Using Dialogic Talks in EFL Primary Teacher Education: An Experience

Una Experiencia sobre Tertulias Dialógicas en Magisterio en Educación Primaria con la especialidad de Lengua Extranjera

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ABSTRACT
The present study is part of a long-term research project based on the use of Dialogic Talks as a collaborative instructional strategy in EFL Teacher Education. The study was conducted with a group (n=20) of EFL Primary Teacher Education undergraduates with the aim of measuring the impact of the use of this strategy in the classroom. Data gathering tools included a questionnaire, students' blogs, observation and the transcripts of sessions conducted in the classroom. Results show evidence of dialogic and transactional learning, while also finding traits of the use of higher-order thinking skills and the development of students' communicative competence in English.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Dialogic Talks, EFL, techniques

RESUMEN
El presente estudio es parte de un proyecto de investigación de larga duración basado en el uso de las tertulias dialógicas como una estrategia de instrucción colaborativa en la formación de profesorado de lengua extranjera (inglés). El estudio se llevó a cabo con un grupo (n=20) de estudiantes del Grado de Magisterio de Educación Primaria (especialización en enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera). El principal objetivo era medir el impacto del uso de esta estrategia en el aula. Las herramientas de recogida de datos incluyen un cuestionario, los blogs de los estudiantes, observación y las transcripciones de las sesiones que se realizaron en el aula. Los resultados muestran evidencia del aprendizaje dialógico y transaccional, así como del uso de las destrezas de pensamiento de rango superior y desarrollo de las competencias comunicativas en inglés.

Palabras clave: Formación de profesorado, tertulias dialógicas, enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera, técnicas

1. INTRODUCCIÓN

Two of the main gaps Communicative Language Teaching did not fill were, first, to reach a high level of authenticity of purpose when using the language (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010) and, second, not having defined the role of literature in the classroom (Paran, 2000). With the advent of CLIL as a methodological approach, there is an opportunity not only to cover those areas but also to connect them, as the need to promote good quality literacy practices in bilingual classrooms has been outlined by research (see Meyer et al. 2015).

Learning contexts where real communication is achieved are generally based on genuine interaction and, therefore, have 'dialogue' at the core of their practices. Dialogue has a pivotal role not only in understanding but also in generating knowledge. This is the main tenet of Flecha's 'Dialogic Learning' (1997), which bolsters the creation of collaborative spaces based on equalitarian dialogue and respectful interaction. Flecha considers Dialogic Learning central in the educational process, ultimately leading to transforming the community.

Creating the appropriate conditions for this to occur is, however, not an easy task, due to at least two main reasons. First, that many students have experienced a transmission-based, unidirectional and focus-on-form education. They expect teachers to follow this methodology and feel uneasy when they are asked to build knowledge with their classmates or think on their own. Second, that dialogic talks are based on reading texts, commonly literature books. The 2017 Spanish reading barometer indicates that the reading habit drastically decreased in population aged more than 14. In the case of people aged from 25-34, almost 50% claim that they do not read because they do not like it, or they are not interested in it. If the book is written in an additional language, the motivation may probably decrease even more.

As some difficulties using literary texts have been foreseen, there is a need to follow a methodological model which helps ease the way to introduce texts in the classroom while also matching with the dialogic principles stated before. After having revised None, Carter and Long (1991), the Cultural, Language and Personal Growth models are disregarded, as they cover just partially students' needs and interests. Instead, the transactional model put forward by L.M. Rosenblatt (1938) is chosen. The model elevates the creation of meaning in the reading process. The focus is not on the text or the reader, but on the interaction between those, and how this building of knowledge is also a shared experience (Rosenblatt terms it 'public sphere' of reading). Therefore, the reading transaction will also be favoured using dialogic talks in the classroom, with the purpose of offering a positive and rewarding reading of literary works.

