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Well I never!: formulaic language as a pragmatic resource in child entertainment media

This study provides qualitative data on the potential for exposure to Situation-Bound Utterances (SBUs) in English language children's cartoons. The SBUs are described according to their pragmatic context, and possibilities for pragmalinguistic inference going beyond the scope of traditional learning environments are discussed. The study also notes how those SBUs are dealt with in the Spanish and Catalan dubbed versions of the same cartoons. To achieve this analysis the children's cartoons *Peppa Pig* and *Charlie and Lola* (two episodes of each) were selected. The original English versions were analysed for the occurrence of SBUs, and, after identifying certain sequences in which they are present, these same sequences were analysed in both the Spanish and Catalan dubbed versions in order to determine what happened to the SBUs. The study takes a multilingual approach to early pragmatic development in order to explore and highlight the considerable gains in pragmatic competence which can be taken advantage of through the use of authentic 'out of school' materials in contexts where three languages are in contact. Secondarily, the study comments on the tendency in certain European countries to dub original version audiovisual media, which it proposes is an impediment to multilingual development.

Key words: multilingualism, third language acquisition, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, formulaic language, situation bound utterances, out of school factors, language attitudes, young learners, cartoons, child media.

1. Introduction

Despite playing an auspicious role in young children's development when learning another language, it is generally regarded as problematic to effectively teach them pragmatic conventions (sociopragmatics) and supply them with pragmatic resources (pragmalinguistics). The main problem is that the metapragmatic information supplied in focused tasks does not work with very young learners, and in instructional settings it is difficult to recreate the same or a similar context in which pragmatic competence is acquired in natural settings. We know that children are pragmatically aware in their L1 where basic pragmatic expressions are acquired very early on (Fenson *et al*. 1994), but often when conventions and routines are taught in another language there is little or no context from which a connection between linguistic routine and social situation can be inferred. Furthermore, research has shown that children with experience of interacting language systems become pragmatically aware at an earlier age (Safont, in press).

Thus, an issue in young pragmatic development is how to capitalize on this pragmatic awareness, both in the classroom and beyond, where traditional approaches are not effective. As pragmatic competence is culture-specific and therefore

dependent on the language routines utilized by particular speech communities, we posit that one option is increased exposure to formulaic language. With this in mind, the current study provides a qualitative analysis of potential exposure to formulaic language in child entertainment media, and how this may be used as a pragmatic resource which not only provides rich and contextualized target language input, but also acts as didactic reinforcement material which can encourage exposure to the target language outside traditional learning environments. In order to do this, we will summarize the pragmatic perspectives which underlie the current study; Searle's taxonomy, Politeness Theory, request modifiers, Formulaic Language, and Situation-Bound Utterances. We will then discuss the use of formula in child language acquisition and its relation to pragmatics, before describing our multilingual perspective on early pragmatic development. Finally, we will analyze episodes from two children's cartoons for the appearance of Situation-Bound Utterances and discuss their potential as pragmatic resources.

2. Pragmatic perspectives

The current study of formula in entertainment media utilizes and is informed by certain definitions from earlier L1 and SLA perspectives on pragmatics; Searle (1976), Brown and Levinson (1987), and Alcón *et al* (2005). As the reader will probably be familiar with this work, only a brief explanation will be provided before narrowing the focus to Formulaic Language and Situation-Bound Utterances.

2.1. Illocutionary acts

Two influential developments in the study of pragmatics are Searle's (1969) *taxonomy*, and later (1976) *classification*, of illocutionary acts and Brown and Levinson's (1987) *Politeness Theory*. Searle's taxonomy divides illocutionary acts (what a speaker means to convey) into five categories: assertives ('true or false' statements), directives (commands, requests, advice), commisives (commitment to future action), expressive (express attitudes and emotions), and declarations (change reality in accordance with the declaration). Brown and Levinson's theory recognizes the 'face-threatening' nature of social interactions and presents a framework to mitigate the damage arising from them. Social interaction can be threatening if we perceive a discrepancy between our social image and others' recognition of the same. In interactions we may impose ourselves or impede others, fluid social interaction often requires us to minimize or mitigate the threat this causes. Brown and Levinson formulated the following politeness strategies: bald on-record (no mitigation), positive (minimize threat to hearer's self-image), negative (avoid imposition on hearer), and off-record (indirect/oblique). Politeness strategies depend greatly on sociological variables, especially social distance, power relationship, and degree of imposition. Scollon and Scollon (1995) expanded this framework in terms of power relationship and social distance by defining three further types of politeness: deference (social distance but no power difference), solidarity (no social distance or power difference), and hierarchical (both social distance and power difference).

