3.3 Limitations

In general, it is often difficult to differentiate speech from thought, especially in first person (Ferrara and Bell, 1995, as mentioned by Buchstaller, 2002, p. 4). Because of this, I expected to find many ambiguous utterances that would have to be categorized as Non-Applicable. But since the context for each concordance has around 100 words, this should be enough to discern in which category it belongs. However, this may not be the case for all cases.

It should also be noted that the conjugations of *be like* explored here are only a small sample of the full use of the quotative that could be found in the corpus. For example, uses of *be like* where the subject is explicit ("And then my family's like") or where there are modals or adverbs ("I'd be like, that's good") are not included.

In addition, all the concordances found in this study were found in the Spoken category of the COCA, which contains mostly talk shows and interviews, to which they are limited to.

3.4 Data collection

This study focused on the first and third person singular in the past and present tense. Specifically, as all of the concordances would come from dialogues where the speakers were retelling events, the tense observed here would be named historical present. Most of the Spoken genre of the corpus came from talk shows and interviews, and the second person singular by definition required the interviewer to also have been involved. Due to the low probability of this, *you were like, you are like,* and *you're like* were not analyzed. The low probability of group interviews also excluded the first person plural. To prevent

having only one plural grammatical person, the third person plural was also excluded, and the study focused on the singular person. In the case of the third person singular *It's like*, where the 'atmosphere of the room' or 'general thought' can neither speak nor think internally, it would have fit in neither category, and was thus excluded. The table below shows all the forms that will be analyzed.

Table 3

Conjugated forms for analysis

Grammatical Person	Tense	Form	Raw Frequency	Raw Frequency of quotatives
First Person Singular	Past	I was like	866	646
Third Person Singular	Past	He was like	194	96
Third Person Singular	Past	She was like	143	62
First Person Singular	Historical Present	I am like / I'm like	673	462
Third Person Singular	Historical Present	He's like / He is like	344	168
Third Person Singular	Historical Present	She's like / She is like	206	106

Both the contracted and uncontracted forms (*I'm like/I am like*) will be taken into account, and added to the contracted form. Therefore, in the future, any instance of *I'm like* also includes its uncontracted form. The raw frequencies reported are from the Spoken genre in the corpus. After the categorizing is done, the results of the use of *be like* as quotative of either Direct Speech or Internal Thought are further interpreted using the chi square significance test. These tables, including the example below, can be found with their corresponding conjugation in the Results section.

Table 4.

Be like

| | Be like | | | | | | |
Year	Total tokens	Direct speech	Internal thought	Focus particle	Preposition (description)	Adverb (approximation)	Response Cry	Non-appliable
2003	170	54	43	23	30	3	9	8
2005	146	40	36	18	26	8	12	7
2007	213	70	67	18	33	6	7	13
2009	266	99	67	42	24	3	11	20
2011	450	161	121	46	59	8	28	27
2013	433	128	124	48	41	11	29	50
2015	748	243	287	49	69	17	31	50
Total	2426	795	745	244	282	56	127	175

3.5 Procedure

The analysis will be divided in two parts: General and *Be like* as a quotative. The first is to

assess *be like*'s status as a quotative compared with its other uses. The second part will be

the main part of this study, as it will show what conjugations of *be like* are more used, and

the frequency of Direct Speech and Internal Thought depending on the grammatical person

or the tense. Following this, the chi square significance test will be applied and its results

shown, which will be interpreted in the following chapter. In the chi square test, the degree

of freedom (which is a measure of how many cells in the table are free to vary) has to be

calculated with a certain formula: Multiply the number of columns minus one by the

number of rows minus one (as explained in Lindquist, 2009). Since all tables will have two

columns (representing Direct Speech and Internal Thought in most cases, except for the

Functions of *like* table, which will have Quotatives and Other Functions as variables) and

two rows for two historical cut points, the formula will be (2-1) x (2-1) = 1, which means

that the analysis of statistical significance will have 1 degree of freedom, and the

interpretation will be based on the following table of significance (Oakes, 1998, as cited by

Lindquist, 2009, p. 40):

Table 5.

Significance level

	Significance level					
	0.20	0.10	0.05	0.025	0.01	0.001
df 1	1.64	2.71	3.84	5.02	6.64	10.83
df 2	3.22	4.61	5.99	7.38	9.21	13.82
df 3	4.64	6.25	7.82	9.35	11.34	16.27

3.6 Sections

To estimate the predominance of the quotative use of *be like* compared to its other

functions, all the raw frequencies per year and tense will be summed up and divided

depending on their function. The result is a table and a chart that shows the proportion of

quotative *be like*, which will tell us how important or relevant this function is.

In this section, the evolution and progress of the two uses *be like* has as a quotative

(Direct Speech and Internal Thought) will be observed through time by grammatical tense,

grammatical person, and as a whole. The result will be four charts (*I was like; I am like;

He/She was like; He/She's like)* that will be tested for their statistical significance using chi

square.

Next, the conjugated forms will be the focus, therefore *I was like + He/She was like*

will have a table and a chart each, which will show their evolution through time. In the

same vein, *I am + He/She is* will also have a table and a chart, and will be analyzed through

the chi square test. *I was + I am* and *He/She was + He/She is* also will apply for this.

Afterwards, the test should determine whether or not these numbers are significant. The sections shall be

1)   *Be like*

2)   *I was like* (1st Person Singular – Past tense)

3)   *I'm like* (1st Person Singular – Present tense)

4)   *He/She was like* (3rd Person Singular – Past Tense)

5)   *He was like* (3rd Person Masculine Singular – Past Tense)

6)   *She was like* (3rd Person Feminine Singular – Past Tense)

7)   *He/She's like* (3rd Person Singular – Present Tense)

8)   *He's like* (3rd Person Masculine Singular – Present Tense)

9)   *She's like* (3rd Person Feminine Singular – Present Tense)

10)   Past tense (*I was like + He/She was like)*

11)   Present tense (*I'm like + He/She is like)*

12)   1st Person Singular *(I was like + I'm like)*

13)   3rd Person Singular (*He/She was like + He/She's like)*