A Comparative Study of New Quotatives in Asian Englishes:
A Corpus-Based Analysis

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1. Introduction

In daily conversations, we often hear people directly quoting what other people have said before; for example, "Why did you download that mobile game?" "Because my best friend has been playing it for a while, and she said, 'You should try it, it's really fun.'" Traditionally, "say" has been the main verb used to introduce direct quotation; however, these days, new quotatives such as "be like" and "go" are also used in conversations (e.g., Buchstaller, 2013; Barbieri, 2009; Tagliamonte & Hudson, 1999; Takahashi, 2014). The origin of the quotative usage of "be like" can be traced to California (D'Arcy, 2007), and the use of new quotatives is now regarded as an ongoing linguistic change in English (e.g., Winter, 2002).

There has been many studies relating to this phenomenon in native varieties of English including American English (Barbieri, 2009), British English (Buchstaller, 2008), Canadian English (Tagliamonte & Hudson, 1999), Irish English (Höhn, 2012), Australian English (Winter, 2002), and New Zealand English (D'Arcy, 2012). Buchstaller (2013) conducted a comprehensive study on new quotatives that aimed to analyze "how exactly these innovations edge their way into the system of speech and thought reporting" (Chapter 1, para.6) including some comparison across different English varieties. However, there has been little attention on quantitative and comparative analysis of new quotatives in Asian Englishes apart from studies such as Sand (2013) on Singapore English and Takahashi (2014) on Philippine English. Sand (2013) looked at the quotative usage of "like" in Singapore English as part of the analysis of weblogs, and the study did not include comparison with more "traditional" quotatives nor detailed analysis of the features of quotatives. Takahashi (2014) analyzed quotatives in Philippine English in comparison with native varieties of English, and internal comparison between Asian Englishes was noted as necessary in future research.

In order to fill the gap in the literature, the present study aimed to describe, analyze, and compare the features and use of new quotatives in Asian Englishes. To highlight new quotatives, traditional quotatives were incorporated in the scope of investigation. Among different varieties of English in Asia, Hong Kong English, Indian English, and Singapore English were selected for analysis. The data on Philippine English was also included based on Takahashi (2014). These varieties were chosen because they are spoken in major Asian areas classified as the Outer Circle according to the Kachruvian paradigm (Kachru, 1992, pp. 356-357). It should also be noted that Philippine English is considered as an American-type English (Dayag, 2012) in contrast to the other three varieties.

2. Methodology

In order to use comparable data across the varieties, this study extracted data from the spoken private dialogues component (S1A, 200,000 words) of the Hong Kong English corpus (ICE-HK: Bolt & Bolton, 2006), the Indian English corpus (ICE-IND: Shastri & Leitner, 2002), and the Singapore English corpus (ICE-SIN: Nihilani, Yibin, Pakir, & Ooi, 2002) of the International Corpus of English. The data in Takahashi (2014) was also from the S1A component of the ICE Philippine English corpus (ICE-PHI: Bautisa, Lising, & Dayag, 2004). The series of ICE corpora all share the same structure, and as such, are most suitable in conducting comparative analysis (see, Greenbaum, 1996). The use of concordancers was strongly considered as the extraction method; however, as the target forms had non-quotative usage as well, it was decided to extract data manually so that it was easier to keep track of the context of each quotative. The present study aimed to analyze quotatives, which meant that the focus was on direct quotation, so indirect quotation was not included in the analysis. In addition, instances of "like" used as a hedge or a filler as in "Dan goes to see a movie like every week" or "I was like so sleepy yesterday" were carefully excluded.

3. Results and Analysis

The gathered data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The main focus was on Asian Englishes, yet some comparison with native varieties of English was briefly included based on previous studies

to illustrate similarities and differences. SPSS (ver. 23) was used for statistical analysis.

3.1 Frequency

There were 191 instances of quotatives in ICE-HK, 166 instances in ICE-IND, 327 instances in ICE-SIN, and 227 instances in ICE-PHI. There was a significant difference between the varieties (χ^2=65.926, df=3, p=.000), with speakers of Singapore English using direct quotation significantly more frequently than speakers of the other varieties. In total, 34 expressions were used as quotatives in at least one of the corpora. Table 1 shows the summary of the data. The category "others" grouped together quotatives which were observed only once in the whole data, namely, announce, beg, call, comment, complain, cry out, emphasize, exclaim, hear, mutter, put, quote, realize, rebut, request, sound, text, and wonder. "Null" refers to instances of direct quotation introduced without any quotative. "(Be) like" refers to the use of "like" as a quotative without an obvious be-verb, and this was only observed in ICE-SIN. The number in parentheses indicates percentage.

