

## **'MY NAME'S MARIA', 'WATISYOURNEIM?' TRACKING SELF-IDENTIFICATION FORMULAIC SEQUENCES USED BY ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

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Formulaic sequences are defined as “ a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar” (Wray 2002:187). Regarding second languages (L2), research has shown their positive effect on learners' proficiency (Boers et al. 2006; Weinert 1995, Yorio 1989, Jiménez Catalán and Fernández Fontecha, forthcoming), quality of writing (Lee 2003) and oral fluency (Osman and Jusoff 2009, Lian Jie 2001). Based on the assumption that low proficiency learners tend to rely more on memory rather than on analytic processes, formulaic sequences are said to be more frequent in early stages of L2. However, empirical evidence is drawn on a reduced number of studies, most with children as second language learners in naturalistic contexts. There is hardly any research on the acquisition and use of formulaic sequences by learners of English as a foreign language in primary school contexts.

The present study explores the use of self-identification formulaic sequences in a longitudinal corpus of letters by English foreign language (EFL) learners throughout three years of Spanish primary education (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> form). The specific research questions are as follows: (1) what words and/or lexical phrases do primary school EFL learners use to introduce themselves? (2) Can we identify formulaic sequences? (3) If so, do formulaic sequences decrease as course/language/vocabulary level increases?

### References

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