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Dialogic literary gatherings in EFL: Fostering quality language learning through dialogic interaction

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Abstract | Dialogic literary gatherings (DLGs) are inclusive dialogic whole-class interaction activities that have proven to contribute to improving students' academic achievement, as well as inclusion and social cohesion, and which can be transferred to any context (Flecha & INCLUD-ED, 2015). By stressing oral interaction as a means to learning and as learning itself, this short study investigates if the implementation of DLGs in a lower secondary EFL classroom in Portugal fosters the emergence of learning opportunities for quality language learning. A classroom observation method was applied, with data being analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. Results show that DLGs provide a number of varied learning opportunities which seem to increase with regular exposure to DLGs, and when a student plays the role of moderator. Further investigation is required on the impact of implementing DLGs in the EFL classroom.

Keywords | *inclusive dialogic learning, dialogic literary gatherings, oral interaction, learning opportunities*

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1 Introduction

Dialogic literary gatherings (Flecha & INCLUD-ED, 2015) are whole-class teacher-or student-moderated interaction activities that contribute to improving students' academic success and overcoming educational and social exclusion. They are one of six successful educational actions (SEAs) that fulfil the double goal of promoting effective learning for all and social cohesion in any educational context, and were identified through a large-scale EU-funded research project called *INCLUD-ED: Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education*, which investigated the educational strategies that could help Europeans overcome inequalities and promote social cohesion.

DLGs have been implemented in classrooms, from preschool to higher education, as well as in non-formal educational settings in several European and Latin American countries. They have proven to impact students' learning, development, and inclusion in general, and may be a useful practice to help tackle two prevalent EFL-related problems: a monologic and structural teaching approach, and little language exposure. However, considering that in an EFL setting the target language is both the medium and the content of learning, specific research in this context is needed. This short study aims to evaluate if and to what extent implementing DLGs in the context of a lower secondary state school EFL classroom contributes to developing students' linguistic learning, i.e. it is expected to respond to the following research question:

- Does the implementation of DLGs in the lower secondary EFL classroom generate opportunities for quality language learning?

2 Literature Review

This section is dedicated to discussing the concept of inclusive dialogic learning, as well as describing DLGs, one of six identified successful educational actions within the inclusive dialogic approach to learning (Flecha & INCLUD-ED, 2015). Furthermore, and despite the lack of research in the EFL context, studies on the implementation of DLGs in an L2 setting are presented. Next, a short reflection

about existing research on language learning through peer interaction is made, and finally the concept of quality language learning and the definition of learning opportunities within it are discussed.

2.1 Inclusive Dialogic Learning

The dialogic learning approach (Aubert et al., 2016) draws on the work of scholars in the field of the social sciences, who have stressed the communicative and dialogic character of our society (Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky, 1987), and who believe that social change, human development and learning occur dialogically (Aubert & Soler, 2007). In education, effective learning occurs when students question the ideas and opinions of others, such as their peers and their teachers (Freire, 2005; Reznitskaya et al., 2009). Through this process, students and their teachers learn together (Freire, 2005) by negotiating and co-constructing knowledge. Bakhtin (1981) states that meaning arises through dialogue at whatever level it takes place, as everything we say or think is a dialogical social event. Hence, interaction and communication are central in dialogic learning, in which dialogue is not a mere genre of discourse or an instructional technique. Drawing on what Matusov calls strong dialogism (2009), dialogue is relational and enables reflectional knowledge and knowing even about one's own knowledge. It is a dialogue among equals, where everyone has the freedom to speak their mind, to take part in all the stages of the learning process and to make decisions, i.e. it is a social meaning-making process.

As to inclusion in education, it occurs when all students share a common activity, and understand its meaning and purpose (Dewey, 2001). Reflection takes place *in dialogue with*, not just *explaining to*, everyone. Being aware that the teacher does not know or control everything, but takes part in learning with them, students feel they have a say. They know their opinion matters and feel free to share their ideas, their own perspective of the subject being learnt, of the world, and of life (Freire, 2005). An inclusive classroom is then a context that empowers students, validates their life experiences and cultural background, and scaffolds their learning.

