

HANDY MANNY: THE PRAGMATIC FUNCTION OF CODE-SWITCHING IN THE INTERACTION OF CARTOON CHARACTERS

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1. Introduction

The so called globalization, along with the modernisation of our society, "have stimulated the expansion in numbers of people speaking national languages located within relatively limited boundaries alongside international languages such as English", as Milroy and Muysken (1995: 1) explain. New multilingual communities have been emerging, mostly from the Second World War, and linguistic minorities have become bilingual. A bilingual person is a unique speaker-hearer using one language, two languages, or both simultaneously, depending on the interlocutor, situation, topic, etc. One of the main issues in bilingualism research is code-switching, which "must be taken seriously first and foremost as a conversational activity" (Wei, 2005: 276). The wide use of code-switching in different contexts and with different languages in contact makes this linguistic device one of the most studied behavioural characteristics of bilinguals' speech. Code-switching thus seems to have an important communicative function. The characters in the series analysed here, *Manny Manitas/Handy Manny*, use code-switching between English (the second or foreign language in our case, L2 henceforth) and Spanish (the first lan-

guage, L1 hereafter) as one of their main resources for alternating between the two languages as well as translations and explanations of some terms in L2. The creators of the series claim that the series may help children learn English, while enjoying the adventures of Manny Manitas and his tools.

This article presents the results obtained from the analysis of 20 episodes of the series to critically assess its potential impact on teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in a context where Spanish is the L1. *Handy Manny* is broadcast predominantly in L1 (English in the U.S., and Spanish in Spain) with occasional inclusion of some expressions in L2. The terms from L2 are either single words or more complex lexical units. The purpose of this article is to explore when and how L2 is introduced, its function, and the impact that its use may have in the process of EFL learning for Spanish children under the age of nine, to whom the series is addressed. *Handy Manny* is marketed to parents and children as a programme that may help children learn and improve their English. However, to the best of our knowledge, no systematic account of what and how it may do so has been provided. The methodological approach adopted in this paper sets this study apart from others that focus on code-switching in the real world by entering the realm of fictional discourse.

2. Code-switching

Code-switching may be understood as the alternative use by bilinguals of two languages in the same conversation. This alternation will occur not only between the turns of different speakers in the conversation, but between utterances within a single turn, and even within a single utterance. There are, no doubt, several theories on the use of code-switch-

ing, and on the high potential regarding its creativity in language use. Gysels (1992), for example, argues that code-switching may be used to achieve two objectives: (i) to fill a linguistic/conceptual gap and (ii) for other multiple communication factors. In addition, Cook (2008) establishes the following uses of code-switching: (i) to report what someone has said in the other language, as in "Sara dijo que I was cute"; or (ii) to talk about certain topics: "La consulta era eight dollars", so that it is used to express terms which do not exist in L1 or are better expressed in L2 (e.g. burger) (cf. Poplack, 1980, 1988, Cortés Moreno, 2001); and (iii) to differentiate between roles: e.g. in a shop, the shop keeper speaks in Spanish with his wife, but in English with his customers. Crystal (1987) and Huang (2008) add that, on occasion, if speakers cannot use one language to express what they intend to, due to a lack of skill, they may switch to another language to fill that gap or difficulty; in such a way that communication does not get disturbed. In addition, a switch can often occur when a particular social group develops solidarity and seeks to exclude outsiders (Crystal, 1987).

While Poplack and Meechan (1995: 201) base their definition on the syntactic element of code-switching and consider it "the juxtaposition of sentences or sentence fragments, each of which is internally consistent with the morphological and syntactic rules of its lexifier language", Gumperz (1982: 97) defines code-switching as "a discourse phenomenon in which speakers rely on juxtaposition of grammatically distinct subsystems to generate conversational inferences". Along the same lines, Köppe and Meisel (1995: 277) stress the pragmatic dimension of code-switching by stating that:

code-switching is used to describe a certain skill of the bilingual speaker that requires pragmatic and grammatical

competence in both languages. With respect to pragmatic competence, code-switching refers to the ability to select the language according to external factors like the particular interlocutor, the situational context, the topic of conversation, etc. Concerning grammatical competence, adequate code-switching requires that switches within one sentence observe specific grammatical contents.