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Alcón *et al* (2005), include the speech act of requesting in Searle's 'directives' category, in so far as they constitute the speaker's attempt to get the hearer to do something. Following Brown and Levinson, Alcón *et al*. propose that requests are considered 'one of the most face-threatening speech acts' (2005: 2). Expanding on previous research (Sifianou, 1999), they provide a taxonomy of internal and external modifiers which mitigate the face-threatening impact of requests. They also point out that, depending on their purpose, not all requestive acts need mitigation (Brown and Yule, 1983). For example, *transactional* purposes (transmitting information) and *interactional* purposes (building/maintaining relationships); the former can remain direct and unmodified whereas the latter usually require the impositive force to be mitigated. Alcón *et al*'s typology consists of two principle modifier types: internal and external. Internal modifiers are included in the request itself and can be divided into the sub-types: openers, softeners, intensifiers, and fillers. Softeners can be further sub-divided into understatement, downtoner, and hedge, while fillers can be sub-divided into hesitators, cajolers, appealers, and attention-getters. External modifiers, which do not form part of the actual request act, are further divided into: preparators, grounders, disarmers, expanders, promise of reward, and please. Perhaps the sub-type most relevant to formulaic sequences is 'fillers' which, according to Sifianou, are socio-pragmatic in nature, 'highly formulaic and mostly semantically void' (1999: 179); in other words, their literal meaning is not retained when they are used as fillers.

2.2. Formulaic language

We know that pragmatic conventions are culturally specific, as such Formulaic Language (FL) plays an extremely important role. FL is a highly salient aspect in natural speech, a large amount of which is 'formulaic, automatic and rehearsed rather than propositional, creative or freely generated' (Wong-Fillmore, 1976: 24-25). The occurrence of formulas in normal language use is estimated to stretch as high as 80% (Altenberg, 1998), and it has even been suggested that 'perhaps everything we say is formulaic at one level or another' (Wray, 2012: 245). FL has been defined as 'chunks' of language (Wood, 2002a) which are learnt, stored and retrieved as if they were 'big words' (Ellis, 1996), or 'prefabricated' sequences which bypass grammatical analysis (Wray, 2000). FL is difficult for language learners to master (Moon, 1992); nevertheless, effective target language communication requires learners to become sensitive to the particular sequences preferred by a given speech community, even though other possibilities may seem equally logical (Wray, 2000). Irujo (1986) explains that when addressing language learners FL sequences are frequently omitted, and Wray (2012: 236) expands on this, suggesting that as FL 'marks insider status' within a speech community it can be used to protect linguistic identity but also 'regularized to increase transparency if the exclusion of outsiders becomes socially or economically undesirable' – thus, somewhat ironically, the

inclusion of non-native speakers may necessarily require the omission of certain formulaic utterances.

Wray and Perkins (2000) and Wray (2000) have indicated two functions of FL: 1) saving effort in processing, and 2) achieving social-interactional functions. Regarding the former, Wray argues that 'whole paradigms of potential utterances can be based on a single lexicalized stem', effectively creating, what she terms, 'frames' containing lexical gaps into which 'any semantically plausible member of the word class' may be placed. She concludes that, '[a]lthough there must be some analytical processing involved in slotting words or morphological forms into an established frame, there is ... less effort involved in this than in creating the whole construction from scratch' (2000: 473-474). Regarding the latter Wray and Perkins propose three distinct social-interactive functions (and their effects): 1) manipulation of others (satisfying physical, emotional and cognitive needs), 2) asserting separate identity (being taken seriously, separating from the crowd), and 3) asserting group identity (overall membership, affirming and adjusting place in a hierarchy) (2000: 14). Wray (1998) has drawn parallels between these functions (especially the first and last) and the functions of holistic human protolanguage, where utterances were linked directly to goal-oriented specific meanings without the necessity for words or rules. Taking this last point into consideration, Wray (2000, 2012) illustrates just how useful FL is in terms of pragmatic development by describing formulas as 'a linguistic solution to the problem of how to promote our own survival interests'. She suggests that human social and psychological complexity renders us unable to fully meet our 'emotional, mental and physical needs without involving others', one way to ensure this involvement is the use of 'wordstrings' currently circulating in our communities in order to minimize misunderstandings and enable social alignment with other community members; in a most rudimentary sense, 'I am like you because I talk like you, so you will want to help me' (2012: 231-232).