The INCLUD-ED research project identified six inclusive dialogic learning practices, also known as successful educational actions (SEAs), which are

practices that contribute both to students' academic success and to social cohesion, and can be transferred to any type of socioeconomic or cultural context, with Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLGs) being one of them (Flecha & INCLUD-ED, 2015). All SEAs follow the concept of *dialogic learning* and its seven principles, as defined by Flecha (2000). These actions and principles have been implemented in over 9000 schools in 14 European and Latin American countries, which take part in the *Schools as Learning Communities* (SLC) project (Comunidades de Aprendizaje, n.d.). The SLC network also includes universities, governments, and other private and public organisations, which, together, aim at social and educational transformation of whole educational communities, through egalitarian dialogue and evidence-based learning.

The SEAs have proved to contribute to improving academic achievement for all students, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, students belonging to cultural minority groups, and students with special needs, while also enhancing their inclusion at school and in society (Navarro-Mateu et al., 2021). This short project will focus on studying the implementation of one of those SEAs, dialogic literary gatherings (DLGs), in the lower secondary EFL classroom, and its effects on language learning.

2.2 Dialogic Literary Gatherings

DLGs are teacher or peer mediated whole class peer-interaction activities organised around the discussion of the reading of the classics of world literature, the focus of which is on the co-creation of meaning among peers. Evidence gathered through a large scale research project called INCLUD-ED (Universitat de Barcelona, 2010) revealed that the regular implementation of DLGs in educational contexts improves reading and overall language skills, and offers students the opportunity to reflect on profound topics related to life that do not often emerge in regular classroom interaction, but benefit social relationships inside and outside the classroom and school (Flecha & INCLUD-ED, 2015).

DLGs' fundament is *dialogic reading* (Soler-Gallart, 2001), a way of understanding reading in which texts are interpreted between participants, whether they are regular readers or not. The first experiences, emotions or

meanings that arise from reading are objects of dialogue and collective reflection, which goes further than only understanding the *meaning* of the text. The individual experience of reading becomes an intersubjective experience, and the incorporation of different voices, experiences and cultures generates understanding that goes beyond what can be achieved individually. In education at large, dialogic reading practices such as DLGs increase vocabulary, expand reading comprehension, improve oral and written expression, develop critical thinking and argumentation skills, and produce important transformation in overcoming inequalities.

DLGs are opportunities for *egalitarian dialogue* to take place in the classroom, as they allow the pupils and the teacher, a parent or any other member of the local community, to discuss ideas about the reading of a classic of literature, regardless of the position of power of the person who speaks. Ideas are to be listened to and valued by everyone according to their validity, not the status of the person who is sharing them (Flecha, 2000). So, DLGs contribute to a classroom environment in which students feel more confident to communicate with each other and the teacher, who, when a well trained and experienced DLG facilitator, feels an equal, and whose role is not to teach or provide evaluative feedback, but to communicate authentically.

Research has been conducted both on the social and academic impacts of DLGs (García-Carrión et al., 2020; López de Aguileta, 2019). However, studies on the implementation of DLGs in L2 education are scarce, and, to the best of this author's knowledge, there is as yet no research on DLGs in the EFL classroom. The intention of this short study is to investigate the interactions that take place during the implementation of DLGs in an EFL lower secondary classroom, in order to identify the learning opportunities that arise from the discussion, and analyse to what extent the DLG environment fosters language learning.

2.3 Previous Studies on DLGs in L2 Learning Contexts

Due to the lack of research on the impact of the regular implementation of DLGs in secondary level EFL classrooms, three studies in the field of Basque as an L2, conducted by Santiago-Garabieta et al. (2021; 2022, 2022) in secondary education

settings are presented in this subsection. All three studies are qualitative and follow the framework of the communicative methodology of research (Gómez et al., 2019), which is founded on egalitarian dialogue between researchers and participants. Santiago-Garabieta et al. (2021) suggest that DLGs may encourage participation in collaborative interactions, while fostering the inclusion of L2 learners, promoting a taste for literature and improving literature competence. Santiago-Garabieta, García-Carrión, et al. (2022) demonstrate that engaging students in meaningful discussions through Basque contributes to positively changing their attitudes towards the language. Finally, Santiago-Garabieta, Villardón-Gallego, et al. (2022) studied the development of oral communication skills through DLGs. The findings of this study show that students' L2 oracy skills are developed during these dialogic literary encounters, particularly in cognitive and socio-emotional areas. This study reflects on how DLGs, as dialogic spaces, increase students' exposure to the L2 (Basque), which, despite being an official language, is a minority language. This is similar to EFL in most of its contexts, with low language exposure and few opportunities to practise and use the language in real-life everyday contexts, which can be increased through the implementation of dialogue-based learning environments such as DLGs.

