. I went and I waited and, <u>like at McDonald's or something,</u> and I saw her pull out, [...]  |
| 6H | 2012 | NBC_PrimeTime  | TRACI-HOVEL-1ACTR# Why (inaudible)? KARA-1BEACHGOER2#: That's <u>like,</u> possibly, <u>the craziest thing</u> I've ever seen.   |
| 7H | 2012 | ABC_20/20      | KIRSTIE-ALLEY-1CE# I didn't. All the clothes that I had when I was, <u>like, chub,</u> are out.  |

|     |      |                |   |
|-----|------|----------------|---|
| 8H  | 2007 | Fox_Gibson     | I saw somebody that had a gunshot wound <u>to like</u> the abdomen area and a police SUV cruiser came flying up to the scene [...]  |
| 9H  | 1995 | ABC_DayOne     | I've been making- you know, I make little suggestions here and there. They're sort of , <b>like</b> , kind of <u>protecting him</u> , you know?   |
| 10H | 1993 | CNN_King       | Mr. ROTHENBERG: I've tried to. It happened, <b>like</b> , <u>instantaneously</u> , after a conversation, you know.  |
| 11H | 2000 | NPR_TalkNation | But as we have said repeatedly, there are many things about which a discussion is possible and if there is a reasonable opportunity to come to an agreement, we, <b>like</b> I think <u>everyone</u> , would welcome that result.   |
| 12H | 2008 | NBC_Today      | KOTB: But voter fraud, meaning you go to the... GIFFORD: Right. That's another... KOTB:... booth... GIFFORD: That's another issue. KOTB:... and you have an ID that says Mickey Mouse and you look like Mickey. <b>Like</b> <u>I don't think that's happening</u> . So to me there's voter registration problems, not voter fraud.  |
| 13H | 2011 | NPR_FreshAir   | So this is after your character becomes the head of this network, and he's become, <b>like</b> , kind of <u>pals with the head of Kablevision</u> , Hank Hooper because they both have kids [...]   |
| 14H | 1993 | Ind_Geraldo    | Unidentified Woman 5: You know, it seems like there's a role reversal here; that you should, <b>like</b> , <u>be much more appreciative of your mother-in-law</u> .   |
| 15H | 2002 | Ind_Oprah      | But it's not <b>like</b> <u>earth-shattering</u> . You do admit this -- this shouldn't be something that shakes the foundation of the marriage.   |
| 16H | 1995 | CNN_TalkBack   | SUSAN ROOK: Now you mentioned that you don't get paid. JANET ADIGHIBE: Yes. SUSAN ROOK: But, I mean, describe what happens. The producer calls you. They fly you to all these fabulous places. I was on a talk show once. I was on Sally Jessy Raphael after I did the presidential debate. And they fly you in. I mean, isn't that sort of <b>like</b> <u>pay</u> , kind of? |
| 17H | 2009 | NPR_TalkNation | I think it's really central for Sendak, even for the Muppets, you know, if they weren't sometimes, <b>like</b> , actually <u>a little bit creepy</u> , I think they'd be a lot less charming.   |
| 18H | 2000 | CNN_SatMorn    | PHILLIPS So Braille is easy. McCLAIN: Yes, it is easy to read PHILLIPS Yes? McCLAIN: It's some -- there's kind of, <b>like</b> , <u>hard words</u> in there. PHILLIPS Like, what's a hard word? McCLAIN: Like, I can't pronounce, like, "Chicago," so I have to pronounce it, like, "Chic-ago." So anyway, it's, like -- I just...  |
| 19H | 2000 | NBC_Dateline   | My arm's are, <b>like</b> , <u>really red</u> , like, just, like, mainly my wrists.   |
| 20H | 1995 | CBS_Morning    | [...] and most the time kids like to listen to kids, so I kind of <b>like</b> <u>connected with him</u> .   |
| 21H | 1996 | ABC_20/20      | I think when I was younger it did. It -- you have, <b>like</b> , <u>a very low self-esteem</u> when people tease you about that kind of thing all the time.   |
| 22H | 1999 | NPR_Science    | We almost view the human as, <b>like</b> , <u>an instrument</u> .   |
| 23H | 2012 | NBC_Dateline   | Well, in the middle of the summer, not one cloud and the sky is , <b>like</b> , <u>really blue</u> , and go out fishing with my dad.  |
| 24H | 1997 | Ind_Springer   | [...] before she went all gung-ho nympho? I mean, you -- you're, <b>like</b> , <u>my best friend</u> .  |
| 25H | 2004 | PBS_Tavis      | I've come to like it over the years. I think Felicity is, <b>like</b> , <u>cool name</u> . Huffman: It's great. It means happiness.   |
| 26H | 1996 | CBS_SunMorn    | Ms-McMILLAN:'... spot. And I go ahead and put my arms around the small of his back. And he is <b>like</b> <u>nice and narrow</u> .  |
| 27H | 2010 | CNN_Grace      | [...] and her mouth was like -- it was like closed, <b>like</b> <u>very tightly</u> . And she looked mad. She looked angry.   |
| 28H | 2008 | NPR_FreshAir   | [...] could you, you know, really work out for this part? I said, I do. (Soundbite-of-laugh) Mr-JENKINS: And they said no, you know, like really, <b>like</b> kind of, <u>maybe lift weights</u> .  |

