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DIALOGIC LITERARY GATHERINGS (DLG) AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

Alumno/a: **Sánchez Yáñez, Elvira**

Tutor/a: Prof. D. Beatriz Valverde Jiménez
Dpto: Filología Inglesa

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Abstract.....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Literary Review	5
2.1. Importance of developing students' speaking skills	5
2.2. Dialogic Literary Gatherings	6
2.2.1. Origins.....	6
2.2.2. What are Dialogic Literary Gatherings?.....	8
2.2.3. Theoretical foundations of DLGs	8
2.2.4. Objectives	12
2.2.5. Methodology	13
2.2.6. Selection of Literary Texts	15
2.3. Benefits of the Use of DLGs in EFL Classroom.....	17
2.4. Development of Communicative Competence through DLGs.....	19
2.5. Possible limitations.....	22
3. Didactic unit.....	22
3.1. Introduction.....	22
3.1.1. Justification.....	22
3.1.2. Contextualization	23
3.2. Temporalization.....	24
3.3. Competences and Objectives	25
3.4. Contents	30
3.5. Methodology	31
3.6. Cross-curricular elements.....	32
3.7. Interdisciplinarity.....	32
3.8. Attention to diversity	33
3.9. Materials and resources	33
3.10. Evaluation.....	34
3.11. Step by step lesson plan.....	35
4. Conclusions	57
5. References	59
General References	59
Didactic unit References.....	61
Appendices	64

Abstract:

This MA dissertation thesis examines Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLGs henceforth) as an educational tool to teach literature whilst improving students' oral skill in the EFL classroom. To this effect, the paper has been divided into two sections. The first section is devoted to the literary review: here we will provide all the necessary information in relation to the importance of improving students' speaking skill; and in relation to the characteristics of DLGs. The second one includes the Didactic unit based on the methodology of this literary practice, in which the graded reader employed is Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist*. The methodology applied is that of DLGs in the sessions devoted to the gatherings, and for the rest of the sessions motivating and collaborative tasks related to the novel are presented.

Key words: Dialogic Literary Gatherings, literature, EFL classroom, graded readers, didactic unit, *Oliver Twist*.

Resumen:

Este trabajo fin de máster examina las Tertulias Literarias Dialógicas (TLD) como una herramienta educativa para enseñar literatura mientras se mejora la habilidad oral de los estudiantes en la clase de inglés como lengua extranjera. Para ello, el trabajo se ha dividido en dos secciones. La primera está dedicada a la revisión literaria: aquí proporcionaremos la información necesaria en relación con la importancia de mejorar la habilidad oral de los estudiantes; y en relación con las características de las TLD. La segunda sección incluye la Unidad didáctica basada en la metodología de esta práctica literaria en la que la lectura adaptada que se utiliza es la novela de Charles Dickens *Oliver Twist*. La metodología aplicada es la de las TLD en las sesiones dedicadas a los encuentros, y para el resto de las sesiones se presentan tareas motivadoras y colaborativas relacionadas con la novela.

Palabras clave: Tertulias Literarias Dialógicas, literatura, clase de inglés como lengua extranjera, lecturas adaptadas, unidad didáctica, *Oliver Twist*.

1. Introduction

Over the last few years, the importance of learning English has increased due to a variety of reasons. English is used as a vehicular language in the whole world; hence, people who speak English are going to have a better future in their academic life and therefore, in their job opportunities. However, students struggle when trying to improve their communicative competence because the circumstances surrounding the learning process of foreign languages at schools does not facilitate the acquisition of that competence among students. Thus, it is essential that teachers of English foster their students' communicative competence, making them see that improving this competence is possible.

The topic of this master's dissertation comes from my experience being as a student of English. I have always been taught English literature in a boring and traditional way, in which we had to read the book aloud in class or at home, and at the end of the unit, we had to take an exam of the book. This set of circumstances made students and I feel demotivated both with English and its literature. Therefore, it is important to highlight that students should learn English in a more rewarding and exciting way, with innovative and advantageous practices.

In order to address the previous situation described, this master's thesis emphasizes the use of literature in TEFL by means of Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLGs henceforth) in order to enhance students' oral skills. In this way, students will be introduced to new content in an inductive and active way, constructing their own learning with the help of their classmates and the teacher. The practice of DLGs will provide students with the 21st century skills, necessary for the future success of students.

As previously stated, the development of the speaking skill in English teaching has always been considered a challenge for teachers because of its difficulties to be evaluated. Thus, it is essential to search for scenarios where the use of English is fostered in order to create cooperative dialogues which reduce the anxiety and inhibition that oral activities produce. In this context, students will be given opportunities to encounter situations in which the language is presented 'naturally'.

In this sense, the use of literature in the EFL classroom becomes a fundamental tool. Moreover, the presence of literature to learn English within the context of Dialogic Literary Gatherings will have many benefits to students. Then, the main goal of this paper is to provide the characteristics of DLGs with the purpose of implementing this practice in a Didactic unit.

In relation to the structure of this paper, it is divided into two major sections. Firstly, we will offer a literary review of the topic, in which the following issues are addressed: the importance of developing students' speaking skill; the different characteristics of DLGs; the benefits of its use in TEFL; how students' communicative competence is developed by means of DLGs; and the possible limitations that teachers may encounter when applying this practice in the classroom. Secondly, we will offer a Didactic unit which focuses on the graded reader *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. This Didactic unit is to be accompanied with the Dialogic Literary Gatherings sessions in which the book is discussed.

2. Literary Review

2.1. Importance of developing students' speaking skills

The use of speaking has always been regarded as the most essential skill to learn since it is used to communicate in this globalized world (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). What is more, most people have considered it as the skill which they need to put much effort with (Brown & Yule, 1983; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Bueno, Madrid, & McLaren, 2006).

English as a Foreign/Second Language (EFL/ESL) learners point out that mastering the English speaking skill is to be preferred to the other skills. This belief is caused due to the fact that learners feel that if they control the speaking skill, they reckon that they are being successful in learning the language. Nevertheless, in many cases, learners do not know how to improve this skill, so they feel reluctant to speak the language. English language learners usually have the impression that they are going to make errors when they speak. Once they know they have enough knowledge to speak they try to communicate. Actually, we do start speaking before we learn any grammar or syntax rule. In addition to this, we devote the most part of our life communicating orally with others rather than writing. Thus, teachers have to put more effort into developing interest in this skill among their English language learners since it is an essential ability to accomplish a good conversation (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

Factors like pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency or comprehension are essential when speaking, and learners have to bear in mind all these factors, since it is a difficult task for them, and even more in the beginning stages of learning. Therefore, the sooner learners begin to practice the oral skill, the faster they are going to reach a good level of English oral communication.

On the other hand, speaking is usually developed at the same time as the other skills. As students know that expressing their emotions, ideas or any other function of the language in the mother tongue is important, they should realize it is as important to do it in the foreign language. In this day and age, speaking is an essential ability to perform any activity which can be found in other places apart from the classroom, like

for example finding a job in the future (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). This idea is also supported by Baker and Westrup (2003) who declare that the best jobs are found by learners who perform extremely well in the English speaking skill. For that reason, it is essential to develop the speaking skill among second language learners, taking also into account that it is the skill which they face more problems with.

When trying to speak in English, students from Secondary Education can feel inhibition because of their fear of making mistakes. An additional reason is that they can be criticized by their classmates. This is a normal fear since they are at a stage in which they want to please their equals and feel part of the group. According to Baker and Westrup (2003), when students are trying to answer the teacher's requests or questions, they are not able to answer them right away because of their lack of vocabulary, grammar, their difficulties in expressing their opinion and their fear of making mistakes. Hence, it is fundamental that teachers make use of teaching techniques and methodologies that take into account the importance of their students' socio-emotional well-being. Schools are the places where the promotion of Social and emotional learning takes place since children spend a great amount of time at school. Thus, in order to promote their social and emotional skills, teachers can use diverse teaching methods or techniques such as group work, learning via play, think-pair-share, accountable talk and kinesthetic activities (Aglia et al., 2018). In this vein, the use of Dialogic Literary Gatherings can be a useful tool since students prepare themselves what they are going to say before the class. Therefore, difficulties like inhibition or embarrassment that may arise due to their lack of knowledge of any topic is not going to be present because of the preparatory work at home.

Leong & Ahmadi (2017:35) state that "oral language interactions and the opportunity to produce the language in meaningful tasks provide the practice that is very important to internalizing the language". Provided that students use the language through this practice of DLGs, they are going to internalize the language easier because they are going to feel that the task is significant for their lives.

2.2. Dialogic Literary Gatherings

2.2.1. Origins

Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLGs) were originated at the school of Verneda-Sant Martí in Barcelona. Since 1981, the school has worked for the alphabetization of adult learners by means of practice. Due to their success, DLGs have been influencing other centres, initially of adult education and later of Pre-School Education, Primary Education and Secondary Education (Flecha, 2015). Actually, the *Confederación de Federaciones y Asociaciones de Personas Participantes en Educación y Cultura Democrática de Personas Adultas* (CONFAPEA) helped in the spreading of DLGs to other centres.

People who participated in the gatherings wanted to make literature accessible to everyone, children and adults (CREA, 2016). Dialogic Literary Gatherings were firstly created for people without academic background, so the aim is not to have educational barriers (Aubert, Flecha, García, Flecha & Racionero, 2008). Moreover, Dialogic Literary Gatherings are also currently applied in libraries, prisons, etc. (CREA, 2016).

Dialogic Literary Gatherings were first implemented by Dr. Ramón Flecha and belong to one of the Successful Educational Actions (SEAs) that are implemented in Learning Communities (Hargreaves & García-Carrión, 2016). In fact, Flecha (2015, p.3) defines SEAs as: “actions that can improve school success and contribute to social cohesion in every context where they are implemented”. Furthermore, investigations related to International Education have scientifically revealed the numerous benefits of DLGs for the education in all the places in which have been implemented. That is the reason why they have been considered as a successful educational practice (Flecha & Tellado, 2015). In addition to this, Flecha (2015, p. 31) points out that “Successful Educational Actions (SEAs) have demonstrated their ability to achieve excellent results with respect to academic success and increased social cohesion in different schools with diverse student bodies and families”.

Flecha (2015) describes the most important educational actions that take place in and outside the classroom: interactive groups, extended learning time and dialogic reading. Interactive groups can be described as a group of students with an adult per group who help them to develop interaction among them. This action is defined as a very advantageous one since the groups of students are small and heterogeneous regarding ability, gender and ethnicity. Provided that “more adults are present in the classroom, meaning greater cognitive resources for all children to learn more effectively” (Flecha, 2015, p.32). Extended learning time is the period after school devoted to offer more activities such as homework clubs or tutored libraries. Students with difficulties are going to have the support needed without missing regular classes because the activities are going to happen during out-of-school-hours. This action is proposed to help increase students’ knowledge of the content that has been taught in the classroom (Flecha, 2015).

One of the major impact of SEAs is that students achieve better academic results due to their implementation at schools. Furthermore, students with special needs are also going to benefit from these actions because they are included in the activities and are able to communicate with their classmates. The reason is that adults, teachers or exceptionally gifted students support them. Thus, these actions enhance both teachers and students’ learning expectations due to their academic improvements (Flecha, 2015).

2.2.2. What are Dialogic Literary Gatherings?

Dialogic is defined as an adjective as “of, relating to, or characterized by dialogue” (Merriam-Webster University Press, n.d.); literary is “of or relating to books” (Merriam-Webster University Press, n.d.), and a gathering is a “party or a meeting when many people come together as a group” (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). Therefore, we could define Dialogic Literary Gatherings as a meeting in which people interact to comment about aspects related to literature.