2.4 Researching Language Learning through Peer Interaction

Peer interaction is any communication-focused activity conducted between learners, where there is little or no participation from the teacher, and which may include cooperative and collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and other types of help from peers (Philp et al., 2014). Swain and Lapkin (1998) stated that peer interaction plays a highly relevant role in developing learners' expression in the target language, contributing to their progress in language production and expanding their linguistic ability. The authors also claim that what occurs in collaborative dialogues, not only contributes to learning, but *is* learning.

Peers feel less anxious about making mistakes when interacting with each other, and this is particularly important with teenagers. Peer interaction carries

affective benefits that are motivating for learning (Dörnyei, 1997). They are more likely to experiment with new phrases or structures and this helps them move from formulaic language to being able to use target language forms to express themselves. Peer interaction also puts pressure on students to communicate, and that triggers second language development, by providing opportunities to notice problems and address the features of the target language (Gass, 2003).

Cognitive (Long, 1996; Swain, 1995), sociocultural (Lantolf, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1998) and sociocognitive approaches have been adopted to investigate language learning through peer interaction. Considering that both cognitive and sociocultural approaches are useful, but limited, and that mind, body and world collaborate to generate language learning, the present study adopts a sociocognitive approach (Atkinson, 2011).

2.5 Quality in Language Education: Opportunities for Learning

This study focuses on the quality of the *process* of teaching and learning, i.e., the belief that quality depends on how the participants in the classroom, both teacher and students, provide and exploit quality learning opportunities (Crabbe, 2003), that is, how they create and manage the many planned or unplanned learning opportunities that arise during a language lesson.

Crabbe (2003) defines *opportunity for L2 learning* as the access to any activity that may lead to increasing language knowledge or proficiency, such as the opportunity to negotiate meaning in a discussion, to read and draw meaning from a text, or to explore a pattern in language use. In this sense, interaction, i.e., speaking and writing with one or more interlocutors in real or simulated communicative situations, is a learning opportunity (Crabbe, 2007). Dialogic interaction, such as that taking place in a DLG environment, provides opportunities for authentic conversations among learners and between them and the teacher. In those discussions students often make use of functional language in a similar way to real-life talk (Oliver & Philp, 2014), and think together with others (Mercer, 2002). The topics under discussion emerge from the reading of the classics, and the stories and characters are often related by students to their own lived experiences.

Following the concept initiated in the ORACLE study of group work (Galton et al., 1999), this short study also considers the utterance length and the teacher-student talk ratio provided by DLGs (Hargreaves & García-Carrión, 2016) as learning opportunities, as they are indicators of the amount of output allowed to students during DLGs (Swain, 1995). Learning opportunities have been identified in interaction in the language classroom, such as co-construction (Ohta, 2001), peer repair (Gao, 2021), self-repair (Hellermann, 2009), asking others, explaining and suggesting (Leslie, 2017). Also, students often use *code-switching* and *lexical transfer* as learning strategies and to keep communication going, particularly when under the pressure of communicating in an oral interaction activity, so code-switching has also been considered a learning opportunity in this context (Leslie, in press).

In conclusion, this study analyses the quality of learning during DLGs as the creation and management of learning opportunities, both by the teacher and the learners, deriving from the authentic discussion about the reading of the classics of world literature.

3 Methodology

3.1 Participants

This short project was implemented at a secondary state school in Portugal, in the Ponte de Sor school cluster, with a class of eighth grade students, which corresponds to lower intermediate or B1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2020). The group of 20 students was heterogeneous in terms of gender (9 female and 11 male students), age (13 to 16), and, to a certain extent, in their cultural and linguistic background (3 students had recently come to Portugal from other countries). All the students took part in the DLGs, some of them with previous supported reading provided by the teacher and/or two students in the class in weekly tutoring sessions. The teacher who implemented the DLGs had previous training in Learning

Communities/Successful Educational Actions, and experience as a facilitator of DLGs.

3.2 Procedure

The DLGs were implemented in 50-minute weekly sessions during the second semester, for 9 weeks, as part of regular EFL activities, to discuss the classic of world literature *Sherlock Holmes, Short Stories* (Conan Doyle, 2000). The sessions took place face-to-face in the school library, with the participants sitting in a circle.