The present study is part of a long-term research project on the impact of dialogic talks in teacher education. The experience presented in this contribution was conducted with a group (n=20) of primary teacher undergraduates completing their final year. They were specialising in English as a Foreign Language and were enrolled in the bilingual group (completing more than 50% of the degree ECTS in English and through CLIL). The experience was carried out in the subject 'Exploring Children's Literature in English' and revolved around the first book of the series Mary Poppins, written by P.L. Travers in 1934, and consisted of a total of twelve dialogic talks developed in October and November 2015. The sessions were recorded and transcribed, and students completed a final questionnaire and a blog. In 2017, students were contacted to complete a questionnaire about their experience with Dialogic Talks and its impact on their personal and professional lives.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 In search of a new model for literature in the bilingual classroom

Literature has played different roles in the history of ELT, from being at the core of methodologies such as the Grammar-Translation method to being almost completely forgotten with the Direct or the Audiolingual Method. Its role in the last decades has not yet been clearly defined. In 2000, Professor Amos Paran asserted that "for the majority of EFL teachers, literature is still not considered to be an essential element within the overall experience of language learning" (78). The use of literature may then be well researched on as an opportunity to develop students' language while also contributing to their educational development. Following the Loop Input theory stated by Woodward (1991), if this is done in Teacher Education contexts, it is expected to start working on strategies and techniques undergraduates can later bring into their own classes.

Even if it seems clear that literature deserves another opportunity, it is also true that the models defined by Carter and Long (1991) are not really covering students' needs and, what is more important, not making a full use of the text which ultimately leads to a true interaction not only with the text, but also with other readers. Fostering an adequate experience of the literary text will encourage students to keep on reading and sharing, thinking critically and finding ways to understand and express their ideas in the additional language.

In this context, the Transactional Theory of reading, put forward by Rosenblatt in her work *Literature as an exploration* (1938), and her subsequent publications (see Rosenblatt, 1978 or 2005) is presented as a possible alternative. Her proposal was based on the idea that the text and the reader are modifying each other in a process she labelled as 'the transaction'. In other words, when we read a text for the first time and when we do it for the second time, neither the text nor we are the same. Using dialogic terminology, the text is in a constant dialogue with the reader. In this sense, Rosenblatt highlighted the importance of the community of readers and established text discussion and debate as the main methodological tool to reach an appropriate transaction with the text:

> An atmosphere of informal, friendly exchange should be created. The student should feel free to reveal emotions and to make judgements. […] Teachers and pupils should be relaxed enough to face what indeed happened as they interpreted in the printed page. (Rosenblatt, 1995: 67)

Another critical element in Rosenblatt's theory is her distinction between efferent and aesthetic stances. In her view, most reading processes encouraged in the classroom are inviting students to experience texts from an efferent point of view, that is, searching for and storing information. However, native speakers rarely experience literary texts this way, as this type of reading is naturally encouraging aesthetic stances. In other words, the reader is invited to experience and to feel through the text, with the purpose of engaging him/her in the story. In Rosenblatt's words, these stances are not opposites, but rather the extremes of a continuum which needs to be balanced in the classroom.

Even if Rosenblatt established the central tenets to consider reading as a meaning-making process where all readers can contribute with their experiences and knowledge to the community of learners, few practical guidelines were given as to put her theory into practice in the classrooms. There is then a need to gather strategies, techniques, resources

and tools to put her theories into practice, as they may be beneficial to create a methodology which works on literary texts from a perspective which is still valid even if it was originated almost a century ago.

2.2 Dialogic Talks as an instructional tool to foster Transactional Reading

Dialogic talks are part of the practices of a group of educational experts, led by Prof. Ramón Flecha (University of Barcelona), who are pursuing dialogic learning. As such, these talks are considered a collaborative strategy, based on the creation of knowledge and meaning through dialogue(Flecha 1997). In the Dialogic Reading, the text becomes a complex and enriching activity where collective dialogue-author and readers produce better learning (Loza 2004: 67).