It is the pragmatic dimension of code-switching that mainly concerns the present research dictated by the nature of the data analysed, which shows a prevalence of contextualized pragmatic expressions in L2. Thus, we coincide with Duran (1994: 72), who states that "if code-switching is something which happens naturally in the scheme of bilineality, it must serve important functions for the language learner/user". This use of code-switching as a learning tool that may help improve pragmatic competence is the hallmark of the present study, in which code-switching frequently takes the form of translation or repetition to clarify certain expressions with the intention of teaching English to children of other languages.

Regarding types and functions of code-switching, there are several classifications. Depending on where it takes place within the utterance, code-switching can be intersentential or intrasentential (Ennaji, 2005). In the former, it takes place across sentences or phrase boundaries (e.g. *Él quiere agua, not Coke*), in the latter, it occurs inside a sentence (e.g. *¡Qué guapo, cute, y encantador es!*). In our data, code-switching occurs in five different situations which will be fully accounted for in the methodology section: a) when an expression in L1 Spanish is translated into L2 English within the same turn; b) when an expression in L2 is translated into, or explained in, L1 within the same turn; c) when a L2 expression is part of a single utterance; d) when an expression in L2 is translated into, or explained in, L1 in two

different turns; and e) when an expression in L2 is defined and explained.

The analysis focuses on what Gumperz (1982: 76-84) describes as “conversational code-switching”, which can appear in the following forms and contexts: (i) in quotations (either direct quotations or indirect speech), e.g. “She doesn’t speak English, so habla español con su madre”; (ii) in addressee specifications, as in “Hola Manny, hello tools”; (iii) in reiterations, when a message or a word in L1 is repeated in L2 or vice versa, e.g. “Necesitamos un micrófono, a microphone”; (iv) with interjections and sentence fillers such as “Excellent! Lo habéis hecho muy bien”. To this list, we have added (v) *metadiscursive code-switching* where the speaker uses a word in L2 and then explains its meaning in L1 (e.g. No, Rusty, glue en ingles significa cola). Metadiscursive code-switching is often designed for language learners and it may often be used as a conscious strategy, e.g. in the classroom.

3. Pragmatic expressions: Formulaic and appraisal language use

In *Handy Manny*, among the different types of L2 target utterances introduced using code-switching, formulaic and appraisal expressions are among the most common. Despite the fact that formulaic expressions have not yet been fully accounted for in the literature, it is now widely accepted that the role of formulas in the process of language learning and teaching is a fast-growing research issue in its own right (Bardovi-Harlig, 2006; Wray, 2006; Ide, 2007). Within second language acquisition, to which our series claims to be contributing to, formulaic language “has been most recently blossoming as a major focus of attention” (Wray, 2006:

592), as the recent proliferation of publications on the topic seem to indicate (cf. Schmitt and Carter, 2004; Spöttl and McCarthy, 2004; Wray, 2004, 2008; Corrigan et al., 2009; García-Pastor, 2009a, 2009b). This is partly due to the fact that the advances in corpus linguistics studies have demonstrated that “the patterning of words and phrases [...] shows far less variability that could be predicted on the basis of grammar and lexicon alone” (Perkins, 1999: 55-56, cited in Wray, 2002). It is now widely accepted that our capacity for novelty is far less than we thought (cf. Coulmas, 1981). As Coulmas argued “conversation” is a structured activity, and as such “a large part of it consists of enacting routines. We greet and say goodbye to one another, we introduce ourselves, we thank, we apologise, we make requests, we exchange good wishes, we give advice, we seek information, etc., all of these are conducted within a large range of conventionalised, pre-patterned expressions” (Ide, 2007: 1). Additionally, different languages may have different patterns and routines with regard to conversational practices such as requests or opening and closing conversations, to mention but some (Bou-Franch and Lorenzo-Dus, 2008; García-Pastor, 2009b; Bou-Franch, 2011).