DLGs follow an evidence-based method (Flecha & INCLUD-ED, 2015). Before the DLGs the class: (1) selected a book among the classics of world literature and (2) agreed on the number of pages to be read for each DLG session. Each participant read the text at home, individually or with the help of a family member, or at school, with support from teacher/peers, and selected a sentence, paragraph, or idea to share in the DLG, and thought about the reasons for their choice. During the DLG sessions, students enrolled to speak by raising their hand. The moderator (teacher or student) noted down their names and gave the floor to each participant, who read the chosen paragraph aloud and explained the reasons why s/he selected it. Then the moderator gave the floor to other participants, so that they could discuss that same paragraph (make comment, agree, disagree, argue, counter argue). The procedure was repeated with each idea shared for the full duration of the DLG.

3.3 Data Collection

Sessions 5 (moderated by the teacher) and 8 (moderated by one of the students) were audiotaped, and about 10 minutes of each session were selected to be transcribed, because they were the moments in which most students, (eight students in both groups), engaged in the conversation. Besides sharing their ideas about the text, they engaged in the discussion of topics raised by reading the text such as *love* (session 5), *racism* and *people's ability to change* their mind and behaviour (session 8). The two sections of the audiotaped material were transcribed verbatim, following conventions by Oliver and Philp (2014), and length

of utterances was calculated in order to be analysed quantitatively and qualitatively in terms of the emergence of learning opportunities.

3.4 Data Analysis

The transcripts were read and reread in search of students' talk on content and talk on language as learning opportunities, such as co-construction (Ohta, 2001), peer repair (Gao, 2021), self-repair (Hellermann, 2009), asking others (for content and language), code-switching (Leslie, in press), explaining and suggesting (Leslie, 2017). Furthermore, talk that pointed towards the use of functional language (e.g. arguing, reasoning, speculating, stating opinion) was considered. In addition, the length of students' contributions and the student-teacher talk ratio were measured as indicators of output as a learning opportunity (Swain, 1995), and compared with previous findings (Hargreaves & García-Carrión, 2016).

The identified learning opportunities were quantitatively and qualitatively analysed, by identifying, listing and providing examples from the data, and counting the number of opportunities found.

4 Results

The present study aims to evaluate if and to what extent the implementation of DLGs generates learning opportunities and contributes to improving learning in the lower secondary EFL classroom. Table 1 displays the nineteen types of learning opportunities that were identified in the transcribed material.

Table 1 *Learning opportunities in the interaction*

Learning opportunities	Example
Arguing	"But in … his other story uh… he said that he wasn't capable of loving anyone else. So, I think that doesn't make sense."
Asking others (language)	"They say they are not… *como é que se diz "igual"?"* [how do you say "igual"?]" "Equal."
Asking others (content)	"Was it five pips or three pips?" "I think it was… three pips."

Co-construction	"(...) that someone... is... a racist for some time and then that person... changes. How can=" "=Realise that he's wrong?"
Code-switching	"Ah, okay, I understand now! But this is...*isso assim... é um bocado mau, vá.*" [That is... a bit bad.]"
Defining	"(racism) it's like you don't like the people who are..."
Disagreeing	"(...) I think he's wrong."
Explaining	"So Holmes disguised himself..."
Humour	"(...) so you are wrong, I'm right [laughs]. I'm kidding"
Inviting	"Think about that."
Peer repair	"Or you can doesn't like." "[Dislike.]"
Providing examples	"(...) I want to say like an example of racism is like when you see ... uh... a black person in a shop you can think he's gonna steal something..."
Reasoning	"Because... if he was Sherlock Holmes... into the house, he doesn't enters."
Self-repair	""Rácism", I don't know, racism..."
Speculating	"(...) he probably changed his mind because he noticed that what they were doing was killing black people..."
Stating opinion	"So, I found that interesting... and kind of weird."
Suggesting	"He might be lying."
Supporting peers	RV "(...) I think..." JR "Do you think? You are wrong." MM "We think! [Laughs]"
Summarising	"but he dies after the... he received the letter."

Both transcripts were analysed quantitatively for learning opportunities in students' talk, by listing and counting the number of opportunities found. Table 2 shows the total number of learning opportunities by type in each session.

