

# Spanish teenage language and the COLAm-corpus

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## Abstract

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The results of the research done on Spanish teenage language with the COLAm corpus<sup>1</sup> of Bergen University is presented in this paper. The teenagers are trying to find their independence, separating themselves from the adults as well as the child generation a situation they share with their peers. The interaction with them is crucial and affects their language. The special characteristics of teenage talk like frequent discourse markers, anglicisms, intensifications and taboo words, not only create bonds within their members but work as identity markers.

**Keywords:** corpus, teenage language, discourse markers, intensifiers, hedges, vocatives, loanwords, taboo words.

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<sup>1</sup> The Corpus Oral de Lenguaje Adolescente would not exist without Knut Hofland at UniDigital's expertise and his collaboration with the transcribers of the COLA-corpus.

## 1. Teenage language and identity work

In this paper the main research issues on Madrid teenage talk, made possible thanks to the existence of the COLAm corpus of the University of Bergen, will be presented (Hofland, Jørgensen et al. 2005; Jørgensen 2008). The different features of teenage language can also be considered as group identity markers, since the peer-group is important for this age. In the teenage interaction peer-group identity, or in-group identity (Brown and Levinson 1987) as well as personal identity is built: "Identity-work refers to the process through which talk makes available to the participants and observers who people doing the talk must be." (Tracy 2002: 9). The group identity is reinforced by the use of the same language, which according to an expression stolen from Briz (2005), could be considered as a *tatoo*<sup>2</sup>. In the following we will have a closer look at the teenagers' frequent use of discourse markers, exaggerations and hyperbolic intensification, lexical creations, loanwords and taboo words.

Teenage language differs from the standard language, although it springs out from it. "The fact that teenage language in certain modalities of their communication differs strongly from standard language can not be denied."<sup>3</sup> (Lázaro Carreter [1980] 2000: 233). This language has some interesting features when used by young people aged 13 to 19 years in an informal situation. The particular Madrid communicative style, the *tatoo*, is found interesting, in spite of the fact that more than one linguist, -and I quote Lázaro Carreter above as an example of an extended opinion- has meant the contrary. One reason for the interest in teenage language might be that teenagers provoke linguistic changes, according to Eckert (1989: 52): "Adolescents are the linguistic movers and shakers [...] and as such, a prime source of information about linguistic change and the role of language in social practice". Not all innovations created among the teenagers make their way to the standard language producing a linguistic change. Lavandera (1977) warned about the fact that although a word can be used frequently, it is not necessarily a linguistic change, but there certainly exist some changes thanks to teenage talk. The teenagers' influence on linguistic change is underlined by such researchers as Andersen (2000), Briz (2003), Zimmermann (2002), Stenström (1998) and Jørgensen (2011).

With the exceptions of Rodríguez (2002), Zimmermann (1996), Briz (2003), Stenström and Jørgensen (2009), Spanish teenage language has not been studied, because it is considered sloppy and full of unnecessary words. Briz (2003) says: "teenagers do not try to hide or seek to be cryptic, they only want to be different, they want to break rules, especially those of the social group that surrounds them. (Author's translation)."<sup>4</sup> Briz (2003) also maintains that the impact of teenagers in the history of language could be more noticeable in the future, thanks to their presence in means of communications/media and certain literary products. "We are able to foresee the changes that our language may undergo in the future, since teenagers work like filters." (2003: 148-150). Teenagers are models and ideals for the rest of the society, and have prestige. A logical consequence is what Zimmermann says: "there are each time more adults that pretend to seem younger by using expressions from the teenage language. (Author's translation)"<sup>5</sup>.

The aim of this paper, which has four parts, is presented together with the motives for analysing oral teenage language in the first part (1). In the second (2) the theory used along with the concepts and the COLAm-corpus are exposed. In the third part (3) we will have a look at the

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<sup>2</sup> El lenguaje juvenil se puede considerar como un *tatuaje*

<sup>3</sup> "No puede negarse la evidencia de que el habla de los jóvenes, en ciertas modalidades de la comunicación contrasta vivamente con la de los mayores"

<sup>4</sup> "El joven no intenta ser oscuro, no intenta esconderse, es decir, no tiene un fin críptico, solo quiere ser diferente, quiere romper con reglas, quiere romper con las reglas del grupo social del que se rodea".

