THE QUOTATIVE SYSTEM IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH YOUTH TALK.
A CONTRASTIVE CORPUS-BASED STUDY[i]

Abstract

The speech of teenagers is rich in narratives, with the direct reproduction of speech, thoughts, and non-lexical material often introduced through the use of quotatives. This paper aims to compare such quotative markers in English and Spanish. Findings indicate that both Spanish and British teenagers make use of a wide range of specific quotatives in their speech. For example, in English *go* and (*be*) *like* clearly prevail over general reporting verbs such as *say*, *think* and *ask*. In Spanish, we also find a system of both general reporting verbs (*decir*, 'say', *contar*, 'tell', *preguntar 'ask'*) and those more typical of teenager speech (*y yo…*. 'and I ...', *en plan 'like', es como* "it's like", *saltar* , 'come up with', etc). However, in Spanish the latter represent only 25 percent of the total, compared to almost 50 percent in English. Linguistic factors (grammatical person, aspect, tense, content of the quote) seem to constrain differently the choice and function of the quotatives observed in the teen talk of English and Spanish.

Key words: spoken language, youth language, quotatives, direct speech, grammaticalisation

1. Introduction

The language of teenagers is of particular interest to linguists because youth and adolescence are the life stages in which language change is most clearly present (Romaine 1984, Kerswill 1996, Cheshire 2005, Androutsopoulos 2005). By "teenagers' language", we mean the expression used by teens, boys and girls of 13 to 20 years old, during normal communication among themselves, rather than in interaction with adults.

The literature on the grammar of English teen talk in particular shows that general trends do exist: simplified language, a high occurrence of onomatopoeic and non-lexical words (Nordberg 1987, Palacios Martínez 2013), a large number of vague language items (Cheshire 2007, Tagliamonte and Denis 2010, Palacios Martínez 2011), particular use of certain intensifiers (Paradis and Bergmark 2003, Tagliamonte 2008) and an abundance of taboo and swear words (Stenström, Andersen and Hasund, 2002). In the language of Spanish teenagers, most studies have focussed on the lexicon, with very little attention to syntax; findings have revealed the use of specific vocative expressions, insult and abuse words, particular word-formation processes (Casado Velarde 2002, Briz 2003, Vigara Tauste 2005), the use of synonyms with an euphemistic function (Rodríguez 2002), playful malformations, and a general tendency to shorten words (Casado Velarde 2002).

The present study aims to draw a contrast between English and Spanish in terms of the use of quotative markers or indexes, that is, grammatical elements in speech that serve to channel the speaker's own thoughts (internal dialogue), to introduce non-lexical words and sounds, and to reproduce what other people have said; this is what Tannen (1984, 1989) refers to as "constructed dialogue".

Attention will be paid not only to particular items belonging to this category but also to the identification of common tendencies and strategies used by speakers of both languages in direct speech, and will serve as a means of providing a more thorough description of the language of teenagers in both systems. To my knowledge, no comparative studies on the use of quotatives in the language of English and Spanish adolescents and teenagers currently exist, and hence this paper is intended to contribute to the literature on quotatives from a contrastive linguistic perspective.

2. Review of the literature

The formal features, variation and function of quotatives have been studied extensively in English and in other languages, including Dutch (Coppen and Foolen 2012), Norwegian (Hasund, Opsahl and Svennevig 2012), German (Golato 2000), Swedish (Eriksson 1995), Greek (Archakis and Papazachariou 2009), Japanese (Oshima and Sano 2012), African languages (Güldemann 2008) and Danish (Rathje 2011), to mention just a few. In most of these cases particular attention has been paid to the variety of quotatives used by adolescents and young speakers as well as to their diachronic development. In Spanish, however, this area of grammar has not received the attention it deserves, the majority of studies concerned with the differences between direct and indirect speech and with the manifestation of quotatives in particular genres, as we will see below.. In the remainder of this section I will discuss the main existing studies for both English and Spanish.