|            |      |                 |   |
|------------|------|-----------------|---|
| <b>29H</b> | 1993 | Ind_Geraldo     | RIVERA: But has he ever murdered anybody? Ms-LEE: No, he just... RIVERA: Not one, two, three, thirteen people? Ms-LEE: No, he's just, <b>like</b> , <u>a pig</u> . RIVERA: He's a pig. What's Richard Ramirez?  |
| <b>30H</b> | 2008 | ABC_Nightline   | JENNA-MISCAVIGE-HI# I must have been like eight years old. We were all told to watch it. And we <b>like</b> <u>never watched TV</u> .   |
| <b>31H</b> | 2003 | CBS_48Hours     | MARRIS: That's the weirdest thing, because I got stuff <u>from like every state</u> . This one is from Iowa, this one is from Castayick (ph), this is for a year free of martial arts, a crochet blanket.   |
| <b>32H</b> | 2011 | NPR_FreshAir    | I felt very vulnerable. So I... TERRY-GROSS: Oh, 'cause you didn't have this, <b>like</b> , <u>brace protecting you</u> . MARGO-MARTINDALE: I didn't have armor around me.  |
| <b>33H</b> | 2011 | NBC_Today       | KOTB: Wait, this is important. This is a thing that you're doing where you put <b>like</b> <u>a laser thing on your stomach</u> ...GIFFORD: Yes.  |
| <b>34H</b> | 1998 | CBS_SunMorn     | At that time, Erica avoided focusing on the Olympics. ERICA-SORGI: Pretty much I'm kind of, I guess I could say, taking it, <b>like</b> , <u>one step at a time</u> , but obviously the Olympics would be, like, very nice to go to, and hopefully I would do well if I ever went there.  |
| <b>35H</b> | 2011 | ABC_GMA         | And without question, our viewers believe what this mother did, injecting her little girl with Botox for so-called wrinkles, was wrong. But yet, so many more questions for us. Is this a crime? Could Britney be taken away from her mother? And how could a little girl look in the mirror and see anything but innocence? BRITNEY-CAMPBELL-# I just, <b>like</b> , don't, like, <u>think wrinkles are nice for a little girl</u> . |
| <b>36H</b> | 2004 | MSNBC_Olbermann | OLBERMANN: Yes, I know. The one and only Michael Musto, columnist with " The Village Voice, " friend of COUNTDOWN, as always, thank you, sir, except for the nightmares. MUSTO: Thank you. OLBERMANN: That's COUNTDOWN. Thanks for being part of it. He was sitting <b>like</b> <u>right behind me</u> .  |
| <b>37H</b> | 1995 | CBS_Morning     | [...] and there's four bosses, four secretaries. And it's not so much like 9-to-5 as it is, <b>like</b> , <u>the family</u> that is established in the workplace.   |