According to the Center for Social and Educational Research (CREA, 2016) this practice is based on masterpieces of Universal Literature which are read and then gatherings about them are prepared. In the following point, I will explain in detail what the definition and its methodology are.

DLG is an innovative and motivating practice that teachers should implement because it permits every participant to be part of the group in a literary context. What participants do is to read and debate about masterpieces of Universal Literature. Moreover, the most important purpose of DLGs is to construct a collective meaning with the help of every participant and to bring universal and classical culture closer to them. If participants are not required to read books and comment on them or if an expert is just giving a lecture about a topic related to the literary work, it is not a DLG. In addition to this, if books are not masterpieces of Universal Literature, it is not a DLG either (CREA, 2016).

Dialogic Literary Gatherings are considered as a way to favour a direct exchange of opinions among the participants without taking into account gender, cognitive capacity or cultural background. Additionally, all participants are treated equal; hence values such as respect, solidarity and coexistence emerge. All participants must have the same academic status and none of the participants cannot control or dominate the dialogue because the foundations of DLGs is to have an egalitarian dialogue and reach to a common reasoning. Participants of DLGs can be composed, for example, by relatives, students, volunteers or prisoners (CREA, 2016).

Moreover, the Community of Researchers on Excellence for All (2016) explains that there are other types of Dialogic Gatherings, like Dialogic Art Gatherings in which people create dialogue about works of art such as paintings and discuss diverse topics related to such works.

2.2.3. Theoretical foundations of DLGs

Dialogic learning is based on the assumption that students learn through interaction with other people, generating agreements and disagreements among them (Aubert, Flecha, García, Flecha & Racionero, 2008). Its fundamental aim is that in order to learn,

people need different and a great number of interactions based on the dialogue, the main characteristic of which is that there is equality. Consequently, every participant has the right to talk because he or she has knowledge to contribute to the discussion; hence, we can recognize the educational intelligence of the participants. Just as Flecha states (2000, p. 25): "Dialogue promotes, instead of negating, each person's reflection."

According to dialogic learning, the most important concept is interaction. It is more significant than reading or writing as a way of learning. However, the skills of reading, listening and writing are rather used as a medium (Álvarez, González & Larrinaga, 2012).

Sociocultural theories influenced the concept of dialogic learning. Sociocultural constructivism explains that knowledge is acquired from two different 'places'. The first one is from an intermental level (the skill that happens in meetings with people) and the second one is from intramental level (the skill that exists within the person):

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formulation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals. (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Lock, 1989)

Thus, sociocultural theories propose that a person acquires meanings that come from a structured environment and when they interact from an intentional point of view. In this interaction, knowledge is constructed from the outside, that is to say, in an interpsychological relationship, when students learn about culture in materials such as books. Secondly, knowledge is constructed in an intrapsychological way, when higher mental functions, or in other words, knowledge is internalised (Vygotsky, 1987).

According to the theory of the cognitive development developed by Vygotsky, there is a relation between the cognitive development and the sociocultural environment. In the same way, the transformation of the environment is considered as an important factor to enhance cognitive development. Dialogic learning is closely connected to Collaborative Learning since there is a construction of knowledge in an egalitarian situation. This type of learning is social, but this characteristic does not belong to the individual learning. Vygotsky (1987) explains that Collaborative Learning consists of learning with people and from them. In Social Psychology, he refers it as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD can be explained as the situation the student is able to overcome with help of an adult, teacher or colleagues, and that when having to face the same situation again, he or she can overcome it without any help.

Vygotsky (1987) explains that it is important to recognize the Zone of Proximal Development through interactions. Vygotsky defines it as:

“[T]he distance between the actual developmental level (of the learner) as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Teachers have an idea of what the students’ limits are; hence they have to provide the students with situations in which they would feel successful and comfortable with. They will have more motivation if they are the protagonist of the activity and Dialogic Literary Gatherings foster this sense of autonomy. Dialogic learning fosters an active type of learning because learners “can manage and monitor their own learning processes recognizing and assessing what they understand and what they do not” (Agliati et al., 2018, p. 12). In fact, students connect new knowledge with what they already know by means of DLGs; hence we can conclude that active learning takes place in this context (Tobón, 2010).

Dialogic Learning is also based on the contributions of different approaches and disciplines that we are going to be described in the following lines. For example, it is based on the theory of dialogic action by Paulo Freire; the concept of dialogic inquiry by Gordon Wells; and the theory of communicative action by Jürgen Habermas (Álvarez, González & Larrinaga, 2012). This new type of learning highlights the idea of dialogic action, in which dialogue is absolutely essential for learning. Moreover, human beings have the necessity to communicate, so in educational situations, teachers have to promote an environment in which students ‘create’ culture and are part of a liberating and critical learning. In this dialogical environment, questions are raised and answers can be given through interaction among people that are going to be treated equally (Freire, 1998).

In the same line as Freire, Wells (2001) also studies how students use the dialogue to transform and acquire knowledge. He explains that an effective educational environment must be active and based on collaborative communication. In order to achieve this interaction, it is essential that the role of the teacher changes; in other words, teachers are not an instructor of knowledge anymore. On the contrary, they are part of the gathering: they collaborate and talk with the students as another participant, guiding them in their process of building knowledge.

Another pillar of DLGs is Habermas’ (1987) theory of communicative competence, in which everybody is thought to be able to communicate. He supports the idea that the way of thinking and the consciousness of a person are determined by social interactions with others. As we may observe, learning by means of communicative competence is also supported by Vygotsky. Furthermore, Tobón (2010) explains that learning materials must be based on the promotion of meaningful learning. He describes that meaningful learning is successful because the student relates the new material with

the ideas that the student has already acquired. Thus, meaningful learning is efficient since materials have more relevance and practicality for learners.

In this line, Dialogic Learning promotes this kind of collaborative and active kind of learning. In this type of practice, memorization does not play a role because learners use their communicative competence (in their mother tongue or in a foreign language) to express their thoughts. Tobón (2010) points out three important conditions: students must show interest in the activity and relate new knowledge with what they already know; the material must be possibly meaningful and the teacher must take an active role in order to mediate between the materials and the students to achieve a meaningful learning.

Thus, Dialogic teaching is considered by many linguists as being a kind of teaching practice that encourages learners to participate and improve as a consequence the way they understand the issues that are discussed. Concerning Dialogic teaching, Robin Alexander (2006) observes that learners think and engage with their ideas through original activities. He argues that Dialogic teaching has the appropriate conditions to be recognized as a pedagogy method. This method uses conversation between the moderator and the participants (in DLGs, the teacher and the students, respectively) to teach and learn. Teacher lecture is avoided in the gathering and there is not a person who is an expert or is completely right. Therefore, the contribution of each learner is going to be accepted and right and they are going to learn from each other.

The learning principles that are intrinsic of the Dialogic teaching can be listed as follows (Flecha, 2000):

- Egalitarian dialogue: participants can share their opinions in a confident way because there is not a right answer and they are going to have the same opportunity to participate. No participant can impose his or her opinion because they have more knowledge in the field or because they are the moderator of the group.

- Cultural intelligence: everybody in the group has the aptitude, knowledge and capability to speak about everything because they have acquired these skills in their lives, so they are able to interpret literature and the different issues raised in a conversation. Thus, participants are going to respect every opinion because they are going to see that everybody possesses a certain level of cultural knowledge.

- Transformation: Dialogic teaching is an innovative way of learning in which dialogue and objectivity plays an important role because people change through this method. Participants are going to experience a transformation in their lives because the knowledge they acquire can change the way in which they see life. Not only does this practice change their way of thinking, but also their relationship with their colleagues or other members of the society. In this vein, Dialogic Literary Gatherings can

be seen as a valuable chance to improve skills related to language, such as oral and reading skills, and those related to values, like empathy, tolerance, and equality.

- Instrumental dimension: apart from the academic knowledge acquired as well as participants' improvement of their communicative competences, they will also develop their reading skills or IT skills, among others, because they will sometimes have to search for information on the Internet in order to speak with friends about the topics under discussion in the gatherings. The information they learn is possible to be shared within the group and/or with family. Thus, they will be developing their Learning to learn competence because this competence can be seen in "fundamental basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT skills that are necessary for further learning" (European Communities, 2007, p. 8).

- Creation of meaning: meaning is created because participants are going to connect what they read and hear from other students with their own experiences in life; hence, the information shared will enhance the creation of meaning. Since students can connect the information with what they know, they will acquire it easily.

- Solidarity: solidarity is a concept which comprises respect and support, as well as willingness. Everybody can participate in the gatherings and they do not have a cost. Dialogic Literary Gatherings were firstly created for people without academic background, so the aim is not to have educational barriers. Since students have an egalitarian relationship, it will produce a better connection. Every participant will learn from one another and students will create a relationship based on common values, which is as important as the acquisition of communicative competences.

- Equality of differences: students are treated equal because all of them participate but each one is going to be different from one another. They all have the right and the possibility of participating. Moreover, everybody must participate in order to benefit from the activity and to illustrate the existent equality.

2.2.4. Objectives

The diverse objectives of Dialogic Literary Gatherings can be summarised in the following points (Galindo, 2015):

- a. Becoming familiar with masterpieces and important authors of the Universal Literature.
- b. Dialogic analysis of the masterpieces and authors.
- c. Improving the reading ability in the silent reading and loud reading in order to stimulate and improve reading comprehension.
- d. Improving students' communication skills (language performance, comprehension, writing, reading and orality).

- e. Achieving respectful turn takings and generating a receptive attitude among participants. This practice is going to improve the dialogue among them and related to that, their socio-linguistic and pragmatic competence.
- f. Using arguments to defend the opinions and develop a supportive and critical point of view.
- g. Considering the ideas given by other participants in a critical way.
- h. Analysing the different values that are going to arise in the books and boost participants' self-esteem.
- i. Fostering reading habits and discovering the fun side of the reading of literature.
- j. Making learning related to communication significant. This oral communication is going to be divided into expression and comprehension.
- k. Reflecting on this methodology and other methodologies related to the promotion of reading.
- l. Promoting a critical thinking about the society in the present comparing their lives with the societies depicted in the literary masterpieces.

2.2.5. Methodology

In order for participants to benefit from DLGs, it is fundamental to follow the steps of this dialogic teaching practice. According to CREA (1999, 2016) and Flecha (2000), the organization of a Dialogic Literary Gathering session can be divided into the following stages:

- Before the session:

The moderator has to know what his or her role consists of. In a classroom context, the teacher has to organize the conversation, assuring that everybody participates and that there is an egalitarian dialogue. As we have explained in previous sections, the moderator, in this case the teacher, does not give a lecture, present or contextualize the masterpiece to the students before each class. The way in which the moderator organizes the conversation must guarantee a dialogue in which all the opinions are respected. In order to achieve this goal, the person who moderates cannot demonstrate a sense of power over the participants because they can feel afraid of giving an 'incorrect' interpretation of what they have read. Teachers cannot judge if an intervention is correct or not because there is not a suitable or right interpretation of the book.

Moreover, the selection of the book is done together with students. All participants will have a say about which book they are going to read. It is advisable to

choose books from the Universal Literature. Their teacher will offer a list and will tell them about the different options and all participants will vote for their preference. Students also have to help decide how many pages they are going to read for the next encounter.

The last step of this section consists in the reading of the pages which had been previously chosen. Students will do it individually at home, and while reading, they will choose a paragraph, some sentences or an idea that they would like to comment upon in the next gathering. Participants have to explain why they have chosen it and why it caught their attention.

- During the session:

First of all, we have to take into account turn takings. The moderator asks if anyone wants to be the first person sharing their comment upon the extract chosen to comment in front of the class. He or she writes down the order of participants who want to talk and the first person begins talking. The role of the moderator is to organize turn takings and to make sure that participants follow the principles of Dialogic Learning.

