# On the Pragmatic Function of Anglicisms in Spanish: A Case Study*[1]

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### ABSTRACT

Anglicisms are a complex phenomenon resulting from language contact and cultural globalization. They are greatly encouraged by the technological and cultural influence exerted by the Anglo-American world. Little has been said so far about usage as a factor. Besides, there is a type of anglicism of a pragmatic nature which remains almost unexplored. It is used in some communicative situations with a sort of expressive or aesthetic function, which some authors have called "ludic" or "empathic", since they tend to mark oral discourse with humorous or ironic features.     In this article we will approach the concept of pragmatic function within this field of anglicisms. To illustrate it, we will provide some examples taken from research previously carried out in the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, with a group of young speakers, undoubtedly the social group most overtly exposed to the influence of anglicisms.

## 1. Introduction

In the last few decades the study of anglicisms has increasingly caught scholars' attention. Being the complex result of language contact and cultural globalization, anglicisms can be regarded as a sort of mechanism for transculturation which, in the case of Spanish, goes beyond the limits of cultural borrowing and affects all linguistic levels (morphology, semantics, syntax, phraseology), due to the tremendous

technological, cultural and political influence of the Anglo-American world (Gómez Capuz 2004: 24–25). Today's bibliography on anglicisms is relatively extensive, including works which have widely studied the reasons for this complex phenomenon, as well as suggested a variety of typological classifications. However, some scholars such as Rodríguez González (1999, 2002b) or Turell (1986) have underlined the fact that the number of studies with a sociolinguistic orientation that might provide some insights into the question of usage is really small, probably due to the difficulties involved in the analysis of the great variety of factors to be taken into account. As Rodríguez González explains, there are no fixed rules regarding the use of anglicisms versus Spanish terms. In addition, the variable use of anglicisms seems to be dependant on many sociolinguistic factors such as the speaker's social status, the channel of communication and the topic. This author makes a distinction between two basic types of factors: those related to linguistic *use* or register, and those related to the *user*, who may belong to a particular social group, this being reflected in his/her sociolect (age, education and socioeconomic status). All these factors might favour a particular usage, although register differences can give a variety of results. What really seems obvious is the correlation between the use of anglicisms and age, especially in some topic areas. This seems to suggest that, because of their inclinations to follow all types of new fashions and anything related to modernity, young people tend to be, to a considerable extent, responsible for the increasing use of anglicisms, especially in colloquial speech.

As Lorenzo (1996: 98) wisely states, "what decides on the question of anglicisms is linguistic usage, regardless of unyielding criteria".[1] Likewise, both Pratt (1986: 367) and Rodríguez González (1997: 9) in his *Introduction* to Rodríguez González and Lillo Buades's dictionary, have stressed the need to create a data bank and to periodically register all those English terms that keep coming into use.

In turn, Rodríguez Segura (1999: 228) proved the use of anglicisms with a function that was rather "expressive or aesthetic, to create alliteration, puns or to play on words, to distort them with some purpose, or simply to mark a speaker's discourse with humorous, ironic or rhythmic features". This is, undoubtedly, one of the most interesting linguistic usages and one that has still not been thoroughly studied (see Rodríguez Medina 2003, 2004). On the other hand, although the influence of English is not exclusively felt in young people's speech, it is true that there are certain spheres or fields of that influence (computers, electronic games, advertising, cinema and television) to which the younger generations seem to be more overtly and deeply exposed. Taking all these aspects into account, in this paper we have a double aim, namely to shape and to illustrate this concept of pragmatic function applied to the field of anglicisms.

In order to carry out this task, we shall start with a summary of what has been said so far about this topic by a number of authors; then we will describe the context of our own research. Finally, we shall illustrate the concept of pragmatic function with some examples taken from the partial results of previous research (González Cruz et al., 2009) into the use of anglicisms by a group of young speakers from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain). In the final section, we will provide some relevant conclusions.

