Arrah, like, you know: The dynamics of discourse marking in ICE-Ireland

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Discourse marking in Irish English: the historical background

For over 400 years, dramatists, novelists, and other writers seeking to depict Irish characters have relied in part on words and phrases taken to be indexical of Irishness when representing the conversational functions now associated with the term 'discourse marker'. In keeping with the general trend in the lexical development of Irish English, many of the terms which are commonly cited are etymologically derived from Irish and carry over similar discourse functions. These terms include introductory particles as in

(1)   *Arra* vat shall ve do full quickly and soon ('The Irishmen's Prayers', 1689)
(2)   'Bud, *musha*, what's the harm o' that', he said to himself (Banim 1838)
(3)   'Oh, *wurrah*, no,' said both, 'don't mention that' (Carleton 1843)

and vocatives as in

(4) 'Well, thin, an' I won't *avich*' (Banim 1838)

(5) " 'Oh! by this and by that, mother', says Jack, 'what did you waken me for?'
      " 'Jack *a-vourneen*', says the mother 'sure and you war lying grunting, and groaning ... and I only nudged you for fraid you war in pain' (Carleton 1843).
(6) " 'Well, *acushla*,' says he, 'you've a purty and an innocent-looking face; but I'm tould there's many a trap in London well baited'. (Carleton 1843).

More subtle is the utterance-final particle *moryah*, which could be translated to 'as it were' in English, but which has no ready equivalent in most varieties of English. It is used to suggest the speaker's non-endorsement of the truth of the proposition to which *moryah* is attached, as in Joyce's (1910) illustration in (7) or the modern example in (8).

(7) A notorious schemer and cheat puts on airs of piety in the chapel and thumps his breast in great style; and a spectator says: — Oh how pious and holy Joe is growing — *mar-yah*!

(8) "He was helping her with her homework *mar dhea* " (Kallen 1997, example from Cork)

In some cases the Irish influence is less obvious, since the English elements constitute a calque or translation based on Irish. The seemingly redundant *at all at all*, for example, represents the English equivalent of two commonly adjoined phrases in Irish *ar chor* and *ar bith*, each of which can plausibly be translated as *at all*, thus yielding an apparent reduplicative in English from a form which is not reduplicative in Irish, as seen in (9).

(9)   She never entered into discoorse with him, *at all at all* (Large 1937)

Some historical representations are based only on English lexicon, in a way that is arguably similar to other forms of English, but which has somehow come to be seen as characteristic of Irish English. Utterance-initial sure is one such type:

(10) '*Sure*, only for this same Dick, I'd never get Mary Finigan for a wife'
        (Carleton 1843)
(11) *Sure* it knocked every idee of a message out of me head (Large 1937)

More recently, as Irish English has started to become familiar to international audiences through the works of Roddy Doyle — including the highly successful films based on The Commitments and other novels — television series such as Father Ted, and a host of other literary and media representations, other discourse markers emerge with consistency, perhaps not so much to mark a distinctively Irish use of English but to mark a style of discourse that is both clearly interactive and, in a much more subtle way, still evocative of an Irish discourse context. Examples such as (12) and (13) carry some of this flavour; note that in both cases, the authors have added orthographic reinforcements to the presentation of speech as opposed to writing:

(12) Don't go near my socks, *righ'*. (Doyle 1987)
(13) She ends up slapping me across the face, *roysh*, and I have to hug her and tell
        her to, *like*, calm down (Howard 2004)

Discourse marking today: what does ICE-Ireland have to say?

While it is true that the stereotypical and sometimes even racist portrayal of Irish literary characters should not lead us to take the literary record as fact, it is also true that studies such as those of Sullivan (1980, 1999) and Amador Moreno (2005) have made good use of modern sociolinguistic insights to demonstrate the continuities between what we know from Irish English dialect literature and what we can understand from contemporary speech recordings. My intention here, however, is not to examine this wealth of Irish English literary material, but, more simply, to use it as a point of departure in order to help with the examination of yet another type of linguistic material — that represented by the International Corpus of English (or ICE) project for Ireland, which was originally proposed by Sidney Greenbaum in 1988.[1]

Greenbaum's vision of the ICE project is simple and clear (Greenbaum 1996b):

> its principle aim is to provide the resources for comparative studies of the English used in countries where it is either a majority first language (for example, Canada and Australia) or an official additional language (for example, India and Nigeria). In both language situations, English serves as a means of communication between those who live in these countries. The resources that ICE is providing for comparative studies are computer corpora, collections of samples of written and spoken English from each of the countries that are participating in the project.

Though this definition could apply to many different types of English, ICE is not defined as a variationist project or a sociolinguistic enterprise in the usual sense. It is not concerned with demonstrating the relationship of speaker variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, or social class with linguistic variability, nor is it designed to examine questions of linguistic change in progress. The ICE project is in fact devoted to the examination of what is avowedly standard English.

The ICE definition of standard English, though, is not one that would please adherents of what Milroy and Milroy (1999) refer to as the 'standard ideology'. For while they argue convincingly (p. 23) that 'the process of standardisation (strictly defined) is based on the idea of aiming, by any means possible, at uniformity', and Lesley Milroy (1999: 174) further argues that, 'the chief characteristic of a standard ideology is the belief that there is one and only one correct spoken form of the language, modelled on a single correct written form', ICE methodology is not concerned in any way with making linguistic decisions as to what is 'standard', nor to making decisions that will create or enforce uniformity in English usage. On the contrary the definition of what goes into an ICE corpus is based on two non-linguistic criteria, as explained by Nelson (1996: 28):

> The authors and speakers of the texts are aged 18 or over, and have been educated through the medium of English to at least the end of secondary schooling. We use these two criteria because they are quantifiable. We do not attempt an evaluation of the language in a text as a criterion for inclusion or exclusion. Age and education can be accurately measured, and they can be applied in the same way in every country. The project, then, is not based on any prior notion of what 'educated' or 'standard' English is.