The role of the moderator is fundamental in this stage. S/he must encourage the contribution of every participant since his/her function is to guarantee respect to different point of views and assure egalitarian participation. This way, every person can express himself or herself freely without taking into account issues such as academic or cultural knowledge.

Second, participants read the chosen extracts. The first participant indicates the location of the extract that he or she has chosen, he reads it out loud and explain why s/he has chosen this idea and what it means to him/her. After this step, every participant has the opportunity to share their views about the meaning of the paragraph/idea. In this process, it is fundamental to consider that first, students are going to improve their oral productive skills and their reading comprehension. Equally important is that they are going learn how to give an argument and share their experiences and reflections which are motivated by the reading of the book.

Third, the moderator asks if any other participant has chosen the same extract or wants to comment upon the ideas or the chosen lines. Afterwards, another turn taking is opened and the moderator writes down again the order of the participants who want to talk, and the process explained in the previous paragraph is repeated. Each participant reads and expresses his or her opinion of the chosen lines and the other participants comment upon them. As we may observe, this repetitive practice will not only favour the possibilities of enhancing the reading comprehension of students, but also of changing their initial interpretation of the text and possibly, ulterior changes in students' mindset. Thus, students are going to be benefited by this practice in two ways: they are going to evolve in their academic and their personal life.

After that, when the comments and the reading of the second part are completed, the moderator opens the third turntaking, and the previous process is repeated. If the moderator follows this pattern, s/he is going to assure that there is an order of turn takings and everybody participates. To conclude this part, the group chooses the pages that are going to be read for the next gathering.

- After the session:

The participants of the gathering start again reading the book at home, taking into account the comments and reflections shared in the last session, and they get ready for the next meeting.

Dialogic Literary Gathering is a practice that involves individual and group reading since the participants establish the dialogue with each other, and this enhances the understanding of the pages which have been read and those which will be read in the following gatherings.

Flecha (2015) remarks that the gatherings must happen once a week and last for one to two hours. He explains that in these encounters students are not just supposed to narrate, but to have a conversation about what they have read. In that way, each participant reads in turns the chosen paragraph or extract and comments on the ideas that those lines have generated. As we have previously explained, this method enhances the possibilities of having an enriching dialogue because the rest of the participants can express their opinion on what has been commented.

Moreover, the role of moderator can be assumed by teachers or any other adult person who belongs to the school community, or even the students themselves. As we have previously pointed out, the responsibility of this person is to give the turn to speak, treat participants equally, and encourage them to speak in order to have an egalitarian participation. The moderator must be considered another participant of the gathering, and he or she cannot impose a 'true' point of view (Flecha, 2015).

2.2.6. Selection of Literary Texts

As we have previously pointed out in section ii, Dialogic Literary Gatherings are based on the reading of a masterpiece of Universal Literature. It cannot be a story or a recent book because masterpieces are works that have been selected universally and present different cultural aspects of humanity. They also show the traditions of diverse and important cultures that have existed for several centuries. These works be used as a model for students because they show the different topics and essential values that are important for humanity. Thus, students can understand another culture and think about its heritage by means of reading masterpieces. Moreover, Universal Literature is never out-to-date because it awakens interest in every person in different generations. DLGs

are going to improve the experience of connecting readers with other worldwide cultures inside the classic works because students are going to share their own knowledge or discoveries, which is going to enhance the stories within the books. As a consequence, reading these works is going to generate among students a spirit of criticism and a connection of the society in the present with issues and information from the past contained in the books (CREA, 2016).

There is another proposition of DLGs which advocates that Universal Literature should be available to people from different backgrounds. In other words, contrary to an extended stereotype within our society, people who have not had access to a formal education can perfectly read, understand, and interpret any of these masterpieces. Therefore, people like poor children who have not read a book in their lives, or prison inmates who have not had access to a formal education learn from what happens in the books and they can connect the stories with their experiences in life (CREA, 2016).

Furthermore, masterpieces from Universal Literature are the perfect books to link learners without a formal education to literature. Besides, when students of cultural minorities read classical literature, for example, it “not only improves their cultural awareness and learning levels, but it also transforms others’ expectations of their academic potential, thus opening the doors to academic success” (CREA, 2016, p. 4). In fact, Flecha explains that “academic authorities build walls between people with less education and certain literature types because it is believed that the people excluded from the ‘select minority’ provide incorrect interpretations of the texts, forgetting that elites link reading with their particular contexts’ (Flecha, 2000, p.62). Thus, Dialogic Literary Gathering is the best practice for students coming from any socio-economical context to obtain a better future and to enhance their academic knowledge by means of an egalitarian dialogue.

Finally, it is also important to highlight that in order to teach literature in an EFL classroom, teachers have to use graded readers because they are adapted according to the students’ level. Original texts may appear challenging for students because the vocabulary, the grammar and sentence structure are going to be complex. On the contrary, graded readers provide an adapted type of language, with little new vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, they are created in a way that students regard them as interesting since they include pictures or annotations (Bamford, 1984).

Graded readers are essential books in the EFL classroom since they are used to enhance intensive and extensive reading. Intensive reading is applied when students read to learn vocabulary and structures in a specific context and to enhance their reading skills. On the contrary, extensive reading is defined by Bamford (1984, p. 219) as “the reading of large amounts of material for pleasure and information [...] This corresponds to the “application” or “conversation” phase in oral language teaching,

when students are encouraged to use what they have learned.” In fact, intensive reading is used when students have to search for the meaning of a specific word, for instance, whilst they are reading the book. On the other hand, extensive reading is applied in the gatherings when learners have to express orally their opinions using what they have learned. Thus, the practice of DLGs is going to enhance the teaching plan because the two types of reading taking place.

Moreover, graded readers are classified into levels according to the lexical and grammatical level. According to Penguin, a publishing house, we can classify them into the following organization:

- Level Easystarts (200 headwords)
- Level 1 Beginner (300 headwords)
- Level 2 Elementary (600 headwords)
- Level 3 Pre-Intermediate (1200 headwords)
- Level 4 Intermediate (1700 headwords)
- Level 5 Upper Intermediate (2300 headwords)
- Level 6 Advanced (3000 headwords)

Besides, the Common European Framework indicate another taxonomy of the linguistic level of a graded reader:

- 1º ESO: A1
- 2º ESO: A2
- 3º ESO: B1
- 4º ESO: B1-B2
- 1º BACH.: B2
- 2º BACH.: B2-C1

2.3. Benefits of the Use of DLG in EFL Classroom

Dialogical Literary Gatherings offer a wide range of benefits which can be described among the following (CREA, 2016; Chocarro de Luis, 2013; Lozano, Iglesias, Giner & Sauleda, 2019):

- DLGs have the capacity to develop people’s interest in reading. Students are thought to develop curiosity in books in a more entertaining and handy way. It is a great opportunity for engaging all kind of people to literature. Thus, students are going to enhance their reading skills and literacy.
- Students are also going to improve their communicative competence because they will have to discuss and demonstrate their personal opinions and thoughts

about the books. In addition to this, there is evidence that shows that Dialogic Literary Gatherings foster egalitarian interactions because all participants have the opportunity to talk and express themselves. Moreover, they respect all the opinions and they learn from their peers. Therefore, students are placed in an egalitarian scenario in which participation is not difficult to achieve; all answers are right and they all have something to say about their interpretations and thoughts about the text so students are not afraid of participating. In this vein, Barros-del Rio, Álvarez & Roldán (2020) conducted a case study in Spain to know the benefits of DLGs in the initial training of pre-service teachers of English in a Master's programme. The students were non-native speakers of English. In the study, the authors concluded that Dialogic Gatherings "engaged participants in a critical understanding of the teaching-learning process of English as a Foreign Language, assisting their teacher identity construction process" (Barros-del Rio, Álvarez & Roldán, 2020, p. 1). On the one hand, self-reflection is enhanced by means of Dialogic Gatherings, fostering group empathy and self-identification in students. Moreover, one student felt that she had to read more carefully because she had to comment upon the readings in the gatherings. On the other hand, students of the master's degree constructed 'a critical professional identity' (p. 8) thanks to the implementation of DGs. Besides, since students knew that they all were going to talk, they changed the way they saw participation as something not to be embarrassed of.

- DLGs encourage some essential values such as solidarity, patience, tolerance and consideration with others' opinion. DLGs encourage reading and favour the creation of connections among the participants. Besides the fact that they provide personal opinions, this practice leads to know some personal characteristics of other participants. We have to take into account that students are going to come from different backgrounds, and therefore, their cultural traditions and habits are going to be diverse. Thus, these gatherings can be used as an implicit way of dealing with interculturality since the experiences of each participant determine the interpretations of the lecture. Moreover, the gatherings develop empathy because students learn to put themselves in the other's shoes. They feel empathy for the characters of the books and for their classmates. In conclusion, DLGs allow students to know each other and understand their different point of views considering the same fact.
- Students consider Dialogic Literary Gatherings an advantageous practice for their learning because they are able to listen and present different point of views in order to contrast, reflect and create new meaning in a collective way.

Furthermore, using literature to teach foreign languages also present several advantages since it is a way to teach both language skills and for students to acquire the

communicative competences defined in the CEFR. Firstly, literature is a material which is authentic because it uses real examples of a language. Then, students are going to be exposed to language that they are going to use and therefore they will realize it is a meaningful material for their lives. One of the major advantages of using literature is that learners normally read books using a language planned for native speakers, so they get familiarized with language forms they would not see if they did not read them (Collie and Slater, 1990).

Secondly, Collie and Slater (1990) described that using literature provides people with cultural enrichment. People usually thinks that it is essential to know the culture of the country to understand the way they think. Therefore, if students make use of the literature they can read, they will understand that there are other ways of thinking about several issues such as beliefs or behaviours. Thus, students are going to take advantage by dint of literary works.

Thirdly, students will realize they are enhancing their knowledge of a language both, when reading at home and during the gatherings. As previously pointed out, using literature in DLGs can effectively help students learn the different skills of a language: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. As we have said in section 2.1., we have chosen to focus on the oral skill because it is the most essential skill to be successful in our globalised world (Collie and Slater, 1990).

Finally, learners will become more interested in the story itself than in the learning of the language. However, since they will use the language to read it, to speak about it and to listen about it, students will unconsciously improve their communicative competences. They will get involved in the story and they will want to discover the point of the story and they will want to look like some characters (Collie and Slater, 1990).

2.4. Development of Communicative Competence through DLGs in EFL

As the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages states, the Communicative Competence is constituted by linguistic competences, sociolinguistic competences and pragmatic competences. As we will explain, through the use of the DLGs in the EFL class, students will work on and develop all these competences.

The linguistic competence is defined by the CEFR (p. 109) as 'knowledge of, and ability to use, the formal resources from which well-formed, meaningful messages may be assembled and formulated.' Needless to say, the linguistic competence (formed by the lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic and orthoepic competence) is developed first in the first stage of the process of DLGs. Thanks to the reading of the books students not only will improve their lexical competence (learning new vocabulary), but also their grammatical competence, acquiring knowledge

incidentally of different grammatical structures of the foreign language. In addition to this, we can outline that literature usually includes a lot of *sentential formulae* and *phrasal idioms* that students will learn incidentally; this lexical knowledge will be advantageous and useful for other skill of EFL, such as writing. Students will be able to use these fixed expressions in their writing tasks when practicing this skill in other class sessions. If they see them in 'real' and 'natural' situations, students will understand that these expressions are useful and meaningful, so they will use them in other communicative situations in their lives.