Table 1. Frequency of Quotatives

	HK	IND	SIN	PHI
answer	1 (0.5)	0	0	1 (0.4)
ask	13 (6.8)	13 (7.8)	17 (5.2)	15 (6.6)
be	2 (1.0)	0	2 (0.6)	0
be like	11 (5.8)	0	13 (4.0)	33(14.5)
(be) like	0	0	7 (2.1)	0
decide	1(0.5)	0	0	2 (0.9)
feel	0	3 (1.8)	0	1 (0.4)
go	0	2 (1.2)	4 (1.2)	16 (7.0)
go like	0	1 (0.6)	0	5 (2.2)
question	0	0	0	2 (0.9)
reply	1 (0.5)	1 (0.6)	0	0
say	131 (68.6)	109 (65.7)	225 (68.8)	83 (36.6)
talk	1 (0.5)	0	0	1 (0.4)
tell	4 (2.1)	12 (7.2)	16 (4.9)	20 (8.8)
think	6 (3.1)	6 (3.6)	16 (4.9)	3 (1.3)
others	3 (1.6)	5 (3.0)	6 (1.8)	4 (1.8)
null	17 (8.9)	14 (8.4)	21 (6.4)	41(18.1)
Total	191	166	327	227

As the table indicates, some quotatives were more heavily used than others across the varieties. The following shows examples of such quotatives. Mark-up symbols were eliminated and quotation marks were added to the examples to emphasize direct quotation.

(1) ask
You have to ask him "if I didn't meet the quota can I get the eight thousand as well"
(ICE-HK: S1A-096#244:1:B)

(2) be like
I was like "where's the train"
(ICE-SIN: S1A-034#30:1:A)

(3) go
And as the proverb go "like the mother like the baby"
(ICE-IND: S1A-066#178:1:B)

(4) say
The girl said "why does I see you today everyday"
(ICE-HK: S1A-028#425:1:A)

(5) tell
Every time he wants to borrow something he will tell Jude "you know here is my matric card go and take it for me"
(ICE-SIN: S1A-082#191:1:B)

(6) null
"No sir I am new just an unexperienced man I'd to come uh try on this"
(ICE-IND: S1A-017#26:1:C)

3.2 New Quotatives and Traditional Quotatives

There were 34 verbs and expressions functioning as quotatives in the data, and 5 of them, namely, be, be like, (be) like, go, and go like can be classified as "new" quotatives based on the literature (e.g., Buchstaller, 2008, D'Arcy, 2007, Takahashi, 2014). "Be all" is another quotative identified for example in American English (Buchstaller, 2014), but this was not observed in the Asian Englishes data. Table 2 shows the proportion of new quotatives and traditional quotatives in each corpus.

Table 2. New Quotatives vs. Traditional Quotatives

	New	Traditional
HK	13 (6.8%)	178 (93.2%)
IND	3 (1.8%)	163 (98.2%)
SIN	26 (8.0%)	301 (92.0%)
PHI	54 (23.8%)	173 (76.2%)

As the table shows, there was a clear difference between Philippine English and the other three varieties (e.g., ICE-SIN & ICE-PHI: χ^2=27.201, df=1, p=.000). In fact, the proportion of new quotatives was all less than 10% in the three varieties, and there was hardly any instances of new quotatives in Indian English. This indicates that new quotatives are not widely used by speakers of these varieties. The difference between the varieties may be related to the fact that Philippine English is more closely associated with American English than the other varieties and that new quotatives mainly originated in American English as mentioned above. However, even the proportion of new quotatives in Philippine English was significantly lower than that of American English (Takahashi, 2014, p. 136).

Table 3 shows the breakdown of new quotatives in each corpus. After a thorough confirmation of the context, "be" and "(be) like" were included in the category "be like," whereas "go like" was dropped from the following analysis because there was only one instance of it in the new data. The table indicates that

both speakers of Hong Kong English and speakers of Singapore English tend to choose "be like" when they do use new quotatives. Speakers of Indian English in the data never used "be like." This does not mean this form does not exist in Indian English, yet its frequency of occurrence is likely to be very low.

Table 3. New Quotatives

	Be like	Go
HK	13	0
IND	0	2
SIN	22 (84.6%)	4 (15.4%)
PHI	33 (67.3%)	16 (32.7%)

3.3 Tense

Direct quotation in conversations is mostly based on what someone said or thought in the past, and therefore, quotatives tend to be in the past tense (Tagliamonte & Hudson, 1999). However, some studies have pointed out an association of new quotatives with historical present tense in certain varieties (Takahashi, 2014, p. 139 on Philippine English; Winter, 2010, p.11 on Australian English). In order to investigate this point, tense of quotatives was analyzed, focusing on the main five quotatives excluding the category "null," which did not have tense. Table 4 shows the result. The future tense is not shown on the table itself but was included in the calculation.