Thus we arrive at an empirical definition of 'standard'. It would not be pushing things too far to say what is 'standard' about the ICE project is only partly about language (i.e., the language of reasonably-well educated or socially prominent people in somewhat formal situations), but more about the use of a standard methodology in ICE corpora throughout the world. ICE now includes 15 separate projects from around the world:

Great Britain	New Zealand	Jamaica
Ireland	Hong Kong	Malaysia
Canada	India	Singapore
United States	Philippines	South Africa
Australia	East Africa	Sri Lanka

In each of these projects, the essential form of the corpus is the same, incorporating the following core features:

☞ 1 million words per corpus

☞ Standard English defined by combination of **speaker selection** and **text type**: no linguistic prejudging of what is to be included in the corpus

☞ Principles of speaker selection: **secondary education** (or equivalent standing); minimally, most formative years spent in relevant country

☞ Principles of text type: **standardised list** of spoken and written texts

☞ Corpus made up 500 texts: 300 spoken, 200 written, each approximately 2000 words long.

☞ Each text transcribed **orthographically** and stored in text format for computer searching: phonology not indicated in ICE transcripts.

Text types in ICE corpora include a substantial amount of relatively informal conversation (albeit all participants know they are being taped for transcription) as well as more formal genres associated with the legal process and parliamentary debate, as seen Table 1, which gives the ICE-Ireland text categories and the approximate number of words in the corpus, based on a calculation of 2000 words per corpus text.

Table 1 Spoken text categories, ICE-Ireland

Text category	Number of texts	Approx word count
Broadcast discussions	20	40,000
Broadcast interviews	10	20,000
Broadcast news	20	40,000
Broadcast talks	20	40,000
Business transactions	10	20,000
Classroom lessons	20	40,000
Demonstrations	10	20,000
Face to face conversation	90	180,000
Legal cross-examinations	10	20,000
Legal presentations	10	20,000
Parliamentary debates	10	20,000
Scripted speeches (not broadcast)	10	20,000
Spontaneous commentaries	20	40,000
Telephone conversation	10	20,000
Unscripted speeches	30	60,000
TOTAL SPOKEN TEXTS	300	600,000

Table 2 Written text categories, ICE-Ireland

Text category	Number of texts	Approx word count
Administrative/regulatory prose	10	20,000
Business letters	15	30,000
Creative writing	20	40,000
Learned publication in Social Sciences	10	20,000
Learned publications in Humanities	10	20,000
Learned publications in Natural Sciences	10	20,000
Learned publications in Technology	10	20,000
Popular publications in Humanities	10	20,000
Popular publications in Natural Sciences	10	20,000
Popular publications in Social Sciences	10	20,000
Popular publications in Technology	10	20,000
Press editorials	10	20,000
Press news reports	20	40,000
Skills and hobbies	10	20,000
Social letters	15	30,000
Student postgraduate essays	10	20,000
Student undergraduate essays	10	20,000
TOTAL WRITTEN TEXTS	200	400,000
TOTAL TEXTS	500	1,000,000

The advantages of having a common methodology for a world-wide study of 'standard' English are clear. Though minor variations may exist, the use of a common set of text types, collected according to the same rules with the intention of gathering naturally-occurring data from similar contexts, facilitates international comparison and allows for empirical tests of the degree to which it is possible to speak of an international standard English which, by definition, shows uniformity within the English-speaking world, and the equal possibility of demonstrating national and local variation within the empirically-defined standard.

Though the ICE methodology has much of value, there are some limitations to it. The obvious one is that it is not conceived of as a sociolinguistic database: there are no rules which require geographical spread, gender balance, or other means to make the demographic base for an ICE corpus somehow representative of the standard-English speaking population at large. If standard language shows no variation, this limitation should not be a problem, but since it is our understanding that any empirical definition of standard inevitably does contain variation, we have designed ICE-Ireland with the intention of representing speakers from throughout Ireland, of ensuring gender balance where possible, and of building in a division between data from the six counties of Northern Ireland and the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland, in order to test the degree to which political jurisdiction may have an influence on the development of the standard language.

More relevant to this paper, however, we have also recognised the lack of an interpretive mechanism in ICE transcripts. As shown in Figure 1, an ICE transcript

does not require tagging for part of speech or any other syntactic or discourse function, and phonological information was excluded from the ICE enterprise in the early decisions taken on building ICE. The most significant features of the excerpt in Figure 1 are the inclusion of the text number and speaker id at the start of each turn; the indication of utterance initiation with a hash mark (<#>), and the enclosure of pauses or other non-linguistic material in angle brackets. Unlike some corpus conventions, capital letters are used in ICE-Ireland transcriptions, in accordance with the ICE-Ireland style sheet.

Figure 1: Typical ICE-Ireland transcript (S1B-035)

<S1B-035$B> <#> John <,> tell me about the farm because your work 's going to go on Christmas Day and every other day but there are traditions and there are memories and it 's obviously a time you enjoy
<S1B-035$D> <#> Yeah obviously it 's slightly different probably from the picture painted now in Alice Taylor 's recent book that everything kind of closed down for the twelve days of Christmas <#> The cows are in the stall and you stock up the hay and away she goes <#> Uh obviously you 've had lot of changes in farming practice now <#> Personally we 're not in winter milk <,> I still have a few cows milking but obviously you 've a lot of people who 've cows calved already at this time of the year

In order to provide an enriched set of data, we have taken the existing ICE-Ireland corpus and annotated it for prosodic features, for the speech act status of utterances, and for the use of discourse markers of various kinds. This corpus is referred to as the Prosody-Pragmatics-and Discourse corpus, or PPD corpus, and is based on the 300 spoken texts in ICE-Ireland. To the best of our knowledge, this is the only annotation project of this kind for ICE corpora. Table 3 shows the main features of the PPD corpus.