## 2. Exploring the pragmatic function

As already stated, although publications on anglicisms abound, the works dealing with their usage and functions – particularly on their pragmatic function – are really scarce. In a pioneering article on the functions of anglicisms in contemporary Spanish, Rodríguez González (1996: 109) remarked the importance for his analysis of two of the three functional components identified by Halliday in the semantic system of language, namely the interpersonal and the textual functions, due to the fact that they seem to have a more pragmatic nature than the ideational or referential function. According to Halliday, the interpersonal function has to do with the usage of certain linguistic units or structures that somehow can mark social or personal relationships. This function is performed by those words or expressions which are syntactically marked and have emotional connotations. It usually happens that when they have not been completely integrated into the language system or are still not recognised as such, borrowings are very prone to develop this emotional meaning, which expresses certain feelings or attitudes such as irony, dispraise, snobbery or affectations of some sort. Rodríguez González gives some clear examples of this type of terms that he considers to be evaluative, such as the anglicism *gay*, which is used in Spanish to mean 'homosexual', and *líder* for 'boss, guide'. As explained by this author, what is special about these terms, in contrast to their Spanish equivalents, is that both have certain positive and pleasant connotations, which the latter do not have. In these and many other cases, what seems obvious is that the foreign nature of the anglicism contributes to soften or to hide the harshness of some concepts, performing a sort of euphemistic function, particularly in the case of those words related to the underworld (drugs, prostitution, organized crime, etc). On the other hand, and beyond the stigmatized areas, it is easy to see the prestigious connotations that English loanwords tend to convey in specialized languages such as those of advertising and computing.

As regards the so-called textual function, it has to do with the creation of a text and the ability to relate it to the context, this being either the situation or the previous text. Within this textual function, the inclusion of anglicisms seems to be motivated by the trend to obtain a higher degree of information, clarity and accuracy in the expression of ideas. In connection with this, we can observe how sometimes there is a tendency towards simplification, that is, the anglicism is a short term that is adopted because of a preference for the economy of language and the application of the rule of minimum effort. Rodríguez González gives the following examples: *thriller*, instead of *película de suspense*; *duty free*, instead of *establecimiento/productos libre(s) de impuestos*; *best-seller* for *libro con gran éxito de ventas*. Similarly, we can mention the use in Spanish of many monosyllabic English words such as *bluff*, *gay*, *pin*, *stand*, etc.

Another reason is the need for accuracy and clarity when there is not an appropriate Spanish equivalent. A case in point is that of anglicisms such as *box* (for Spanish *compartimento movible en un hospital para niños o cuidado intensivo*) or *stand* (for *área o estructura para exhibición o venta de productos*). Sometimes, anglicisms are preferred in order to avoid polysemy or ambiguity, as well as for emphasis, or even to

achieve variety of expression, combining the alternative use of the anglicism and its Spanish equivalent.

Another recent work that also applies Halliday's functional model is the comparative study carried out by Danbolt Drange (2009) with Chilean and Norwegian youth. This author (2009: 70–79) makes a basic distinction between borrowings that refer to a new reality and those that already have a referent in the target language. The former perform an ideational or referential function and can be classified into the following subcategories:

(a) Proper loanwords, which include those words that designate a new object or invention. Both the word and the object are introduced into the language at the same time. This is the most traditional type of borrowing, where vocabulary related to technology abounds, such as *CD*, *e-mail*, etc.

(b) Loanwords referring to customs, objects or realities that belong to another culture, such as *lord, lady, cricket, Halloween*, etc.

(c) Trademarks of English origin. New products usually maintain their original names when they are introduced into another language. Two examples given by Danbolt Drange are *Messenger* and *Scotch.*

(d) Titles and expressions from TV shows, films and songs, which directly make reference to globalized cultural concepts, like *star wars, fame* and *rocky*.

(e) Proper names of English origin. This category includes two types of names, firstly, the first or Christian names of English origin, and secondly, those names which are modified with an English pronunciation or replaced by the corresponding pet name in English. This is a phenomenon that is connected to so-called phonetic anglicisms. For example, calling a man *Maicol* /maikl/ (from *Michael*), instead of *Miguel*, his real name.

According to Danbolt Drange, these five categories perform the ideational function, as long as these types of borrowing describe or make reference to the world, that is, their usage is motivated by the need to describe or to mention something that was completely unknown or had not been described before. Therefore they are filling a gap in the target language.

As for the second type of borrowings, that is, those which do not refer to a new reality, Danbolt Drange (2009: 76) believes they can perform either the interpersonal or the textual function. In her opinion, the interpersonal function is the one that in many cases explains the use of borrowings related to jargons in the speech of youngsters. She points out the existence of four main factors that determine the use of anglicisms, namely prestige, the need to soften the message, the need to intensify it, and finally resorting to humour, which includes vocatives and nicknames. Notwithstanding, Danbolt Drange also underlines the difficulty to determine accurately the speaker's motivation when choosing between a loanword (an anglicism) and a native word. It is the context, together with the speaker's attitude – his/her voice and intonation – what

will help us to correctly interpret his/her reasons for the choice, and to decide whether there is irony, parody or any other reason behind the use of the anglicism.