A Situation-Bound Utterance (SBU) is a very specific type of formulaic language. Kecskés, who coined the term, describes SBUs as 'highly conventionalized, prefabricated pragmatic units whose occurrence is tied to standardized communicative situations' (2000: 606). The defining feature of SBUs is their 'obligatoriness' and 'predictability' in specific social interactions. In earlier research, Kecskés argued that pragmatic functions are not encoded in the SBUs themselves instead they are 'charged' by the situation in which they are used; it is this 'situational charge' which differentiates SBUs from identical, but freely-generated phrases. SBUs are dynamic in nature, principally because in each speech community appropriate communicative behavior in particular situations is defined by societal conventions and rules. Kecskés (2010: 2897) states that '[t]hrough SBUs interlocutors not only fit their contribution to the given situation but also establish and confirm the social situation'. SBUs differ from other types of FL because they are tied to situational 'frames', which Kecskés describes as 'interpretive devices by which we understand a term's deployment in a given context' (2002: 104). Not to be confused with Wray (2000), a *situational* frame is the general conventional knowledge about a given

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situation which is highly variable according to socio-cultural conditions but, on the whole, is mutually understood within a speech community.

Kecskés (2010) suggests that how frequently different linguistic expressions occur impacts on their 'meaningfulness': the more frequent the occurrence, the more referential meaning is lost. In such cases he proposes that the 'compositional meaning of utterances often becomes of secondary importance and the functional aspect begins to dominate' (2010: 2893). We can see this with the utterance *How are you?*, used so frequently as a greeting that its compositional meaning as an enquiry becomes overshadowed by its meaning as a pragmatic act of salutation. In a standard greeting situation you would not expect the question to be answered; instead the hearer would be expected to enter into the pragmatic ritual or routine by acknowledging and returning the salutation. With this in mind, Kecskés differentiates between three types of SBU: plain, charged and loaded. Plain SBUs (e.g.: *Can I help you?*) are semantically transparent and have a minimal pragmatic extension. Their meaning can be computed from their compositional structure. Charged SBUs (e.g.: *See you soon*) are semantically ambiguous, their basic function can be extended pragmatically. Both literal and situation-bound meanings are salient, but only the latter is 'charged' by the situation. Finally, loaded SBUs (e.g.: *Help yourself*) have no semantic transparency as the pragmatic function is more important than the literal meaning and takes it over. Their pragmatic function is encoded into the actual utterance itself, which has a strong tie to the situation in which it is deployed.

3. Early language acquisition and pragmatic development

According to Wood (2002a: 4), early language learners can infer meaning from linguistic sequences in both L1 and L2 contexts and then later analyze them to extrapolate and contextualize the data. This is important because it proposes that children learn and use FL as 'chunks' *before* they develop the faculties of lexicosyntactic analysis necessary to break these units into their composite parts. Referring to Peters (1983), Wood states 'early on the child develops strategies for extracting meaningful chunks from the flow of conversation ... and remember[ing] them as new lexical units. He or she is then ready to develop an ability to use lexical and syntactic information already acquired to analyze new chunks in the linguistic environment' (2002a: 4). Previous research (Wong-Fillmore, 1976; Hakuta, 1974; Hickey, 1993) has found that the acquisition of prefabricated formulaic chunks was followed by a syntactical and semantic analytical breakdown which helped facilitate and develop overall linguistic competence (Wood, 2002b).

Vygotsky's (1934/1986) insights on thought and language highlighted the development of 'egocentric' and 'inner' speech in children. While inner speech (inside the child's head) is the foundation of thought, egocentric speech (out loud but self-directed) serves 'mental orientation to tasks and conscious understanding of the environment' and helps the young child to overcome difficulty. Egocentric speech 'is evident in young children who imitate speech sequences and structures observed in

adult conversation, and use them to talk to themselves during individual play' (Wood, 2002b: 41), it stands to reason that these 'sequences and structures' also contain pragmatic conventions which children are able to observe and then deploy in adequate moments of their play. The Vygotskian concept of declarative and procedural knowledge - knowledge *about* something and knowledge of *how to do* something - can be applied to learning formulas in that a learner's first encounter with an FL sequence is in the declarative range but repeated exposure, both to linguistic and pragmatic stimuli, proceduralize such sequences. Thus, pragmatic conventions are acquired as part of target language (TL) exposure, the learner starts with knowledge about these conventions before transposing this to knowledge of how to 'do' TL pragmatics. The more adept a learner becomes at using a foreign language, the more likely it becomes 'part of the pragmatic system of senses', which include 'context-sensitive shades of lexical meaning'. Just as words become saturated with senses as inner speech develops, for the second language learner, adult or child, 'the standard phrases and strings and sentence or utterance frames of the second language likely become saturated with senses too' (Wood, 2002b: 43).