Biber *et al.* (1999: 1120) mention how young speakers "mark quoted speech using the highly versatile particle *like,* typically preceded by forms of *be*". They also provide examples in which direct quotations are marked by *all* preceded by a past form of *be* (i.e. *He was all* "Well I wanted to stay out of it"). This suggests that the three forms *go*, *be like* and *be all*, and even a fourth one, *this is* + subject, are nowadays popular among younger generations as quotatives. A number of studies from the 1980s onwards have shown that the age factor plays an important role in the choice of these quotatives, with older speakers tending to use the general reporting verbs, such as *say, ask*, *claim*, *remark*, *reply*, *shout*, *report,* etc., whereas adolescents and teenagers opt frequently for alternative forms, such as *go, be like* or *be all*, using general reporting verbs far less. This general tendency is recorded by Romaine and Lange (1991), Ferrara and Bell (1995), Tagliamnonte and Hudson (1999), Dailey-O'Cain (2000), Macaulay (2001), Winter (2002), Stenström *et al.* (2002), Tagliamonte and D'Arcy (2004), Barbieri (2005), Buchstaller and D'Arcy (2009), Buchstaller *et al.* (2010), Buchstaller (2011), Fox (2012) and D'Arcy (2012), among others. The general conclusion from these studies is that in the USA *go* became common among adolescents and younger speakers about 35-40 years ago, its place rapidly taken by *be like* in recent decades. Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) have also shown that this general trend in the use of these quotatives spread from the USA to Canada and the UK. Macaulay (2001) records similar findings with speakers from Glasgow.

More recently, Winter (2002) examined the discourse quotatives of Australian English found in interviews with adolescents. *Be like* is found in the data although it is not so frequent as *go*, *say* and null or zero. Barbieri (2005)

has studied the quotative system with particular reference to *be like*, *be all* and *go* in four spoken corpora of American English. Rickford *et al.* (2007) have focused on the use of *all* as an intensifier and quotative in American English.

Cheshire *et al.* (2011) have identified a further two new quotatives, *this is* followed by a personal pronoun in its oblique form, such as *me* or *him*, and the verb *give*. Fox and Robles (2010) have focused on the quotative *it's like* followed by enactments (expressions of thought, feelings and attitudes) without an attributed human subject. Finally, Rodríguez Louro (2013) discusses the use of quotatives by speakers from Perth, Australia, with particular reference to *be like*.

Most of these studies have also considered three of the grammatical variables we are interested in here: grammatical person, verbal tense and aspect, and the content of the quote.

The proliferation of studies on quotatives in English contrasts, as noted above, with a corresponding dearth of similar projects for Spanish. To my knowledge, no specific work dealing with the quotative system in the language of Spanish teenagers exists, despite the fact that, as we know, adolescents and young speakers tend to include a lot of narratives in their daily speech. There is, however, some work on the differences between direct and reported speech (Verdín Díaz 1970, Gutiérrez 1986, Maldonado 1991; Reyes 1993, 1994; Cameron 1998, Camargo 2004; Estévez 2010) as well as studies focusing on these types of discourse in particular genres, such as journalism (Reyes 1982) and literary texts (Reyes 1994).

3. Method

The findings discussed here will be based primarily on data extracted from two corpora, COLT (The Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language) and COLA (*Corpus Oral del Lenguaje Adolescente*), which can be considered fairly comparable, since they are of a similar size (around 430,000 words), are both based on recordings of spontaneous and informal interactions made by the participants themselves, and were both compiled at the University of Bergen according to similar criteria and parameters.

The COLT corpus, part of the British National Corpus (BNC), was compiled by Anna-Brita Stenström and her team in 1993 and consists of 431,528 words produced by teenagers aged between 13 to 17 in the London area. Although COLT was compiled in an attempt to represent language produced by British adolescents, it should not be regarded as fully representative of general adolescent British English, but rather of London teenager speech.