### 9.2.3. Discourse marker

|           |      |               |  |
|-----------|------|---------------|--|
| <b>1D</b> | 1999 | CBS_48Hours   | We were all on the stairs going down to the cafeteria. And the bomb squad people all had their guns up. Ms. Miller tried to go back to Sanders, <b>like</b> , and they'd yell at her. They're like, ' Get back down there,' like, totally just yelled at her, wouldn't let her go. |
| <b>2D</b> | 1994 | Ind_Geraldo   | Because, you know, she's four, you know, and she's, <b>like</b> , you know, when her dad calls her or she's always wanting to call her dad and everything else, you know...  |
| <b>3D</b> | 1990 | ABC_PrimeTime | Mr. WHITE: They would back away, they would call me names, and they'd throw themselves up against a locker, you know, <b>like</b> , and they couldn't get close to me for any reason, they couldn't walk in the same hall.   |
| <b>4D</b> | 2005 | Ind_Oprah     | Ms-RAY: Make mom's cheeks rosy. WINFREY: Make sure you do that. Ms-RAY: And then I would slide, <b>like</b> ... WINFREY: That'll make... Ms-RAY: an Oprah magazine in there so she could read in bed.  |
| <b>5D</b> | 2012 | FOX_Susteren  | I mean, it's, like -- it's not sort of, <b>like</b> , I don't see everyone sort of sitting there with a pencil and a and a pad of paper learning some skill.   |
| <b>6D</b> | 2001 | NPR_ATC       | Ms-TENANT: I don't think it's fair because, <b>like</b> , you know, even if she's in a public school, this interpreter is going to be with her every day.  |
| <b>7D</b> | 1998 | Ind_Geraldo   | Mr-LEE: I was kind of losing my (censored) mind and I was drinking a lot of (censored) booze just todeal. I was, <b>like</b> , you know, lots and lots of vodka, probably about a gallon of vodka a week.  |
| <b>8D</b> | 2003 | NPR_Daybreak  | But, you know, you're always buying new things and really, <b>like</b> , you know, you buy a shirt   |

|            |      |             |   |
|------------|------|-------------|---|
|            |      |             | and you like it for that summer but you don't really ever wear it as much as you did initially.   |
| <b>9D</b>  | 2006 | NPR_ATCW    | We're sort of atavistic in allowing instincts that were appropriate for an earlier period, <b>like</b> , I mean, anything that is strange you had to say strange, enemy, danger, destroy, you know. |
| <b>10D</b> | 1997 | CBS_48Hours | MICHAEL: (Voiceover) In the old days, <b>like</b> , you know, you'd just throw the dog out the door and that's it, but you don't do that anymore.   |
| <b>11D</b> | 1991 | CNN_King    | Mr. SIMMONS: Well, you know, <b>like</b> , you know, when we're both, like, in jacuzzis in heaven there'll be somebody here.' Hi, my name is' Dave Harold' of the' Dave Harold Show'[...]           |
| <b>12D</b> | 2009 | ABC_20/20   | And I, not - for not one minute, was gonna let this person take over my life and to try to prove me - <b>like</b> to prove me wrong.  |