While the above provides an interesting insight into how young learners take advantage of formulas in their linguistic and pragmatic development, it remains a structuralist perspective. As is the case with early pragmatic development which has traditionally been studied from either an L1 or an Interlanguage Pragmatics (IP) perspective. The L1 perspective is characterized by a focus on pragmatic awareness raising in the first language in natural settings, whereas the IP perspective is characterized by a focus on awareness raising in the foreign language in instructional settings. We consider both of these perspectives to have a monolingual bias as they both focus on one language, assume that there is only one 'mother tongue', and that acquisition is consecutive and aims to achieve a native-like 'end state'. In line with more recent, dynamic perspectives on multilingualism (Aronin and Singleton, 2008; Canagarajah and Wurr, 2011; Cook, 1992; 1997; Herdina and Jessner, 2002), and the rejection of the 'end state' concept (Larsen-Freeman, 2005), the current study adopts a multilingual perspective focused on the interactions of language systems and takes into consideration the exposure to, and the linguistic/pragmatic competence in, all languages in the multilingual environment. In this case the focus is on L3 input in an already bilingual speech community. Several authors (Aronin and Hufeisen, 2009; Cenoz and Jessner, 2009; Dewaele, 2007; Jessner, 2006) have argued that multilingualism and multilingual development are both quantitatively and qualitatively different to first and second language acquisition. Part of this difference is the enhanced metalinguistic and metapragmatic awareness inherent in multilinguals due to their prior knowledge and experience of multiple language systems; what Herdina and Jessner (2002) call the 'M[ultilingualism]-factor'. Jessner (2008) argues that the M-factor plays a crucial role in the catalytic effect of bilingualism on third language acquisition. Ongoing research in early pragmatic development has shown the effect of bilingualism on L3 request modification (Safont, 2005, 2011, 2012) and that interacting language systems increase young learners' metapragmatic awareness (Safont and Portolés, in press). Furthermore, taking a

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multilingual perspective, Safont (in press) has shown that interacting language systems make multilinguals pragmatically aware from an early age; something which would not have been picked up from a monolingual perspective.

4. Identifying SBUs in child entertainment media

The goal of this study is to provide qualitative data on the potential for exposure to SBUs in English language entertainment media directed at young children. We propose that child entertainment media comprises rich, authentic, contextualized TL texts, provides exposure to FL and SBUs, and indirectly teaches pragmatic conventions through simultaneous provision of pragmalinguistic resources and sociopragmatic context. When used as added L3 input in 'out-of-school' contexts, this type of media is highly motivating for young learners. As the author is based in the Valencian Community in Spain, the three languages considered are Spanish (majority), Catalan (minority), and English (foreign). However, the results of the current study could be extrapolated to any context where majority, minority, and foreign languages exist side by side. Taking into consideration our proposal above, two specific research questions are posed: RQ1) do children's cartoons contain Situation-Bound Utterances?; and, if they do, RQ2) is the pragmatic force the same between the original and dubbed versions?

4.1. Method

In order to achieve the stated goal, this study employs the following method. The British children's cartoons *Peppa Pig* and *Charlie and Lola* were selected because of their popularity, suitability for young audiences, and the fact that they are broadcast in various dubbed versions.

Peppa Pig (2004), first broadcast in the UK by Channel 5 / Nick Jr, tells the story of the everyday life of the Pig family. All characters are anthropomorphised animals (pigs, sheep, foxes, bears, etc.), the main character is a young pig/girl, Peppa, who lives with her parents and her baby brother George. The cartoon is aimed a preschoolers and as such uses simple shapes, bright colors, and a very basic vocabulary with repetition of key points in the storyline. Since it was first broadcast, Peppa Pig has been shown in 180 territories around the globe, it has been dubbed into a variety of languages, and has lead to the creation of a wide range of themed merchandise.

Charlie & Lola (2005), first broadcast in the UK by BBC2 / Cbeebies, tells the story of a young girl, Lola, and her older brother Charlie. The two siblings get into various imaginative adventures and together negotiate and solve typical issues and problems related to a child's family life. The cartoon is aimed at young children between 3-7 years old, as such the animation is more fast-paced and imaginative, including some fairly surreal sequences and some photomontage, the type of language used is also more complex and the storylines often lead toward the conclusion of some childlike dilemma (sharing, socialization, fussy eating habits, being selfish,

etc.). Since it was first broadcast, Charlie & Lola has been shown in 26 countries and has been dubbed into various languages.