For the analysis of the Spanish data, I used the *Corpus oral de lenguaje adolescente* (COLA), which was established in 2002 at the University of Bergen and compiled by Annette Myre Jørgensen and her team. The subjects are between 13 and 18 years old and were selected from schools in areas with varying social profiles. At present, the corpus contains a total of 416,261 transcribed words. As with COLT, we should also be cautious when considering this corpus as fully representing the language of Spanish adolescents, since it was compiled in Madrid with the participation of informants of particular social groups. The concordancer CONCAPP was used

to search for different quotative forms. The initial data retrieved then had to be filtered manually with great care, since examples with a possible quotative function had to be disregarded when they did not conform to the features typical of the speech reporting verbs.

4. Results

The data clearly indicate that both Spanish and British teenagers make use of a wide range of quotative forms, the presence of these very often conditioned by a number of grammatical features. There are obviously other social variables, such as the speaker's gender and social background, which also have a bearing on the presence and choice of quotatives, but these fall outside the scope of the present study.

I will begin by discussing the English findings and then move onto Spanish. After this I will draw a contrast between the two groups with the aim of identifying both shared tendencies and differences.

4.1. English data
4.1.1. Quotative frequency and overall distribution

In COLT, as Table 1 below shows, a total of 2,709 quotative tokens were retrieved, at a frequency of 62.5 per 10,000 words. Hence, quotatives may be regarded as common in the language of British teenagers, at least in the light of the data extracted from the corpus used here. The proportion of general reporting verbs here, including *say* (29.3%), *think* (5.6%) and to a lesser degree *shout, ask* and *talk*, is around one third (35.1%) of all quotative markers used. So, the other reporting verbs can together be regarded as more typical of teenagers, although of course these are not necessarily exclusive to them. *Go* is by far the most important here, representing almost half of all the quotatives used (42.6%).

Table 1: Overall distribution of quotative markers in COLT (The Bergen Corpus London Teenage Language) (431,528 words)

QUOTATIVE	N	%	Frequency per 10,000 words
GO	1,154	42.6%	26.7
SAY	793	29.3%	18.4
Zero	473	17.5%	11
THINK	152	5.6%	3.5
BE like	45	1.7%	1
like only	45	1.7%	1
SAY like	14	0.4%	0.3
GO like	14	0.4%	0.3
this is + subject	10	0.3%	0.2
SHOUT	4	0.1%	0.09
other verbs (*TALK*, *SOUND* + *like*	4	0.1%	0.09
ASK	1	0	0
Total	2,709	100%	62.5

In contrast to the high frequency of the verbs *say* and *go*, the various expressions with *like*, including *be like* (1), *go like* (2), *say like* (3), *sound like* (4) and *like* (5) on its own, represent only 4.3 percent of the total. Hence, in the early 1990s, when this corpus was compiled, there was a clear tendency for the use of the verb *go* by British teenagers, with the different forms with *like* not so widely used.

(1)   Well *I'm like* <laughing> </> I *was like* <laughing> got to the last sentence and it was cut, and it was really lucky (COB136406/27)[ii]

(2)   and then he *goes like*, "sorry man, close the door and get out" (COB139003/21)

(3)   I mean you can't be, she *says like* "oh her mum should wake her up, put her <unclear> wake her up" (COB136903/75)

(4)   That sounds *like* <unclear> <mimicking> "ha ha". (COB/134602/24)

(5)   he opens the door and he's got like shaving cr= shaving foam on his face *like* <mimicking> "ah he's white he's white!" <nv> laugh (COB138907/19)

The proportion of zero, null or unframed quotatives (Mathis and Yule 1994; Palacios Martínez 2013) is also worth noting, since they represent 17.5 percent of the total.