The semantic, phonological and orthographic competence can be improved, as it does in our Didactic unit with the chosen book, in the sessions in which DLGs are not carried out. As an illustration and in relation to the semantic competence, students can improve this competence by means of activities related to the book, of lexical classification, semantic fields, hyponymy, synonyms/antonyms, etc. In addition, these activities will improve the quality of students' vocabulary because they will be practicing with all types of words: verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc.

Regarding the phonological competence, learners will develop it by doing activities related to sounds. As an illustration, teachers can give students a sound which they have problems with and they have to search for words in the book that includes the same sound. Moreover, they can say some words out loud to make sure that they have acquired that phoneme.

The orthographic competence can be improved, for instance, by doing a spelling competition. Students may consider it as a funny way of learning how difficult words are written because they are 'playing' at the same time.

Moreover, the orthoepic competence will be practiced in the DLGs when students are required to read aloud the part of the text they have chosen to comment in front of their classmates. They will have to produce a correct pronunciation of the written form of their speeches about the chosen extract, hence, they will have to know the spelling conventions, how to search for a word in the dictionary to check its pronunciation, the intonation and reading aloud taking into account punctuation marks.

Furthermore, in relation to the sociolinguistic competence, which can be defined as 'the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use (CEFR, p. 118), we have to highlight that students will enhance this competence when participating in the Dialogic Literary Gatherings because they will have to use the language to share their ideas with their classmates. At the same time, they will have to use the different sociolinguistic components. Each student will have to bear in mind the different conventions for turntaking (to ensure an egalitarian participation, fundamental aspect in DLGs), the politeness conventions and register when talking with their

classmates in the gatherings. Moreover, they have to be respectful with the opinions of the other colleagues.

On the other hand, the sociolinguistic competence is also developed when commenting upon the chosen book in the gatherings because students will use the language within a social context. They will have a conversation with students coming from different cultural backgrounds; hence, this will develop in the students' mind a sense of multiculturalism because they will realize how diverse cultures think differently about the same issue.

Furthermore, as we have just pointed out, students need to have an idea of the conventions for turntaking in order to have an egalitarian participation.

Thirdly, the CEFR (p. 123) defines the pragmatic competence as 'the user/learner's knowledge of the principles according to discourse competence, functional competence and design competence.' Concerning the discourse competence, they will have to debate in the DLG taking into account that their message is convenient, organized, structured and ordered. Since students prepare beforehand what they are will say, they can check if they have problems with some kind of structure, or with the coherence and cohesion of the ideas they want to express in the gatherings. Learners will realize they can convey their message in English in front of their classmates and therefore, they will have less inhibition. This practice will create the perfect atmosphere in order to learn English because students will perceive that learning and using the language is useful for communicating ideas and opinions.

Unconsciously, students will consider and apply the microfunctions and the macrofunctions of the pragmatic competence in the DLGs. Microfunctions are considered the 'categories for the functional use of single (usually short) utterances' (CEFR, p. 125). When we talk, we previously think the intention of our utterance, that is to say, if students want to ask, answer, express emotions or report knowledge. For instance, learners will express if they agree or disagree with their classmates about a topic that arises in the gathering. In addition, for example, they will express their emotions when talking about what they have liked about the book, what have surprised them or if they feel gratitude about something.

On the other hand, macrofunctions are 'categories for the functional use of spoken discourse or written text consisting of a (sometimes extended) sequence of sentences' (CEFR, p. 126). Students will be practicing some of these macrofunctions, for instance, when explaining why they have chosen one specific extract or when they are narrating their life experience about a topic that has appeared in the book.

2.5. Possible limitations

As we have learned in the previous sections, Dialogic Literary Gatherings offer several advantages in the students' learning process in general and especially when improving their communicative competences in English. However, it is important to highlight some challenges that teachers may encounter when carrying out this practice. If teachers know the difficulties which are possible to be found, the limitations and their effects may be reduced to a minimum.

Several studies have come to the conclusion that introvert students do not participate as much as other participants. Therefore, the teacher must encourage these students to participate and be aware of the importance of an egalitarian participation because extrovert students may contribute more than introvert students. Although the atmosphere of the activity may be favorable to talk, some students will be reluctant to do so (Chocarro de Luis, 2013).

Furthermore, teachers may find that some students have academic difficulties with a book because they do not understand the text or its topic (Lozano, Iglesias, Giner & Sauleda, 2019). Thus, in the first place, books must be relevant for them so that students can feel identified with the experiences of the characters in the different stories. Secondly, as we have explained in point 2.2.6., teachers have to choose books in which the difficulty of the language is suitable to their linguistic level. In the third place, texts should be long enough to catch the attention of the students, and if the text has many details, students may feel distracted and may lose the track of the story. Finally, teachers must check that the literary works portray a culture that students are able to understand and the themes within the books do not cause offence to them (McRae, 1994).

3. Didactic unit

Title: *Talking about Literature: Oliver Twist*

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. Justification

As it was explained in the beginning of our literary review, enhancing the speaking skill must be an essential objective for teachers since students find it the most difficult skill to learn. Learners usually think that they are going to make errors if they speak, so they feel embarrassed and therefore, reluctant to speak. Teachers should implement innovative practices in order to know how to help students to enhance the speaking skill. It can only be improved if they have time to practice the oral English, so that the sooner learners begin to practice it, the faster they will reach a good level.

As a way to help students improve their speaking skills, our Didactic unit will follow the methodology of Dialogic Literary Gatherings, using a graded reader: *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens (Pearson English Reader). The reasons that justify this choice are the following ones: first, this graded reader book is adapted to the level B1 (according to the levels defined in the CEFR) and it fits with the average level of the class. Secondly, as it was said in the literary review, the literary works that students use in the DLGs have to belong to Universal Literature. The third reason is that students may find themselves identified with the story and the characters due to the age of students. In addition to this, students will learn some essential values that are portrayed in the book.

The Didactic unit under discussion becomes purposeful and meaningful from, at least, two different standpoints. On the one hand, as the curriculum establishes students are expected to interact with peers, relatives, friends or the like expressing causes and consequences and ideas through conditionals and to express personal thoughts and ideas (related to the book itself) in written and oral form. The Didactic unit proposed fosters such interactions.

On the other hand, this Didactic unit will introduce students to basic cultural traits so that they can develop a concern for reading (by means of the reading of the book and activities related to the book) and open their eyes to different realities/worlds, which is a paramount objective. They will notice the importance of this issue in their real lives, at the same time they learn the English language.

This Didactic unit is the 7th of the academic year, so it will take place in the third term. It contains 8 sessions of 50/55 minutes each.

3.1.2. Contextualization

The present lesson plan is aimed at students of the 4th year of Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE) with an average age of fifteen and sixteen. It has been designed for a group of thirty students. Broadly speaking, the students' curricular level may fit that of intermediate level (B1). However, in case there are some students who need more practice, they will have reinforcement activities.

The school in which this Didactic unit will be taught is located in Motril (Granada) and it will be carried out at IES Julio Rodríguez, which is a Compulsory Education School (CES). Motril has approximately 60.592 inhabitants and its economy is based on activities within the sectors of tourism and agriculture. Motril is a very important city tourism-wise, since it is one of the most visited and famous places in the province of Granada because of its coastal location.

In relation to the position of pupils in class, they are typically sitting in pairs. However, in the sessions in which the DLGs are developed, students will be arranged in

a position in which speaking atmosphere will be enhanced, such as in a circle or in a U-shape.

With regard to the characteristics of the students, it is essential to mention that there is one student with special educational needs: she is a student with visual impairment. Also, there is a student who joined the class after the beginning of classes, concretely at the end of the first term.

3.2. Temporalization

The unit is divided into eight sessions of fifty-five minutes each and it has been programmed for the third term of school year. The last session of each week will be dedicated to Dialogic Literary Gatherings, concretely in the fourth and the eighth session. Before these two sessions, the class and the teacher will reach an agreement concerning the number of pages that students will read at home for each gathering.

This Didactic unit will be implemented during the third and the fourth week of April:

SCHEDULE					
Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3 rd week	Session 1	Session2	—	Session 3	Session 4
4 th week	Session 5	Session 6	—	Session 7	Session 8

Table 1. Programmed time schedule

The different elements that this Didactic unit comprises -didactic objectives, contents, methodology and evaluation- contribute, on the one hand, to the acquisition of a FL ultimate goal: communication; and on the other, to the development of the ensuing key competences defined in the Compulsory Secondary Education curriculum:

3.3. Competences and Objectives

As the Royal Decree 1105/2014, the Decree 111/2016 and the Order ECD/65/2015 state, the fourth year of Compulsory Secondary Education establishes eight key competences:

- I. Linguistic communication (CLC).
- II. Mathematical competence and key competences in science & technology (CMST).
- III. Digital competence (DC).

- IV. Learning to learn competence (L2L).
- V. Social and civic competences (SCC)
- VI. Initiative and entrepreneurship (SIE).
- VII. Cultural expressions and artistic awareness (CAE)
(Order ECD/65/2015, p. 6988)

Following the Royal Decree 1105/2014, the Decree 111/2010 and the Order ECD/65/2015, this Didactic unit will enhance the following competences:

- Communicative competence in one's mother tongue and in a foreign language (I). The proposed activities in this Didactic unit seek promoting real communication in English in the classroom. Students will do activities to advance their oral and written skills. They will have to do oral activities in which communication is established with the teacher or among students and different writing tasks to enhance their written skill.
- Social and civic competence (V). This competence includes the respect for other cultures or lifestyles. With this Didactic unit, students will become aware of changing views held by a particular people, in this case, British people in the Victorian Era and how those views have changed in our current society.
- Cultural and artistic expressions (VI). Students are in contact with literary works from another country or culture. In this Didactic unit, students will read a literary work and will do activities related to the story. This kind of activities promote the varieties of cultures and the importance of art.
- Learning to learn competence (VII). Through this competence, students have to develop their own abilities and they should work on their own. This Didactic unit contains some activities which promote cooperative work as well as individual learning. Students will improve this competence when they use the dictionary to write a formal letter and a script for a play. Moreover, students will also develop this competence when doing the work previous to the gathering, working on their own strategies to reflect on the reading and to choose the ideas they feel identified with. In addition to this, they will have to prepare what they will say in the gatherings.
- Autonomy and initiative (Entrepreneurship) (VIII). Students acquire social skills, develop cooperative skills and work in groups. For that reason, in this Didactic unit these skills are promoted through activities such as the Dialogic literary gatherings themselves, creating the script of a play, and working in groups when they play the Treasure Hunt.

In addition, this Didactic unit is planned so students work on their communicative competence as defined in The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001, pp. 13-14; 108-130). The CEFR divides the communicative competence into:

- Linguistic competence. According to the CEFR, in this competence, the lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic and orthoepic competence are included. All these competences will be worked on in the proposed Didactic unit. First, with the use of a graded reader, this Didactic unit develops the lexical competence and the grammatical competence when students read the book chosen for the DLGs because they will learn new vocabulary and grammatical structures incidentally. Moreover, students will acquire *sentential formulae* and *phrasal idioms* due to the considerable inclusion of them in literature.

In relation to the semantic competence, students will work on it by means of activities of synonyms and antonyms included in the Didactic unit. These activities will help students widen their vocabulary.

Concerning the phonological competence, learners will work on it by doing an activity related to sound identification. Students usually have problems when they have to identify sounds, so this type of activity will help them do so.

The orthographic competence will be also improved in this Didactic unit through the activity devoted to spelling competition. Students will be keen on learning how difficult words are written so as to win the game.

Finally, as we have said in point 2.4., the orthoepic competence will be practiced when learners are required in the sessions devoted to DLGs to read aloud the extract they have chosen.