Table 3: The PPD (Prosody-Pragmatics-Discourse) corpus

1. Selected texts are annotated for prosodic features, based on an adaptation of the Tones and Break Index (ToBI) system (e.g. Silverman et al. 1992), in which each phonological phrase is given a 'tune number' to represent the sequence of high and low tones (11 tunes were identified in the corpus) (cf. Portes 2003).
2. The speech act status of all analysable utterances was encoded using a system developed from Searle (1976)
3. The following pragmatic functions were encoded: 　　Discourse markers (*) 　　Quotatives (+) 　　Sentence tags (@)

In the transcription of Figure 2, then, the regular ICE transcript is enhanced by speech act annotation (e.g., <dir> … </dir> represents the start and completion of a directive); signalling of the discourse marker *kind-of* by use of an asterisk; and annotation of prosody using numbers to denote prosodic contours, capitalised vowels to indicate syllabic prominence within the word, and the % symbol to show the end of a phonological phrase.

Figure 2: PPD version of S1B-035 excerpt

<S1B-035$B> <#> <dir> John <,> 1tEll me about the 2fArm% because 1yOUr work
's going to go on 1ChrIstmas Day and every 1Other day% but there 1Are 1tradItions
and there are 1mEmories% and it 's 1Obviously a time you 1enjOy% </dir>
<S1B-035$D> <#> <rep> Yeah 1Obviously it 's slightly 3dIfferent probably from the
picture painted now% in Alice 1TAylor 's recent 1bOOk% that 1Everything kind-of*
closed 1dOwn for the 1twElve days of Christmas% </rep> <#> <rep> The 1cOws are
in the 2stAll% and you 1stOck up the 2hAy% and 2awAy she 1gOEs% </rep> <#>
<rep> Uh 1Obviously you 've had 3lOt of changes in farming practice now% </rep>
<#> <rep> 3PErsonally% 2wE 're not in 2wInter milk% <,> I still have a 1fEw cows
1mIlking% but obviously you 've a lot of people who 've 1cOws 1cAlved% 1alrEAdy
at 2thIs time of the 1yEAr% </rep>

Building from the ICE and PPD corpora, it becomes possible to examine the use of
discourse markers in contemporary Irish standard English, and, ultimately, to make
structured comparisons with other national Englishes for which ICE corpora exist.
The comparative element will be mentioned briefly in this paper, but in the remainder
of this discussion, I will focus especially on three elements in the discourse marking
system:

(i) the degree to which discourse marking associated with traditional dialect has
been incorporated into the standard language as reflected in ICE-Ireland,
(ii) the degree to which ICE-Ireland reflects international trends in the use of
discourse marking, and
(iii) the extent to which we can understand the data in terms of linguistic
convergence and divergence, in which Irish standard English converges with
both traditional dialect and with international standard English, thus creating a
unique configuration that is also divergent from other Englishes.

Ultimately I will suggest that these three tendencies demonstrate the dual nature of
the principle 'same but different': Irish English has indeed come to share features of
discourse marking with other world Englishes, yet even when the so-called standard is
the basis of study, Irish English remains truly different from the Englishes found
elsewhere.

The first layer to consider is the appearance of discourse markers which have been
associated with traditional dialect, either through transfer from the Irish language or
from developments which are at least lexically based in English. Table 4 lists the
items to be considered here.

Table 4: Discourse markers associated with traditional dialect or vernacular

Marker	Tokens (N=)
Faith	1
Arrah	2
At all at all	3
Yerra	5
Ould/oul	44
Sure	207

Examples of these markers are as follows:

Faith
Upgrader: precedes and affirms new information

(14) <S1A-055$B> … And I was saying that that the doctor wasn't on at all now really <,> and we didn't know like whether that the doctor that 'd be standing in wouldn't know the history or anything <#> But **faith** then she contacted him <#> She rang McDaid anyway but <#> It was all money anyway and pension book <,> you see <#>

(Speaker: Female, 50+, Co. Limerick)

Arrah
Precedes new information but refers back to shared knowledge; an indirect request for agreement

(15) <S1A-087$C> … <#> She 's not as slow as Ron is <#> <{> <[> Ron </[> is unbelievably slow <#> He stares at you for a minute <#> And then like he eventually decides oh well I better give her her change like <#> And he 's an hour then looking for change <#> Well I know he 's like that with me anyway <S1A-087$B> <#> <[> Well Ron </[> </{>
<S1A-087$B> <#> **Arrah** Lee doesn't look at you at all <#> Just <,> looks at the money <#> Is it a tenner or a fiver

(Speaker: Male, 18-25, Co. Mayo)

(16) <S1A-089$C> <#> Ugh yuck <#> Jimmy you 're never getting married boy
<S1A-089$B> <#> Six six zero <,> <&> laughter </&>
<S1A-089$D> <#> Wait a minute now uhm
<S1A-089$B> <#> Or that one <{> <[> there there </[>
<S1A-089$D> <#> <[> **Arrah** it 's all </[> </{> no do you see <unclear> 2 sylls </unclear> there too much gold <#> It should have a few more diamonds on it
<S1A-089$B> <#> That one

(Speaker: Female, 18-25, Co. Mayo)

Yerra
Precedes new information but refers back to shared knowledge; an indirect request for agreement

(17a) <S1A-055$B> …<#> And all that 's going to be repainted now again <#> They could still close it in two years ' time
<S1A-055$A> <#> Why why would you close it is it
<S1A-055$B> <#> **Yerra** no but you see that <,> it would be cheaper now to subsidise patients in a nursing home <,> as to to be paying staff in a hospital