The mechanics of Dialogic Talks are quite simple. Students have to read the text indicated by the teacher and they highlight one sentence they want to share with others. They meet and share this sentence, give their opinion in a respectful and tolerating classroom atmosphere, where the teacher is another reader. Interpretations of the text are not imposed but rather negotiated among all participants. This strategy is based on a dialogic view of learning, which supports the view that learning occurs through interactions with others.

The nature and procedure of these circles are in line with Rosenblatt's proposal of collaborative reading, both combining the private sphere (the reader interacting with the text alone), and the public sphere (the reading sharing reading experiences and having contact with shared meanings of the text). Also, the text is used in an authentic context, fostering aesthetic views, which balanced the natural use of efferent stances, and encouraging critical thinking skills by analysing, discussing and associating the text with other spheres, such as the sociocultural context, the author's biography, etc.

Dialogic Talks may then fit Rosenblatt's theory, as it has been previously highlighted in the literature of the topic (see Fernández, Garvín and González 2012). Therefore, it is assumed that transactional techniques, which favour communication and interaction in the classroom, will also benefit the creation of a communicative and authentic learning environment focused on meaning, and not on form. The main purpose of this type of exchanges is to build up knowledge individually and together using language as a communication tool. In this sense, the use of literature in the bilingual classroom could be guided by these presumably favouring strategies.

2.3 Literature Review

The use of Dialogic Talks in teacher training has been subject to research in the past years. Alonso, Arandia and Loza (2008) and Fernández, Garvín and González (2012) put dialogic into play to train in-service teachers. They focused on dialogic reading seminars, as in the present study, and were interested in participants' learning and how these experiences were different from those they had in their initial training. The main purpose was to demonstrate how dialogic reading seminars may shape teachers' beliefs and practices about reading texts in their classrooms.

Concerning the benefits obtained with the use of this instructional strategy, Alonso et al. (2008) highlighted how Dialogic Talks favour participants' equalitarian dialogue and reinforce the idea of how we are transformational agents and responsible for the change in our own classrooms. They also claim that teachers reading together may influence not only

the teaching process but our lives from a more general perspective. In this line, Fernández et al. (2012) mention that teachers valued collective reading as motivating and rewarding, and compared it with their university training, which was far more individualistic. Also, using original versions and primary sources was considered interesting and valuable. An interesting finding was that teachers value the need to have a sense of understanding and flexibility in this type of lessons. Besides, they were willing to transfer this experience to their classrooms.

Concerning the use of Dialogic Talks in the Teacher Degrees, Chocarro (2013) and Foncillas and Laorden (2014) present studies to measure the impact of the use of this instructional technique in their classrooms. Chocarro (2013) carried out an experience with students taken 2nd Year of Primary Teacher Degree in the subject of Inclusive Education, where the equalitarian dialogue was fostered. In this study, undergraduates used the strategy to teach at school, and reflected on it after the experience took place. Results show that students highlighted equalitarian dialogue in the classroom, and an atmosphere of respect, fostering students' empathy, the interplay of emotions and thoughts, the promotion of reading habit, encouraging participants' communication, working on interculturality. The negative impact of this practice was also present, as the lack of participation of shy students, which could be mitigated thanks to the teacher. Students were then aware of the important role of the teacher to foster participation. The study does not mention the book used; neither does it provide information about the data gathering tool administered to the participant.

The second study, conducted by Foncillas and Laorden (2014), was developed in the Social Education Degree at the same university in which the present work was conducted. Information was gathered using observation grids and recordings and using three main elements as success indicators: the creation of a cooperative learning environment, the development of a transformative, critical and reflective capacity, and the impact on students' relationship with their affective environment (family and friends). Results show that students recognised this instructional strategy as positive for their learning and learned to work with others, respect their opinions and build their knowledge together. Also, students developed communicative skills in an environment based on egalitarian dialogue and respect.