<sup>5</sup> "[...] hay cada vez más adultos que pretenden 'rejuvenecerse' a través del uso de expresiones tomadas del lenguaje juvenil".

five most salient features of the studies of Spanish teenage language that have taken place at the University of Bergen. The conclusions form section four (4).

## 2. COLA: Corpus Oral de Lenguaje Adolescente

Briz (2003) agrees with Zimmermann (2002: 141) who insists that the study of teenage language should be based on the real interaction: “The point of departure for its study should be the communicative act, the conversation among the teenagers: the elements of their speech should not be taken separately or in an isolated way”<sup>6</sup>. This is what the Corpus Oral de Lenguaje Adolescente Madrid, the COLAm-corpus has made possible: the observation of the teenage language from real interaction ([www.colam.org](http://www.colam.org)). The COLA-corpus has a strategic point of departure, we record the teenagers talking with their friends, since that is when we get the most natural and analyzable data. Talk about any issue like parents, teachers, love relations, drinking, are treated as if they were questions of paramount importance, and are frequent among our Madrid youngster (Hofland, Jørgensen et al. 2005; Jørgensen 2008).

The Madrid corpus, COLAm, constitutes the corpora from Buenos Aires, COLAba, and Santiago de Chile, COLAs, in the COLA-project. The reason for choosing the country capitals for the corpus building is due to the prestige of the capitals’ language, which has an influence on the rest of the country’s way of speaking (Jørgensen and Drange 2012).

Corpus Linguistics, a line of work more and more well considered among linguists, is characterized by an empirical methodology, and makes its investigations on large collections of natural data called *corpora*. The aspect mentioned above, in addition to what Biber says: “empirical investigation of corpora can shed light on previously intractable research questions in linguistics” (2006: ix) fully justifies the empirical corpus based inductive methodology. The COLA-corpus offers many advantages for the study of language in use: we analyse the mentioned aspects of oral language among teenagers by looking at real examples gathered in order to see what really happens among them. As Svartvik points out (1992: 8), corpora provide information about the language which one otherwise would not have, in addition to the fact that: “[...] they can be used to study the use of language in different text types; the results are more objective and the research can be recopilated”.

The COLAm-corpus which currently consists of roughly 500,000 words, is large enough to reflect the Madrid teenagers’ speech habits. The corpus has samples of conversations held among teenagers made accessible to investigation through computational programs. The ways of recollecting the data, the dimensions, the organisation and design of the COLA-corpus lets us study the functions of the different elements of Spanish Teenage Talk to which we can access through special search engines. One of the advantages of this corpus is that it presents the speakers’ voices along with the transcribed speech, which offers the researcher the opportunity to capture the speakers’ different moods and expressions of emotions that enable the interpretation of the utterances and, through the intonation, account for other aspects as well (Hofland, Jørgensen et al. 2005)<sup>7</sup>.

The COLAm corpus is part of the COLA project and was recorded in Madrid in 2003-2007 by school recruits, who volunteered to record their conversations with their friends of the same age and a similar social background for three or four days. The speakers, including the recruits, were boys and girls, aged from 13 to 19 from working-, middle-, and upper-class schools in Madrid areas. The teenage conversations are recorded in SONY (MZN10) recorders, and the files

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<sup>6</sup> “La base de partida para su estudio ha de ser el acto comunicativo, la conversación de o entre jóvenes: no pueden tomarse los elementos por separado o de manera aislada [...]”

<sup>7</sup> I extend my gratitude to the coordinator of the transcriptions of the COLA corpus during 10 years, Esperanza Eguía Padilla.

have been passed onto CD for transcriptions by the program Transcriber<sup>8</sup>. The variables that have been registered are age, gender and the teenager's social class. The teenagers are treated anonymously, avoiding the personal identifications of the recruits. The recordings are an efficient way of recording informal conversations, because the 'observer's paradox is avoided: "Find out how the people speak when they are not being observed; when it is only through the observation one could get to know it". (Labov 1994)

In this paper the term *utterance* is used to refer to the linguistic units analysed in teenage language. An utterance can consist of any element, from a pause filler to a long utterance (Bañon 1993; Tracy 2002).

The frequency of the different elements analysed is calculated by using the number of word tokens per 1000 words (ptw) as a unit. The examples are followed by the codified name of the city, the school and age. In the example MAMTE2G01, MA means Madrid, MT is acronym of the name of the school, E2 means the class level, G/J01 gender of speaker, G is a boy and J is a girl, the number refers to the number of the turn.