Danbolt Drange (2009: 78) quotes Halliday when stressing the importance of the textual function as a reason for using loanwords. She also makes reference to Rodríguez González's idea that anglicisms can be used in order to simplify, economize, state in a more precise way, as well as to stylistically vary the message. Likewise, she points out how often loanwords can perform both the interpersonal and the textual function at the same time.

In turn, as already stated in our introduction, Rodríguez Segura (1999: 228) proved the usage of anglicisms with an expressive or aesthetic function. According to this author, whenever they are used, anglicisms always meet a particular need on the part of the speaker, that is, there is always some reason for the use of an anglicism. The following are some of the motivations that she suggests:

(a) The person has in mind the English word or expression. Finding the equivalent in Spanish means he/she has to stop and think (and maybe he/she is talking for a live TV or radio programme).
(b) Using foreign words suits his/her character and way of expressing him/herself.
(c) Foreign words are part of the speaker's professional jargon.
(d) The speaker wants to add a pompous touch to his/her discourse.
(e) S/he just wants to be funny.
(f) S/he uses English loanwords precisely to disapprove of or to mock at them (for example, using an extremely careful pronunciation or a totally wrong one, or a peculiar intonation).
(g) S/he wants to boast about being a very educated person, etc.

Within the so-called interpersonal function, we can also include the use of anglicisms with an ironic, parodic or humorous aim, as proposed by Rodríguez-Medina (2004) in a corpus of anglicisms taken both from literary works and well-known radio and TV humorous programmes. For instance, she recorded, among some other interesting phenomena, the usage of Hispanicized English suffixes such as *-eibol* or *-ing* to create words like *insoporteibol* or *acojonanting*, which have a clear humourous effect on the hearer. In her opinion, this expressive use of anglicisms seems to indicate that they have already consolidated in Spanish discourse. We are dealing with a permanent sociolinguistic tendency, which allows speakers to capture the nuances – which are sometimes very subtle – included in the distortion of English words and in the morphological mixture of the two languages: hispanization of the spelling of the anglicism (*chou*); creation of pseudoanglicisms with a Spanish base (*inaugurator*); using English prefixes and suffixes or adapting them into Spanish (*insoporteibol*, *flipeibol*); using *-ing* forms (*spantosing*); adopting and adapting characters from the Anglo-American culture to the Spanish culture (*Narcís Skywalker*) and distorting Spanish forms on the analogy of English words (*Zaplan's*).

It is easy to observe how all these expressions are increasingly used in colloquial speech, especially in conversations held by young people. This is due to the popularity of the programmes that create these hybrid forms and to their expressive force. Therefore, it is to be expected that in a short time they will become a new word-formative resource in Spanish.

This humourous use of anglicisms is also mentioned by Vigara (2002) in her study of the language of *los pijos* (posh, stuck-up people). This author makes reference to a sort of playful or ludic anglicism which is not only used by young people or by *pijos* but rather is to be considered "a real sign of our time". It consists in replacing Spanish words or expressions with their equivalents in English. In the case of young *pijos* who can manage themselves well with English, the usage of these anglicisms is not always "properly practical; it rather has a function that is mostly ludic". Vigara (2002: 231–232) gives several examples of this type of anglicism which, in her view, could also be called *empathic* since it is used only among peers:

> A quienes son capaces de saludar con un 'Hello, niña...*Kisses*', darles las gracias en inglés *(thank you)*, decirles que llevan 'más de diez minutos para *cachar* [< *to catch* españolizado] un taxi, ¡qué heavy!', presentarlos/-as como *my friends* o piropearlos/-as diciéndoles que van *fashion* ('a la moda, atractivos, molones') o *well*... Este anglicismo puede aparecer por doquier y renovarse constantemente. En lugar de ir a bailar o a la disco[teca], puede aparecer (o no) ir *de dáncing*; en lugar de salir el 'finde' y beber, tomarse el *weekend* y *drinkar* (< *to drink*); estar de exámenes puede ser estar de *examinations*..., y así en el caso de muchas otras expresiones cotidianas.

Many of the uses or functions that we have just mentioned in this section are included within what we prefer to call the "pragmatic function" of anglicisms, which, as we can see, covers a relatively wide range of uses, either by providing emotional or positive connotations, or by highlighting an ironic, parodic or humourous aim. These are perhaps the most outstanding purposes, but we can also include the ones mentioned above such as to achieve conciseness, emphasis and variety of expression, or even to avoid ambiguity.