Table 2 *Type and total of learning opportunities by session*

Learning opportunities			
Session 5 (transcript 1)		**Session 8 (transcript 2)**	
by type (number of turn)	**Total no. of learning opportunities per total no. of students' turns (53)**	**by type (number of turn)**	**Total no. of learning opportunities per total no. of students' turns (69)**
Asking others (14) Explaining (21, 23/25, 69) Reasoning (27, 74, 77) Stating opinion (32, 36, 74)	24 (45,3%)	Summarising (6) Explaining (20, 23) Code-switching (24, 28, 30, 32, 55, 58) Humour (29, 72)	32 (46,4%)

Co-construction (34) Speculating (37, 83) Arguing (41, 46, 69) Suggesting (42) Disagreeing (44, 58, 70, 79, 84) Code-switching (53) Supporting peers (85)		Asking others / providing information/language (34, 67, 77) Reasoning (42) Co-construction (46) Stating opinion (49, 51, 55) Arguing (57) Speculating (60) Self-repair (67) Defining (67) Providing examples (77, 84, 86) Peer repair (78, 79, 80, 81, 85) Inviting (86)	

The data presented in Table 2 show that a number and variety of learning opportunities were found in both sessions. In session 8 there is a greater variety of learning opportunities than in session 5. This positive evolution could result from the fact that: (1) the students became more accustomed to the format of DLGs; and/or (2) the students became more engaged with the story as it developed; and/or (3) in session 8, the conversation was moderated by a student and the teacher was a participant along with the class, a "peer", which may have encouraged students to experiment with the language more.

Overall, *code-switching* (seven occurrences), *stating opinion* (six occurrences), *disagreeing* (five occurrences), *explaining* (five occurrences), *peer repair* (five occurrences), *asking others* (four occurrences), *arguing* (four occurrences) and *reasoning* (four occurrences) are the most frequent learning opportunities. While code-switching shows that some students often use the L1 to be able to participate in the discussion and thus develop the L2 (Colina & Mayo, 2009), stating opinion, disagreeing, explaining, arguing and reasoning demonstrate the use of functional language by students to authentically discuss their ideas about and beyond the text, namely to analyse the story in detail, evaluate the characters' behaviours, and relate them to their own lived experiences. Asking others and peer repair provide evidence that students interact collaboratively to

bridge their language and content gaps and work in their ZPD with scaffolding from their peers (Vygotsky, 1987). Reflection and discussion about and beyond the text are thus made possible even at a lower intermediate level such as a B1/8th grade EFL class.

As mentioned before, JO moderated session 8 and the teacher (T) took part in the conversation in a situation of equality to the students. On the one hand T had to enrol and wait for his turn to speak, on the other hand he could share his own ideas and comment on students' shared ideas. In this excerpt, students were discussing the reason(s) that made one of the characters – uncle Elias – run away from the United States, where he had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan, and the conversation evolved into a discussion about racism and people's ability to change.

Excerpt 1 (session 8)

turn	participant	Talk
33	JO	D, you may talk.
34	D	Was it five pips or three pips?
35	JO	Uh... I think it was... three pips.
36	D	And... I'm pretty sure, I'm not sure about that... I'm pretty sure there was a piece of paper that wasn't burnt... in this part of the text.
37	T	That's what I just read.
38	D	Is it? There's is a piece of paper that was left...xx=
39	T	=The only document that is left from Uncle Elias's past. So it's the only thing we have.
40	D	And they're going after that...
41	T	Yeah.
42	D	I think he was a KKK member and then he left because he found it bad or he stole money and the documents... which is I think what we did but I think he might have been against racism because he wouldn't, you could just take the money and leave the papers or he could take the money and take the papers, which is what he did so I think he was against racism at some point.
43	T	[Interesting...]
44	JO	[to the teacher] You may talk.
45	T	So... nice, very nice... uh... idea. And I wonder and I ask everyone now if... you think that it's possible... that someone... is... a racist for some time and then that person... changes. How can=
46	JO	=Realise that he's wrong?

JO clearly adopts the role of moderator by giving participants the floor (turns 33 and 44), while also answering their questions (turn 35) and co-constructing

knowledge with them (turn 46), thus scaffolding his peers' development of oral communication.

If we compare excerpt 1 with excerpt 2 (see below), the latter taken from session 5, in which JO was one of the participants and T was moderating, we notice some differences. In excerpt 2, JO cleverly remembers that somewhere back in the story there was information about Sherlock Holmes' feelings for a specific woman and for women in general.