(17b) <S1A-083$A> <#> <[5> I 'd </[5> </{5> say nurses are exceptionally well treated though generally speaking in the State by all accounts <#> <{> <[> Double time and everything </[>

<S1A-083$B> <#> <[> Well <,,> well </[> </{> we wouldn't say so <#> But <{> <[> I suppose we are really </[> <&> laughter </&>
<S1A-083$A> <#> <[> But <,> by by comparison </[> </{> with with <{> <[> with </[> with most other professionals
<S1A-083$B> <#> <[> Yeah </[> </{>
<S1A-083$B> <#> Yeah <,> **yerra** you would be you would <{> <[> yeah yeah </[>

(Speaker: Female, 50+, Co. Limerick)

At all at all
Upgrader: affirms assertion which precedes it

(18) <S1B-032$D> <#> I think John it should be very clear and it should be made very clear that the particular comments which you 're attributing to me uh were made at a private meeting of the Fianna Fa/il parliamentary <{> <[> party </[>
<S1B-032$B> <#> <[> I checked </[> </{> them with people who were there and
<S1B-032$D> <#> Yes yes I I 'm not saying I 'm not denying the fact that **at all at all** but what I am saying it was a private party meeting where people have an opportunity of saying exactly what they feel

(Speaker: Male, 50+, Limerick)

Oul(d)
Usually precedes a referring expression; general mitigation — diminutive, speaker or listener closeness, shared knowledge, etc.

(19)   S1A-015$D> <#> So what are you going to stay there at least another year <{> <[> and try next year </[>
<S1A-015$A> <#> <[> At least another </[> </{> year anyway you know <#> I 'll see where I am next year now <#> Same place as I am this year no doubt <#> Och I don't know <#> I 'll see what the craic is you know <#> Got a few <unclear> 3 sylls </unclear> got to get the **oul** bank balance into the black before I worry about going

(Speaker: Male, 18-25, Northern Ireland)

(20) <S1A-064$E> <#> But the funniest line I think in the whole thing is when he goes uhm <,> she stops him anyway and he says <,> ah go away <#> Oh would you go away from bothering me from bothering me you know <#> It would be more in your line now to give me a spin into town in the squad like and this kind of thing <&> laughter </&> <#> And then he goes <,> they were going off someplace anyway uhm but you and your **oul** pioneer pin and your <&Irish> fa/inne </&Irish> <,> and your little white cross for not cursing <&> laughter </&>

(Speaker: Female, 18-25, Tipperary)

(21) <S1A-095$A> <#> Just me and Don <#> Well we 'd usually watch Will and
Grace but the series is over <,> on Living <#> So it was double bill last week
so we had it on nine to ten and then the Teachers and then a video couple of
bottles of wine and an **oul** chat

(Speaker: Female, 25-45, Armagh)

Sure
*Usually precedes assertion; new information presented as old, indirectly requesting
agreement*

(22) <S1B-071$B> <#> What does that involve Martine <#> Does that involve
photocopying the book <#> <{> <[> **Sure** that 's a waste of time

(Speaker: Male, 34-41, Co. Down)

(23)   <S1A-002$A> <#> **Sure** they had all those <{1> <[1> **sure** they have </[1>
all those obituaries done <#> They have <.> o </.> obituaries done for <,>
<{2> <[2> William and Harry </[2>

…
<S1A-002$D> <#> They 've been done <{> <[> for years </[> the
arrangements
<S1A-002$A> <#> <[> Yup </[> </{>
<S1A-002$H> <#> Mhm
<S1A-002$F> <#> **Sure** it was put out on Ceefax a few months ago by
mistake you know just for a few seconds <#> The whole you were practising
uhm whatever whatever or preparing whatever they were going to say

(Speaker A: Female, 25-45, Belfast; Speaker F: Female, 25-45, Belfast)

(24)   <S1A-076$A> <#> Oh yeah well no <#> It was going to be <.> s </.> what
was it sixty quid <,> the flight <,> <{> <[> and </[>
<S1A-076$B> <#> <[> **Sure** </[> </{> that 's for nothing

(Speaker: Female, 18-25, Limerick)

(25)   <S1A-090$B> <#> I 'd a great ould time now <#> **Sure** I didn't know anyone
else except Ronnie and me like <{> <[> <#> And I </[> obviously knew
myself like
<S1A-090$D> <#> < [> Yeah </[> </{>
<S1A-090$D> <#> Yeah
<S1A-090$B> <#> Didn't know anyone else that would have been in the
school like but **sure** we got on great

(Speaker: Female, 18-25, Co. Cork)

Though the preceding set of markers establish some of the key features of
interactive discourse in Ireland, and demonstrates links between the discourse
strategies associated with traditional dialect and those of the contemporary standard
language, they are by no means the primary means of discourse marking which are

found in the ICE-Ireland corpus. Though the list of discourse markers in Table 5 is far from exhaustive, it shows some of the more common types, whose number of tokens far exceeds the traditional markers we have noted thus far:

Table 5: Use of selected discourse markers in ICE-Ireland (spoken)

Word	Tokens (N=)
Well	1762
Oh	949
So	728
Just	624
Now	615
Okay	261
Right	199

Obviously it would be impossible to discuss these and other discourse markers in detail within the time available, so I would like to concentrate here on two in particular: *like*, in its use as a focus particle, a quotative, and a clause-final discourse marker, and *you-know*, which, in accord with Schiffrin's pioneering work on the subject, I understand as a marker whose primary effect is to draw attention to knowledge that is presumed or implied to be shared between speaker and listener. As a way of illustrating comparisons between Irish standard English and other types, I contrast *you know*, which downplays the novelty of the utterance by its reference to shared information, with *I mean*, a marker that I take to be an upgrader which works by drawing attention to the speaker's commitment to the utterance.