### 3. The COLAm perspective: Aspects of Madrid teenage language

In this chapter we will go through some of the main feature of Madrid teenage language, based on works written based on the COLA-corpus. The features that have caught the researchers attention we call *tatoo*, using a metaphor from the teenage world: the use of discourse markers, maximalization, hedging, use of vocatives, creation of new words and taboo words.

#### 3.1 Discourse markers in Madrid teenage talk

A discourse marker is understood here as an element which does not have a syntactic function in the sentence or utterance, but several functions at the interpersonal, interactional level: clarify and structure the message, regulate the contact with the hearer, hedge or intensify the message, take, keep or end the turn etc. According to Martín Zorraquino and Portolés Lázaro (1999), discourse markers are invariable discourse units that do not have a syntactic function in the structure and that "[...] have a role that coincides with the discourse: to guide -in accordance with its different morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties- the inferences that take place in the communication."<sup>9</sup> As Stenström (2007) puts it, discourse markers are [...] "very handy for the speakers involved in the conversation, since they work both on the discourse strategic level, both as an organizer of the turn and a planning device and on the interactional level, keeping contact with and making the listener more involved."

Teenage talk has been criticized for being inarticulate and full of slang and taboo words and not least for being peppered with unnecessary smallwords (discourse markers/vocatives), like, for instance, *o sea, como, ¿sabes? tío/a, tronco/a* (Sánchez Olsen 2006). These "unnecessary" small words are often what irritate speakers of normative standard language, who thinks they should be eradicated from their speech or at least avoided. There is with no doubt a certain abuse of discourse markers among Madrid teenagers, which can be illustrated by the following example, expressed by Mar, a fifteen year old girl, when talking to a friend about her father's reactions:

1. Mar: mi padre tenía ayer el cable cruzado, *tía*, y yo *qué sé*, le dijo eso y ya *pues nada y nada* esta mañana me dice mi padre *bueno* entonces que vas a hacer esta tarde, *en*

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<sup>8</sup> Signs used in the transcriptions: . = One second's pause, .. = Two second's pause, ... = Three second's pause, <risas/> = laughter, <F> = loud speech, [utterance] y [utterance] = overlap, % = not finished word (XXX) = not understandable/ = rising intonation, \ = descending intonation (música) = background music.

<sup>9</sup> "[...] poseen un cometido coincidente en el discurso: el de guiar -de acuerdo con sus distintas propiedades morfosintácticas, semánticas y pragmáticas- las inferencias que se realizan en la comunicación"

*plan bien, ¿sabes? y yo no sé entonces, antes de bajarme del coche me ha dicho bueno luego hablamos y tal sabes o sea como que yo creo que sí y que no salga me cago en la puta ¿sabes?* (MAORE3J01)

my father had his “cables crossed”, and who knows, I told him that and then like whatever this morning my father says well what are you going to do tonight like ok, you know? And I don’t know, then after getting out of the car he told me well later we have to talk and so on you know, like I don’t know and I think that yes that I should not go out, and, fuck him, you know?

The use of discourse markers in teenager’s informal speech might seem anarchic at times. Nevertheless each one of them has a specific function, like keeping or taking the turn, maintaining the communication, as well as a certain dramatic effect (*el cable cruzado, me cago en la puta*). Discourse markers like *yo qué sé, pues nada, y nada, y como que* (Jørgensen and Aarli 2008) do not have any lexical meaning and do not convey any information, and together with the vocatives, control the hearer’s commitment, response and underlines the message.

The excessive use of discourse markers, taboo words, loanwords, etc. constitutes the most important features that teenage language is known and criticised for. As Rodríguez (2002: 23) puts it, “[...] the teenagers are the ones who use most fillers and have a poorer language (less adjectives and more verbs) and as such a poorer vocabulary.”<sup>10</sup> This would lead the teenagers to take the turn many times without knowing what to say, but with the intention of maintaining the contact as Herrero (2002: 89) says:

[...] the constant presence of phatic appellative elements in the utterances, or between them to mark the interlocutive relation and to mark that it is maintained (tío, tronco, oye, mira, yo te voy a decir, ¿entiendes? ¿tú te imaginas?, figúrate tú, etc.) to call upon the hearer to make him/her nuance, verify, confirm or explain previous utterances (¿eh?, ¿verdad?, ¿no?, ¿crees?, ¿no te parece?, etc.)

This can be explained by the teenagers insecurity and lack of linguistic competence, but another reason is that these are group identity markers.