(6)   A: We gotta go now. Bye
        B: Yeah, bye right. We're gonna go
        A: <shouting> Bye!
        B: Bye Russell! Bye Scott! <mimicking girlie voice> bye cutey Scott (COB135301/49-52)

In the data there are also ten instances of a quotative structure introduced by the demonstrative *this* followed by the verb *to be* and a subject form.

(7)   he goes, "this is for you" *this is me*, "thanks" (CO132707/294)

The previous results are very similar, with some minor differences, to those reported in previous studies.

4.1.2. Grammatical person, aspect and tense in quotative frame
As Table 2 shows, the third person singular person is, in global terms, the most common in the case of the quotative *go*; this is explained by the fact that, on its own, the form *goes* represents over 58 percent of the total number of tokens recorded for the whole verbal paradigm. This general tendency, however, contrasts with findings for base and past forms, that is, *go* and *went*, in which the first person singular overrides the third. Regarding the *-ing* form *going*, the third person is once again more frequent than the first; under the category of "other" (row 8) are listed cases in which *going* functions independently as a present participle and therefore the grammatical person distinction is wholly irrelevant. This might explain the high proportion of examples attested in this category. The choice of a particular person is closely associated with the tense selected by the speaker and the aspect expressed by the verb. It also shows on many occasions the degree of involvement of the speaker with what is being narrated.

Table 2: Distribution of grammatical person for *go* in COLT

	GO		*GOING*		*WENT*		*GOES*		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1st person sing.	56	34	43	19.3	52	54.2	31	4.6	182	15.8
1st person plural	5	3	5	2.2	-	-	-	-	10	0.9
2nd person	27	16.3	13	5.8	-	-	-	-	40	3.5
3rd person sing.	31	18.8	90	40.4	39	40.6	639	95.4	799	69.2
3rd person plural	28	16.9	15	6.7	5	5.2	-	-	48	4.2
OTHER	18	11	57	25.6	-	-	-	-	75	6.4
TOTAL	165	14.3	223	19.3	96	8.3	670	58.1	1154	100

It is also interesting to note the non-standard use of *goes* with the first person singular, presumably by analogy with the third. We have identified a total of 31 examples of this kind. Finally, the second person, *you*, is present with the base and the *-ing* forms in very modest proportions, 16.3 percent and 5.8 percent, respectively

With regard to *say*, something similar applies, as can be seen in Table 3 below; the third person singular form prevails over the rest and, as before, this is followed in frequency by the first person. However, the tendency to favour the third person is more clearly marked with *go* (69.2%) than with *say* (37.2%). Under the category of 'other' we have included here examples that cannot be classified under any grammatical person, mainly because they correspond to non-finite forms.

Table 3: Distribution of grammatical person for *say* in COLT

	SAY		*SAYING*		*SAID*		*SAYS*		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1st person sing.	59	23.4	16	20.5	174	46.6	3	3.3	252	31.8
1st person plural	4	1.6	1	1.3	-	-	-	-	5	0.6
2nd person	42	16.7	6	7.8	31	8.3	-	-	79	10
3rd person sing.	35	13.9	20	25.6	155	41.6	85	94.5	295	37.2
3rd person plural	12	4.8	9	11.5	5	1.3	-	-	26	3.3
OTHER	100	39.6	26	33.3	8	2.3	2	2.2	136	17.1
TOTAL	252	31.8	78	9.8	373	47	90	11.4	793	100

The predominance of the third person singular is also very clearly attested in COLT with *be like* representing 73.4 percent of the total (see Table 4). In this respect, it is also important to point out that two thirds of these, some 22

tokens out of 33, have the pronoun *it* as their subject, and that this is generally contracted with *is*, resulting in a kind of fixed quotative expression *it's like*.