Last but not least, we cannot forget in this section to make reference to two significant contributions by Gómez-Capuz which are closely related to our study. The first is a lexico-semantic analysis of a corpus of anglicisms used in colloquial Spanish. This corpus was obtained from a speech community living in the metropolitan area of Valencia during the period 1988–1996, through a number of secret recordings which very accurately reveal the features of spontaneous conversation. The interest of this work lies in the fact that it allows us to study the strategies used by speakers from mainland Spain "in order to achieve phonic, morphosyntactic and semantic assimilation of these foreign words" (Gómez-Capuz 2000: 9). Among the conclusions provided by this research, we find the following to be especially relevant, since they have to do with anglicisms with a high frequency of use (their use is recorded eight times at least). They are the following types of anglicisms:

(a) Old anglicisms, which are assimilated and widespread: *güisqui*, *póquer*, *bar*, *mitin*.
(b) Anglicisms related to sports; some are older (*fútbol*, *gol*, *tenis*, *penalty*) and others are more recent (*squash*, *aerobic*, *basket*).
(c) Relatively old anglicisms, which denote everyday realities: *jersey*, *spray*, *suéter*, *grill*, *coca-cola*, *sándwich*, *parking*, *camping*.
(d) Very recent anglicisms, which give verbal expression to basic realities of the way of life of young people: *pub*, *flipar*, *hippy*, *rocker*, *rock*, *junky*, *cómic*, *póster*.
(e) Some recent technical anglicisms, which reveal the increasing use of words related to technology in oral colloquial discourse: *PC*, *marketing*, *estrés*, *test*. (Gómez-Capuz 2000: 261)

The second contribution by Gómez-Capuz (2001) consists of the study of the introduction in Spain of a number of pragmatic and cultural anglicisms via the dubbing of American films and TV shows, a field where defective translations abound, so much so that they become "the door through which all kinds of anglicisms, except for lexical anglicisms, enter the language". In his opinion, these anglicisms are very harmful for the integrity of the Spanish linguistic system, and he suggests the following classification:

• Semantic anglicisms (false friends like *romance* for *amoríos*)
• Syntactic anglicisms (excessive use of the passive voice and possesives, like *estar siendo* + participle)
• Phraseological anglicisms (calques like *jugar un papel* or *tener problemas*)
• Pragmatic anglicisms (though these are referred to by [some] authors as "syntactic or phraseological calques"), such as *olvídalo* and *¡seguro!*

Gómez-Capuz (2001: 14-15) notes it is difficult to provide an exhaustive classification of what he calls "pragmatic interferences" "because of the existence of very few studies on this issue, as well as due to the difficulty to determine which factors belong to the pragmatic level". However, he underlines the fact that

> pragmatic interference makes use of constructions which – from a formal or structural point of view – are syntactic or phraseological calques (or even lexico-semantic calques), and they have been classified as such by scholars. Notwithstanding, these calques go beyond the syntactic and phraseological levels and can even affect the discursive organization of a text (in our corpus of film and TV show dubbings, the imitation of daily conversation); they can contribute to a certain degree to discourse organization, to the expression of semantic nuances between sentences, to give verbal expression to certain discoursive routines and to the modality of the utterance.

Therefore, this author proves the heterogeneous nature of anglicisms as a phenomenon, while he gives examples of this type of pragmatic anglicisms, such as the following:

- *¡qué bueno que viniste!*, a calque of *how good of you to come! / how good that you came!*
- *¿cómo le gusta?*, instead of *¿le gusta?* or *¿qué le parece?*, a calque of *how do you like it?*
- *¡déjame solo!*, instead of *¡déjame en paz!*, a calque of *leave me alone!*
- *olvídalo*, instead of *nada, despreocúpate*, as a calque of *forget it.*
- *¡seguro!*, instead of *sí, claro*, a calque of *sure!* in emphatic statements.
- *¿sí, John?*, instead of *¿qué pasa, John?* or *dime, John*, a calque of *yes, John?*

In conclusion, we cannot but agree with Rodríguez González (1996: 125) when he stresses the fact that today anglicisms inevitably form an important part of our linguistic repertoire, not only because of their large number in a great variety of fields, but also because of the diversity of functions they can perform, the pragmatic function being one of the most interesting and complex. To this we should add another equally important function, that of marking speakers' identity and their belonging to a group (Joseph 2004; Edwards 2009). This means that using anglicisms also seems to be an identity feature, marking speech, in this case, as that of a young person.

## 3. Our research

### 3.1. General remarks

This research was motivated by the evidence of the growing influence of the English language and culture in Spain, though it is not a new tendency at all. As Pirulli (2007: 202) states, "there is a close connection between linguistic phenomena and the social, economic, historical, political and cultural context where they take place". There is no doubt that the predominance of English has consolidated in Spain in the last few decades due to a long list of extralinguistic factors. For instance, it has been observed that the presence of new anglicisms in certain specialized areas is in line with scientific and technical developments. Thanks to the media and the popularity of the Internet, those terms are now part of the common language. According to Pirulli (2007: 8),

> due to the great popularity of devices and services such as computers, mobile phones, emails and the Internet, many specialized anglicisms have come into everyday language, especially among youngsters, who are familiar with technology and learn technical terms very quickly and naturally.