The works of (Jørgensen 2008), (Jørgensen and Stenström 2009) (Stenström and Jørgensen 2009), (Stenström 2009) have remedied the scarce attention given to the Spanish teenager’s use of discourse markers. According to Martín Zorraquino y Portolés Lázaro (1999: 4191) the most frequent discourse markers in Spanish are: *bueno, bien, eh, este, ya y sí, hombre, etc.*, but they do not mention *tío/a ni tronco/tronca, colega, como, en plan*, etc., which are specific markers for teenage language.

### 3.2 Conversational strategies: intensification and hedging in the Madrid teenage talk

Teenagers are not known for their capacity to nuance their utterances. In the teenager’s world everything is black or white, while the grey shades are seldom considered. According to Briz (2003: 146) the hyperbole and maximalization is notorious among them. When they use the strategies they find useful to achieve their goals, they will draw heavily on them, especially when it comes to the intensification. The intensification as well as the hedging are verbal tactics that the speaker can use to persuade the hearer and get agreement or acceptance.

The intensification is a strategy expressed by the speaker to influence the hearer and show her intention. The only monographical work on intensification in Spanish is Albelda

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<sup>10</sup> “[...] son los jóvenes los que exhiben un mayor empleo de muletillas y un estilo verbal menos cualitativo (menos adjetivos y más verbos) y, por tanto, más pobre en vocabulario” Rodríguez, F. (2002). *El lenguaje de los jóvenes*. Barcelona, Ariel.

(2007), but there are several articles on the subject (Briz 2006; Briz 2007). Albelda (2007: 17) claims it is an “argumentative mechanism oriented towards the regulation of the conversation.”<sup>11</sup> In Briz’ (2003) opinion the predominant features of teenage language are those of the oral informal language, being the difference “the excessive use of some of them, like, for instance, the intensification.”<sup>12</sup> As Briz ( 2003: 146) points out:

The maximalisation is a strategic means in the informal conversation, especially in the interaction of the younger ones; some insults turn nice, nothing is taboo, on the contrary, the discourse is clearly dysphemistic; swear words stop being bad words, or at least go on unnoticed among the speakers to show agreement, disagreement, although these might sometimes be fictitious or present a ludic function.”<sup>13</sup>

Among teenagers intensification as a pragmatic strategic mechanism is used more often than hedging (Jørgensen 2009).

There is a difference between what is decodified as cooperative and polite in general, and what is understood as such in a certain culture, or in a social in-group (Brown and Levinson 1987) or in a specific communicative situation (Briz 2003: 150). For instance, the scatological expression *que te cagas* used in a neutral setting, when Lola is talking about the heat, which no doubt, is just intense, not unpolite:

2. Lola: había ahí en la rotonda a pleno sol un calor *que te cagas* (MAORE2J02)

there was in the square so much sun so hot there that you could shit yourself

Other intensifying strategies are used to color the utterance by means of an exaggeration in order to get the interest for the negotiation, like in Sara's exaggerated description of her physical attributes in example 3:

3. Sara: vale, pero el culo justamente que lo tengo *como una mesa camilla*  
ok, but it is just my ass that is like a table  
Olga: ¿qué dices, tía?  
what are you saying?  
Sara: es *como un pueblo* mi culo, tía (MAORE2J01)  
it’s like a village my ass

As a strategic resource, the maximalization is often used in the conversations among teenagers; without letting it interfere with their interpersonal relations. It should not be surprising therefore to find a high frequency of taboo words in the COLAm corpus, like for instance the ones uttered in example 4. by Sara in order to underline her message, more than insult her friend:

4. Sara: *joder es que eres gilipollas, vete a la mierda*  
fuck, you are stupid, go to hell

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<sup>11</sup> “Un mecanismo argumentativo orientado a regular la conversación.”

<sup>12</sup> “La diferencia radica en el carácter más marcado de algunos de ellos, como por ejemplo el de la intensificación”, “la hipérbola es continua en el lenguaje juvenil”

<sup>13</sup> “La maximización es un recurso estratégico en la conversación coloquial y más aún en la interacción entre jóvenes; algunos insultos se tornan cariñosos, nada es tabú, al contrario, el discurso es claramente disfemístico; la palabra malsonante deja de serlo o, al menos, pasa desapercibida para los interlocutores, para mostrar acuerdos, desacuerdos, aunque estos últimos sean muchas veces fingidos o presenten una función lúdica.” (Briz 2003: 146)