- Sociolinguistic competence. In this Didactic Unit, students will come into contact with a language register which differs from the language they are used to using in class. Reading and commenting on the book in the DLG sessions will help students familiarize with a literary use of the language. Moreover, students will work on this sociolinguistic competence when they participate in the DLGs. Students will develop this competence when participating in the DGLs because they will have to use the language to share their ideas with their classmates. Each student will have to bear in mind the different conventions for turntaking, the politeness conventions and register when talking with their classmates in the gatherings. Moreover, they will have to be respectful with the opinions of the other colleagues.

Besides, the sociolinguistic competence will be developed when commenting upon the chosen paragraphs from the book in the gatherings because students will use the language within a social context.

- Pragmatic competence. The CEFR states that this competence is related to "the mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence, the identification of text types and forms, irony and parody" (2001, p.13). In this didactic unit, students will have to comment on ideas taken from the book chosen for the DLGs, taking into account that their message is appropriate and well-organized. In addition to this, in this Didactic unit, students will have to write a formal letter. In order to do that, they will have to know the differences between a formal and an informal register, the structure of type of text they are writing and they will have to make sure that the letter they are writing is appropriate in terms of coherence and cohesion.

Moreover, when elaborating this Didactic unit, the general objectives defined in the Compulsory Secondary Education curriculum (Royal Decree 1105/2014), have been taken into account. The general objectives for the students of this stage that will be worked on in this Didactic unit are the following:

- a) To assume their duties responsibly, get to know and exercise their rights respecting the others to practise tolerance, cooperation and solidarity and to utilise the dialogue in order to consolidate human rights and equality of treatment between men and women as the key principles of a pluralistic society and to get ready to exercise a democratic citizenship.
- b) To get into the habit of working individually and cooperatively, of showing effort and becoming responsible in one's studies and to recognize these as necessary variables to succeed in school tasks and as a means of personal growth.
- c) To assess and respect both the differences between sexes and the principle of equal rights and opportunities between them. To reject any kind of stereotyping that might imply man woman discrimination.
- d) To develop affective capacities within all possible spheres of their personality and social relationships, together with attitudes completely opposed to any kind of violence, prejudices and sexist stereotypes, and favouring a peaceful resolution of conflicts.
- g) To bolster entrepreneurship and to develop attitudes of self-confidence, critical awareness, personal initiative, cooperation, curiosity, and interest to foster learning to learn strategies and also skills to plan, take decisions and assume responsibilities.
- i) To convey and interpret messages appropriately in at least one foreign language. (RD 1105/2014, pp. 176-177)

In this way, Dialogic Literary Gatherings will foster an egalitarian participation in among students, taking into account that equality and tolerance must be present in today's society. Moreover, in this Didactic unit individual and group work will be carried out, since students have to learn diverse ways of working with the different tasks in order to be a person prepared for interacting within the society. In addition to this, students will work on socialisation speaking with their classmates in the DLGs and they will also have to cooperate in order to complete some tasks of this Didactic unit, such as the Treasure Hunt. Therefore, they will learn to achieve a proper resolution of conflicts. Furthermore, students will have the responsibility and decision of carrying out some tasks such as the short play and the formal letter. Also, the action of performing in the play in front of their classmates will enhance their self-confidence.

Finally, when elaborating this Didactic unit, the following objectives related to the teaching of Foreign Language (Order July 14th 2016) have been taken into account:

1. To comprehend global and specific information from oral texts intended for diverse communicative situations, adopting an attitude of respect and cooperation.
2. To be able to produce oral texts and interact in the course of familiar communicative events both comprehensibly and adequately but also to use the dialogue as a means to sort conflicts out peacefully.
3. To comprehend written texts previously adapted to students' proficiency level and interests with the idea of scanning and skimming through them but also complementing their information with other sources so as to with a critical spirit derive new knowledge.
4. To appreciate reading in all its possible media as a source of pleasure and/or personal growth.
5. To produce brief and simple written texts aimed at different purposes and built upon distinct topics, making use of the appropriate cohesive and coherent devices.
6. To make an accurate use of the phonetic, lexical, syntactic discursive and functional components of the FL in real communicative contexts.
8. To develop an aptitude for teamwork, rejecting stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination on the basis of sex or any other personal or social condition or circumstance while, on the contrary, strengthening those social bounds and affective/emotional abilities which seem essential to solve conflicts peacefully
10. To appreciate foreign languages as channels for communication, cooperation and understanding between people from different origins and

cultures, fostering solidarity and respect to human rights whilst, at the same time, exercising democratic citizenship.

12. To show a receptive approach towards L2 learning and to develop a self-confident attitude in one's own capacity to learn and make a creative use a foreign language to take the lead and participate always showing a critical attitude in FL communicative exchanges. (Order July 14th 2016, pp. 212-213)

In this sense, as previously pointed out, this Didactic unit will help students improve their speaking skill because they will have to use the oral language by means of DLGs in order to express and discuss about their beliefs from the book. Thus, students will also improve their listening skill while they listen to their opinions' classmates. They will be capable of understanding what their classmates think about particular aspects of the book. Moreover, they will improve their reading skill and their ability to understand more complex ideas thanks to the reading of the chosen book, in this case, *Oliver Twist*. Therefore, the objective of appreciating reading will be fostered among students. Moreover, students will enhance their writing skill when producing texts, such as the formal letter. Besides, in order to work on the orthographic competence, this Didactic unit has included an activity (the spelling contest) in which students have to spell some words from the book to see if their classmates are able to guess the word. Finally, as we have described throughout the whole paper, Dialogic Literary Gatherings will make students feel that the English language is a useful and globalised channel for communication, fostering a sense of multiculturalism.

Therefore, the Didactic Objectives, the Stage Objectives, the Foreign Language Objectives and the Key Competences that this Didactic unit comprises can be summarised as follows:

Didactic Objectives	Stage Objectives	FL objectives	Key Competences
	RD 1105/2014 D 111/2016	Order July 14th 2016	RD 1105/2014 D 111/2016
1) To develop students' oral skill through the expression of personal thoughts, discussion of ideas, comparison of images, and by means of acting as students were characters in a play. 2) To learn social, historical and cultural aspects from the book. 3) To learn the structure of a formal letter. 4) To work in groups to answer games and tasks related to historical and cultural aspects from the book. 5) To understand English information and instructions from the teacher and the activities.	a, b, c, d, g, i	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12	CLC, L2L, SCC, SIE, CAE

3.4. Contents

The contents (as can be seen in the table below) have a close relationship with the didactic objectives. These are the contents of the Unit:

Contents	
COMPREHENSION AND PRODUCTION STRATEGIES • Reflecting on the ideas of the book • Answering comprehension questions • Identifying and understanding vocabulary, expressions and grammatical structures in the book, in oral and written texts	COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS • Producing oral explanations of the chosen extract from the book in the gatherings • Producing written texts: a formal letter and the script for a play • Speaking about consequences and causes using the first and second conditional
LINGUISTIC COMPONENTS • First and second conditional • Reported Speech • Vocabulary related to the book and the Victorian Era	SOCIOCULTURAL AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC ASPECTS • Cultural and History knowledge (Victorian England) • Reflecting on the actions and values that are portrayed in the book, characteristic of the Victorian Era

3.5. Methodology

This Didactic unit has been designed following a methodology based on a communicative approach in which a constant interaction is promoted, since the main goal of foreign languages is communication. In order to achieve this, not only will students be permanently exposed to oral and written English language, but also, they will produce it. Furthermore, the vocabulary and the grammar contents are presented in a natural way showing real examples taken from literary and authentic materials. Students will acquire the previous contents through games and motivating exercises.

The teacher will become a guide for students to acquire knowledge within the classroom. Then, in order to help students to complete the tasks, he or she will circulate

around the classroom. In addition to this, this action will also help the teacher to see if they are working on the tasks. On the other hand, the role of the teacher will change for the sessions in the Dialogic Literary Gatherings since he or she will act as a moderator, giving turn takings and taking notes on their contributions.

Moreover, tasks will follow a transition which include warm-up activities and exercises which function as input for the realization of those coming afterwards. The main vehicle of communication will be English although Spanish will be allowed when appropriate. Concerning mistakes, some errors will be permitted since they are part of the learning process.

Students will be sitting in pairs but in such a way that students with a lower-level of proficiency will sit and work with students who show a higher level so that the latter help students who have difficulties in completing and understanding tasks in English.

In addition to this, this Didactic unit is intended to be taught at the same time students are reading the chosen book and doing the Dialogic Literary Gatherings. Having said that, students will work with contents that are familiar to them because they are related to the novel. Thus, it will be easier to teach those contents. Finally, collaborative and motivating activities are the main focus of the sessions.

3.6. Cross-curricular elements

Cross-curricular elements are a must in current educational practices. As educators, beyond teaching contents, we need to foster life-long learning and instruct values that our students may well need when facing real situations. In the case of this unit, it is paramount to include the following cross-curricular elements:

1. Multicultural education: cultural aspects such as the main ones of Victorian England are discussed.
2. The knowledge of moral values, which include, among others, empathy, justice, freedom, and equality.
3. The development of social abilities by means of participation, taking into account the teaching of the aforementioned values.

3.7. Interdisciplinarity

In this Didactic unit, there are some topics and values (as the ones mentioned in the previous section) that may be taught within the foreign language context, as there is a connection with other subjects in the students' curriculum. In this case those subjects are:

1. History: the novel they have to read is set in Victorian England so students will read about those people's way of living. In addition to this, some exercises are also connected to this part of the England's history.

2. Moral and Civic education: students have to distinguish and discuss upon actions that are (im)moral.

3.8. Attention to diversity

As said before, there is a student with visual impairment; hence, there will be an academic intervention for her:

- The pupil will sit next to the teacher so she may be provided with some additional help.
- Every slide/picture/exam/worksheets will be enlarged so these materials are easier to read.

Moreover, as previously pointed out, one student has joined the group after classes had started. Thus, the teacher will provide this student with reinforcement activities when needed. Additionally, these activities will be useful for learners who need more practice.

On the other hand, a set of some extension activities has been put together for learners who finish the planned activities earlier. These activities will be related to the grammar structures taught in this Didactic unit, that is, first and second conditionals and reported speech. Examples of extension and reinforcement activities can be found in the appendix 1.

3.9. Materials and resources

In the teaching of this Didactic unit, the following materials and resources will be used:

- Reading material: Graded reader Oliver Twist (Appendix 2)
- Blackboard and interactive whiteboard
- Overhead Projector
- Computer
- Internet connection
- Power Point presentations
- Dictionary
- Photocopies
- Pens, notebook

3.10. Evaluation

<u>EVALUATION CRITERIA</u>

In order to evaluate the learning outcomes of this Didactic unit, the following objectives have been taken into account:

- **Listening comprehension:**

1.1. To identify relevant information in short oral texts. CLC, DC.

1.8. To know and value the sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects: historical and geographic characteristic in English speaking countries. L2L, SCC, CAE.

- **Speaking and interaction:**

2.1. To produce short and medium length texts with a clear structure in a formal and informal register. CLC, DC, SIE.

2.6. To use a great lexical repertoire to communicate in usual and unusual situations. CLC, L2L.

2.7. To pronounce and modulates the voice in a clear and intelligible way. CLC, L2L.

- **Reading comprehension:**

3.1. To identify relevant information in any written text. CLC, CMST, DC.

3.3. To know and use the sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects to comprehend texts related to a way of living, social structure, etc. CLC, SCC.

3.8. To identify cultural and geographic elements which are typical of English speaking countries and cultures. L2L, SCC, CAE.