Table 4: Distribution of grammatical person for *be like* in COLT

	COLT	
	N	%
1st person sing.	6	13.4
1st person plural	-	-
2nd person	2	4.4
3rd person sing.	33	73.4
3rd person plural	4	8.8
TOTAL	45	100

If we look at the effects of tense on the choice of the quotative form, we see (Table 5) that this linguistic factor plays an important role. This is most clearly observed in the contrast between *go* and *say*; thus, *go* is selected when the speaker wants to render the story more vivid and realistic, involving the audience more directly in their account through the use of the so called conversational historical present (CHP), which generally has this communicative function and which is particularly common in narratives and stories (Biber *et al*. 1999: 454-455). By contrast, *say* is preferred when simply referring to events in the past without any notable or specific emotional import.

Table 5: Distribution of grammatical tense for *say* and *go* in COLT

	SAY		*GO*		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
simple present tense	134	42	182	58	316	18.2
historical present tense	99	12	732	88	831	48
simple past	389	71	158	29	547	31.5
habitual *will*	17	77.2	5	22.8	22	1.2
habitual *would*	18	90	2	10	20	1.1
TOTAL	657	100	1079	100	1736	100

Hence, according to the context and situation, speakers will opt for *goe*s or *said/say(s)*. The differences between these two verbs in terms of the use of the historical present and the past tenses are not so evident with the simple present. Here there is a slight preference for *say* over *go*, but the differences are not overwhelmingly significant, at 42 percent for the former and 58 percent for the latter. Finally, habitual *will* and *would* are represented in the data at very low levels, making definite conclusions impossible, although a slight preference for *will* and particularly for *would* is perceived in the case of *say*.

As regards verbal aspect, Table 6 below illustrates how the progressive is more typical with *go* than with *say*, which might be related to the far more common use of the present historical tense with the former rather than the latter.

Table 6: Distribution of the progressive versus non-progressive use of *go* and *say*

	SAY		*GO*		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
progressive	52	24	166	76	218	100
simple	631	41	913	59	1544	100

Be like and *like* on its own behave as general reporting forms, like *say*. Moreover, *be like* tends to favour historical present rather than present and past.

Table 7: Distribution of be like as quotative according to tense and subject person in COLT

	COLT	
BE Like quotative form	**N**	**%**
I was like	6	13.3
he was like	3	6.7
she was like	-	-
it was like	1	2.2
Full NP (*Dad, Tom, Nathan, the woman) was like*	2	4.4
they were like	-	-
we were like	-	-
he's like	3	6.7
she's like	-	-
they're like	4	8.9
I am like	-	-
it's like	22	48.9
you are like	2	4.4
there's like	1	2.2
this is like	1	2.2
Total	45	100%

4.1.3. Speech versus thought representation and non-lexical sounds

In general, findings here do not differ significantly from previous studies. *Say* is used to introduce direct speech without any pragmatic effect, as with *go*, although I also find some variation. *Think* is clearly the quotative most frequently selected by the speaker to report thoughts, with *be like* and *like* appearing to be more multifunctional, in that they can report not only speech but also inner thoughts and non-lexical words. Finally, unframed quotatives are also quite multifunctional, although they especially favour non-lexical sounds. In what follows, then, we will consider and compare each of these quotatives in detail.

As mentioned above, *say* and *go* serve mainly to report speech but both can also introduce non-lexicalised words, although this is more common with the latter; indeed, in COLT 44 cases of sound words with *go* were found, and only

16 with *say*. We can claim, then, that *go* favours the use of non-lexicalised sounds. Other than this, they can also introduce exclamative expressions, backchannels and imperatives. Quite frequently *be like* communicates the speaker's feelings, attitudes or thoughts at that moment, even if these are not explicitly mentioned, as in (8).

(8)   Yeah they're *like* <sound effect> (COB139201/55)

Zero quotatives not only serve to introduce direct speech, yet very often become a strategy used by speakers to report another person's words by imitating their way of speaking, often accompanied by modulation of the voice, gesture or other paralinguistic devices. As regards *this is* + subject, everything seems to indicate that this quotative only serves to express direct speech.

