



# no (.) just just do the accent like (.) how they speak

## Degrees of pragmaticalization in the speech of Cardiff teenagers



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1382: "righteous in the eyes of God, upright and impartial" from O.Fr. just from L. *justus* "upright, equitable" from *jus* (gen. *juris*) "right", especially "legal right, law" from O.Latin *iustus*, perhaps its "sacred formula" is word peculiar to Latin (not general Italic) that originated in the religious cults, from PIE base \**yewes-* (cf. Avestan *yasda-* "make ritually pure", see *jurist*). The more mundane L. *lawword* has covered specific law as opposed to the body of laws.  
<http://www.etymonline.com>

**Pragmaticalization**  
« lexical items on their way to becoming function words may follow two different paths, one of them resulting in the creation of grammatical markers, functioning mainly sentence-internally, the other resulting in discourse-markers mainly serving as text-structuring devices at different levels of discourse » (Erman & Kotsinas 1993:79)

« Along the same phoneticization or equalizer? (see another) M.F. shortening of O.E. *gaika* like, similar, from P.Gmc. *\*gaikaz* "having the same form", lit. "with a corresponding body" (cf. O.S. *gaik*, O.N. *gaikr*, Du. *gaik*, Ger. *gaich*, Gch. *gaieks* "equally, like") compound of *ga-* "with, together" + *\*haisn* "body" (cf. O.E. *lic* "body", Ger. *Lichte* "corpse", Dan. *lig*, Swed. *lik*, Du. *lijk* "body, corpse") Anabogus, etymologically, to L. *conform*. The modern form (after *than* "rich" may be from a northern descendant of the O.E. words O.N. *cognate*, skr. Formerly with comp. *like* and superl. *liest* (still in use 17c.). The prep. (c. 1200) and the adv. (c. 1300) are both from the adjective. As a conjunction, first attested c. 1530. Plural *likes* (n.) "predilections, preferences" is from 1851; earlier used in sing. in this sense (1425). The word has been used as a postponed filler ("going really fast, like") from 1775; as a presumed emphatic ("going, like, really fast") from 1810; originally in counterculture slang and top talk. Phrase more like it "closer to what is desired" is from 1888.  
<http://www.etymonline.com>

**Frequency**  
2nd most frequent PM  
34 occurrences for girls, 33 for boys,  
out of 8000 words = **8.4 / 1,000 words**  
(cf. LLC = 3.38/ 1,000 words (Aijmer 1985);  
and COLT = 5.7 / 1,000 words (Erman 1996))

**The corpus** : oral spontaneous speech, collected by Sophie Vincent-Bour in a bilingual school in Cardiff in 2003, among 18 teenagers aged from 13 to 14 years old. For the purpose of this study, we have selected a subcorpus of 2 conversations, one between two girls, the other between two boys, which amount to a total of 8000 words

**Frequency**  
1st most frequent PM  
121 occurrences for girls, 43 for boys,  
out of 8000 words = **20 / 1,000 words**  
(cf. BNC London Spoken = 0.43 / 1,000 words (Andersen 2000);  
and COLT = 2.65 / 1,000 words (Erman 1996))  
Already a GENDER-related use of LIKE ?

Very frequent collocation with Verbs (53.7%), often in imperatives (10.45%), and when preceded by modals (10.45%),  
*just talk about anything ( ) what girls do you fancy cos like if you just have like ( ) cream trousers*  
Sometimes appears in PM clusters (11.9%)  
*a bowl of hot chocolate that's just like the size of your head*  
Also found in the prefab *it's just (that) (3%)*  
*it's just complete rip off*  
1 « isolated » occurrence  
*mmm ( ) just ( ) I love him*  
Sometimes appears in unfinished clauses (13.4%)  
*I'll just live #*  
*oh I'll just #*

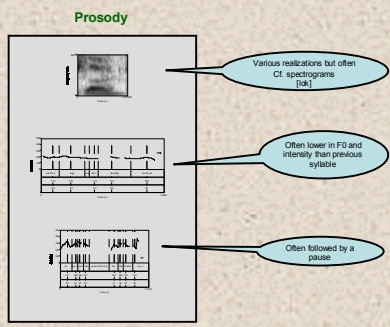
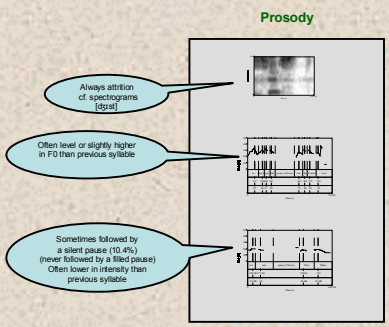
**Goals**  
Compare the use of JUST and LIKE in the conversations  
Assess their respective degrees of pragmaticalization  
Relate this to teenage speech as a period of pragmatic acquisition

Very frequent collocation with (filled and silent) pauses, and unfinished utterances (47.6%)  
*Bush is like uh (-) # here's a statement ( ) no one likes you and they were like um (-) um (-) like #*  
More than 30% of all occurrences produced after BE, (24% of which in the prefab *it's like*)  
*it's like if ( ) you haven't the braces you're not cool*  
Introduces quotative sequences (10.98%)  
*I was like ( ) wow*  
Appears in clusters with :  
Conjunctions (*but, and, etc*) and PMs (*cos, you, know, etc*)  
*yeah ( ) but like ( ) what style of trousers though (-) cos like if you just have like ( ) cream trousers*

**Method**  
Study the context and frequency of *just* and *like*  
Study their prosodic profile

Lower syntactic flexibility > lower degree of pragmaticalization  
Mainly appears in argumentative or hypothetical contexts (advice, imagined/recollected situations, « serious » topics)  
+ speaker-oriented

High syntactic flexibility > higher degree of pragmaticalization  
Mainly appears in highly qualifying/descriptive contexts (anecdotes, imitations, jokes, colours, quantities)  
+ hearer oriented



**Conclusions**

- *like* is fully pragmaticalized whereas *just* is in the process of pragmatic diversification (isolated use and prefabs)
- common semantic core around the notions of adjustment and conformity, but diverging destinies: *just* is speaker-oriented whereas *like* is hearer-oriented
- speaker orientation (*just*) corresponds to "survival of the fittest" (Poulsen 1996)
- hearer orientation (*like*) corresponds to the construction of a "collaborative floor" (Edelsky 1981) vs. "single floor" (*just*)
- both contribute to "high involvement style" (Nordberg 1986, Tannen 1984)
- adolescence is a period of pragmatic acquisition, where teenagers experiment their linguistic positioning among their peers (anticipation of co-speaker's (dis)agreement, emergence of face-saving consciousness, and gender-related use of language)