Originally, the English versions of eight episodes of the above cartoons were analyzed for the occurrence of SBUs, this was later cut down to four episodes (two of each) in order to secure versions in the three languages. After identifying certain sequences in which SBUs are present in the original versions, these same sequences were analyzed in the Spanish and Catalan versions to determine what happened to the SBUs. The SBUs were described according to their pragmatic/situational context, taking the social variables into consideration wherever possible, and the pragmatic force of each utterance in the dubbed versions is also discussed.

4.2. Results and discussion

In relation to RQ1, a wide range of phrases were found in both cartoons which in the context in which they were deployed marked them out to be SBUs (see: table 1). Considering that there are hundreds of episodes of each cartoon and we only analyzed five episodes of *Peppa Pig* and three episodes of *Charlie & Lola*, we can get an idea of the enormous potential for exposure to SBUs in this media genre. In relation to RQ2, between the original and dubbed versions we found a similar pragmatic force in most cases, however, there were some exceptions due to omission, extra linguistic devices, and discrepancy between languages. The balance of this paper will discuss in more detail the specific SBU examples chosen from the episodes we analyzed.

Peppa Pig	**Charlie & Lola**
A clever clogs	you're back!
A real whopper	Goodie!
Leave it to me	How would you like to…
Here you are	Buckle up
Getting warmer/colder	Would you like…
Hooray!	Say cheese!
Give me a clue	Why didn't you just say so?
I beg your pardon	*Let me see*
Tucked up	How about this?
What's the matter	*Give it a try*
Open wide	Go on
I'm afraid	Just for me
I say!	Hurry up
Who wants to join me?	Gobbled
Well I never!	Please may I have…?
Here you are	Please can I borrow…?
Here comes the airplane	*That's enough!*
In through the doors	Don't you think…?
Blah, blah, blah!	*I need to…*
Tea time	Here you are

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Don't worry

Table 1: SBUs present in analysed cartoons (the phrases analyzed are shown in italics).

4.2.1. SBUs in Peppa Pig

The children's cartoon *Peppa Pig* is aimed at preschoolers; as such it has a quite basic vocabulary and deals with everyday family situations. Nevertheless, after close analysis, we were able to find a fair amount of SBUs; the following account describes and discusses just four of them.

I beg your pardon! In this scene Peppa's little brother George burps while the family are sitting together at the kitchen table. The immediate reaction of his mother is to exclaim "I beg your pardon! Was that you George…?". The interaction takes place within the family and in the intimate setting of the kitchen, so the social distance is practically zero, however the power relationship clearly favors the mother. The literal meaning of "to beg someone's pardon" is a somewhat formal apology on behalf of the speaker, nowadays it is rarely used in this sense and in the present context this literal meaning is no longer relevant. We are left with its function as an SBU, charged by the specific situation it can be understood as a polyfunctional utterance: it demonstrates the speaker's attitudes to the situation, that the speaker thinks the hearer should make an apology, and that the speaker wants the hearer to modify their behavior (in this case to be more appropriate to the relevant social norms). It terms of Searle's (1969) taxonomy we can simultaneously observe one expressive and two directive illocutionary acts; Brown & Levinson (1987) would apply the 'off-record' category to both the directives as both are effectively indirect requests. In terms of Alcón *et al*'s (2005) request modification it is more complicated to find the specific sub-type for this utterance as it is a request in a very oblique sense. We could suggest that as it precedes a direct request for information (*was that you George?*) it could be considered similar to the internal modifier 'attention getter'. Finally, in terms of the status of the utterance as an SBU, it is clear that, due to the frequency of deployment in similar contexts, it becomes what Kecskés (2010) terms 'charged'; its referential meaning has been lost and its functional aspect comes to the fore. In the dubbed versions of this episode we see that in Spanish the utterance *Oh, ¡vaya!* is used, whereas in Catalan, for some inexplicable reason, the utterance is actually edited out of the scene. In neither case is the pragmatic force of the utterance the same, in Spanish it merely indicates surprise and/or disappointment and in Catalan it is totally omitted.