4.2. Spanish data
4.2.1. Quotative frequency and overall distribution
If we now turn to the data from the Spanish corpus, COLA (see Table 8 below), we observe that the number of quotatives is also quite high. However, the total figure of 2,191 is somewhat lower than that for COLT (2,709). This difference, moreover, is statistically significant (x^2 43.89, df= 1, p= <.0001). Such a difference might be attributable to minor differences in the content and type of the conversations recorded in each corpus, variables which would be impossible to control for in the current analysis, and to differences in the general quotative system of Spanish and English.

Table 8: Overall distribution of quotative markers in Spanish COLA

QUOTATIVE	N	%	Frequency per 10,000 words
decir/say	1,522	69.5%	36.6
y yo/and I/me *y el otro/ and the other*	238	10.9%	5.7
Zero	174	8%	4.2
en plan/like	91	4.1%	2.2
empezar/start	49	2.2%	1.2
hacer/do (*hace* 28, *hacía* 10, *hizo* 6)	44	2%	1.1
pensar/think	17	0.8%	0.4
(ser) como/be like	15	0.7%	0.36
saltar/jcome up with	8	0.3%	0.2
soltar/mention (*suelta, soltó*)	7	0.3%	0.16
ir/go	7	0.3%	0.16
ponerse/go	7	0.3%	0.16
contar/tell (*cuenta, contó*)	4	0.2%	0.09
coger/take	4	0.2%	0.09
other: *o sea/that is; así/like*	4	0.2%	0.16
Total	2,191	100%	52.78

In this case the general reporting verbs, represented by *say/decir*, *pensar/think* and *contar/tell*, amount to about 70.5 percent of the total. The

remaining quotatives, *hacer/do*, *ir/go*, *empezar/begin*, *y yo/and I*, *y el otro/and the other, en plan/like,* etc., then, can be regarded as more typical of teenagers although, as before, this does not mean that they are not used by adults, and are indeed used, albeit at a lower frequency. According to this, the quotative system in the language of Spanish teenagers is less innovative than in the case of English, given that the proportion of reporting verbs characteristic of teenage language is higher in the latter than in the former. However, the Spanish quotative system here presents new developments which merit attention. Also worth mentioning is the presence of the first person personal pronoun *yo*, 'I', preceded by the conjunction *y*, 'and', in parallel with the pronoun *otro/a*, 'other', also preceded by the same conjunction, that is, *y yo/and I* and *y el otro/and the other* employed as quotative markers. These represent a number of tokens that cannot be regarded as marginal, since taken together they amount to 10.9 percent of the total.

The number of unframed quotatives is also significant, 174 cases, representing 8 percent of the total. The expression *en plan*, 'like', also functions as a quotative marker, representing 4.1 percent of the total, with some 91 examples attested. It can be considered as one of the most typical quotatives in the language of Spanish adolescents and teenagers, and is very rarely found in the speech of adults.

The verb *empezar/begin* is also used as a quotative and can be adapted to any situation, since it simply marks the beginning of direct speech without adding any further emotional or expressive value. A total of 49 examples were found, representing 2.2 percent of the total number of quotatives.

Contrary to what happens in English, forms with *ir/go* and *ser como/be like* are not very common in Spanish teen speech, at 0.3 percent and 0.7 percent, respectively. Two other verbs of movement, *saltar/come up with* and *soltar/mention*, are also used sporadically as quotatives, and taken together represent around 0.6 percent of the total. Finally, the reflexive verb *ponerse/get* also performs the role of a quotative in a small number of cases, 7 in all representing just 0.3 percent of the total.

4.2.2. Quotative verbal tense and person
In Spanish, as Tables 9 and 10 show, the third person singular and the present tense clearly prevail over the rest. Thus, *decir/say* occurs mostly in the first and third persons of the present tense, that is, *digo* ('I say') and *dice* ('s/he says'), with 679 and 747 tokens, respectively. As a variant of *digo* ('I say'), I also find 2 cases *of me digo*, that is, 'I say to myself', which introduces the speaker's thoughts. The high proportion of this quotative in the present form reduces considerably when the verb occurs in the simple past tense, with 97 examples, and in this case the third person singular, *el/ella dijo* ('s/he said') is clearly the most common. Finally, we also find 96 instances in the gerund form *diciendo* ('saying').