According to Caja (2009: 115) who studied the intensification in the Madrid COLA-corpus, COLAm, these intensifiers are pragmatically very efficient as they work as strategic communicative devices as well. Teenagers try to catch the hearer's attention by not agreeing, and they use intensifiers profusely: "The teenagers exaggerate and do not spare any details when they inform about something be it high spirits, be it low spirits, and they show this clearly with their linguistic creativity."<sup>14</sup>

Briz (2002: 19) defines hedging as "a linguistic strategic operation of minimizing what has been said and the point of view, thus connected with the argumentative activity and the negotiation of agreement."<sup>15</sup> According to him, the hedges are not always a reflection of politeness, because they can also "tone down, mitigate and soothen the illocutive strength, repair and hide the real intention<sup>16</sup>." On the other hand, these linguistic means do normally search for agreement, since they are specific values in relation to the use of hedges, the linguistic expression of such an activity, only on rare occasions are manifestations of a social function, the face, and concretely the polite face<sup>17</sup>." In fact, linguistically the hedging means to minimise the strength of what has been said. In the following example 5., Anna talks about the relation with her mother. She seems to find herself in a conflict of interests and mitigates what could be perceived as a criticism of her mother:

5. Ana: pues yo cuando me pongo muy nerviosaa, en serio, cuando me peleo con mamá o... cuando *en plan* me saca de mis casillas y me pongo *en plan* que nos empezamos a pelear *en plan*... que nos peleamos (MAORE2J01)

Ana: but when I get nervous, seriously, when I fight with my mom or... when like she makes me lose it and I  
get like we start to fight like... yeah, like well we fight

The social purpose and the keeping of the face among adolescents affects above all the own face, more than the other's face (Jørgensen 2009). The studies of teenage language have focused above all on the semantic-pragmatic aspects of the hedging, like for instance, *en plan* and *como* in teenage language (Holmvik 2011, Jørgensen 2009, Jørgensen & Stenström 2009, Nord 2006). The discourse marker *en plan* works at an interactional level of the utterance. Stenström (2007: 10). This is also the case with *como*, when it is used as a discourse marker among two Madrid teenagers in example 6:

6. Mar: ¿preguntaste a Llano?  
did you ask Llano?  
Luz: bueno, yo  
well, I  
Mar: es *como* más fashion  
he is like more fashion

The use of *como* can be a strategy of linguistic "distance" as well as a strategy of social approach (Jørgensen and Stenström 2009). *Como* has a mitigating effect on the insult *lerda* (*dumb*) uttered by one friend to another criticising a specific behaviour in example 7:

<sup>14</sup> "Los jóvenes todo lo exageran; no ahorran ningún detalle cuando desean informar, bien sea para mostrar euforia como para mostrar que su estado de ánimo está bajo, y dan clara muestra de ello con su gran creatividad lingüística."

<sup>15</sup> "Una operación lingüística estratégica de minimización de lo dicho y del punto de vista, así pues, vinculada a la actividad argumentativa y de negociación del acuerdo."

<sup>16</sup> "[...] quitar relieve, mitigar, suavizar, restar fuerza elocutiva, reparar, esconder la verdadera intención."

<sup>17</sup> "Son valores más concretos unidos al empleo del atenuante, la forma lingüística de expresión de dicha actividad, solo en ocasiones instrumento o manifestación de una función social, la imagen, y en concreto a veces de la imagen cortés."

7. Mar: ¿eres medio lerda, pero sin el eres *como* lerda, pero sin el como! (MAORE2J2)  
you are half dumb but without the half

The discourse marker *como* can also work as an exemplifier. In the example 8, *como* introduces the amount used in the exemplification of a certain sum:

8. Ana: me voy a gastar el triple = sería como en plan pagarte = imagínate pagar *como* ciento cincuenta ciento  
I'm going to spend three times it would be like paying you imagine paying you like a hundred and fifty hundred

Comparing the English *like* and the Spanish *como* Jørgensen and Stenström (2009) found that when *como* modifies a quantity it works as an approximative marker (Jucker and Ziv 1998: 165). In example 9, we have an example where the numbers of issues in the exam Ana has to undergo are mentioned just approximately, probably exaggerating:

9. Juana: o sea, porque esta evaluación era continua y me entraba todo en plan *como* veinte temas, o sea, no me te lo juro te lo juro, es que no me estudié nada ni una literatura y, además, llegaba al recreo y todo el mundo repasando y a mí me daba tanta pereza, tía (MAORE J01).

well because in this term the exams have been continuous and all the issues like about twenty, I mean I I don't swear, I swear I did not study anything I did not study one literature, and besides, I got to the recreation and everybody was looking over I was too lazy to do it

When *como* is used as a filler to avoid silence, to fill pauses, reformulate or repair moves, it can work as a stalker or as a planifier. The marker *como* does not only function as a hedge, but as a stalker, a help in our struggle to find the right words (Coates 1996; Jørgensen and Stenström 2009). These findings were corroborated by Holmvik's (2011) more extensive research on the Madrid teenagers' use of *como*.