Wildner-Bassett (1984) establishes that “routine formulae constitute a substantial part of adult native speaker’s pragmatic competence, and learners need to acquire a sizable repertoire of routines in order to cope efficiently with recurrent and expanding social situations and discourse requirements”. Along the same lines, Tomasello (2003, cited in Corrigan et al., 2009: 309) claims that “the schemacity and abstraction of adult grammar arises through a developmental process of building an inventory of constructions. This process is centrally influenced by patterns of meaning and frequency on what children hear and produce”. If that were the case, being exposed to formulas and formulaic appraisal expressions may help children in the process of

learning a language to “avoid the difficulties associated with stringing words and morphemes together by rule and the risk of instilling our message with inappropriate pragmatic overtones” (Wray, 2004: 249), thus helping them increase accuracy and fluency, and develop their pragmatic awareness (cf. Nattinger and Decarrico, 1992; Bou-Franch and Gregori-Signes, 1999). Several authors also state the relationship between formulas and greater pragmatic competence (Kasper and Schmidt, 1996), and argue in favour of explicit teaching (cf. García-Pastor, 2009a) as a more effective way of “facilitating the acquisition of pragmatic routines” (Tateyama, 2001: 220).

Formulas or formulaic sequences “exist in so many different forms that it is difficult to develop a comprehensive definition of the phenomenon” (Schmitt and Carter, 2004: 4). This coincides with Wray (2008: 35), who admits that these discrepancies have caused “a considerable scope for discussion about what should and should not be counted”. Formulaic expressions may be composed of single or multi-word units. The criteria used for classifying formulaic sequences by different authors are “institutionalization, fixedness, [...] non-compositionality and frequency of occurrence” (Schmitt and Carter, 2004: 2). Schmitt and Carter pay attention to multi-word sequences, while Wray (2002) also includes single words and morphemes as examples of formulaic language. Wray (2006: 593) argues that “for most researchers, the term ‘formulaic language’ refers to two or more words which may or may not be adjacent and which have a particular mutual affinity that gives them a joint grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, or textual effect”. She acknowledges the discrepancies between child language acquisition, sociolinguistics, literary style, phraseology, grammar, discourse and psycholinguistics, each with a different conception of the purpose of formulaic language; and proposes a holistic definition:

Formulaic language is a generic strategic solution to a recurrent challenge for us as humans: how to promote our own interests. The rationale for this proposal resides in the way that humans use language to manipulate others. Manipulation entails persuading another person to think, feel, or act in some way that you desire. Selecting linguistic material that enables you as a speaker to fluently express your message and enables your hearer(s) to easily decode it supports this self-promotional goal. (ibid.)

Formulaic expressions in *Handy Manny* may help children improve their conversational skills and pragmatic competence in English, as “automatic retrieval of words and fixed expressions undoubtedly contributes significantly to smooth performance and normal paced delivery [...] [since] [t]he extremely high frequency of occurrence of such chunks in native-speaker and expert-user conversation reveals their regular, fixed forms and the pragmatically specialised functions they have acquired over many millions of utterances” (McCarthy, 2010: 4).

Many of the formulaic expressions in our corpus may be classified as appraisal or evaluating devices, which should be viewed as belonging to the field of interpersonal semantics (Eggs and Slade, 1997). Appraisal refers to the attitudinal colouring of talk among dimensions like certainty, emotional response, social evaluation, and intensity. As reported by these authors, appreciation, affect, judgement, and amplification are four main categories that should be included in appraisal analysis. Eggs and Slade (1997: 125) define each as follows: appreciation indicates “the speaker’s reactions and evaluation of reality”, while affect is “the expression of emotional states both positive and negative”. Judgement includes “the speaker’s judgements about the ethics, morality or social values of other people”. Finally, amplification is “the way speakers maximize or minimize

the intensity and degree of the reality they are negotiating". Formulas and formulaic appraisal expressions in our corpus perform the pragmatic function of helping to regulate the relationship between the fictional characters. Appraisal expressions mainly convey positive emotional states and judgments of the situations they get involved in, thus creating solidarity, friendship and group membership, as illustrated in the following section.

4. Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative methods have been combined to provide an account of the use of code-switching in *Handy Manny*. Quantitative measures address the presence of L2 (English) in the analysed episodes broadcast mainly in L1 (Spanish), while the qualitative analysis comprises an assessment of the pragmatic function of the different types of units that code-switching is made of in the corpus which, broadly speaking, fall into two different categories: *permanent* and *context units*. *Permanent lexical items* are present in most of the episodes and are the hallmark of the series (e.g. its song, the song characters sing every time they go to work and the names of the characters). *Context lexical items* are more episode-related and can be classified as: a) *non-formulaic* units (i.e. vocabulary or expressions that are related to the topic of the episode); b) *formulaic* and *evaluative* expressions, which work on the pragmatic level and help express the attitude of the characters towards the situation, and towards the other characters. Our aim has been to clarify the function of these items that emerge from code-switching to evaluate their contribution as potential language teaching material.

Quantitative analysis

First, we counted the number of target words in L2 per episode to assess how much vocabulary was introduced. Secondly, we analysed each instance of L2 according to the order of appearance of L1 and L2 in code-switching, since L2 expressions are often translated in the next turn. The possible variations are:

- a) Type 1= L1+L2 (e.g. silencio/quiet, Ep. *Unas vacaciones bien merecidas*);
- b) Type 2= L2+L1 (What's this?/¿Qué es esto?, Ep. *Objeto Perdido*)
- c) Type 3= L2 without any translation (e.g. Oh my!, Ep. *The Lost Object*).
- d) Type 4= Translation (L1+L2) in two different turns by two different speakers (e.g. Manny: yes, grandpa, acabamos de arreglar tu 'boat'. Grandpa: mi 'barco', excellent. Ep. *Unas vacaciones bien merecidas*)
- e) Type 5= metadiscursive code-switching (L2+L1). The term is explained by using a definition formula, which is not used as such in the other types (e.g. Herramienta: ¿Una lavadora y una washing machine? Sí que tenemos trabajo; Manny: No, una washing machine es una lavadora, vamos herramientas).

Qualitative analysis

The qualitative analysis includes a classification of the L2 terms into permanent or context dependent lexical items. The nature of both is different, as explained below.

- a) Type 6 = *permanent* units (e.g. the song of the series, the song they sing every time they go to work, the

names of the characters) recur in all or almost all episodes. These terms help identify the series for the audience;

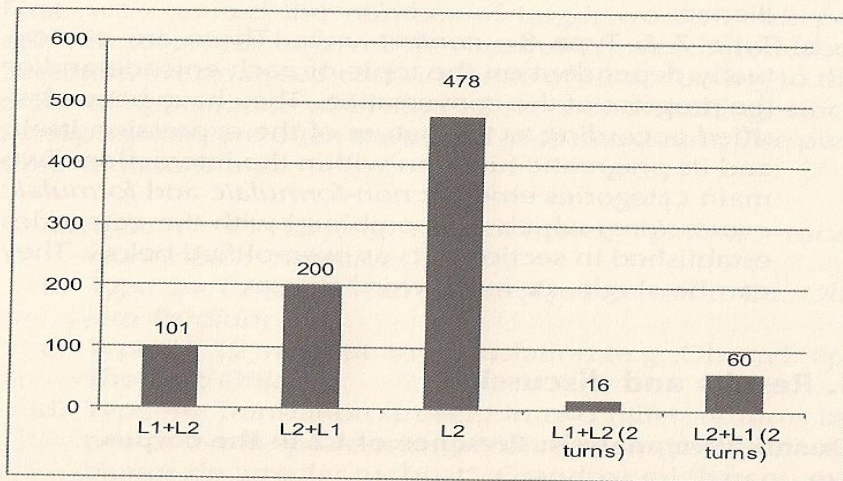
- b) Type 7 & Type 8= *context* units. These are contextually dependent on the topic of each episode and/or the progress of the conversation. They have been classified according to the nature of the expression itself, and its pragmatic function within the interaction. Two main categories emerge: *non-formulaic* and *formulaic expressions*, which are combined with the categories established in section 4.1, as exemplified below. They can be single- or multi-word strings.