The verb *empezar/begin* regularly occurs in its third singular present form, *empieza*: The same is true for the reflexive verb *ponerse/get*, *saltar/come up with* and *soltar/mention*. These are most frequently used in the present, and indeed no examples in the past were found here.

The verb *hacer/do* is always found in the third person but as regards tense we find more variation than before. From the 44 tokens of this quotative retrieved, 28 (63%) are in the present, the rest referring to actions in the past, either in the imperfect (*hacía*), with 10 examples (22%), or the perfect (*hizo*), with 6 tokens (15%).

Table 9: Distribution of grammatical person for most frequent quotatives in COLA

	DECIR/ SAY		EMPEZAR/ BEGIN		PONERSE/ GET		PENSAR/ THINK		SALTAR/ COME UP WITH		SOLTAR/ MENTION		HACER/ DO		SER COMO/ BE LIKE		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1st person sing.	679	44.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	679	41
3rd person sing.	747	49.1	49	100	7	100	7	100	8	100	7	100	44	100	15	100	884	53.3
-ing form/ gerund	96	6.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	96	5.7
TOTAL	1522	91.7	49	2.9	7	0.4	7	0.5	8	0.4	7	0.4	44	2.6	15	0.9	1659	100

Table 10: Distribution of grammatical tense for most frequent quotatives in COLA

	DECIR/ SAY		EMPEZAR/ BEGIN		PONERSE/ GET		PENSAR/ THINK		SALTAR/ COME UP WITH		SOLTAR/ MENTION		HACER/ DO		SER COMO/ BE LIKE		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
present tense	1425	93.6	49	100	7	100	7	100	8	100	4	57.1	28	63.6	15	100	1543	93
imperfect	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	22.7	-	-	10	0.6
simple past	97	6.4	-	-							3	42.9	6	13.6	-	-	106	6.4
TOTAL	1522	91.7	49	2.9	7	0.4	7	0.5	8	0.4	7	0.5	44	2.6	15	0.9	1659	100

In the case of *ser como*/*be like*, all 15 instances are in the impersonal form, that is, *es como*, 'it's like', and all are in the present tense. We do not record any example with a personal subject as was the case in English (e.g. *I/she was/is like*...).

4.2.3. Speech versus thought representation and non-lexical sounds
Decir/say generally introduces direct speech and, less frequently, the speaker's internal thoughts. However, unlike English *say*, the Spanish equivalent *decir* is not generally used with non-lexicalised sound words, since that function is mainly reserved in Spanish for the verb *hacer/do*. The following extract illustrates this:
(9)   va y le abraza y le hace "pimba je je je"
         'and he goes and hugs her and he says "pimba je je je"'(CAMASHE3/JO1)
However, we do find examples of *decir*/*say* with exclamations and non-lexicalised sounds, including taboo words, that are wholly fixed in the language.

Notice also how *hacer/do* can also introduce gestures often accompanied by the adverbial *así*, 'thus, like this'. The correlative forms *y yo/and I* and *y el otro/and the other* mark direct speech without the presence of a verb.

Table 11: Quotative verbs in Spanish according to the type of quote introduced

	speech	thought representation	non-lexical words
DECIR/SAY	√	√ (*say to myself*)	√
PENSAR/THINK		√	
HACER/DO			√
Y YO (AND I)/Y EL OTRO (AND THE OTHER)	√		
NULL OR ZERO	√	√	√
EN PLAN/LIKE		√	
EMPEZAR/BEGIN	√		√
ES COMO/IT'S LIKE			√
PONERSE/GET	√		√
SOLTAR/MENTION	√		
SALTAR/COME UP WITH	√		

Null or unframed quotatives in Spanish play a similar function to those in English and seem to be the most flexible, as we can see from Table 11 above.