The use of *like* as a discourse marker to focus on a piece of new information has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention in recent years (e.g. Anderson 1997, Dailey-O'Cain 2000) and it is not my intention to review this research here. Since this use of *like* is generally agreed to be of relatively recent origin, though, it is of some significance in the first instance to establish its existence in Irish standard English. Indeed, the PPD analysis shows over 1000 tokens of discourse-marking *like*, divided into several categories as follows.

Focus-marking *like* I take to include *like* when it occurs before some new information, drawing attention to what follows. Sometimes this usage can have a mitigating function, in reducing the force of a following assertion, but this force is by no means to be assumed. Typical examples include the following, where the material for which *like* provides the focus is underlined:

(26) <S1B-076$A> … <#> I 'm thinking the screensavers would be our home page
    <#> We 'd have **like** <u>our mousemats around the place</u> <,> some kind of way of getting <,> you know uh as as good as we can get it

(Speaker: Female, 26-33, Dublin)

(27) <S1A-100$B> <#> Yeah so <,> so hopefully just the three people are alright and they 're not <,>
    <S1A-100$A> <#> Exactly
    <S1A-100$B> <#> Cos then **like** <u>with eleven people you 'd be assured to have a few good people</u> there but three people you 're just

(Speaker: Male, 18-25, Dublin)

(28) \<S1B-078$A> \<#> Okay \<#> No other queries on that now
  \<S1B-078$C?> \<#> It 's crazy how that can happen though isn't it \<#> Cos
  like <u>physio have a full complement of all those</u>

(Speaker: Female, 18-25, Dublin — query)

(29) \<S1B-003$A> … \<#> Right the thing is that that Leo the Sixth could be your
  son but the other thing is that your son \<,> or the person who supposedly is
  your son has allegedly just tried to kill you \<#> So **like** <u>the story is that Leo
  the Sixth attempted to assassinate</u> \<{> \<[> <u>Basil the First</u> \<#> So \</[>

(Speaker: Male, 46-65, Co. Down)

Widespread commentary on focus-marking *like* as a feature of international
English suggests a strong degree of convergence between standard Irish English and
international Englishes, bearing in mind that many, though not all, of the studies
which have been done elsewhere have concentrated on more vernacular levels of
usage than that found in ICE-Ireland. Nevertheless, what has not received nearly as
much attention is the use of clause or element-final *like*, which also has a discourse
function. As with focus-*like*, the function of element-final *like* may be to focus
attention on a particular bit of information, to mitigate the force of an assertion, to
allow for a less exact commitment to a particular position, and so forth. Crucially,
though, this use of *like* does not precede the information to which it is attached, but
follows it. Positionally it may occur within an utterance or may appear more like a
conversational tag, attached at the end: utterance-final tags account for over 400
tokens of *like* as a discourse marker in ICE-Ireland. Typical examples from ICE-
Ireland include the following, where the relevant material preceding *like* is
underlined:

(30) \<S1A-011$B> \<#> No but it was really our church our church \<#> We used to
  think it was so funny though cos we 'd a Protestant Chaplain in our school as
  well as a Catholic one right \<#> So when we were doing religion class <u>they
  were doing religion class as well</u> **like**

(Speaker: Female, 18-25, Dublin)

(31) \<S1A-093$A> \<#> He no I watched him do it \<#> He did it very very
  professionally \<#> <u>He knows exactly what he 's at</u> **like** you \<{1> \<[1> know
  \</[1> \<#> <u>He used to race bikes</u> **like** \<#> He \<{2> \<[2> said he 'd be \</[2>
  doing working on chains every \<,> <u>every week</u> **like**

(Speaker: Female, 25-45, Co. Down)

(32) \<S1A-093$B> \<#> You can receive \<,> and you can send but you have to put
  something in front of it and it 's expensive \<#> \<{1> \<[1> So \</[1> top up
  before you go \<#> Put about twenty quid in it before you \<{2> \<[2> go \</[2>
  \<#> And then uhm \<,> aye ask when you 're in the wherever you are ask
  somewhere <u>how you do it</u> **like**

(Speaker: Male, 25-45, Co. Down)

(33) <S1B-016$C?> <#> Will the question be subdivided <,> <{> <[> will it be </[>
    <#> No
    <S1B-016$A> <#> <[> No </[> </{> <#> Don't think so <#> I hope not for
    your sake <#> Uhm <unclear> several sylls </unclear>
    <S1B-016$C?> <#> What <u>if you haven't a clue of it</u> **like**
    <S1B-016$B?> <#> Yeah you could maybe know <u>one part of it</u> **like**

(Speakers: Females, 18-25, unspecified location, Republic of Ireland)

(34) <S1B-018$B> <#> Okay <,> so like would I actually start with stuff like that
    <S1B-018$A> <#> Oh absolutely <{> <[> yeah </[>
    <S1B-018$B> <#> <[> Yeah </[> </{> and just get <,,> like just get them
    working on the English vocabulary and geography vocabulary <{> <[> or
    whatever </[>
    <S1B-018$A> <#> <[> Yeah </[> </{> <,> and like using kind of multi-
    modal <,> <u>in</u> <{1> <[1> <u>that</u> </[1> **like**

(Speaker: Female, 20-30, Co. Kerry)

(35a) <S1A-048$B> <#> Uhm I usen't to <#> I used to always get on well with my
    <{1> <[1> Mam </[1> <,> but I usen't get on well with my Dad <#> But as
    since I moved out of the house <,> you know it changes your view on things
    <#> <{2> <[2> And </[2> when you go back to the house <u>it 's different</u> **like**

(35b) <S1A-048$A> <#> And is your sister living at home
    <S1A-048$B> <#> Yeah <#> Well but she 's got a <,> she 's going out with a
    Marine an American <{> <[> Marine <,> </[> called Bat <,> <#> And uh he
    's <,> so she 's going out with him <#> And she 's hardly ever in the house
    <#> So <,> I don't know <#> I get on with her a lot better than I do <u>with
    Michael</u> **like**