In light of the literature in the area produced in the last years, it may be concluded that Dialogic Talks are considered to have a positive impact on both Teacher Education undergraduates and in-service teachers. All studies highlight how Dialogic Talks favour respect, understanding and communication in the classroom. Also, participants value the possibility to learn from and with others, fostering a collaborative learning environment. Fernández et al. (2012), who carried out their study with in-service teachers, suggest the need to transfer these dialogic practices to university, claiming that they may help fight the traditional model of teachers owning all knowledge and students receiving it.

A clear gap in the area is that the use of Dialogic Talks in CLIL environments has been not found at the time of developing this study. If the use of collaborative and communicative instructional techniques is to favour students' language abilities and content acquisition, it is necessary to measure their impact and reflect on how we can make better use of those. Dialogic Talks have been proved to favour students' L1 communicative skills and may also contribute to their bilingual literacy development.

3. METHOD

3.1 Context and participants

The context of the study is a university college set in Alcalá de Henares, Madrid. It is a private institution run by the religious congregation of the Marist brothers, and is administratively attached to the Universidad de Alcalá. It has been offering degrees in Teaching for more than 40 years now, and has a student population of around 1000 people. The institution encourages educational innovation using active methodologies in the classroom. One of the methodologies favoured is the use of dialogic learning in both the Teacher Education and Social Education Degrees, as proved with a previous study using Dialogic Talks in two Social Education subjects (see Foncillas and Laorden 2014).

The study was conducted in a class composed of 26 students. For the purpose of the study, only those who attended the lessons regularly account for the information provided in the present work; therefore, 20 of them finally participated in the study. They were 6 men and 14 women aged 21/22. The experience was conducted in the subject "Exploring Children's Literature in English", a compulsory subject for students studying to become Primary Teachers with an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) specialisation. The students participating were also following the bilingual itinerary at the University, which meant that all of them hold a minimum B1 level (CEFR) at the beginning of their studies and had at that time completed almost 50% of their studies in English.

The subject is delivered in three different groupings: large group (all the class together), middle group (half of the class, A or B); or seminars, where the whole group is divided into four groups (A1, A2, B1 and B2). The experience was developed during the seminars, having three meetings with groups of 5 students in November and December in 2015. The researcher was lecturing the subject and, during the seminars where the Dialogic Talks were conducted, a language assistant, an English native-speaker, was also present. He was also invited to record his observations and commented on them with the lecturer after each session.

The subject is focused on the development of four key competences. Students should be able to know resources and strategies to use literature in the primary classroom, they should also know how to develop literacy skills through literature in the EFL/CLIL classroom, and be able to plan effective lessons including texts, stories and literature. Apart from that, they are expected to use English appropriately as the language of communication and instruction in the classroom using a B2+ minimum level.

The implementation of Dialogic Talks is an activity included in the lecturer's didactic plan for the subject. The module it belongs to revolves around a famous children's book, in this case, the first book of the series *Mary Poppins*, written by P.L. Travers in 1934. The main goals of this module are to make students engage in a meaningful reading experience using Dialogic Talks, to raise students' interest in how literary texts may contribute to our learning and personal development, to make students experience techniques and strategies to use literary texts in the classroom, and to raise students critical thinking by comparing the book with other related works, such as their adaptation to the screen as films, or documentaries related to the creation of the text or the life of the authors.

The module was developed from October to December, parallel to modules 1 and 2 in the subject, covering 16 classroom hours plus 20 hours of students' autonomous work. The sessions were directed as follows:

- Session 1 (2 hours): Brainstorm information about *Mary Poppins* and create a Padlet (a virtual wallchart with notes on the data gathered in the session).
- Session 2 (homework+2 hours): Watch the movie *Mary Poppins* at home. In class, we discuss the main events in the movie.
- Session 3 (2 hours): Elicit knowledge about the author of the book, P.L. Travers. Watch Saving Mr Banks in class (this movie explained the adaptation of the book to the screen).
- Session 4 (1 hour): Simulated dialogic talk with the whole group and the first chapter of the book. Instructions to understand how Dialogic Talks work.
- Sessions 5, 6 and 7 (3 hours, they were repeated in the 4 seminar groups): Dialogic Talks.
- Session 8 (2 hours): In-role teacher pretending to be P.L. Travers to conduct a press-conference with students. The information delivered was taken from Lawson (2013). Reflection and discussion.
- Session 9 (2 hours): Students were asked to prepare an activity to work on Mary Poppins' story with Primary Students in Spain.
- Session 10 (2 hours): A group of 52 children from a local school participated in the workshop prepared by students in groups.
- Session 11 (1 hour): Final questionnaire is administered.

3.2 Aims

The study attempted to measure the impact of the use of a transactional-based tool: Dialogic Talks, as an instructional strategy to enhance students' learning (future EFL Primary Teachers) in a bilingual context. More specifically, its application will be measured in terms of how students respond to literature, and how this response may shape their learning experiences and professional development as future teachers. As students are not taking any other similar subject in the degree, it was not possible to measure this impact against a different experience using another strategy. However, students' perceptions of the experience and their learning development are collected to fill this gap in the best way possible.

3.3 Data Gathering Tools

Research tools used were questionnaires, an observation log, students' blogs and analysis of recorded sessions. It was our purpose to triangulate the data gathering tools used to pursue research validity. Responses obtained after the experience were complemented with information obtained in August 2017, a year and eight months after the experience had been conducted. At that time, the lecturer contacted the group, sent a questionnaire about their view of Dialogic Talks and asked for participation to those who had been teaching recently. Information from 5 participants, out of 20, was obtained.

Concerning questionnaires, these were delivered at the end of the experience with the purpose of gathering data related to students' perceptions and opinions of having experienced dialogic literary circles in the classrooms. The first question included in the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was asking about their gender. Although no significant differences were expected to be found among sexes, this information was considered to prove this. Then, students were asked about whether they liked to read in Spanish and English. The next section revolved around their participation in the Dialogic Talks, and

students were questioned about whether they had participated in the Dialogic Talks (otherwise the responses were not valid), and if they found the sessions interesting. Later, questions concerning their perceptions of language and communicative development were included. More specifically, they were asked if they had felt comfortable talking in English, and if they had realised about their progress in their oral skills in English. The following questions were more open, and asked students how the Dialogic Talks were helping them, and what they had learnt with them (students were encouraged to provide with information about language, content, attitudes, or other aspects). Last, students were asked to give suggestions for improvement and to suggest the lecturer if she should keep this strategy in the future.

Throughout the dialogic talk sessions, students were asked to keep their subject blogs. These blogs are assessed in the subject, and are based on students' reflections on their lessons. Students have a blog schedule which indicates they should write their posts once every two weeks, and respond to their classmates' entries in the second week. The topics around which students need to write are not imposed by the teacher. However, students need to refer to their experiences and learning in class in the last lessons. Therefore, it was expected that there would be some entries dealing with the Dialogic Talks.

The last data gathering tools were the observation logs and the transcriptions of the recordings (the final sessions of the four groups were recorded with students' permission). The lecturer kept an observation diary she used to take notes throughout the lessons. Information gathered was primarily concerned with students' creating of collaborative learning, contributing to each other's knowledge and expertise and, secondly, to explore if students were engaged in a transactional way with the text.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Information gathered from the questionnaires indicates that it was the first time that students experienced dialogic talks with literary works in English. They mention it is the first time they had read a book and commented on it in groups. Also, they recognise the importance of developing communicative competences in a stress-free environment, in which nobody is marking their oral proficiency or judging their points of view. In this sense, most of them mentioned the importance of being respectful and considerate of their classmates' opinions. Regarding the didactic potential of this experience, some students indicated that this experience could well be employed in their future classes, with some adaptations. It was quite revealing to know that all of them without exception recommended the lecturer to keep this activity in the future.