- **Writing production:**

4.1. To write short and medium length texts with a clear structure in a formal and informal register. CLC, DC, SIE.

4.3. To incorporate the sociocultural and sociolinguistic knowledge acquired to produce written texts. CLC, SCC, SIE.

4.8. To value the foreign language as a means of communication. SIE, CAE.

(Order 14th July 2016, pp. 215-219)

Related to the process of evaluation, the following instruments and criteria of evaluation have been established:

<u>INSTRUMENTS OF EVALUATION¹</u>	<u>CRITERIA OF EVALUATION</u>
- Scale for daily observation of students - Scoring rubric for the formal letter - Scoring Likert scale for the play - Test	- Daily work and attitude: 20% - Participation in the gatherings: 20% - Content knowledge: 30% - Participation in the short play: 15% - Formal letter: 15%

3.11. Step by step lesson plan

Acronyms:

- Individual work: IW
- Pair work: PW
- Group work: GW
- Whole class: WC

Session 1 – 55 min			
Activity	Timing	Skill	Grouping pattern
Video	15'	Listening and speaking	WC
Treasure Hunt	25'	Listening, reading, speaking and writing	GW IW
Cover of the books	10'	Speaking and listening	WC
Brainstorming session	5'	Speaking and listening	WC

¹ See Appendix 3

Session 2 – 55 min			
Activity	Timing	Skill	Grouping pattern
Vocabulary activity	10'	Reading and writing	IW
Song “Time After Time” and grammar explanation	35'	Listening, reading and speaking	WC
Victorian food	10'	Speaking and listening	WC

Session 3 – 55 min			
Activity	Timing	Skill	Grouping pattern
Pass the pig	15'	Listening and speaking	GW
Short play	25'	Reading, writing and speaking	GW
Formal letter	15'	Listening and writing	IW

Session 4 – 55 min			
Activity	Timing	Skill	Grouping pattern
Dialogic Literary Gatherings	55'	Speaking, listening and reading	IW WC

Session 5 – 55 min			
Activity	Timing	Skill	Grouping pattern
For and against	10'	Speaking	WC
Assumptions	15'	Writing	IW
Reported speech	20'	Reading, writing and listening	PW WC
Synonyms	10'	Reading and speaking	PW

Session 6 – 55 min			
Activity	Timing	Skill	Grouping pattern
Spelling contest	15'	Listening, speaking and writing	PW WC
The story of Oliver Twist	20'	Reading	IW

Victorian Age	20'	Listening and writing	IW
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Session 7 – 55 min			
Activity	Timing	Skill	Grouping pattern
To steal or not to steal	15'	Speaking and writing	GW
Guess who game	15'	Speaking and listening	PW
Test	20'	Reading	IW

Session 8 – 55 min			
Activity	Timing	Skill	Grouping pattern
Dialogic Literary Gatherings	55'	Speaking, listening and reading	IW WC

SESSIONS

SESSION 1:

1. Video. (WC; 10')

This activity will help students to get familiarized with the scenery, the setting and the characters of the story.

Students will watch the following video, which is the trailer of the film '*Oliver!*':

Link video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvKJ1wZmzjE>

After watching the video, students will be requested by the teacher to answer questions about the book:

- Have you ever heard of this story?
- What do you think is the topic of this book? Human rights, love, war, women, comedy, etc.?
- Where do you think the story is set?
- Do you think is it a sad or a happy story?
- What do you think about the characters' clothes? Are they similar to clothes we wear in these days?

2. Task: Treasure Hunt (GW, IW; 25')

Go around the room and read the information posters displayed on the walls (see below). As you go around the room you need to fill in the following answer sheet. You will then become Victorian history experts!

ANSWER SHEET

1. When was the Poor Law Amendment Act and what did it mean for poor people?
2. What were conditions like in workhouses? Find three facts.
3. Find two rules for life in the workhouse.
4. Find two common occupations for women in the Victorian period.
5. Which common illnesses (preventable today) affected people in the Victorian period? Find three.
6. Find two differences between the lives of rich and poor children in the Victorian period.
7. What were the free charity schools for poor children called?
8. Find two leisure activities that the rich spent their free time doing.

POSTERS

2

Houses for the poor

- More people moved from the countryside to the cities to find work in factories.
- Cities, especially London, were overcrowded.
- People crowded into already crowded houses.
- Rooms were rented to whole families or perhaps several families. Each family would have 4-5 children/
- Factory owners often built houses for their workers but this didn't make standards better.

3

Transport

- The most common form of transport was the horse (and cart)
- The steam engine had been invented and trains connected towns for the first time
- The poor only travelled by foot!



The teacher displays the posters on the walls with information related to the Victorian society: work, education, transport, etc. Two examples have been previously portrayed to give an idea of the structure of the posters. Students are arranged in groups of four and they have to move around the class to complete their answer sheets.

Then, after students try to give the answers of all the questions and comment upon them to the teacher, the teacher shows a PowerPoint presentation which indicates the answers of the Treasure Hunt. The teacher has to check their answers to see if they have understood what they have read. After this, the teacher explains some characteristics of the Victorian society to introduce students to the society they will be reading in the book.

3. Cover of the books (WC; 10')

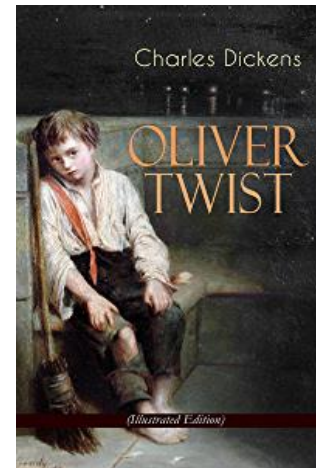
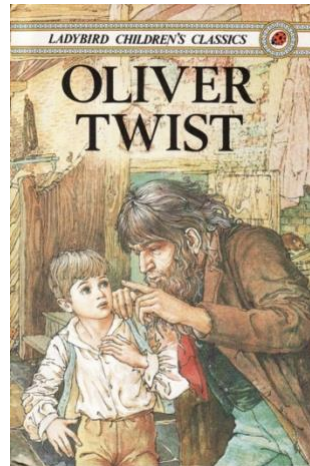
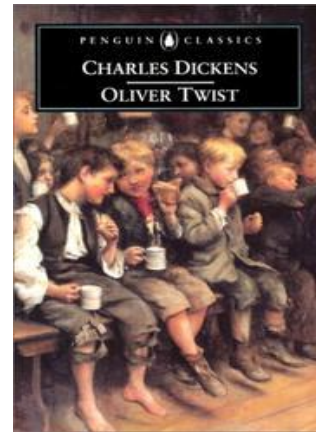
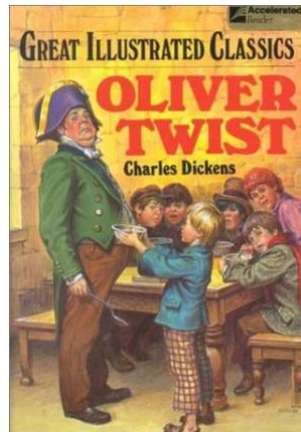
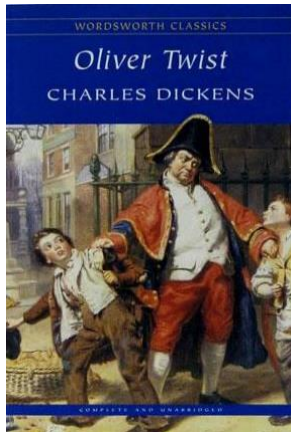
Students look at these six different books covers for *Oliver Twist*.

² Adapted from: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/victorian-homes/>

³ Adapted from: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/transport-land>

Image taken from: <https://horsesandhistory.wordpress.com/2011/05/02/transport-and-carriages-in-the-victorian-era-1837-1901/>

⁴What do they tell us about the story? *Make 3 predictions based on the covers.*



This activity will help students to have an idea about the story they are will read. They will have to describe the pictures and make predictions about the story. The teacher can point the covers and ask students about different aspects, such as “What is happening? Why do you think the man is chasing the boy? How does the boy feel?”

4. Brainstorming session (WC; 5')

The teacher and students will carry out a brainstorming session after the previous activities. Students will express their opinions about what the story of this book may offer them. The teacher can suggest the following questions: “Do you think you will

⁴ Images taken from: <https://www.elejandria.com/libro/oliver-twist/charles-dickens/551>,
<https://www.amazon.com/-/es/Charles-Dickens/dp/B000NGTBG0>,
<https://www.iberlibro.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=22838682430>,
<http://lamiradadeunlector.blogspot.com/2017/03/cuestionario-sobre-oliver-twist.html>,
<https://za.pinterest.com/pin/573927546239537013/>, <https://www.amazon.com/OLIVER-TWIST-Illustrated-Including-Criticism-ebook/dp/B06XCXY5D1>

enjoy the book? What do you think of the physical appearance of some characters of the story? Could you guess who the protagonists in the story are?"

Finally, the teacher and the students come to an agreement to prepare one chapter for the fourth session, in which the Dialogic Literary Gathering will be carried out. The teacher explains to students that they will read the agreed number of pages at home and choose at least one extract on which they will have to comment in the DLG session. The teacher tells them that in the gatherings they have to read the chosen extract and tell their classmates why they have chosen it. Moreover, students will also comment on the chosen extracts by the other classmates. Thus, the teacher explains that they have to do this preparatory work at home.

SESSION 2:

1. Vocabulary activity (IW; 10')

Match these important concepts that have appeared throughout the first and second chapter of Oliver Twist with their meanings.

1. Workhouse
2. Orphan
3. Foster father/mother
4. Servant
5. London
6. Despised

- a. Hated
- b. A place where poor people were made to work
- c. A child whose parents have died
- d. A person who looks after a child not his/her own
- e. A person who is employed to do work for another person
- f. The capital city of England and the United

The objective of this activity is to work on vocabulary related to the chosen book. With this activity teachers can check if students search in the dictionary for the words they do not understand.

2. Song "Time after time" (WC; 15')

The objective of this activity is to motivate students to relate the song to the topics dealt with so far in the reading they have done. Moreover, students will be introduced to the

grammar of this unit, which will be the “conditionals”. For this purpose, students will have to identify where the conditionals are, paying special attention to their structure.

The teacher will deliver a photocopy with the lyrics of the song and the activity. Firstly, they will listen to the song following the lyrics. Secondly, they will listen to the song again whilst they fill in the gaps with what they hear. If necessary, the song will be played three times.

Link song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KdBCFclSC0>

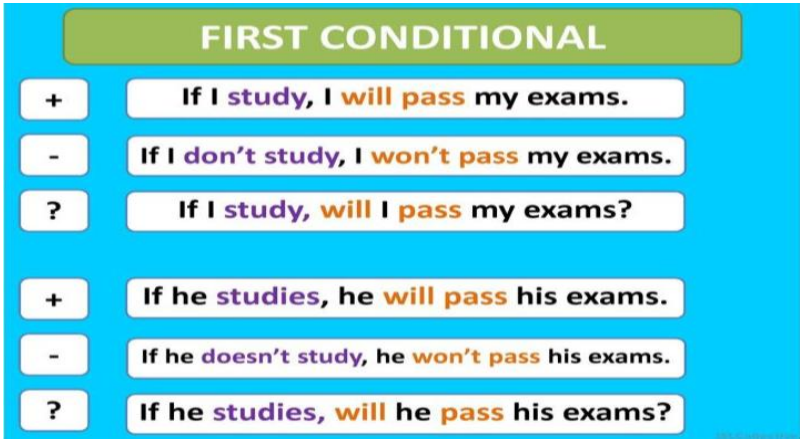
Lying in my bed, I hear the clock tick and think of you Caught up in _____ Confusion is nothing new Flashback, warm nights Almost left behind Suitcase of _____ Time after _____ you picture me I'm walking too far ahead You're calling to me, I can't hear What you've said Then you say, "go slow" And I fall behind The _____ hand unwinds If you're lost you can look and you will find me Time after time If you fall, I will catch you, I'll be waiting Time after time _____ you're lost, you can look and you will find me Time after time If you fall, I will catch you, I will be waiting Time after time	After my picture fades and darkness has Turned to grey Watching through windows You're _____ if I'm okay _____ stolen from deep inside And the drum beats out of time If you're lost you can look and you will find me Time after time If you _____ I will catch you, I'll be waiting Time after time If you're lost, you can look and you will find me Time after time If you fall, I _____ catch you, I'll be waiting Time after time Time after time I've got a _____ of memories that I almost left behind Time after time Time, time, time But you say to go slow but I fall behind Time after time after time (after time, oh)
--	--

In this way, grammar is presented to students in an inductive way because they understand why and how conditionals are used without having their teacher presenting the structure beforehand. After this activity, the teacher proceeds to explain the grammatical content in more detail and with many examples. Since the students already know the first conditional, it will be easier for them to understand the second conditional.