Most of the time *en plan* serves to introduce the speaker's internal thoughts and feelings rather than to report what another person has said.
(10)   Tu ves que con Javi tu vas a tener confianza *en plan* "tia pues adelante"
        You see you will feel safe with Javi *like* "go ahead then man"
        (CAMAORE2J01)

It is also curious to see that *es como*, 'it's like', can be followed by a word for a sound, which, as noted above, is largely restricted in Spanish to the verbs *hacer/do* and *empezar/begin*.

The quotatives *soltar* and *saltar* indicate spontaneity, and speakers tend to use them when expressing surprise or disagreement with a prior comment by another speaker or with the whole situation.

The reflexive *ponerse* introduces reported speech rather than the speaker's internal thoughts and can also introduce a non-lexicalised word.

5. Summary and conclusions

With regard to methodological issues, the two main corpora used, COLT and COLA, have provided useful information for the description and characterisation of quotatives, since they contain a high number and wide range of examples from different contexts and situations. Furthermore, COLT and COLA have proved to be fairly comparable reference sources for a contrastive study of Spanish and English. Although these two corpora provide a great deal of information, at times we had problems in the interpretation of the data, more particularly when deciding whether the element reproduced by a speaker corresponded to their own words or to the words of another person, thoughts or non-lexical words.

In terms of the quotatives used by teenagers in English and Spanish, the findings here indicate that we are dealing with a rich system, including a wide collection of general and teenager-specific constructions that are rapidly developing and changing, particularly in the case of English. We find this particularly with two English forms. *Go* and *(be) like*, which clearly prevail over the other general reporting verbs, such as *say*, *ask*, *claim*, and which also show typical processes of grammaticalisation. It is also observed that *say* and *go* are not identical, either in use or in their grammatical properties. A low number of tokens of the quotative *this is* + speaker have also been identified.

In the case of Spanish, we also find a system of general reporting verbs and expressions (*decir/say'*; *contar/ tell*; *preguntar/ask, hacer/ do*) and a parallel system characteristic of teenagers (*empezar/start'*; *saltar/come up with*, *soltar/mention; ir/go*; *ponerse/get; y yo*, 'and I'; *en plan*, 'like'), although the general reporting verbs here play a more important role than in English. In Spanish, teenagers' specific quotatives represent only 25 percent of the total, compared to almost 50 percent in COLT. Curiously enough, the range of alternative quotatives to the general reporting verbs in Spanish is much wider than in English; however, their presence in the language is clearly lower. Within the set of characteristic teenager quotatives in Spanish, special mention should be made of *y yo* and *el otro*. The expression *en plan* as a quotative is also worth mentioning and behaves in a similar way to *like*, conveying the speaker's internal thoughts.

Also notable is the existence of a number of reporting verbs more characteristic of teenagers (*ir*, *soltar*, *saltar*) which generally express movement but which are used here to introduce direct speech by adding the meaning of surprise and spontaneity. The reflexive *ponerse* is also found as a quotative in a small number of cases, conveying something unplanned and unexpected. In the two corpora analysed, zero or unframed quotatives are clearly present at significant levels.

The current study should not be regarded as totally conclusive, since problems remain for a more thorough linguistic interpretation of quotatives; a closer analysis of the audio recordings of oral interactions would be helpful in this

respect, although their sound quality is not always good enough to determine exactly what speakers mean.

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[ii] All the examples included in the study have been transcribed following the corpus conventions. Each example will be followed by an identification code indicating the corpus or source from which it was taken (CO for COLT, and COL for COLA), the corresponding code number from the corpus, and the conversation turn reference given. In this case, the example provided was selected from *The Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language* (COLT), document number B136406, and the corresponding conversation turn was 27.