The growing use of anglicims is also a consequence of the spread of Anglo-American trends, habits, techniques and social attitudes. Anglicisms are frequent not only in the media, but in all kinds of communicative situations: chats with friends, dissertations, dubbed scripts, TV debates, contemporary novels, advertising, etc. (Rodríguez Segura 1999: 228). In fact, the presence of English in advertising in Spain, including the

Canary Islands, is quite remarkable, especially in advertisements aimed at young people. As Varey (2008: 29) explains,

> English tends to be used to reflect an essence of freshness, energy and vitality. English is used in this way because it is usually targeted at young people who are more likely to understand it than older generations.

The Spanish media, especially the press, frequently echo this fact, criticizing it or warning against the perils of the Anglo-American influence on Spanish culture (see Villena's article or the special issue titled "El español de 2108", recently published in *Quo* magazine). However, it should be pointed out that many English words and idiomatic expressions which are normally included in the lists of anglicisms in Spanish are not really assimilated into the language. These are unsystematized spontaneous cases of anglicisms related to code-switching and due to snobbery and other pragmatic reasons. According to Rodríguez González (2003: 559), "anglicisms are often used in the Spanish press for snobbish purposes and they are part of the speaker's idiolect with no consequences at all for the Spanish language". Therefore, we believe that, when compiling a corpus, it is fundamental to measure the real use of anglicisms by the native speakers of the language. In any case, it seems that the increasing presence of anglicisms in Spanish will continue its tendency as long as the United States maintains its economic, political and cultural leadership in the world.

  This scenario explains why we have focused this study on the use of anglicisms by young speakers, since they belong to a generation constantly in contact with Anglo-American culture. We agree with Rodríguez González (2002a: 43–44) when he describes the language of youth as "an anti-language characterised by special expressiveness. Young people tend to change the meaning of old words and resort to foreignisms because of their exotic connotations". Anglicisms are so popular among Spanish youth that Rodríguez González has dubbed the phenomenon *youth anglomania*, "a consequence of the Anglo-American influence, especially the *underground* culture of drugs, rock and comics and alternative magazines" (Rodríguez González 2002a: 46):

> These magazines are characterized by the use of sloppy English, with many spelling errors because of the authors' lack of knowledge or careless and playful attitudes towards language typical of *underground* texts. The intention to be funny or critical is particularly obvious in the case of phonetic writing found in comics (*plis, comuniqueichon*, *guels*).

However, these characteristic phenomena in the speech of young people where lexicon becomes "the most evident identity reference" are not new at all (Briz 2003), even though other interactional pragmatic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic features play an important role in their identification. Rodríguez González, an expert in anglicisms and the language of youth, has contributed with plenty of data in his different studies which have clarified many theoretical aspects of the Spanish youth counterculture movements and their values.

3.2. Methodology

In our research into the use of anglicisms in the speech of young speakers from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, we have chosen a number of speakers aged between 18 and 22. In linguistic research the age variable may be considered in different ways, and cuts in the *continuum* of the age groups seem sometimes arbitrary. Except for specific cases of adolescent or child language, most of the related studies tend to choose 21-to-35 year old individuals as the first generation, with subsequent generation cuts including all age groups. The reason for our selection is the inclusion of young speakers that have all come of age in a five year range. We have left out younger generations, since their linguistic fluctuations may lead to unreliable results (López Morales 1994: 27).

Previous studies in other cities have proved that young speakers are particularly inclined to resort to anglicisms in everyday speech. That is the case of the comprehensive corpus of anglicisms used by secondary students from Madrid (compiled by the University of Bergen Project COLA).

In our research project, data were obtained through a survey oriented to a group of speakers (25 girls and 25 boys) chosen at random and asked about their linguistic habits and preferences in personal interviews. This figure is based on William Labov's suggestion that sociolinguistic research does not require a large amount of informants due to the tendency towards homogeneity in linguistic habits. Notwithstanding, after applying the 0.025 percentage to the official population figures published by the city council, we observed that the resulting data were very low and unrepresentative, and therefore we decided to increase slightly the number of interviewees to make calculations easier and more reliable.[2]

The total number of anglicisms currently used in Spanish is so large that for the purposes of this research we had to make a representative selection which enabled us to reach reliable conclusions. We decided to choose 50 common anglicisms with equivalents in Spanish and tried to design a short survey, considering that young interviewees are not very fond of writing and answering and could have negative attitudes towards a long survey. However, the final questionnaire took 13 pages and could not be shortened.