### 3.3 Vocatives in Madrid teenage talk

The vocatives express the relation between the speaker and the hearer according to the parameters of distance/proximity, respect/confidence, power/solidarity, formality/informality. (Calsamiglia Blancafort and Tusón Valls 2001: 141). According to Cuenca (2004) the conversation is the most suitable area to analyse the vocative: the presence of the hearer and that the vocatives increase in a face to face interaction. The teenagers use the vocatives to call each other, to get the other's attention and to ensure that they are being listened to<sup>18</sup> (Stenström and Jørgensen 2008; Jørgensen 2010). The vocatives, generally considered as address forms, can also be considered discourse markers, because like Dini says (1996: 57): "thanks to their marker and focus function the vocatives could be counted among the markers."<sup>19</sup>

The use of vocatives in Spanish teenage talk from Madrid is more frequent than in standard language because of the phatic communion established among them and maintained through the use of vocatives is very significant for them (Herrero 2002). They are of paramount importance in teenage language, and have been observed by, for instance, Stenström & Jørgensen (2008a, 2008b), Gelbes & Estrada (2003), Jørgensen (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012), Sánchez Corrales (2006) and Rigatuso (2006; 2007).

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<sup>18</sup> Boyero Rodríguez (2002: 237) calls them "Marcadores tipo fático nominal vocativo" in her work.

<sup>19</sup> "El vocativo, gracias a su función marcadora y de enfoque, puede llegar a ser incluido entre los marcadores pragmáticos".



The most frequent vocatives among the Madrid teenagers are: *tía/o*, *tronca/o*, *chavala/a* y *colega*. (Jørgensen 2008; Stenström and Jørgensen 2008; Jørgensen and Martínez 2009). Although *tío/a* is used among teenagers, it is also used among friends, family, colleagues, professionals<sup>20</sup> (Alonso-Cortés 1999).

10. o sea, me viene llorando a mi casa, *tronco* y ¿qué busca? ¿qué pretende? ¿qué quiere de mi, *tronco*? (MAMTE2J02)  
I mean he comes home to me crying, ..., and what is he looking for what does he want from me?
11. *tía*, es que eres una borde, *tía*, es que te pasas mazo, *tía* (MALCE3J06)  
..., but you are obnoxious..., you overdo it a lot

According to Stenström & Jørgensen (2008) there are more vocatives in Spanish teenage language than in the English, and in the Norwegian vocatives appear seldom and differ from the Spanish and English in form and frequency (Jørgensen 2010). The vocatives in the Spanish language are used as a phatic appellative element. It has the proper vocative function in initial position and the other discourse marker functions in medial and final position, in order to maintain and enhance the social contact (Leech 1999; Jørgensen 2008; Jørgensen and Martínez 2009).

### 3.4 Lexical creations and anglicisms

The teenage lexicon is a considerable field to look into when it comes to new words. Some authors insist on their innovative aspects, holding that (Catalá Torres 2002: 130): “it is through teenage jargón that many elements, that originally are a magnificent reflection of our mental lexicon to continuously expand old words and form new ones, make their way into the colloquial language”<sup>21</sup>. Languages grow steadily with the creation of new lexical terms and linguistic expressions, and many of the words that come into the standard language have originated in the teenage language. Teenage language has a special lexicon, that among teenagers is held as a tool that unifies the group, at the same time as it excludes those who do not master their “code”, the specific teenage expressions (Martínez López 2009).

The mechanisms that Casado Velarde (2002) presented as typical for the teenage language in the eighties still holds for today’s teenage language in Madrid. Word changes, suffixes on *-ada* and *-azo*, like in *triunfada*, *empachada*, *feada*, *guapada*, *incordio*, *puritazo*, *bolsazo*, *guarrazo*, and prefixes like *súper* y *mega*. This has not been studied among the researchers in the COLA-group yet, where the efforts have been concentrated on the processes of the anglicisms.