Explanation of grammatical content. (WC; 20')

The teacher provides the students with the following charts.

First conditional

Structure	IF + Present simple (condition clause), will + infinitive (result clause) Will + infinitive (result clause) , IF + Present simple (condition clause)
Usage	Talk about possibilities in the present or in the future
Examples	 Taken from: https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-powerpoints/grammar/first-conditional-1/first-conditional-rules/87468

Second conditional

Structure	IF + Past simple (condition clause) , would + infinitive (result clause) Would + infinitive (result clause) , IF + Past simple (condition clause)
Usage	Talk about things in the future that may happen (dreams, wishes) Talk about things in the present that are impossible
Examples	+ → If I won the lottery, I would buy a house — → If I didn't win the lottery, I wouldn't buy a house. ? → What would you do if you won the lottery? I would buy a house. Taken from: https://www.englishexercises.org/makeagame/viewgame.asp?id=15815

3. Victorian food (WC; 15')

Compare and contrast the following images. Which one would you prefer to eat? Which meal do you think rich people prefers?

Gruel: oats, water, salt.⁵



Steak⁶



⁵ Image taken from: <https://www.educationquizzes.com/11-plus/english/comprehension-2/>

⁶ Image taken from: <https://www.thespruceeats.com/marinated-top-round-steak-3060302>

The teacher will show students a Power Point presentation in which students can see the food that the characters in “Oliver Twist” eat. This activity will enhance in students the ability of oral skill because they will have to compare and contrast images. Moreover, students will learn the typical food that Victorian people ate and how similar or different these dishes are in relation to the food people eat in the present. For example, the teacher can ask them: *what would it be if you had to eat gruel every day?*

In the Power Presentation, students will watch twice the following video of the film *Oliver!* (1968) to give students an idea about how workshops operated when children had their lunch.

Link video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ly7PONiKGUs>

Moreover, students will have to answer the following questions:

- 1) What do you think is the reason why the children act like this?
- 2) Are the adult people eating the same? What are they eating?

SESSION 3:

1. Pass the pig (GW; 15')

The teacher will tell the students to stand up and form in two lines (teams). S/he will give them an item that will be thrown without causing injury. The teacher will set the timer on his phone to sound after 45 seconds, s/he will tell them the beginning half of a conditional sentence and the students have to give the other part of the conditional. The sentences will be related to the story of *Oliver Twist*.

For example, the teacher can tell students the following sentences:

If Oliver Twist were older...

If Oliver Twist were Spanish...

If Oliver Twist were my brother...

The reason of this game is to practice the second conditional introducing a gamified activity.

2. Short play (GW; 25')

The teacher divides the class into groups of 5. Each group has to create a kind of dialogue with the characters to perform a “short play”. Students can choose any character (for example, Oliver Twist, Fagin, Nancy, Dodger, Mr. Sowerberry...) and their lines in the dialogue so that it can be created by the students. For that, they can use their dictionary.

Students only have 15 minutes to write the lines of the play and remember them because the performance in front of their classmates will last two minutes maximum.

This activity is created with the idea on providing students with activities in which they can be spontaneous and their imagination is enhanced. Moreover, students will not refuse doing activities like this because they break with the routine and they can interact with their classmates.

The teacher will evaluate the presentation with the scale which is in the Appendix 3.

3. Formal letter (IW; 15')

Imagine you are someone living in a poor neighbourhood writing a letter to your friend from the present day, letting them know what life is like in this place.

Include descriptions of:

- the poverty
- the sights, smells and sounds of the place
- the unusual characters living there

Sentence Starters

Dear X from the future...

I am writing to let you know...

This place is...

The streets are...

The people are...

There are unusual smells like...

Since the structure and the register of the formal letter has been previously explained in the second term, the teacher will only revise it. Then, s/he will explain the formal letter (as portrayed before) that students will have to start in class, but they will have to finish it at home. Students will use the dictionary at home when necessary. The teacher will also explain that they may use at least two examples of one type of the two conditionals that they have previously seen. They will have to hand it to the teacher the following week because the next session will be devoted to Dialogic Literary Gatherings. The teacher will correct them at home and s/he will observe which common mistakes they make to prepare more work about them in the future. After this, the teacher will return the writings to the students and s/he shares his/her thoughts.

The scoring rubric of the formal letter is to be found in the appendix 3.

SESSION 4:

This is the first session in which Dialogic Literary Gathering is carried out. As we have previously pointed out at the end of the first session, students have been told the preparatory work they have to do at home.

In this session, the teacher begins by describing the methodology, which has been previously explained in point 1.2.5., of Dialogic Literary Gatherings. The teacher asks them if anyone wants to be the first person sharing his comment upon the extract he has chosen to comment in front of the class. He or she writes down the order of students who want to talk and the first person begins talking. As previously seen, the teacher has to organize turn takings and to make sure that participants follow the principles of Dialogic Learning.

Therefore, following the order of students who want to talk, they start reading the chosen extracts indicating the location of the extract that he or she has chosen, he reads it out loud and explains why s/he has chosen this idea and what it means to him/her. After this step, every participant has the opportunity to share their views about the meaning of the paragraph/idea. In this moment, it is very important that the teacher foster participation. After that, the teacher asks students if any other classmate has chosen the same extract or wants to comment upon the ideas or the chosen lines.

Afterwards, another turn taking is opened and the teacher writes down again the order of the participants who want to talk, and the process explained in the previous paragraph is repeated. Later, when the comments and the reading of the second part are completed, the teacher opens the third turntaking, and the previous process is repeated.

To conclude the session, the class chooses the pages that will be read for the next gathering. The teacher tells students to read the chosen chapter at home taking into account the comments and reflections shared in the session in order to get ready for the next session.

SESSION 5:

1. For and against (WC; 10')

- Was Fagin right in making the orphan children steal and make them believe that what they were doing was ok?
- Fagin made children believe that he cared for them. How do you feel about with this action?

You may use the following initial statements:

I'm not so sure.

I totally agree.

I don't think so

Maybe true, but...

2. Assumptions (IW; 15')

Imagine you could meet one character of the book. Who would you choose and what would you do together? (10 sentences)

For example: *If I met Oliver Twist, I would go...*

3. Explanation of reported speech (PW, WC; 20')

REPORTED SPEECH			
'I <u>know</u> quite a lot of people <u>here</u> .' Robert said.	Present Simple	Simple Past	He said that <u>he knew</u> quite a lot of people <u>there</u>
'John <u>is feeling</u> much better.' Paul said.	Present Continuous	Past Continuous	He said that John <u>was feeling</u> much better
'I <u>enjoyed</u> <u>my</u> holiday in the States' David said.	Simple Past	Past Perfect	He said that <u>he had enjoyed</u> <u>his</u> holiday in the States

Adapted from: <http://williamromero2773.blogspot.com/2017/08/reported-speech.html>

Transform the following sentences related to the story in direct speech into indirect speech.

1. "I want some more". Oliver Twist said.
2. "A reward of five pounds is offered to anyone who will employ Oliver Twist". A notice stated.
3. "Hurry up!" Mr. Bumble said.
4. "You're in a bad way!" The boy whistled.
5. "It is very kind of you to help me". Oliver said.
6. "He'll find work for you". The boy said.

Adapted from:

<https://books.google.es/books?id=HyUtDAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false>

The teacher points out at some sentences which are written in reported speech in the book. Then, the teacher explains this grammatical point using the previous table and adding more examples. After that, students have to do the previous exercise with sentences extracted from the book. This activity is made in pairs since it is the first time that students learn reported speech, so they can help each other. Afterwards, the sentences are corrected by the whole class and the teacher clarifies any doubts that may arise. In this way, students realize that reported speech is a grammatical point that we normally use without realising.

4. Synonyms (PW; 10')

Write the synonyms of the following words and mention their word class. You can check in the dictionary when necessary.

- a. *Apprentice:*
- b. *Gruel:*
- c. *Thin:*
- d. *Reward:*
- e. *Servant:*
- f. *Beg:*

This exercise has been introduced in the Didactic unit in order for students to widen their vocabulary. With this exercise, students will enhance their semantic competence with words that appear in the book. In addition to this, it will improve the quality of students' vocabulary because they will be practicing with all types of words: verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc.

SESSION 6:

1. Spelling contest (PW;15')

Spell the following words to your partner. Then, you have to write the word and how it is pronounced. Let's see who guess more words! You can also use other words from the book to make it more difficult.

- *Workhouse*
- *Twist*
- *Sowerberry*
- *Starve*

- *Handkerchief*

With this activity, students will enhance their orthographic competence. In this way, the teacher will observe if students are able to spell and pronounce difficult words in a correct way. We have previously given an example of an activity with words that appear in the book. Moreover, students will be willing to do it because they are not spelling the words to the whole class, since this can cause them inhibition. Moreover, the classmates can help each other if they do not know how to say a letter.

2. The story of Oliver Twist (IW; 20')

Read and order the following paragraphs which tell the summary of the story of *Oliver Twist*:

- Unfortunately for Nancy, news of her betrayal reaches Sikes, and he beats her to death. Sikes accidentally hangs himself soon after. The Maylies reunite Oliver with Mr. Brownlow, who forces Monks to explain himself. The reader and Oliver are then informed that Monks is Oliver's half-brother and that Oliver is entitled to a large fortune. He receives his share of the money, Fagin is hung, and the Maylies, Oliver, and Mr. Brownlow move to the countryside where they spend the rest of their days together.*
- He soon finds himself in the presence of the Artful Dodger, who tells him to stay at the house of an "old gentleman" (named Fagin) with a number of other boys. Oliver learns that these boys are trained pickpockets. Oliver witnesses the boys take a handkerchief from Mr. Brownlow, an elderly man, which prompts Oliver to run away in fear and confusion. The elderly man mistakes Oliver's behaviour for guilt and has him arrested. However, after learning more about Oliver, Mr. Brownlow realizes his mistake and offers to take care of him at his home.*
- Oliver assumes that he is now rid of Fagin and the pickpockets, but his knowledge of their crimes causes them to seek Oliver out. Nancy, a prostitute and mistress of one of Fagin's men, Bill Sikes, is sent to take Oliver from Mr. Brownlow back to Fagin. She does so successfully, and Oliver is sent on a burglary mission with another member of the group to the countryside around London.*
- Oliver, an orphan since birth, spends much of his childhood at a "child farm" (orphanage) with too many children and too little food. The farm is located roughly 70 miles outside London. One night, after being served his portion of gruel, Oliver asks for a second helping. Oliver is sent to work as an apprentice to an undertaker. Eventually, after suffering repeated mistreatment, Oliver runs away and heads for London.*

Text modified from: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Oliver-Twist-novel-by-Dickens>

3. Victorian Age (1W;20')

Link video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjOGs-GdEpIn>

1. How many socio-economic classes existed in the Victorian period? Mention by which people they were formed.
2. What was the key to success in the Victorian period?
3. How a traditional family looked like?
4. Were women able to vote? If not, what was their main goals in life?
5. Did children have time to play?
6. What is the main activity in a Sunday school?
7. How old are the children who work in the factory?
8. How many hours are the children allowed to work?