(Speaker: Male, 18-25, Co. Cork)

(36) <S1A-055$E> <#> But you know it 's cruel where <u>he 's above in Mallow now
    like</u> <#> And he 's in that ward just there 's three beds here <,> three facing
    him three behind him and <u>this kind of thing</u> **like** <#> Now <u>he has plenty of
    money</u> **like** but he wouldn't pay to go into a home <#> He <{> <[> wouldn't
    pay to have a phone below now </[>

(Speaker: Female, 45-65, Limerick)

(37) <S1A-057$A> <#> Well it 's only to do honours <#> If you were to do it as a
    minor <{> <[> I think you could do </[>
    <S1A-057$B> <#> <[> You can </[> </{> you <{1> <[1> can </[1> do it <#>
    Oh then I might <u>hang onto it</u> **like**

(Speaker: Male, 18-25, Cork and Dublin)

Despite the attention given to focus-marking *like* in recent sociolinguistic research, considerably less attention has been paid to the use of element-final *like*. One exception to this tendency is found in the work of Cheshire et al. (1999), who contrast clause-final *like* as a dialectal trait with focus *like* as an incipient feature in adolescent speech. Indeed, English dialectal history shows element-final *like* in the sense of 'as it were, so to speak' to have been fairly widespread, as examples (38)-(40) from the *English Dialect Dictionary* show:

(38) He went as if he never intended to come back, *like* (Lancashire)

(39) A glass afore 'ee goes 'ome won't 'urt 'im – just 'earten 'im up *like* (Oxfordshire)

(40) The farmers' work was over *like* for the year (Surrey).

Significantly, the EDD includes one such example from Ireland:

(41) A couple of chaps in uniform *like* came axin' me me business.

Moreover, this use of *like* has, to some degree, crossed the Atlantic as a dialectal feature, where the *Dictionary of American Regional English* also reports it in the sense of 'seemingly, so to speak, to some extent'. Examples are seen in (42) and (43) from Florida, found in the LAGS concordance.

(42) Behind the door *like*

(43) Nobody don't bother with you no more *like*

In the absence of further information, I would be reluctant to make a firm statement as to the reason for the relative lack of attention paid to element-final *like* versus focus and quotative *like*, but it is certainly easy to make a suggestion: for most of the English-speaking world, element-final *like* is recessive and dialectal, not a part of current vernacular among younger speakers, and not widely evident in the standard language, however it is defined. In Ireland, however, the feature is robust: far from being recessive or dialectal, it features prominently in a wide range of informal speech settings, and crosses from time to time into more formal settings such as university lectures.

I turn now briefly to a consideration of *like* as a quotative in ICE-Ireland. Quotatives could form a topic in their own right, and strictly speaking I would not put quotative *like* into the same category as focus or element-final *like*, but because of the large amount of attention which this form has received in recent years (e.g. Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999, Tagliamonte and D'Arcy 2004, Buchstaller 2006), I examine this feature briefly here. Certainly the ICE-Ireland corpus shows quotative *like*, usually accompanied by a form of the verb BE, to be alive and well. The PPD corpus shows some 67 tokens of quotative *like*, including examples such those of (44) to (48). Note that in (47), taken from one of the youngest speakers in ICE-Ireland and one of the more recent recordings, not all examples are quotatives in the strict sense (used in the PPD analysis) of quoting actual speech from an actual speaker; in keeping with other treatments of the subject, though, these near-quotatives are also noted here. Note, too, that in (48), the speaker repeats the same self-quotation (the first time using *said*, and the second time using *like*), thus underlining the quotative function of *like*.

(44) <S1A-044$A> <#> Another ex-girlfriend <#> And I **was just like** oh really <#> Oh really <#> And uh <,> I was just angry because I was going well if she 's coming on Thursday you must 've known that like last Saturday

(Speaker: Female, 25-45, Co. Down)

(45) <S1B-079$C> <#> No <#> It 's like a new method of speech training and like they 'd have very limited amount of time on the computer and then it would be all about going off and doing your own work and coming back and doing more … <#> Uhm and then there was a group called aphasia group and this was by Deborah Jean Wilson <,> … and **she was like** <,> all people have a say in the comedy of aphasia <&> all laugh </&>

(Speaker: Female, 18-25, Dublin)

(46) <S1A-011$A> <#> <[> Three people three people thought I sounded American </[> </{>
<S1A-011$A> <#> That 's when you get friends that sort of you know substitute it really really badly after like <,> five minutes in a different country <#> And **you 're like** <,> what 're you doing <#> <{> <[> Stop it </[>

(Speaker: Female, 25-45, Co. Antrim)

(47) <S1A-100$B> <#> <&> laughter </&> And it was just like <,> then the thing <,> the lift stopped and it **was just like** <,> oh no we 're stuck <,> we 're stuck <#> Oh my God <#> And it **was just lik**e <&> laughter </&> and he was just there oh Jesus I can't even close them <,> I **was just like** <,> Michael
<S1A-100$A> <#> What an idiot
<S1A-100$B> <#> But he was only pretending he closed the doors <,> so <#> Then the thing started going again and it **was just like** <,> you fucking bastard

(Speaker: Male, 18-25, Dublin)

(48) <S1A-020$D><#> I said listen Roger <,> it takes a hell of a lot more than a leather jacket to make somebody trendy
<S1A-020$A> <#> <{> <[> Ooh </[>
<S1A-020$B> <#> <[> Ooh </[>
<S1A-020$C> <#> <[> Ooh </[> </{>
<&> laughter </&>
<S1A-020$D> <#> Now I 'm not <,> I wasn't <,> I **was** <{> <[> **like** <,> </[> it takes a hell of a lot more than a leather jacket but sure keep going and see how you get on

(Speaker: Female, 25-45, Derry)

Turning to the last of the discourse markers mentioned in the title of this paper, *I mean* and *you know* will be familiar to anyone who works with discourse markers. Schiffrin's (1987: 267-311) observation that "*y'know* gains attention from the hearer to

open an interactive focus on speaker-provided information and *I mean* maintains attention on the speaker" is a general distinction that has been maintained or developed in many subsequent analyses. In looking at silence in the use of Irish English discourse, I have argued elsewhere that *you know* is the silent partner of *I mean*: where *I mean* usually functions as an upgrader by reinforcing the strength of the speaker's assertion independently of the listener, *you know* more often works as a downgrader. Even when it does not function as a downgrader, I would argue that *you know* works to present information by referring at least to the possibility of shared knowledge between speaker and listener.