The English language is international and dominant. Its influence on vernacular languages is discussed not only in Spain, but in Latin America, where English is associated with technological innovations and music, and has a strong symbolic value. According to Chesire “it is (...) is used so extensively throughout the world now that it can serve as an ‘open reservoir’ for symbolic meanings” (2002). The colloquial register is often forgotten when it comes to the influence of English words, although many of the anglicisms in Spanish spring out from teenage language (Gómez Capuz, 2004a). The research on anglicisms in teenage language is a particularly relevant issue because of the ongoing globalisation. According to Romaine (1996), the probability of linguistic changes through anglicisms is high, since the globalisation’s communication networks lead young people to get in touch, defying the cultural and

<sup>20</sup> Aunque *tío/a* se usa habitualmente en el lenguaje juvenil es usado también entre amigos, familiares, colegas, profesionales.

<sup>21</sup> “A través de la jerga juvenil, penetran en el habla coloquial elementos que, en su origen, son un magnífico reflejo de los mecanismos de que dispone nuestro léxico mental para extender continuamente viejas palabras y acuñar otras nuevas.”

geographical limits. According to her, the teenagers have created a multicultural identity which leads to linguistic changes based on anglicisms (Kotsinas, Stenström et al. 2000).

The position of teenage language is to be considered in the linguistic changes of a language. "There are also borrowings with a more colloquial and unconventional flavour for many fields, most frequently found in magazines and in youth language, from where they may seep into the general language" (Rodríguez 1999). In Bua's (2006) work on anglicisms in the Madrid teenage language one of the frequent anglicisms is *flipado*, derived from *flipar*, from the English verb *to flip*. It's used by the teenagers as an adjective meaning 'enthusiastic' or 'mad'.

12. Juan   ayer se quedó chaval *flipado* porque están mazo de guapos son dos mensajes tronco que se los escribí pero no se los he mandado (MALCE2G01)  
He got all impressed yesterday because they are most beautiful my messages man I wrote them to her but I haven't sent them

In several conversations we find the adjective *flipante*, meaning 'great':

13. Mar: no pero por eso tener lo típico tener lo típico yo tenía esas sandalias plateadas que son *flipantes*.  
no but because of that having the typical things have the typical I had those silver sandals that were gorgeous  
Luzma: eran tenían un taconazo *flipante* pero *flipante*. (MAORE1J2)  
They were they had amazing really amazing heels

Nevertheless, the teenagers also use derivations from anglicisms changing their meaning or grammatical category. This fact is in accordance with the idea of teenage language being creative, expressive and a point of departure for innovations and linguistic changes. The following anglicisms are found in the COLAm corpus:

14. Juan:   que es un thirty-one (MASHE1G02)  
it is a thirty one
15. José:   damos un paseo/ vamos *by walking* (MOE1J2)  
lets go by walking
16. Any:   para pero qué te crees *popstar* o qué/ (MALCE2J02)  
stop it do you think you are a popstar or something?

Although anglicisms exist in teenage language, there are not so many that we need to worry about the future of the Spanish language, a conclusion which is in accordance with Drange (2009) and Bua (2006). The youngsters from Madrid use above all anglicisms that have been imported along with the thing they mean. Bua (2006) also shows that when using anglicisms, the teenagers will change part of the word with a Spanish translation, a point of view which goes along with Gómez Capuz et al.'s (1997) idea about anglicisms not being so frequent in Spanish informal colloquial speech.

### 3.5 Taboo words in Madrid teenage language

Compared to the North European languages' taboo words, which would be more scatological, eighty per cent of the taboo words in the COLAm corpus belong to the sexual interdiction (Navdal 2007). There is one word found from the magic religious interdiction, namely, *hostia*, (host), while the scatological sphere has four, and the social only one. Nevertheless, taking a closer look on the expressions we see that is difficult to make an exact observation, since an expression like *me cago en tu puta madre*, has words from all three fields: sexual interdiction, the scatological and the social.

Following Navdal (2007), the taboo words have many different meanings. Expressions like *tardar un pedo* (“last a fart”, be quick), *partirse la polla* (break ones dick, laugh), *tocarse la polla* (“touch one’s dick”, don’t bother), *sudar la polla* (“sweat one’s dick”, don’t bother) y *pasárselo teta* (“have it tit”, have great fun).