In order to improve the listening skill in this session, students will watch a short video about Victorian England in order to learn about some Victorian values and the life of people belonging to different socio-economic classes. Secondly, they will have to answer the previous questions to check if they have understood what they have listened.

Students will first read the questions of the video to see if they understand all the vocabulary and then, since they will not watch the whole video, it will be played twice so that they have time to listen and complete the questions. If there were questions that they had not been able to complete, they would complete them at home. Since this video is on YouTube, they can watch and repeat the video at home as many times as needed. The students' answers will be uploaded to Google Classroom so that the teacher can evaluate the individual listening skill.

SESSION 7:

1. To steal or not to steal (PW; 15')

In groups, discuss the following statements you have been given:

- It is never acceptable to steal.
- If somebody needs something and they can't afford it, they should steal it.
- It is okay to steal from a shop but never from a person.
- It is acceptable for a poor person to steal from a rich person.
- If the world were a fair place, people would never steal.

This session will start with a speaking activity related with one of the main topics within the book: robbery. Thanks to this activity, students will reflect upon this topic and they will use structures that will be useful in the DLGs.

Afterwards, they will create in common five bullet points stating the reasons why people may steal.

2. Guess who! (PW; 15')

The teacher will project the different characters of the book on the board and students will be divided in pairs. Student A will choose one person, without revealing their choice. Then, Student B will ask yes/no questions about their physical appearance, using the target language. For example, *Is it a man or a woman? Is she wearing a hat? Does she have blue eyes?* In this way, students will remove characters until they guess the character that student A has chosen. When they guess the character, they switch roles and repeat. The student who guesses more characters is the winner. The teacher can portray the images as the example below.



Oliver



The Artful Dodger



Fagin

Images taken from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/interactive/2011/sep/22/charles-dickens-interactive-wallchart>

It will be a beneficial gamified activity for students since they will review the characters of the book before doing the test. Moreover, it will be useful for them because they will be using the grammar and the vocabulary of the unit.

3. Test (IW; 25')

Choose the correct option.

1. Who runs the home for young orphans where Oliver lives for nine years?

- Mr. Bumble
- Mrs. Mann
- Agnes Fleming
- Miss Hannigan

2. How does Oliver violate the rules of the workhouse?

- By asking for more gruel
- By taking the Lord's name in vain
- By running a pickpocketing ring
- By spreading revolutionary ideology among the paupers

3. What is Mrs. Sowerberry's main complaint about children?

- They are too small.

- They are weak.
- They are unintelligent.
- They eat too much.

4. What is Mr. Sowerberry's profession?

- Undertaker
- Chef
- Butler
- Chimney sweep

5. What is Jack Dawkins's nickname?

- Toby Crackit
- The Artful Dodger
- Loopy
- The Jackal

6. What does Nancy pretend to be in order to drag Oliver back to Fagin?

- A truant officer
- Oliver's sister
- A workhouse official
- Oliver's mother

7. Who comes to Oliver's defense after Fagin recaptures him?

- Jack Dawkins
- Charley Bates
- Nancy
- Mr. Brownlow

8. What did Old Sally steal from Agnes Fleming?

- A will
- A marriage certificate
- An engraved watch
- A gold locket

9. What is Nancy's profession?

- Flower-seller

- Nurse
- Prostitute
- Artist

10. Dickens wrote *Oliver Twist* in response to what piece of legislation?

- The Law of Estates and Inheritance
- The Poor Law of 1834
- The institution of the death penalty
- The Decency Act

Adapted from: <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/oliver/quiz/>

SESSION 8:

This is the second and last session in which Dialogic Literary Gathering is carried out. The process that has been explained in session 4 is repeated in this session. The teacher asks students if anyone wants to be the first person sharing his comment upon the extract he has chosen to comment in front of the class. He or she writes down the order of students who want to talk and the first person begins talking.

Therefore, following the order of students who want to talk, they start reading the chosen extracts indicating the location of the extract that he or she has chosen, he reads it out loud and explains why s/he has chosen this idea and what it means to him/her. After this step, every participant has the opportunity to share their views about the meaning of the paragraph/idea. After that, the teacher asks students if any other classmate has chosen the same extract or wants to comment upon the ideas or the chosen lines.

Afterwards, another turn taking is opened and the teacher writes down again the order of the participants who want to talk, and the process explained in the previous paragraph is repeated. Later, when the comments and the reading of the second part are completed, the teacher opens the third and last turntaking, and the previous process is repeated.

4. Conclusions

This master's thesis argues that literature can be taught and used within the classroom in an interesting and exciting way. Students can enjoy learning a language through literary texts by means of an innovative practice, that is, Dialogic Literary Gatherings. As we have seen in the literary review, DLG is a motivating practice and the advantages that DLG offer to students are so numerous that it should be implemented in every school.

Firstly, DLGs have the capacity of developing people's interest in reading. Students will improve their curiosity in books in a more entertaining and handy way. They will become familiar with masterpieces and important authors of the Universal Literature. Therefore, they will enhance their reading skills and literacy.

Secondly, students will develop their communicative competence because they will have to discuss and demonstrate their personal opinions and thoughts about the books. In fact, student participation is difficult to achieve within the classroom because they are afraid of making mistakes, so they feel reluctant to speak. However, since there is not a wrong answer in Dialogic Literary Gatherings and they all have something to say about the text, students are not afraid of participating.

Thirdly, DLGs encourage essential values for students such as solidarity, patience, autonomy, empathy, tolerance, kindness, etc. Students connect with each other in the DLGs because they all provide personal opinions and personal experiences from their cultural background. Therefore, DLGs can be used as an implicit way of dealing with interculturality. Apart from this, students will reflect and create new meaning in a collective way, main goal of DLGs.

Moreover, as explained in the Didactic unit, all the competences of the language are improved while at the same time students are learning about the way of living of a former society. As described in the literary review, using literature in order to teach foreign languages present several advantages since it is a way to teach both language skills and for students to acquire the communicative competences defined in the CEFR. As we may have realised, it is essential to teach a language using literary texts since one the best ways to teach cultural competence is through the reading of literary texts.

Despite the new insights this study offers, there are also some limitations, mainly related to the implementation of the Didactic unit. The idea was to implement it in a classroom with similar characteristics to the one proposed in the section of contextualization. In addition to this, a complementary experimental study was going to be conducted so as to prove the hypothesis of our investigation: the introduction of Dialogic Literary Gatherings has a positive effect in the development of students' communicative competences. However, due to the current and extraordinary situation

we are living, it has been impossible to carry it out. Nevertheless, I have the intention of carrying out this experimental study in the future.

In short, the inclusion of literature in TEFL has to be a paramount objective for teachers and educational institutions since literature provides the necessary context to learn a foreign language. In addition to this, teaching English literature by means of the practice of Dialogic Literary Gatherings will enhance the benefits of using literature in EFL classrooms, so this dialogic practice should be a fundamental tool in the teaching of English.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Examples of extension and reinforcement activities:

Activity 1. Multiple choice. Choose the correct answer.

- Q1. "Where do you live?"
- ☐ Miho asked me where do I live.
 - ☐ Miho asked me where I lived.
 - ☐ Miho asked me where did I live.
-

- Q2. "What is the time?"
- ☐ Can you tell me what is the time?
 - ☐ Can you tell me what the time is?
-

- Q3. "Why did he say that?"
- ☐ I would like to know why he said that.
 - ☐ I would like to know why did he say that.
-

- Q4. "Do we have a test tomorrow?"
- ☐ I've forgotten do we have a test tomorrow?
 - ☐ I've forgotten if we have a test tomorrow.
 - ☐ I've forgotten have we a test tomorrow?

Taken from: <http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/multi/repsspee.htm>

Activity 2. Choose the appropriate form of the verb.



The teacher told us ...



"Close the door."

... the door



"Be quiet!"

... quiet.



"Don't make noise here."

... noise there.



"Do your work in pairs".

... our work in pairs.



"Open your books".

... our books.

Taken from: <https://agendaweb.org/exercises/verbs/reported-speech/imperative>

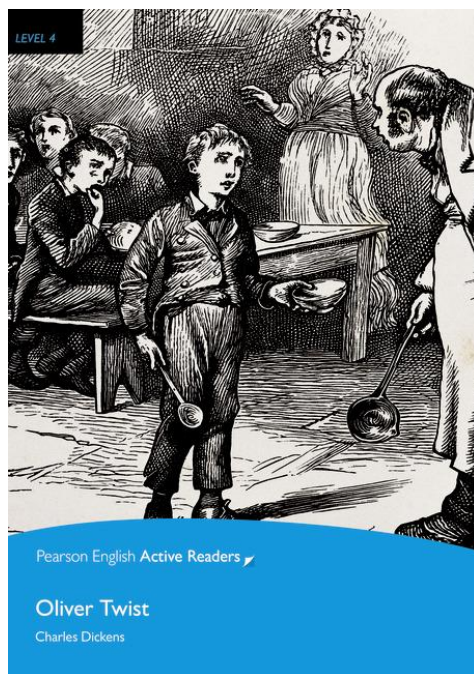
Activity 3. Complete the sentence with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

- 1) If I _____ (be) you, I _____ (get) a new job.
- 2) If he _____ (live) in Mexico, he _____ (speak) more.
- 3) If we _____ (not/be) friends, I _____ (be) angry with you.
- 4) If you _____ (have) enough money, you _____ (buy) a house.
- 5) If she _____ (win) the lottery, we _____ (travel) the world.

Appendix 2

Graded reader:

Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens. Level 4. Pearson English Readers.



Taken from: <https://www.pearson.co.jp/en/catalog/product.php?item=384029>

Appendix 3

Scale for daily observation of students:

Criterion	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
Homework				
Attention and good attitude				
Participation				

Scoring rubric for the formal letter:

	Excellent 4 pts.	Very good 3 pts.	Satisfactory 2 pts.	Needs improvement 1 pt.
Format	The student consistently follows the format and uses the appropriate register of a formal letter.	The student usually follows the format and uses the appropriate register of a formal letter.	The student sometimes follows the format and uses the appropriate register of a formal letter.	The student does not follow the format and does not use the appropriate register of a formal letter.
Structure and Content	Body includes at least three complete paragraphs. A clear purpose is clearly stated and conveyed to the reader.	Missing one component from the following: at least three complete paragraphs, clearly stated purpose.	Missing two components from the following: at least three complete paragraphs, purposed is somewhat clear.	Missing three or more components from the following: at least three complete paragraphs, purpose is not clearly stated.
Grammar and Spelling	Grammar and spelling are correct.	Grammar and/or spelling errors are minimal, which do not affect understanding.	Several errors in grammar and/or spelling, which affect understanding.	Many errors in grammar and/or spelling, which affect understanding.
Register/Audience	The register used is appropriate for the audience.	The majority of the register used is appropriate for the audience.	The register used is sometimes inappropriate for the audience.	The register used is inappropriate for the audience.

Scoring Likert scale for the short play:

4 = Excellent 3 = Very good 2 = Good 1 = Needs improvement				
Audibility – Projecting your voice so your audience can hear and understand you.				
4	3	2	1	
Pronunciation – Ability to pronounce all the sounds correctly				
4	3	2	1	
Vocal variety/Expression – Using appropriate pitch, volume and flow.				
4	3	2	1	
Rate – Reading a speed or pace that is easy to follow.				
4	3	2	1	