What's the matter? In this scene Peppa's brother George enters the living room crying because he has lost his favorite toy and his mother asks him "what's the matter?" Again, as the interaction takes place in an intimate setting within the family unit there is virtually no social distance, the mother has more power than George in this interaction. Deployed in this context, the utterance is tied in its predictability to a set situation; however, using Kecskés' (2010) terminology, we can understand the

SBU as either 'plain' or 'charged'. As a plain SBU the utterance would belong to Searle's (1969) directive category; it is a direct request, the speaker is asking for information about the hearer's problem. As a charged SBU the utterance would belong to the expressive (or even, obliquely, the commissive) category; it is used to express sympathy, a willingness to understand, and potentially solve, the hearer's problem. For this reason, according to Scollon and Scollon's (1995) expansion of Politeness Theory, it is possible to consider the utterance an act of solidarity within the family unit; there is no social distance and although the mother has more power by default, in her use of the utterance she brings this difference down to a minimum. Bearing in mind that the character of George is an infant who has not yet learned to speak properly, we can assume that the charged SBU is the salient one in this interaction. Again this is a question of the frequency of deployment in set situations affecting the meaningfulness of the utterance, even if George were an adult we would know that the charged reading is the salient one; the functional aspect has overshadowed the referential meaning. In the dubbed versions of this scene we find a similar pragmatic force in both the Spanish utterance *¿Qué te pasa?*, and the Catalan *Què t'ha passat?*; however in the Catalan version an extra explanatory device, *Perquè plores?* (why are you crying?), prefixes the utterance further contextualizing it.

I'm afraid… In this scene Peppa is not feeling very well so she is visited by the family doctor who gives her some medicine and says "I'm afraid it doesn't taste very nice". In contrast to the previous two examples, here the social distance between the doctor and the Pig family is much greater. In the interaction between Peppa and Dr. Bear, the power relationship clearly favors the latter. Furthermore, as he wants Peppa to take the medicine, the imposition comes from the doctor. In any situation, the utterance 'I'm afraid' is what Searle (1969) would class as an expressive because it indicates the speaker's psychological attitude to the situation. However, in this case, the literal meaning of the utterance (being scared) is no longer relevant because what the speaker means to convey is knowledge that the hearer may react negatively to the speaker's proposition. This means that, as an SBU, the utterance is 'charged'; it can be read in both the plain and charged sense but according to the situational frame it is clearly the latter which is salient. As the utterance is so frequently deployed in situations where a negative reaction is anticipated, it functions as a way of removing responsibility for the speaker's imposition on the hearer. The utterance could be considered an indirect request for the hearer not to blame the speaker for what is about to happen (what Brown & Levinson (1987) would consider a negative politeness strategy) while simultaneously and subtly recognizing the imposition and, here, given the power imbalance between interlocutors, expecting complicity (in this case, consenting to a medicine that may not taste nice). If we take the utterance *per se* as an expressive we could apply Alcón *et al*'s. (2005) terminology to propose that it functions as an external disarmer in relation to the subsequent assertive proposition (*…it doesn't taste very nice*), in this case it does not modify a request but rather mitigates the imposition of the speaker's overall intention. In the dubbed versions we find the Spanish *Me temo que…* which we

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can consider to have a similar pragmatic force, but, interestingly, in Catalan this is replaced by a type of warning - *Però t'aviso…* - and as such does not mitigate the imposition; in fact, it actually increases it by effectively 'passing the buck' for what is about to happen.

Well I never! This scene is an extension of the preceding one; as previously, the social distance between the family and the doctor is greater and the power relationship favors the doctor. In this scene the doctor pays a second visit to Peppa, who now feels better but nonetheless continues taking advantage of the kindness of her friends and family. Mr. Pig plays a trick on Peppa by asking everyone if they want to play football with him outside, of course, all Peppa's friends say yes and Peppa, momentarily forgetting her pretence, jumps out of bed and shouts "me too!" - this leads the doctor to exclaim "Well I never! A complete recovery." In Kesckés terms this utterance is 'loaded' in that it is so strongly tied to the situation that a literal (plain) interpretation is not possible. It functions, according to Searle's (1969) taxonomy, as an expressive utterance indicating the speaker's psychological attitude to the situation; the speaker is letting the hearer(s) know that what is happening transgresses his beliefs and/or expectations. Bearing in mind the social distance and power relations at play in this scene, this utterance is indirect/oblique because the doctor includes himself in the situation, making light of Peppa's pretence and softening the potential threat to face of pointing out that Peppa was not being entirely honest. In Brown & Levinson's (1987) terms we could understand the pragmatic function of the utterance as a positive politeness strategy in that the doctor uses the utterance to make a kind of joke in order to avoid conflict. In the dubbed versions we find similar pragmatic force, the Spanish utterance is *¡Caramba!* and in Catalan it is *Em quedo ben parat!*, both of which are pure formulaic utterances deployed to a similar pragmatic effect as in the English version. It is interesting to note that the Spanish utterance sounds quite antiquated but is probably used to reflect the doctor's characteristics and status from the perspective of a child.