5. Results and discussion

Quantitative analysis: Presence of L2 in the corpus

A total of 853 terms in L2 were found in the corpus, i.e. an average of 42.65 L2 words are introduced per chapter. In this estimation, we have not included the proper names of the characters. However, we have paid attention to some other characters' names like Grandpa or Cute, since they also have lexical meaning, thus counting as target L2 expressions for children to learn. We have also included terms of address (Mr., Miss, etc.) for the same reasons. Graph 1 illustrates the percentages of L2 terms according to the categories described above.

Graph 1. Percentages of L2 terms according to the categories described in the method.



Type 3, where code-switching into L2 appears without translation, has the highest percentage. Although it seems that there is a high quantity of L2 terms introduced in the series; in fact, this is not truly so in qualitative terms, as most of them are repetitions of the same word. For instance, the greeting 'hello' appears 89 times in type 3; or the affirmation particle 'yes', which appears 44 times in this same category. Besides, there are expressions which are repeated several times in most of the chapters: various greetings (e.g. good morning, thank you, bye), some orders encouraging the tools (e.g. come on, let's go) or evaluating expressions of a process or action by another character (e.g. excellent, wonderful). Type 3 is also used to carry out pragmatic functions like accepting or agreeing (e.g. "That's great Grandpa" in *Como una herramienta en una cacharrería*), greeting (e.g. "Hello Grandpa, how are you?" in *Grandpa's tomatoes*), giv-

ing orders (e.g. "Herramientas: si, let's go" in *Feria de ciencias*) and apologizing (e.g. "I'm sorry" in *Philip tiene hipo*); as well as reinforcing vocabulary (e.g. "No creo que quisieran secar la coina, la meterían sin querer" in *Objeto perdido*); and evaluating (e.g. "excellent" in *Música*).

Type 2 (L2 + translation into L1 within the same turn) is the second in highest percentage. Its function overlaps with the functions of type 3 above. Some examples are: giving orders and thanking (e.g. "Light on, enciende la luz, light off, apaga la luz", "Julieta's Grandpa: Thanks a lot Manny y gracias también a vosotras, herramientas" in *El monstruo de Julieta*). There are also examples of type 5, metadiscursive code-switching, where the speakers – mainly Manny – translate and explain the meaning of the term in L2 (e.g. "No, una washing machine es una lavadora, vamos herramientas" in *La pequeña Squeeze*). In other occasions, L2 introduces semantic fields (e.g. "Bueno, aunque no quede yellow pintura tenéis muchos otros colores, tenéis red, blue, green, montones de colores" in *Grandpa's tomatoes*).

Qualitative analysis

Permanent lexical terms

Two songs in the series appear in all the chapters. The first song is played as Handy Manny and his tools are leaving to go to work. The second one occurs when they start working on the task. These songs intersperse L1 words and expressions with L2 ones (e.g. "A trabajar, go quickly go", in the first song, and "now we work together, nos gusta trabajar" in the second).

Some names of the tools are also in English: Dusty, Pat, Philips, Rusty, Squeeze, Stretch, Turner. They serve the purpose of introducing three types of lexical items in L2. Two

of them are proper nouns (Pat, Philips), while the others make reference to their characteristics: Pliers (Squeeze) are operated by squeezing the handles, while you have to Stretch a measuring tape if you want to measure. Yet, Dusty and Rusty are of a different nature. Dusty (a saw) makes reference to the wood dust, which results from using the saw. Finally, Turner (a screwdriver) is given this name due to the action that is carried out in using it, since a turner is an item that turns. Turner would thus be an example of onomatopoeia.