Concerning observation and transcript analysis, information gathered shows that students were contributing to their learning in many ways:
- Linguistic issues. The students completed their classmates' sentences or contributed with a more appropriate word when somebody else was stuck.
- Putting academic language into practice. Students show a good command of language resources to express their opinion, agree and disagree, illustrate with examples and back up their opinions. There are some instances in which they all want to speak, but the moderator acts appropriately and establishes turn-taking. In this last session, the lecturer was not moderating and asked a student to play this role instead.
- Building on previous comments. They generate new knowledge by linking what others have said.

- Going back to the book. They were concerned about not forgetting the book in their talks. There are many instances where students refer back to paragraphs in the book or keep their classmates on track referring to lines or scenes in the book.
- Cultural issues. They contribute with their views on British and American society, comparing Travers' background and the context of the book with Disney's creations. Spanish culture was not mentioned in the talks, but they were aware of the differences when creating a different product using the same story.
- Considering the timeline. Some students were aware of the time the book was written and the movie was launched. They established connections between society in the 30s, 60s, and now.
- Teaching, our profession. Many of the reflection captured in the recordings are based on their ideas about how Mary Poppins educate children and their own role as teachers. This comparison leads to insightful conversations were students are shaping their own views on education.

Regarding the level of participation, all students contributed to the group with the sentences they had highlighted in the text. It was also gathered that the role of the moderator is essential to keep students on track. It is relatively easy to depart from the book and start commenting on issues which are not directly related to the story. The lecturer modelled the role of the moderator in the first seminar, and students took this role later. One volunteer was appointed to be the moderator for half of each session, to allow more students to be in this role.

The character of Mary Poppins in the text and in the movie was also subject to discussion. One student commented on an instance in the book when Mary Poppins is displaying kind behaviour towards the children and said out loud: "I see kindness here" (Teresa S, seminar 2). Her classmates agreed and were happy to find this, somewhat relieved. This, and other instances in the seminars, may prove that in transactional reading, readers answer "not to the text but to their evocation of the text, to their own creation" (Galda 2013, p. 6).

Participants in this experience were also interested in how children's literature has evolved over time. More specifically, they mentioned that the original book could be considered not appropriate for children now. They discussed about the dangers of overprotecting kids. This comparison was also valued as rich and fruitful, as the book "(..) makes us think about society, the way they used to teach values, morals and manners. And maybe it would be very useful for us to reflect on them now" (Laura C., seminar 2).

Concerning blogs, students were given access as authors to the university blog site. Each student was requested to write six posts and comment on their peers' posts throughout the module. In the time the Dialogic Talks were used, nine students commented on this experience[1]. In most of the cases they reflected on the use of 'dialogic circles, but also described some of the activities or commented on the situation depicted in the books.

Most commentaries on the Dialogic Talks experience referred to the opportunity to exchange ideas in a peaceful atmosphere, build on their classmates' ideas and perspectives, and consider this instructional strategy as to be adapted for their Primary classrooms in the future. Some students referred to Dialogic Talks as an opportunity to learn together. One example is the comment made by Carmen S. (November): "Then we start sharing ideas and I have to highlight that the conversation was fluent all the time. We were respecting each other and adding something new to other thoughts. I really like this idea because we can implement it in our future classrooms and create a debate in a relaxing atmosphere and

with plenty of meaningful ideas". It is worth noting that students were considering that the creation of a relaxed atmosphere was a crucial point to share and learn as a community. Also, they were considering this technique as a plausible teaching tool in the future.

After one year and eight months, the lecturer contacted the group to know whether they had been using literature and Dialogic Talks in their professional lives. Some former students had not had the opportunity to teach yet, but five valid responses were obtained. These now Primary Teachers all have a positive view of the experience, and they agreed on it having influenced them in considering the potential literary texts may have in the primary classrooms. However, just one of them (Inés F.) had the opportunity to implement Dialogic Talks in their classes. She is working at an English school and used the Dialogic Talks with some adaptations, as she added the use of visuals and realia to enhance students' interaction and understanding. This teacher considers that everything she has learned at University is now useful and she can understand much better why it is important to make children love books and reading.