4.2.2. SBUs in Charlie & Lola

The children's cartoon *Charlie & Lola* is aimed at young children from age 3 to 7 years. The main characters are brother and sister and the stories generally contain some kind of moral message about positive and negative personality traits as well as typical issues arising from a young sibling relationship. After close analysis, a number of SBUs were found; the following is a description of four of them:

Let me see… In this scene Charlie and Lola are in the library, the book that Lola wants is not available so Charlie is looking for another that she might like. As the interaction takes place between siblings there is virtually no social distance, the power relationship favors Charlie as he is the older brother and Lola looks up to him, Charlie is imposing slightly. When he goes off to look for a book, Charlie utters "Hmm, let me see…", within the situational frame we can consider the utterance charged; it is an oblique or indirect request which Charlie uses to indicate that

he is carrying out an activity and to request indirectly that Lola should wait for the outcome. This could be considered a positive politeness strategy in Brown & Levinson's (1987) terms, as Charlie is showing a willingness to attend to Lola's needs. A plain reading of the utterance is also possible, 'Let me see' uses the imperative as a direct request to look at something. According to the typical deployment of this utterance, its function as a direct request would be less frequent; we can see another instance of referential meaning taking a back seat in relation to functional aspect. What Charlie actually wants Lola to do is to wait, however, as he is showing solidarity and sympathy to her needs, a direct request would apply too much impositional force and would not be an appropriate illocutionary act according to his intentions; for this reason Charlie mitigates the impositional force of this interaction by using the oblique strategy described above. In the dubbed versions we find fairly close translations, in Spanish *Vamos a ver…* and in Catalan *A veure…*, both of which, as charged utterances, have the same force and can be deployed in the same situation. Contrary to the English utterance, in Spanish and Catalan the plain reading as a direct request would be differentiated by its conversion into the interrogative (*¿A ver?*, *a veure?*); one could not, for example, request to see something using *¿Vamos a ver?*

Give it a try… This scene is a continuation of the previous one, as such the social distance and power relationship are the same as before, this time there is a greater degree of imposition from Charlie. After several failed attempts, Charlie has found a book that he believes will fulfill Lola's somewhat demanding criteria. Lola, however, is not so easily convinced. In order to persuade Lola to do what he wants her to, Charlie makes the utterance "Go on Lola, give it a try. Please, just for me." A plain reading of the utterance is possible and would be a direct request (evident by the use of the imperative), usually connected to trying, testing, or tasting something. However, charged by the situation 'give it a try' loses its referential meaning and becomes an SBU (it functions to express 'do what I want'). In both the plain and charged readings the illocutionary act is one of Searle's (1969) directives, in the charged form we can understand it an 'expander' of the utterance 'go on' (a way of repeating the request in a different form). As the request uses the imperative form of the verb 'give' there is no internal modification of its impositional force, in order to mitigate the request it is tied to the attention grabber 'Lola' and the external modifier 'please'. In this way the request does not sound impolite, and is in line with Charlie's intention (to persuade). Even though there is no internal modification the face-threatening imposition is minimized by use of the modifier 'please' and further compounded by what, applying Alcón *et al*'s (2005) terms, we could consider a disarmer – '*just for me*' – a type of reinforcement device which aims at disarming the possibility of a refusal from the hearer. In the dubbed versions we find the Spanish *Inténtalo* and the Catalan *Prova-ho*, both of which are unmitigated direct requests (what Brown & Levinson (1987) would call 'bald on-record´) and, as such, do not have the same pragmatic force.