Table 4. Tense of Quotatives

		be like	go	ask
HK	Past	38.5%	0	30.8%
	Present	61.5%	0	69.2%
IND	Past	0	0	84.6%
	Present	0	100.0%	15.4%
SIN	Past	40.9%	0	47.1%
	Present	50.0%	100.0%	41.2%
PHI	Past	45.5%	0	80.0%
	Present	54.5%	100.0%	13.3%
		say	tell	
HK	Past	70.2%	0	
	Present	24.4%	100.0%	
IND	Past	64.2%	75.0%	
	Present	33.9%	5.0%	
SIN	Past	76.4%	6.3%	
	Present	20.4%	81.3%	
PHI	Past	83.1%	75.0%	
	Present	14.5%	25.0%	

Looking first at the new quotatives, around 50% of "be like" was indeed in the present tense in Hong Kong English and Singapore English as well. All of such instances apart from one example of Hong Kong English were in the historical present tense, indicating

that this tendency may be shared across Asian Englishes. All instances of "go" were in the present tense and were mainly used to introduce fixed expressions such as proverbs. Although the frequency is too low to fully support this point, it may be true that the quotative "go" is "treated as a fixed phrase in the present tense especially in non-native varieties of English" (Takahashi, 2014, p. 138).

Another tendency to note is that although the traditional quotative "say" was used in the past tense significantly more frequently in all the varieties (with no significant differences between Hong Kong English, Indian English, and Singapore English: χ^2=9.277, df=4, p=.055), "ask" in Hong Kong English and "tell" in Singapore English were used significantly more frequently in the present tense than in the past tense. This may imply that connection between direct quotation and the past tense is weaker in some English varieties, not only regarding new quotatives.

3.4 Grammatical Person

Direct quotation is usually accompanied by the name or the personal pronoun of the person who uttered it originally. Even in case of "null" quotatives, it is possible to infer the subject based on the context. Table 5 shows the subject of the quotatives across new quotatives and traditional quotatives in the data. There were only several cases of direct quotation with "you" as the subject, so they are not shown on the table.

Table 5. Grammatical Person of Quotatives

		be like	go	ask
HK	1st	38.5%	0	38.5%
	3rd	61.5%	0	53.8%
IND	1st	0	0	61.5%
	3rd	0	100.0%	38.5%
SIN	1st	36.4%	0	0%
	3rd	63.6%	100.0%	100.0%
PHI	1st	15.2%	18.7%	40.0%
	3rd	81.8%	81.3%	60.0%
		say	tell	null
HK	1st	25.2%	25.0%	47.1%
	3rd	69.5%	75.0%	52.9%
IND	1st	22.0%	25.0%	64.3%
	3rd	75.2%	75.0%	35.7%
SIN	1st	38.2%	50.0%	23.8%
	3rd	60.4%	50.0%	76.2%
PHI	1st	32.5%	35.0%	36.6%
	3rd	65.1%	55.0%	63.4%

The table demonstrates that quotatives tend to co-occur with the third person pronoun or specific names regardless of the variety. This includes the

association of the new quotative "go" with the third person pronoun across the varieties due to its "distal" nature (Romaine & Lange, 1991, p. 266). Studies have shown that "be like" is equally or more frequently used with the first person pronoun in North American English and British English (Tagliamonte & Hudson, 1999) but not in Australian English (Winter, 2010). The latter pattern was observed with regard to the Asian Englishes data in the present study. In Asian Englishes, direct quotation was heavily associated with actual or adapted speech rather than internal thought concerning the six main categories (ICE-HK:98.9%, ICE-IND:96.7% ICE-SIN:94.8%, ICE-PHI:92.8%), and this may be a reason behind the tendency.

4. Discussion

This study has shown that new quotatives are not as widespread in Asian Englishes as in native varieties of English, especially American English. Direct quotation itself is widely used in conversations, more so in certain varieties such as Singapore English than in other varieties such as Indian English although this may be related to the choice of conversation topics by the speakers. "Be like" seems to be the preferred choice over "go" when new quotatives do appear in Asian Englishes apart from Indian English. New quotatives are used in the present tense as well, suggesting the shared use of historical present tense across Asian Englishes. Another common feature is the tendency to favor quoting utterances of other people (excluding the interlocutor), resulting in the higher frequency of the third person pronoun as the subject of quotatives.

Speakers of Philippine English use new quotatives more frequently than speakers of other Asian varieties. Philippine English has been considered as an American-type English as described above, implying that new quotatives may still maintain a certain association with American English. Buchstaller (2013) has claimed that the global spread of new quotatives can be explained as results of the combining effects of media influence and internal parameters of each English variety (Chapter 3, Section 2, para.10). Indeed, there were some differences between Asian Englishes with regard to traditional quotatives as in the degree of preference of the historical present tense, which may have influence on the features of new quotatives used in that variety.

5. Conclusion

The use of new quotatives has been considered as an ongoing change in conversations across different English varieties of the world. The present study has shown that there is still a preference for traditional quotatives in Asian Englishes. It remains to be seen how and if new quotatives are going to further spread in Asian Englishes. One main limitation of this study is that the ICE data was gathered around the year 2000, meaning that it will be necessary to analyze more up-to-date data to fully assess the present situation. In addition, sociolinguistic factors and attitudes toward new quotatives in Asian Englishes remain as topics for further investigation.

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