The choice of address terms in the series also alternates between the use of L1 and L2. Thus, Grandpa (*abuelo*) is one of the permanent L2 terms and has never appeared in L1 in the data. Some characters such as Sr. Lopart are always in L1, while others are always in L2, e.g. Mr. Lawrence. The objective in introducing both terms of address in L1 and L2 (e.g. Sr/ Mr.) is to force learners to make an implicit connection between the two, while in examples such as Grandpa, L2 vocabulary is expected to be learned by association with the characteristics of the character himself (old, white hair, Manny's only relative). However, there are no clear reasons or patterns emerging from the alternation between the two. Some other permanent terms belong to formulaic conversational routines such as "Hello, Manny Manitas", every time he answers the phone, or the alternation between L1/L2 when Grandpa greets them all: "Hola Manny, hello tools". The affirmation 'yes' – which may be considered as being halfway between formulaic and non-formulaic – is also a permanent L2 term that alternates with other formulaic expressions such as 'of course':

(2) Mrs. Rose: *yes, Rusty. ¿Qué opinas Manny, puedes hacerlo?*

Manny: *of course, Miss Rose. El cartel va a quedar genial. ¿Verdad, herramientas?*

La mentirijilla de Rusty

Context lexical items

Formulaic and fixed expressions and/or formulaic appraisal expressions – which help establish the relationship between the characters, the situation, and, indirectly, the audience – are prominent in the series. Greetings such as ‘hello/hi’ (89 examples), ‘goodbye’ (13 examples), ‘good morning’ or ‘cheers’, are among the most common. Other formulaic expressions include: directives (be quiet, be careful let’s go), questions (what happened? what’s wrong?), apologies (I’m sorry), expressions for agreeing and disagreeing (that’s right, you’re right), and evaluating or appraisal expressions of appreciation (that’s perfect, terrific, that’s good, wonderful!, fantastic!) and judgement (well done). With regards to non-formulaic items, nouns are the most common with around 40 nouns in the episodes, followed by adjectives and verbs. Most of them are examples of common everyday words (e.g. nouns such as ‘boat’, ‘coffee mugs’, ‘potato’, ‘salesman’, ‘girl’, ‘washing machine’, ‘hat’, or verbs such as ‘understand’, ‘listen’, ‘know’, ‘are gone’).

Discussion and implications for language learning

This study analysed code-switching focusing on the presence of L2 terms in 20 episodes of the series *Handy Manny*, with the aim of evaluating whether this series may be a suitable tool for learning English/Spanish. Results indicate that, in fact, there’s a presence of L2 terms introduced through code-switching in each episode. These include a wide variety of basic formulaic and non-formulaic expressions in English. These expressions are introduced using code-switching with a direct switch into L2 English, often followed by a translation for each of them. Previous studies (Spöttl and McCarthy, 2004; Schmidt and Carter, 2004;

Wray, 2006; McCarthy, 2010) have demonstrated the importance of formulaic language in applied linguistics and pragmatics (cf. Tateyama, 2001); and how learning formulae may help improve pragmatic competence among learners (Tateyama, 2001; García-Pastor 2009a, 2009b). As can be observed from the examples above, pragmatic functions are expressed predominantly by formulaic language which is introduced in chunks, and may therefore be learned as such. The variety of formulas is considerable (53 different formulaic expressions over 20 episodes), and they fulfil a number of pragmatic functions such as greeting, thanking, apologizing, requesting, identifying and evaluating through appreciation, judgement, and amplification. Other formulas are also interjections and discourse markers, and storytelling opening formulae (e.g. Once upon a time). All of these formulae are uttered within a comprehensible situational context, which certainly may help clarify their function for potential language learners, so that they may understand how they are used.

Qualitatively, there is a prevalence of positive over negative pragmatic expressions. Evaluative positive expressions contribute to help maintain and strengthen comradeship and friendship between Manny and his tools. Most of these expressions are introduced by the main character Manny. Consequently, his role is ratified through discursive means: Manny is the teacher (explains L2 words which the tools may not be familiar with), the boss, and a good friend who has a very positive attitude towards his friends, and who fosters comradeship and team-work. Manny's discourse is also polite, always using greetings when appropriate (how are you?, see you, have a good day), and thanking other characters for their help (thanks, you're welcome, I'm very grateful) as well as apologising if necessary (I'm sorry). All these pragmatic functions are explicitly introduced in the conversations between the characters in the series through code-switching in the different patterns specified above.