#### 9.2.4. Quotative marker

|             |      |                |  |
|-------------|------|----------------|--|
| <b>Q1</b>   | 1994 | ABC_20/20      | DOUG TILTON: <b>She's like</b> , you know,' <u>Play with the audience, but don't- you know, don't do too much and don't forget to bring in scandal, and we want to make it look like that Mitch is jealous.</u>  |
| <b>Qe2</b>  | 2011 | CBS_Sixty      | And it's funny because we're just at that level now where it just doesn't happen anymore that one of us can say to the other, you know, one time, I was doing this. you know, one time, I was doing this. Because, <b>it's like</b> , yeah, I know. I was there. |
| <b>Qe3</b>  | 1998 | CBS_PublicEye  | ' No, I don't want to go.' And <b>it was, like</b> ,' <u>Captain, you know, this is your job. This is your duty for the good old red, white and blue.</u>  |
| <b>Q4</b>   | 1992 | Ind_Geraldo    | Ms-MARTIN: When I do my nightclub show, <b>I'm like</b> , you know, <u>Hey, the rat will take dollars.</u>   |
| <b>Qe5</b>  | 2009 | CNN_Newsroom   | BERNARD-DIGREGORIO: If they have contracts, fine. <b>It's like</b> , <u>remortgage your house.</u> That's what we have to do.  |
| <b>Q6</b>   | 1995 | ABC_DayOne     | ' I mean, I quit my job. <b>I'm, like</b> ,' <u>I gave up my doorman job.'</u>   |
| <b>Q7</b>   | 1995 | Ind_Geraldo    | TEEZER: Yeah. We -- we see them -- <b>they're, like</b> , <u>one, two, three, open their legs right there.</u>   |
| <b>Q8</b>   | 2011 | ABC_20/20      | Well, well, I'm pregnant, you know? "And <b>I was like</b> ," <u>Oh, really? "</u> You know?   |
| <b>QL9</b>  | 2011 | NBC_Dateline   | [...] told me some girl came in there and just <b>freaking out like</b> , you know,' <u>I need some bath salts, you know, like I'll strip for you guys.</u>  |
| <b>Qe10</b> | 2009 | NBC_Today      | But I mean, I would love to know -- <b>it's like</b> , <u>Steve, you know, your breath -- Steve, you know, you smell a little.</u>   |
| <b>Q11</b>  | 2008 | ABC_GMA        | She says, yeah, you know. I said, what, <b>she's like</b> , <u>well, you know, he was struggling.</u> I said, you mean struggling with like the emotions? She's like, no.  |
| <b>Qe12</b> | 1998 | ABC_20/20      | out on the tundra when the wolf pack killed a caribou. <b>It wasn't like</b> . <u>"Well, I'll eat just what I need for today and then come back and get the rest tomorrow."</u>  |
| <b>Qe13</b> | 2009 | NPR_TalkNation | Target Women: Yogurt. And what I just loved about <b>it was just like</b> , <u>who would ever eat yogurt where they're eating?</u>   |
| <b>Q14</b>  | 2005 | NPR_TalkNation | [...] he saw-- you know, when he came out, <b>he was just, like</b> , <u>I'm not going to go back. Even if I could back to -- and I can, I can go back tomorrow to get things out of the house, but I'm not going to do it.</u>                                  |
| <b>Q15</b>  | 2009 | CNN_Behar      | I think it was calculated. COLLINS: When I first heard it, <b>I was like</b> , <u>this woman is a genius.</u>  |

|      |      |              |  |
|------|------|--------------|--|
| Q16  | 2008 | ABC_20/20    | [...] And <b>he's just like,</b> <u>Nothing.</u> "I'm like,' Are you crying because my father's crying?"   |
| Q17  | 1999 | CBS_48hours  | And when you feel your heart pound like that, <b>you're like,</b> <u>Yeah, this is life. I'm alive.'</u>   |
| Qe18 | 2009 | CBS_48hours  | And you're -- <b>it's just like</b> <u>there's no way that nobody would have heard from her by 4:30 in the afternoon.</u>  |
| QL19 | 2003 | NPR_FreshAir | [...]" Fame. "And, you know, you're kind of <b>wondering, like,</b> <u>OK, is this the type of school that's going to be like a cliché?</u>  |
| QL20 | 2010 | NPR_FreshAir | GROSS: So you must have been really grateful to your parents for getting it... Ms-LEIFER: I was. GROSS:... and not for, you know, being upset or <b>worrying, like,</b> <u>how are we going to tell our friends,</u> or you know, like don't bring her home. |
| QL21 | 2003 | Ind_Oprah    | Sometimes when I break up with people, <b>I think like,</b> <u>OK, did he let me leave because he never really liked my lips anyway?</u>   |
| QL22 | 2011 | ABC_20/20    | Christian was not in the airplane. It was just so much confusion, <b>like, thinking,</b> <u>"I can get out of this."</u>   |
| Qe23 | 2007 | CBS_48Hours  | And a film with that kind of promotion, because the thing is, as it is right now <b>it's like,</b> <u>ooh, controversy,</u> right? Which in itself promotes, right?  |

### 9.2.5. Uncategorizable instances

|    |      |         |   |
|----|------|---------|---|
| U1 | 2009 | ABC_GMA | But, of course, the President-elect will have to take a limousine because everything is so closed off around here right now. I'm looking at fences and security <b>like you wouldn't believe.</b> |
| U2 | 1996 | ABC_GMA | Wow. Your family would get food, like stale cookies and cakes and things, from a bakery because you had no food, <b>like,</b> <u>stale cream puffs.</u> And that's what you survived on.          |