There are also taboo words with different functions in teenage language (Navdal 2007) like: interjections *¡Joder!*, (*Fuck*) *¡Cojones!* (*Bollocks*), *¡Por gilipollas!*, *¡Una polla!* (*A dick*), interrogations *¿Dónde/qué coño?* (*Where/What the hell?*)

17. Pablo: voy a ver si mi padre de una puta vez me deja hacerme el puto tatuaje o qué coño pasa

It is also used as intensifier *los putos cojones*; (*the fucking bollocks*) *la puta maleta* (the fucking suitcase), negation (*una polla, like hell it will*)<sup>22</sup>, adjectives *follada*, (*fucking, fucked*), derogatory denominatives *putilla, gilipollas* (*wimp, dickhead*). The taboo words act as phatic vocatives as well. For instance, *hijo/a de puta* (*son of a bitch*), *gilipollas*, (*dickhead*), *cabrón* (*motherfucker*) have a clear phatic function, underlined by Stenström y Jørgensen (2008; 2008), Jørgensen (2010, 2011) and Zimmermann (2002), who unanimously claim that teenagers use insulting terms with no face threatening intentions, but as a positive politeness in-group device (Brown & Levinson 1987).

18. Marta: que *cabrón* no me has dejado ver <risa/>

19. David: las aceitunas me cago en dios (XXX) y tú diciendo que estaban buenas, *cabrón*

The maintaining and strengthening of the social relationship is a fundamental among teenagers and the selection of taboo words for this purpose is emblematic. As several conversations from the COLA-corpus show, there is laughter before and after the taboo words and the interaction seems utterly friendly. These taboo-words are not face threatening, and as such they do not inflict negatively on the phatic communion established among the speakers. On the contrary, the adolescents use taboo words in a phatic way, to show interest for the group member’s utterances. *Joder* (*fuck*) *hostia* (*my God*) are words where this function is clear.

20. Pablo: tienes como coca cola en la cara  
 Andrea: coca cola en la cara ¡joder! <risas/>  
 Andrea: tú tienes como escupitajos en la cara  
 Pablo: y tú la *hostia*  
 Andrea: <risas/> no  
 Pablo: venga

#### 4. Final discussion and future investigations

Describing teenage language is not always an easy task. The discourse markers used in teenage language have more than one function (Jørgensen and Martínez 2007; Stenström and Jørgensen 2008; Jørgensen and Stenström 2009), and the teenagers use them more frequently than standard speakers do (Jørgensen & Martínez 2007). The well known polyfunctionality of the discourse markers, pointed out by several reseachers (Brinton 1996; Martín Zorraquino and Montolío Durán 1998; Pons 2000; Fischer 2006). If this is notorious in standard language, it is blatant in teenage talk, where the less law-abiding teenagers have time to play with the expressions and experiment with the language (Jørgensen 2008; Jørgensen 2009). The ongoing readjustment and reformulation, due to the spontaneousness inherent to this kind of talk (Ochs and Schieffelin 1979; Stenström and Jørgensen 2011), together with the need to control by

<sup>22</sup> With the correct intonation for a negation.

means of vocatives and pragmatic markers if the listener is following the speaker or not, do not make it easy to interpret the exact functions of the many discourse markers.

In spite of these difficulties, we have seen that the Madrid teenage language differs from the Spanish standard language, and that the communicative style is special as well (Jørgensen 2011). Thanks to the repetition of the discourse markers (Jørgensen and Martínez 2007; Sánchez Olsen 2007), the intensification (Caja 2009), the hedging (Nord 2006; Jørgensen 2009; Holmvik 2011), the special vocatives (Jørgensen 2008; Jørgensen and Martínez 2009), anglicisms (Bua 2006), taboo-words (Navdal 2007) we can speak about the existence of a linguistic *tatoo*.

The interesting thing about corpora is that not only can they predict the future language's loanwords, taboo words and new verbs, but the COLA corpus could be an important tool for the future, by which researchers could see what the former oral generation's language was like, and carry out research on the differences.

The COLAm corpus has a great utility in teaching Spanish as L2 since it presents an up-to-date ways of talking (Drange 2009; Drange 2009). Together with the other teenage language corpora like COLT and UNO, which came to the existence thanks to Hofland's expertise, there are created excellent possibilities for contrastive analysis among different Spanish varieties as well as between English, Spanish, Norwegian teenage talk (Stenström and Jørgensen 2011). Last but not least, these corpora could be an useful tool for translating teenage talk in films.

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