The first section of the survey asked about personal details; the second one presented 50 anglicisms and their Spanish equivalents. Informants had to indicate whether they preferred the English word or the Spanish equivalent and the frequency of use of the chosen item in their discourse; the third and fourth sections asked about the pragmatic function of anglicisms they used in their daily lives. The third section consisted of 19 English words and idiomatic expressions often found in the speech of young people, intuitively chosen according to our experience as native users of the language in daily contact with students, relatives and friends of the same age group. We compiled real examples of anglicisms utilized with ironic, humorous or expressive purposes in certain contexts, so they were not written in isolation but in long sentences where the intention of the speaker could be clearly seen. In the fourth section, we also asked the speakers about the frequency and context of use of 6 anglicisms of pragmatic

nature (*sorry*, *bye*, *hello*, *please*, *no comment*, *darling*) in their speech. Sections 5 and 6 dealt with the cultural level of informants and their degree of familiarity with so-called cultural anglicisms. Finally, section 7 analysed the speakers' command of English and tried to confirm the possible relationship between their level of English and the frequency of use of anglicisms.

## 4. Some examples of use of pragmatic anglicisms

We will show and analyse some examples of the results related to anglicisms with pragmatic functions obtained in sections 3 and 4 of our survey. Individuals had to indicate how often they used the terms in the following list, followed by their context of use:

| | |
|---|---|
| *fashion* | *¡Qué fashion te veo!* |
| *light* | *El examen fue muy light.* |
| *heavy* | *¡Qué heavy! Me pareció muy heavy.* |
| *body* | *Una alegría para mi body. ¡Vaya body!* |
| *off the record* | *Me lo dijo off the record.* |
| *superstar* | *Va como si fuera una superstar.* |
| *superwoman* | *Va de superwoman por la vida.* |
| *flower-power* | *Esa chica es un poco flower-power.* |
| *happy* | *¡Qué happy! Se quedó todo happy.* |
| *number one* | *En eso es el number one.* |
| *crack*[3] | *Lo has conseguido, eres un crack!* |
| *fifty-fifty* | *Eso lo solucionamos fifty-fifty.* |
| *groggy* | *Me levanté groggy total.* |
| *K.O.* | *Hoy no salgo, estoy K. O.* |
| *stand-by* | *Ese asunto está en stand-by.* |
| Overbooking[4] | *En la disco había overbooking.* |
| **off** *off* | *Ahora mismo me pillas en off.* |
| *business* | *El tío tiene un business que no veas.* |
| *show* | *Me montó un show delante de todos.* |

We can see the answers of the 50 informants in the following table:

| WORDS | YES, FREQUENTLY | NEVER | SOMETIMES |
|---|---|---|---|
| *fashion* | 6   (12%) | 20   (40%) | 24   (48%) |
| *light* | 10   (20%) | 12   (14%) | 28   (56%) |
| *heavy* | 11   (22%) | 20   (40%) | 19   (38%) |
| *body* | ———— | 39   (78%) | 11   (22%) |
| *off the record* | ———— | 48   (96%) | 2   (4%) |
| *superstar* | 1   (2%) | 29   (58%) | 20   (40%) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *superwoman* | 3 (6%) | 31 (62%) | 16 (32%) |
| *flower power* | 1 (2%) | 35 (70%) | 14 (28%) |
| *happy* | 20 (40%) | 6 (12%) | 24 (48%) |
| *number one* | 5 (10%) | 14 (28%) | 31 (62%) |
| *crack* | 32 (64%) | ———— | 18 (36%) |
| *fifty-fifty* | 14 (28%) | 7 (14%) | 29 (58%) |
| *groggy* | 9 (18%) | 18 (36%) | 23 (46%) |
| *K.O.* | 19 (38%) | 9 (18%) | 22 (44%) |
| *stand-by* | 28 (56%) | 5 (10%) | 17 (34%) |
| *overbooking* | 17 (34%) | 10 (20%) | 23 (46%) |
| *off* | 7 (14%) | 27 (54%) | 16 (32%) |
| *business* | 11 (22%) | 20 (40%) | 19 (38%) |
| *show* | 20 (40%) | 8 (16%) | 22 (44%) |