We firmly believe that pragmatic functions can help promote the learning of specific routines that learners should start mastering from an early stage in the process of language learning. The simplicity of the expressions introduced in *Handy Manny* is in accordance with the age group which the series is mainly addressed to (i.e. children under nine years old), thus favouring the development of pragmatic competence. The series, however, does have a few drawbacks: mainly careless pronunciation of L2 terms (the voices of the Spanish version are by native Spanish speakers, and their pronunciation reflects many mistakes that are the product of L1 transfer), and some minor pragmatic errors, which are caused by the process of dubbing the series into Spanish. In such context, the series should provide for the most correct pronunciation, so that children can learn from it.

Another drawback is the fact that exposure to these expressions is most probably insufficient. A longitudinal interpretation of the results proves that along 20 episodes chosen at random, the input may be insufficient. Most of the expressions appeared only once or twice in the episodes analysed, while other items such as 'yes' (44 times), 'hello' (89 times), and 'thank you' (27 times) appear more often. Insufficient exposure is a handicap for learning a language, unless the child watches the episode several times (an action pretty common among children). However, one may doubt whether children are aware of the implications of code-switching or not, since many authors claim that "learning requires awareness at the time of learning target features" (Schmidt 1993, in Takahashi, 2001: 198; Tateyama, 2001).

As for the non-formulaic expressions in our corpus, the verbs are common verbs (e.g. sing, listen, know, wait) and they are introduced in the right context. There is also an example of a modal auxiliary (must), which is also contextualized, and helps introduce the idea of obligation. The adjectives and nouns also belong to basic semantic fields that

would correspond with what children start learning at school at an early age (e.g. colours). Other adjectives may be classified as belonging to the evaluative category of appreciation (Eggins and Slade, 1997): 'good', 'handsome', 'beautiful', 'new', 'little', 'incredible', 'smart', 'pretty'. Others, which may at first sight look less common, are justified due to the topic of the episode and the situational context (e.g. windy, sharp). The nouns introduced (around 98) are also contextualised and correspond with items that can be retrievable from the context: the physical context (i.e. the objects can be visualized) or the topic under discussion.

6. Conclusion

The starting point for this study was to investigate the possibilities that the cartoon series *Handy Manny* may offer for children who are learning English. The analysis of L2 (English), which was introduced through code-switching, led us to establish different categories according to the order in which L1 and L2 were combined. Results indicate that there is a prevalence of formulaic expressions with a pragmatic function in the conversation. This is a positive feature of the series, since exposure to formulaic sequences at an early age can help improve children's pragmatic competence in situations where the use of such formula is adequate or even required. We believe that introducing vocabulary in L2, and pragmatic expressions with a clear social function at an early age is certainly a good idea.

Notwithstanding the utility of L2 terms in a series for children, there are several drawbacks: a) learners do not have enough exposure and input; b) the input is unsystematically organized, and there seems to be no rationale behind most of the choices of L2 expressions when looking in depth to what the learner is being "taught"; c) the careless pro-

nunciation of the L2, which often reproduces the Spanish phonological system rather than the English one. This study, however, has not tested the impact that the series may have had on a regular spectator. Further research is thus needed to see whether there is any impact on the children or not, and whether using code-switching is fully comprehended by the child.

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How can we innovate in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom, so that our students are able to use the target language more adequately? This question has, by no means, an easy answer.

In fact, there is an ever-growing body of research attempting to provide a response to this question from many different angles, and, at present, still much remains to be done. The present volume is a modest reply to this question in an effort to increase attention to pragmatic issues in EFL teaching and learning, among which (im)-politeness phenomena are crucial. In so doing, the contributions to this volume intend to highlight the significance of a learner-centred pedagogy that takes into consideration learners' changing needs in an increasingly globalized world, and the consequent flexibility this brings to teacher and student roles, teaching methodologies, and learning materials in the context of the classroom.

The chapters in this book thus emphasize the use of new technologies in teaching and learning processes, learners' cultural backgrounds with a view to cross-cultural communication and international mobility, and learners' personalities, attitudes, beliefs and values, with a focus on learners' freedom of choice in their acquisition of a second or foreign language. All these issues are contemplated from various theoretical approaches and methodological perspectives, which reflect the hybrid and interdisciplinary nature of this volume.



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