   The PPD analysis of ICE-Ireland shows 1297 tokens of *You know* as a discourse marker; these can be contrasted with 722 such tokens of *I mean*. Illustrative examples are seen in (49)-(54). Note especially (49) and (52), in which elements introduced by *I mean* establish an opening argument that is subsequently reinforced by reference to information that is now given knowledge, in turn introduced by *you know*.

(49) <S1B-040$C> ... <#> And obviously like it places parents and everybody really in a very difficult position ... one of the central points of Christmas that is that children get presents the way they have targeted in on children and obviously like it puts fierce pressure on parents from children <#> And like children 'tis no good explaining to children that Santa hasn't had a pay increase in the last ten years and that he can't afford to bring extra toys <#> **I mean** *like* it 's all down to media pressure now and obviously if Johnny next door 's getting a Double Nintendo Super XYZ like the other child wants **you know** a Treble Nintendo XYZ with Power Rangers on top of it

(Speaker: Male, 25-45, Unspecified Republic of Ireland)

(50) <S2A-006$B> <#> Yeah I thought for a minute Jimmy that was Stephen Crozier who was booked remember for that challenge on Gerard O'Kane earlier on ... <#> Uhm but **I mean** Maghera 's woes at this stage <,> Magherafelt 's woes at this stage cannot be simply put down to the breeze <#> Their passing <,> uhm their composure <,> everything has changed from the first half <#> But **I mean** all credit to Maghera <#> They reorganised regrouped at half-time

(Speaker: Male, 25-45, Co. Antrim)

(51) <S2A-065$A> <#> They were taken by Mr Robson uhm <,> yes they 're quite recent <#> I 'm sorry I apologise to you
<S2A-065$B> <#> Well **I mean** are they in evidence <#> That 's my only concern <#> Are these in evidence

(Speaker: Male, age unknown, unspecified Northern Ireland)

(52) <S1B-039$D> <#> <&> laughter </&> <#> You 're one of the people ... <#> And we have to be pragmatic about it <#> **I mean** if all the arms are are given up uhm uh that the IRA have and that the the Loyalist paramilitaries have at the moment there 's nothing to stop them from buying more arms uh in the years to come <#> So **you know** I think we have to be pragmatic

(Speaker: Male, 45-65, Co. Louth)

(53) <S1B-079$C> ... <#> Uhm then they would put the call through and the person uses their own voice but the National Relay Service person says **you know** this person has uhm a speech impediment <,> please don't hang up the phone <#> **You know** if you have difficulty understanding I 'll help to translate for you <#> So I thought it was brilliant

(Speaker: Female, 18-25, Dublin)

(54) <S1A-094$A> <#> Yeah no we were sort of all I don't think Juliette was <{1> <[1> uhm cos </[1> Mum keeps going calling her big beefy yeah <&> laughter </&> <#> never <,> never diplomatic mum <{2> <[2> on that </[2> front <#> Uh like Dad was talking about Juliette 's bum veering towards the camera which was so <&> laughter </&> like Jesus give it a rest like **you know** <#> I hope you don't say that in front of Juliette **you know** ...
<S1A-094$B> <#> <[1> Mm </[1> </{1>
<S1A-094$B> <#> <[2> Yes </[2> </{2>

(Speaker: Female, 25-45, Co. Down)

Discourse marking in ICE-Ireland: Comparative Perspectives

Though the discussion thus far has established a number of features of discourse marking in standard Irish English, as defined by ICE protocols, it is only natural to try ask further questions about the social contextualisation of these markers. Are all speakers of different ages and regional backgrounds equally likely to use particular markers in the same way? Do gender differences exist within the corpus? What about the effect of text type — are markers equally distributed within text types, or does the use of particular markers correlate with differences in formality, purpose, pre-planning of the discourse, or other factors? Ultimately, too, there are the comparative questions which ICE as a international project is designed to answer — how much of what we have seen here is distinctively Irish, and how much belongs to English internationally?

Given the complexity of the data, it would be impossible to answer all such questions in a single session. By way of illustration, however, I would like to present the results of some comparative work which illustrates some of the social patterns within the data.

Turning first to what could be called traditional discourse markers, the number of tokens in the corpus of *faith*, *arrah*, *yerra*, and *at all at all* is too small to allow for any quantitative analysis. The tendency is for these elements to occur in the Republic of Ireland, in rural areas, and with older speakers, but age stratification is not strict even within our limited sample. In general, however, it would not be surprising to find higher use of these markers in those areas where traditional dialect has made the most use of them.