**Table 1.** Results related to the use of pragmatic anglicisms.

As we can see in table 1, the most frequent pragmatic anglicisms are the following: *crack* (64%), *stand-by* (56%), *happy* (40%), *show* (40%), *K.O.* (38%) and *overbooking* (34%). If we add the answers of the 50 speakers confirming their use of this corpus of 19 anglicisms "frequently" or "sometimes", the list of these terms from greater to lower frequency of use is as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *crack* | (100%) | *business* | (60%) |
| *stand-by* | (90%) | *fashion* | (60%) |
| *happy* | (88%) | *heavy* | (60%) |
| *fifty-fifty* | (86%) | *off* | (46%) |
| *show* | (84%) | *superstar* | (42%) |
| *K.O.* | (82%) | *superwoman* | (38%) |
| *overbooking* | (80%) | *flower power* | (30%) |
| *light* | (76%) | *body* | (22%) |
| *number one* | (72%) | *off-the-record* | (4%) |
| *groggy* | (64%) | | |

## 4.1. The sex variable

As regards the influence of the sex variable on the results (summed up in table 2), we have observed that it has not been particularly significant. In fact, it is remarkable that the answers given by males and females are very similar, as the high degree of coincidence of resulting figures suggests. That is the case of the terms *heavy* (5 boys and 6 girls use it frequently) and *number one* (used frequently by 2 boys and 3 girls and only sometimes by 16 boys and 15 girls). A similar trend was observed in the terms *crack* and *fifty-fifty*, and the degree of coincidence is also high in the rare use of the expression *off the record* (23 boys and 25 girls never use it). So general results seem to confirm that there are no significant differences in the use of anglicisms by male and female individuals. In fact, we have only observed minimal differences in the case of

*fashion*, *light*, *happy* and *superwoman*, which seem to be preferred by girls, and *K.O.*, *heavy*, *groggy* and *business*, which have proved to be more typical of male discourse. These results could be associated with the stereotyped hobbies and tastes of boys and girls.

| WORDS | YES, FREQUENTLY | | NEVER | | SOMETIMES | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| *Fashion* | 2 | 4 | 15 | 5 | 8 | 16 |
| *Light* | 4 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 13 | 15 |
| *Heavy* | 5 | 6 | 9 | 11 | 11 | 8 |
| *Body* | ———————— | | 21 | 18 | 4 | 7 |
| *off the record* | ———————— | | 23 | 25 | 2 | 0 |
| *superstar* | 0 | 1 | 16 | 13 | 9 | 11 |
| *superwoman* | 1 | 2 | 18 | 13 | 6 | 10 |
| *flower power* | 0 | 1 | 17 | 18 | 8 | 6 |
| *Happy* | 6 | 14 | 5 | 1 | 14 | 10 |
| *number one* | 2 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 16 | 15 |
| *Crack* | 17 | 15 | ———————— | | 8 | 10 |
| *fifty-fifty* | 7 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 14 | 15 |
| *Groggy* | 6 | 3 | 6 | 12 | 13 | 10 |
| *K.O.* | 12 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 13 |
| *stand-by* | 13 | 15 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 8 |
| *overbooking* | 6 | 11 | 6 | 4 | 13 | 10 |
| *Off* | 3 | 4 | 15 | 12 | 7 | 9 |
| *business* | 8 | 3 | 8 | 12 | 9 | 10 |
| *Show* | 10 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 9 |

**Table 2.** Sex variable results. (Use of anglicisms with pragmatic function; M = male; F = female)

4.2. Other examples taken from the results of section 4 of our survey

As we have already noted, in the fourth section individuals were asked two questions about the frequency and contexts of use of 6 terms with pragmatic functions in their discourse:

    (a) *Do you ever use any of the following terms when you speak in Spanish?*
    (b) *Do you make an effort to pronounce these English terms properly?*

    In the first question, we tried to find out the frequency of use of certain English words and expressions such as *please*, *hello*, *bye*, *no comment* and *darling* that are totally unnecessary in Spanish, since they have highly established and ritualized Spanish equivalents in similar contexts, and therefore their use can only respond to pragmatic purposes of expressiveness, snobbery or humour. According to the informants' answers, this phenomenon seems to occur mainly in informal situations with relatives and friends, with humorous purposes or, as one individual indicated in

relation to the term *darling*, "when I am joking with my girlfriend". These pragmatic anglicisms are shown below in decreasing order of frequency:

*please*      (80%)
*bye*         (70%)
*hello*       (70%)
*sorry*       (70%)
*no comment*  (20%)
*darling*     (10%)