The five former students, now teachers, agreed on having an interest in learning more about how to make better use of books in their classrooms. They also considered that Dialogic Talks are useful and can be implemented in their teaching context. Also, they all agreed in finding 'the *Mary Poppins* experience' crucial to understand how they can make the most of books in the classrooms.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The present study aimed to measure the impact of the use of a transactional-based tool, Dialogic Talks, in the learning of a group of students taking the Primary Teacher Degree. The study has demonstrated that the impact has been positive in terms of students' learning gains. This has also shown that future literacy pedagogies should consider some key elements highlighted by students as having an influence on their learning.

First, Dialogic Talks favour the creation of a collaborative-cooperative environment in the classroom. Students value the chance to share their reading experiences in a comfortable environment where they did not feel judged or assessed. This has been also pointed out by experts, such as Rosenblatt, who states that: "The primary criterion should be not whether his reactions or his judgments measure up to critical traditions but, rather, whether the ideas and reactions he expresses are genuine" (1995: 67). It seems clear that these conditions were created thanks to the Dialogic Talks. In addition, the role of the moderator was essential to conduct students' interventions. Leading discussion without imposing our own views is not an easy task; however, there are some guidelines, which are also indicated by research, which were effective, namely: "Listen well, ask contingent questions, seize opportunities to clarify or enlarge concepts and ideas, and be challenging but supportive in interactions with students" (Galda 2013).

Second, the importance of integrating different views and learn how to build our own knowledge with the help of others. This was carefully modelled by the lecturer in the first sessions, when she acted as the moderator. It is very important to let them know that all interventions are valid, but they need to be justified and clear. The teacher is just one more reader, but an informed one.

Third, the relevance of using literature in class with a meaning-making perspective. Rosenblatt insisted on the importance of making readers have a live-through experience of the text, as to evoke their reading and construct it from the private (individual) and the

public (group) sphere. In this case, students read at home, but were also encouraged to bring one sentence to share with the rest. This simple process made students focus on what words meant to them, and they were re-constructing the text together. This view opposes current practices focused on exploiting the text to learn grammar and vocabulary.

Fourth, the use of English for real communication purposes. Even though focus-on-form was not encouraged, some interventions in the seminars were concerned with vocabulary and expressions. Students helped each other to make meaning out of those words and to make the text their own (hence, unobtrusive scaffolding was provided in this way). In their interventions, students were using appropriate language, and were aware of the importance of the expressions they were using (respectful and semiformal), but the message they were conveyed was of the utmost importance.

Fifth, students claimed they had learned much with this experience, as the Dialogic Talks gave them the chance to know about different elements and ideas they could not have come up with alone. This also led to putting higher order thinking skills (HOTS) into play, as participants could not be content with understanding the text, they needed to analyse, synthesise, compare or evaluate.

All in all, research shows that Dialogic Talks may be influential in changing teacher trainees' views on the use of literature in their classes. Also, they contribute to creating an appropriate atmosphere for students to interact with the text, their classmates and the lecturer. Dialogic Talks foster listening skills, and the practice of turn-taking, agreeing and disagreeing, and constructing own views with the help of others.

Concerning future lines of research, this study has made an attempt to gather information about the impact of this experience on students and could gather the views of five of them one year and a half after it was conducted. It would be interesting to contact them in the future to know whether their views have changed if these former students have implemented dialogic-friendly strategies in their classes once they became professionals. Also, it would be interesting to provide students with more Dialogic Talks during their training, so as to test whether their language skills and critical thinking skills are fostered with their use. Last, it would be interesting to classify students' responses to the text, as to know whether dialogic-friendly tools are encouraging any specific type or if direct intervention from the teachers' part is needed to work on some areas which would be otherwise not dealt with.

NOTES

1 Students' quotes are cited literally. No language correction has been made.

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