The use of *ould* or *oul*, however, represents a more robust convergence between traditional dialect and what we think of here as the standard language. The ICE-Ireland corpus contains 44 relevant examples, 41 of which occur in Face to face conversations,, with 1 Business transaction and 2 Telephone conversations providing the remainder. The distribution of tokens and speakers, subdivided by jurisdiction as

to Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and by gender, is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Distribution of *oul(d)* as a discourse marker, ICE-Ireland

	NI	ROI	Total
Tokens (N=)	29	15	44
Speakers	20	10	30
Male speakers	09	03	12
Female speakers	11	07	18

The larger number of tokens of *sure* gives more scope for quantitative analysis. Table 7 examines the possibility that *sure* could be used as a discourse marker in ICE-GB. In comparing ICE-Ireland with ICE-GB, we are at a disadvantage because nothing comparable to the PPD corpus exists for ICE-GB; we cannot therefore readily distinguish between those uses of *sure* in ICE-GB which have full lexical status and those which are used as discourse markers. A good indication of the situation, however, may be found when we extract sentence-initial *sure* from other uses. For the Irish English discourse marker, sentence-initial *sure* introduces a full proposition, trading on the presentation of new information in the context of shared information. As seen in Table 7, it is rarely used as a general marker of agreement, comparable to *yes* or *no*. ICE-GB, however, contains no examples of sentence-initial *sure* as a discourse marker introducing a proposition; all relevant tokens use sentence-initial *sure* as a simple declaration of assent.

Table 7: Distribution of *Sure* in ICE corpora

	NI	ROI	Total	ICE-GB
Total *sure*	390	408	798	723
Initial discourse marker	56	50	106	0
Internal discourse marker	37	56	93	n.a.
Simple agreement/assent	01	02	03	23

Turning to *like* as a discourse marker, we may again use the PPD analysis of ICE-Ireland to select discourse-marking *like* and quotative *like* from among the adverbial and other uses of the word. The distinction between focus-marking *like* and element-final *like* is not encoded in the PPD analysis; all are treated as examples of discourse-marking *like*. What is distinguished, however, is the use of *like* in sentence-final position, which is referred to as tag *like*. Because of its structural positioning, tag *like* in ICE-Ireland can be compared efficiently with ICE-GB. Table 8 shows that discourse-marking *like* is ubiquitous in ICE-Ireland, and that the difference in uses of tag *like* between ICE-Ireland and ICE-GB is dramatic.

Table 8: Distribution of *like* in ICE corpora

	ICE-Ireland	ICE-GB
Lexical *like*	1663	1748
Internal discourse marker	1036	
Quotative *like* (BE like)	67	03
Tag *like*	406	14
Total *like*	3172	1776

As a final illustration of how Irish and British standard English could be compared using ICE methodology, consider the contrast between *you know* and *I mean* (see also Kallen 2005). There is nothing which might be considered etymologically Irish about either of these constructions, and the hypothesis that standard English is uniform would suggest that Irish English and British English should not differ quantitatively in the distribution of these two markers. Table 9, however, shows that the quantitative differences are marked. Showing, too, the nature of comparisons which are possible within ICE methodology, Table 9 does not rely on whole corpus figures, but gives a breakdown by text type for the major interactive types within each corpus. Comparisons within the table show that while, for example, the proportional differences in Business transactions between ICE-Ireland and ICE-GB are dramatic, with ICE-GB showing more than twice as many examples of *I mean* as ICE-Ireland and ICE-Ireland including over three times as many examples of *you know* as ICE-GB, these proportional differences are somewhat muted in Face to face conversations and Telephone conversations. Both corpora show a tendency for *I mean* to be suppressed in Unscripted speeches, and it is only in this category that use of *I mean* is greater in ICE-Ireland than in ICE-GB.

Table 9: Distribution of *I mean* and *you know* in ICE corpora

	NI	ROI	Total	GB
Business *I mean*	23	14	37	81
Business *you know*	110	56	166	54
Classroom *I mean*	83	53	136	151
Classroom *you know*	131	73	204	82
Conversation *I mean*	155	105	260	836
Conversation *you know*	587	272	859	682
Telephone *I mean*	14	35	49	80
Telephone *you know*	94	73	167	102
Unscript speech *I mean*	13	10	23	11
Unscript speech *you know*	119	57	176	63
Total discourse *I mean*	288	217	505	1159
Total discourse *you know*	1041	531	1572	983

Conclusion

The use of discourse markers of one kind or another is nothing new. Indeed, considering their importance in systems of information exchange, participant role in conversation, and the determination of illocutionary force, it is surprising that they have not received more scholarly attention until relatively recently. Though discourse markers can plausibly be seen as a universal feature of language, it is equally true that even within a single language in its so-called standard form, it is possible to see considerable variation and the process of ongoing change within the discourse-marking system.

In the preceding discussion, I have suggested that Irish standard English, as observed empirically and without any ideological attachment to the ideal of linguistic invariance, can be understood in terms of a number of different influences. First, we have seen that some features of traditional dialect, some of them rooted in the Irish language itself, have become incorporated into the standard language. Though some such features are relatively rare and arguably recessive, others are quite robust and differentiate Irish standard English from, at the very least, its British counterpart.

Secondly, we have seen that even where Irish and British lexical forms may show a common history, as with *I mean* versus *you know*, their typical patterns of use show a quantitative difference that clearly differentiates the two types of English; it is possible that further qualitative differences lurk underneath the obvious quantitative differences. In the case of *like,* we see a third theme, in which the relatively recent quotative and focus forms have come to co-exist with a postposed form of *like* that is much closer to the pattern found in traditional English dialects. The dialectal record shows that the latter form was not restricted to any one part of England or Scotland — but the ICE-GB corpus shows that it is extremely rare in the contemporary standard language. Not so in Ireland, where all these forms have come together to yield, again, both a quantitative difference from British English and a qualitatively different system of using *like* as a discourse marker.

Research of this kind shows how possible it is for even so-called standard varieties of a language to be 'the same but different'. It also illustrates the way in which globalisation has a continuing effect on language change, but it does not suggest that globalisation means that one national variety (such as American English) will entirely supplant any others. Rather, it implies that the local and the global will come together and create new Englishes — and indeed such processes may occur with other international languages — that incorporate the old and draw on the new, showing continuing variation and change in a so-called standard language.

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