That's enough. This scene takes place in a zoo. After not having shown much restraint, Lola has eaten all of her packed lunch, spent all her pocket money, and

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has now used up all the film in her camera; she has been borrowing from Charlie all day to make up for her shortages. Charlie lends Lola his camera and she proceeds to take a lot of bad photos, using up most of Charlie's precious film in the process. At this point Charlie snaps "That's enough Lola!", he is clearly quite frustrated. The social distance here is minimal, Charlie is more powerful in the interaction, and Charlie is imposing on Lola. A plain reading of the utterance 'that's enough' would indicate that a sufficient quantity has been reached, however this assertive meaning is not salient in this particular frame. In its situational frame the utterance 'that's enough' loses its referential meaning and begins to function as a direct request, Charlie is asking Lola to stop what she is doing; in Kecskés' (2010) terms this is a 'charged' SBU. As the utterance is highly predictable in the given context, it becomes 'tied' to the situation and renders the plain reading impossible. As an illocutionary act we can see that the plain reading is an assertive, when we consider its charged reading it becomes a directive. Looking at the pragmatic implications of the SBU, we can see that Charlie is quite annoyed by Lola's actions so his request does not sound very polite; he does not care about minimizing the imposition and, due to the intimate social distance, he doesn't need to. In Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms, it would be considered a 'bald on-record' request. In the dubbed versions we find a similar pragmatic force in the Spanish utterance *Suficiente!* and the Catalan utterance *Prou!*, both of which can be deployed in similar situations to the same effect and both of which have identical plain readings.

I need to… In this scene Charlie and Lola are still at the zoo, Lola has realized that she has been annoying her brother by using all of his things, however, she still wants to take some more photos. This time Lola takes a new pragmatic approach in order to fulfill her goal, she utters "Charlie, can I borrow your clicky camera? I need to take a photograph of the seals." As before, the social distance is minimal in this interaction, the difference is that Lola is imposing this time and the power relationship is not in her favor. A plain reading of 'I need to...' would indicate some kind of necessity the speaker has, however, charged by this situation 'I need to...' is used to provide a reason/justification and, as such, becomes what Alcón *et al*. (2005) would consider a grounder tied to the conventionally indirect request 'can I borrow'. It is external to the main request and mitigates it by way of an explanation; it also swerves responsibility on Lola's part. From a Politeness Theory perspective we could consider it a negative politeness strategy in that Lola is attempting to show that she would not impose without a good reason. The common use of 'I need to…' as an explanatory device attached to this type of requestive behavior means that the referential meaning from a plain reading has been lost, the situational frame renders its literal sense irrelevant and leaves us with a charged SBU. Lola does not *need* the camera, she wants it; however, given that what Lola wants is for Charlie to submit to her will, therefore limiting his freedom of choice/action, the utterance 'I *want* to take a photograph...' would be too direct and not give her the result she hopes for. In the dubbed versions we find no significant difference in the pragmatic force of

the utterance; in Spanish it is *Necesito*... and in Catalan it is *Necessito*..., both of which have the same plain and charged readings.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined exposure to SBUs in children's entertainment media, and their potential as a pragmatic resource for young language learners. It highlights the potential gains in pragmatic awareness which can be taken advantage of through the use of 'out of school' materials, and, secondarily, adds another perspective to the discussion that dubbing audiovisual media is not conducive to multilingualism.

In response to RQ1, we can confidently state that children's cartoons are indeed a rich source of formulaic language; a conclusion which reinforces Alcón's (2005) claim that authentic audiovisual input addresses all aspects of language use in a variety of contexts. Only a small number of cartoons were examined but a wide range of SBUs were discovered; this gives an indication of the wealth of examples that could be gleaned from a more in-depth analysis. Children's cartoons can be considered a pragmatic resource because they provide well illustrated situational frames which simultaneously contain both context and language, in other words, sociopragmatic awareness can be raised at the same time as the necessary pragmalinguistic resources are provided. Additionally, the amusing storylines and colorful animation make this type of media particularly appealing to children and thus provides an effective format for young learners which can reinforce positive attitudes to an L3 and language learning in general; this is in line with previous research on 'out of school' factors and multilingual language attitudes (Nightingale, 2012).

In response to RQ2, we have seen that by comparing the majority and minority language versions of our SBUs, the pragmatic force may be lost in translation and even when there is congruence in the pragmatic force it is not conducive to L3 learning as only the sociopragmatic context is provided. Taking this into consideration, in our opinion, dubbing original version audiovisual media removes pragmatic learning opportunities and obstructs multilingualism. It is clear from the current study that original version cartoons can be a powerful didactic resource for young learners, not only are they accessible and entertaining, but, in multilingual contexts, they also provide precious L3 input in a way that can be easily applied and managed outside of formal learning environments.

As a closing comment, current multilingual research (Safont, in press) shows the extraordinary pragmatic learning potential of young multilinguals, whom traditional pragmatic approaches, at best, merely provide with structural input and, at worst, ignore. By taking a multilingual perspective, that is by taking into consideration all languages present in the environment, we rise to the future challenge of how to capitalize on this potential and facilitate a true multilingual language development.

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