Table 3 below also shows the answers given by informants to the first question:

| ANGLICISMS | I USE IT | | I DO NOT USE IT | | NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | M | F | |
| *Sorry* | 16 | 17 | 9 | 8 | |
| *Bye* | 13 | 19 | 12 | 5 | One girl did not answer |
| *Hello* | 13 | 15 | 12 | 10 | |
| *Please* | 15 | 20 | 10 | 5 | |
| *no comment* | 8 | 10 | 16 | 15 | One boy did not answer |
| *Darling* | 6 | 5 | 18 | 20 | One boy did not answer |

**Table 3.** Use of 6 pragmatic anglicisms in the Spanish discourse (section 4) (M = male; F= female).

These results seem to indicate that these terms are more likely to be used by girls: *please* (20), *bye* (19), *sorry* (17) and *hello* (15) are the most frequent words, while *darling* and *no comment* are the least present in their discourse. This latter tendency was also observed in the answers given by boys.

In relation to question 2, table 4 sums up the answers of the informants:[5]

| AGE GROUP | YES | NO | SOMETIMES | NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 years | 4 | 4 | 2 | |
| 19 years | 3 | 5 | 0 | No data from 2 informants |
| 20 years | 1 | 2 | 4 | No data from 3 informants |
| 21 years | 1 | 2 | 3 | No data from 4 informants |
| 22 years | 3 | 1 | 2 | No data from 4 informants |
| TOTAL | 12 | 14 | 11 | No data from 13 informants |

**Table 4.** Answers to the question *Do you make an effort to pronounce these English terms properly?*

This question was only answered by 37 out of the 50 informants. If we add the number of affirmative answers to the "sometimes" answers, we obtain a total of 23 informants – almost half of the informants – who admitted they made an effort to pronounce the terms properly, which we consider to be a relevant figure.

## 5. Conclusions

In this article we have studied the concept of pragmatic function of anglicisms. After defining this function, we have illustrated it with a number of examples taken from our earlier research on the use of anglicisms by young speakers from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. According to our results, the tendency of the informants to resort to English words and idiomatic expressions with expressive, ironic or humorous purposes seems to be confirmed, especially in colloquial and informal contexts. Some terms used frequently by more than 60% of the interviewees are particularly remarkable. That is the case of *crack* (100%), *stand-by* (90%), *happy* (88%), *fifty-fifty* (86%), *show* (84%), *K.O.* (82%), *overbooking* (80%), *light* (76%), *number one* (72%), *groggy* (64%), *business* (60%), *fashion* (60%) and *heavy* (60%). It should also be pointed out that young speakers very often resort to code-switching when they include in their Spanish discourse highly socially ritualized words such as *please* (80%), *bye* (70%), *hello* (70%) and s*orry* (70%). Female interviewees showed a greater preference for these kinds of words. Another relevant aspect of these linguistic tendencies is the way young people mark their identity as a group through these pragmatic anglicisms.

 Finally, we would like to highlight the need to carry out more studies with larger samples so that our conclusions could be contrasted with the results obtained in other Spanish cities. Our contribution is only intended to emphasize the relevance of pragmatic anglicisms in the discourse of Spanish youth, since further research is necessary to reach definite conclusions. As Riquelme (1998: 43) has noted,

> Linguists (lexicographers or grammarians) must focus on the design of a repertoire, a register of the linguistic use. Later the Real Academia de la Lengua (RAE) will cautiously accept and include these uses in its Dictionary (DRAE) as long as they are conveniently and rigorously contrasted.

To end up, we will quote again Riquelme (1998: 18) and his vision of the phenomenon of anglicisms which we absolutely share:

> The phenomenon of anglicisms is just the tip of the iceberg of a far deeper and more complex process: transculturation. It is a transforming process of changing daily routines; some of them are very intimate and others are rather collective and generalized. Our daily lives, thoughts and even feelings are transformed.

**Notes**

1. This and the rest of the quotations which appear in English from works originally written in Spanish have been translated by us.

2. The percentages used were as follows: 1.16 for 18-year-old speakers; 1.15 for 19 year olds; 1.18 for 20 year olds; 1.24 for 21 year olds; 1.29 for 22 year olds. Earlier works that took Labov's principles into consideration but had finally to increase percentages include Samper Padilla (1990) and Luján García (2003). For further information about the population of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and the informants that took part in this research, see González Cruz et al. (2009).

3. Strictly speaking, the term *crack* is a pseudoanglicism, since it is not used in English with the same meaning as in Spanish.

4. *Overbooking* is a particularly interesting term. It is used metaphorically in coloquial speech in Spanish, a tendency unknown in the English speaking countries.

5. This question was included in order to find out if the speakers were aware of the fact that they were using foreign terms. It could also help us to confirm if careless pronunciation of English words was considered to be important or not in young people's circles.

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