Excerpt 2 (session 5)

turn	participant	Talk
53	JO	*Aqui* [Here]. Ah, can I read? Uhum… "For Sherlock Holmes, there was only one woman in the world … he did not love her, because he never loved woman (sic)"=
54	D	=But… *mas isto é o Watson a dizer* [But this is Watson speaking]… isto não tá xx
55	JO	"Her name was…" Ah!
56	T	So… you might be right, but D might be right too, I guess. So, who's right here?
57	D	Me.
58	JO	*Não* [No].
59	D	É óbvio [It's obvious].=
60	JO	=I don't think so, because…
61	D	*Isto não é o Sherlock Holmes a dizer*. [This is not Sherlock Holmes speaking]=
62	JO	=Because, because I… I, I…
63	D	[laughs]
64	RV	*Ele tem sempre razão*. [He's always right]
65	JO	*Acerte ou erre*… [Whether I get it right or wrong]
66	T	That's not an argument, I'm afraid.
67	JO	The legend never miss.

In contrast to JO's attitude in session 8, here he fails to defend his point, switches into Portuguese, and ends up adopting a playful behaviour, presumably to divert attention away from his failure thus wasting what could have triggered several learning opportunities for the class.

These data may suggest that having a student moderating the DLG instead of the teacher contributes to improving participation among the class while fostering the moderator-student's responsibility, which leads to more adequate behaviour and, ultimately, contributes to generating more learning opportunities.

Having a student as moderator was an opportunity for JO's personal and linguistic development and a challenge for the class to experiment with ideas and language. Thus, session 8 became closer to what a peer interaction activity looks like, as a student moderated the discussion and the teacher's talk was limited by enrolment and turn-taking. Further research on this aspect could help clarify this idea.

Regarding students' contribution, the average utterance length was between 14,4 (session 5) and 15,6 words (session 8). Overall, students' utterances ranged between 1 and 108 words, and 27 (22,1%) out of the 122 students' utterances analysed were extended, i.e., consisting of at least 20 words. Also, students' talk share in the two analysed sessions was between 63,7% (session 5) and 88% (session 8), which is consistent with previous studies of DLGs and interaction in the classroom, such as the study conducted by Hargreaves and García-Carrión (2016), which recorded 75 to 97% pupil talk in an L1 primary setting in England. This contrasts with the amount of output allowed to students in so-called traditional classes where teacher-student interaction takes up most of the time, and the average students' talk share was 25% of the total speaking time (Galton et al., 1999). Data confirm that student talk share is very high and extended utterances are common in DLGs, which points to the high quality of learning opportunities provided by this dialogic practice and may indicate that in the social interaction fostered by DLGs, students think together with their peers and the teacher (Mercer, 2002) and effectively make use of functional language as an opportunity for their own and their peers' language learning (Oliver & Philp, 2014). Further research could confirm these aspects and show whether other factors, such as interest in the topic, willingness to communicate with peers students know well, positive affect in the class, or group cohesion, are involved.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

This short project aimed to verify if and to what extent the implementation of DLGs in the EFL lower secondary classroom generates opportunities for learning. The

results show that DLGs create a considerable number and variety of learning opportunities, with *code-switching and stating opinion* being the most common. Data also suggest that learning opportunities are noticeably more diverse as the class gets more accustomed to regularly participating in DLGs and when a student, not the teacher, plays the role of moderator, releasing the teacher to be a participant with the class, and allowing for the development of egalitarian dialogue among the whole group: students and teacher. The analysis is also consistent with previous findings on the use of functional language as a tool for learning (Oliver & Philp, 2014).

The results discussed here hint at the application of the findings of the INCLUD-ED extensive research project (Flecha & INCLUD-ED, 2015) to the EFL context, namely the fact that DLGs foster language learning and social cohesion through egalitarian discussion about the classics of literature in the lower secondary EFL classroom. The findings are also consistent with other studies about DLGs and language education, such as the emergence of authentic conversations about substantial topics (Hargreaves & García-Carrión, 2016) the fostering of high levels of participation (Santiago-Garabieta et al., 2021), the development of students' oracy skills in the FL (Santiago-Garabieta, Villardón-Gallego, et al., 2022), and the improvement of students' attitudes towards a language they have little exposure to (Santiago-Garabieta, García-Carrión, et al., 2022). However, there is still limited understanding on the role of DLGs in supporting L2 or FL learning, so further studies need to be conducted in this field.

Other questions may be raised from the analysis conducted in the present study, such as the contribution of regularly implementing DLGs to student engagement, to the development of group cohesion within the class, or the impact that having a student as the moderator and the teacher as a participant has on the participation of students in the DLG.

Although this short classroom observation study shows that opportunities for language learning occur through DLGs, it has several limitations, such as the fact that it was conducted with a single group in a single school and by analysing only two excerpts of DLG sessions. Further research is required to analyse in depth

the impact of DLGs on the quality of language education, particularly in the context of EFL.

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