MASTER'S THESIS

DEVELOPING THE SPEAKING SKILL AND CULTURAL AWARENESS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM USING TV SERIES: DISCUSSING *SENSE8* WITH RESTORATIVE CIRCLES

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Abstract

Considering one's teenage years are a very formative stage in a person's life, teachers at secondary education level should aim at including opportunities for their students' personal development together with academic contents to make their progress through high school as enriching as possible. For this reason, Coeducation appeared very recently, a program based on deconstructing inequality that the EFL subject has a lot of potential of applying to its contents. To do that, extensive exposure to TV series proves useful according to linguistic, cultural, and motivational reasons. They are a relevant authentic material which can act as a source of English acquisition, they can include many topics that lead to cultural awareness, and they enhance motivation. This last characteristic is crucial to develop the speaking skill, which is not usually connected to TV series. To relate them, debates could be considered an efficient bridge, but they are uncontrollable and unguided. However, there is an alternative resource that compensates their drawbacks: restorative circles. With a pedagogical nature, this versatile resource allows classroom cohesion and interaction in a safe space while working on any topic or oral production content established in the EFL curriculum. For this reason, this dissertation develops a didactic proposal in which, during a whole year, students will watch the TV series *Sense8* and use it as an alternative source of EFL knowledge to the typical textbook. To discuss the episodes, work on their topics, and develop the different communicative functions while raising cultural awareness, restorative circles will take place. As a result, this proposal will allow personal and academic development, which will make the EFL acquisition process more complete.

Keywords: Restorative circles, TV series, speaking skill, EFL, cultural awareness

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1. Introduction

During their time in secondary education, students acquire knowledge of different relevant fields while eliminating the gaps of information they had. The process of *deconstruction* works in a very similar way, as people reflect on their attitudes, beliefs, and actions to try to discover those which are harmful for them and therefore, they need to change. In both processes, a person develops academically and personally. As these procedures are so similar, it is feasible to say they can be compatible. In fact, the educational process should aim at allowing personal development together with academic progress because the teenage years are a very formative period of a person's life in which the personality develops (Klimstra et al., 2009, p. 898). This path, then, should contemplate the implementation of social and cultural skills that would help students develop themselves personally together with academically as a complete acquisition of knowledge (social and cultural, and educational). In some high schools, this combination is beginning to be established thanks to the very recent program of Coeducation. Nonetheless, it is important to verify whether a complete acquisition of knowledge is really being implemented in the different subjects of the curriculum. To see how this could be done, this dissertation will concentrate on the English as a Foreign Language (EFL from now onwards) subject and the potential it has considering English is a language spoken by millions of people and a reflection of cultural diversity (Arnaudova, 2006, p. 2).

The English language connects people and improves their knowledge of the world because it opens the doors to explore it. But how could the EFL subject enhance academic development while also allowing for personal development? One very relevant method could be by using TV series in the EFL classroom. After an obvious decay in reading habits among teenagers and the expansion of content platforms, TV series have emerged as a source of instructional authentic material (Larrea-Espinar & Raigón-Rodríguez, 2019, p. 37) because of the diversity of topics they contain and their obvious entertaining nature. Apart from being a very useful resource for English acquisition, carefully selected TV series can offer an insight into the diversity of the world and thus enhance cultural awareness, which is essential for personal development. To be able to expand

this awareness, discussions about certain cultural topics should be emphasised in the classroom starting from the relevantly formative teenage years.

Therefore, the speaking skill comes into the equation. Apart from allowing the beginning of conversations, this skill is particularly connected to critical thinking (Akdag & Kirkgöz, 2020, p. 201), something vital to learn to question and understand the culture that surrounds us. However, to successfully develop this skill in an EFL classroom, motivation must be present. As it will be reviewed in the following section, TV series can offer a very good opportunity for motivation improvement, because they are an authentic and interesting material that can be both a source of linguistic and cultural knowledge. To discuss them orally, one of the most obvious choices regarding speaking activities is debates. Nonetheless, their uncontrollable nature and their lack of versatility in an EFL classroom can also reduce the benefits of engaging in a speaking activity. To counter this disadvantage, restorative circles[1] could act as a method of reflecting on the linguistic and cultural knowledge that students acquire in the viewing of the series in a spoken form. As a pedagogical method used in high schools, they can become a substitute for debates in the EFL classroom because they let people express themselves in a guided interaction, therefore compensating for the possible uncontrollable outcome of a debate. Apart from this, their own existence consists of improving social relations in a diverse cultural world, which again connects to the need of encouraging cultural awareness to promote academic and personal development altogether.

1.1. Structure

First, this paper will review all the theoretical background related to the topic to observe how the information previous studies convey supports the didactic proposal that will be designed. Apart from that, the different studies that will be analysed in the literature review section will allow the observation of a knowledge gap, which will be connected to the objectives of this dissertation, both examined after the theoretical review. After that, the didactic proposal will be introduced,

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[1] Restorative circles will also be addressed during the dissertation as RC (when singular) and RCs (when plural).

which will be designed for a group of fourth-year obligatory secondary education students (4th of ESO). At the beginning of the proposal, the study will justify how focusing on the speaking skill and implementing the viewing of a TV series for a whole year will not affect the general development of the EFL subject. Subsequently, this dissertation will contemplate the use of a questionnaire at the beginning of the academic year to become familiar with the expectations, tastes, opinions, and experiences of the students that would follow this proposal in the near future. To test its accuracy, the questionnaire was distributed and answered by a particular group of 4th of ESO students. Once all this information is established, the paper will depict in detail four sessions using restorative circles with their prior viewing and previewing activities, the objectives, and the expected results. Indeed, considering the proposal this paper will develop covers a whole school year, one would expect it to cover all the different sessions within the academic year. Nevertheless, because of space restrictions, only four of all sessions will be depicted in the proposal, selected because of their depth and significance to understand the general idea defended in this dissertation. The other ones, however, will be summarised in a table in Annex C. Finally, a concluding section will compile the most important aspects of the proposal and offer both limitations and ideas for further research on the topic.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Legislation[2]

According to the general objectives stated in the Curriculum of the First Foreign Language of the Balearic Islands, learning the English language implies a cultural component that promotes values of freedom of speech, the right to be educated in diversity, and the importance of intercultural dialogue (Conselleria d'Educació i Universitat, 2015, pp. 9-10). Furthermore, the learning of a foreign language entails an open mind towards others and new knowledge (p. 8). Moreover, it should allow students to understand the social reality of our diverse world to be democratic, upright, responsible, honest, and solidary citizens (p. 8). Considering

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[2] The Curriculum of the First Foreign Language of the Balearic Islands and the Coeducation Program are originally written in Catalan. The information developed in this dissertation about them is an unofficial translation.

language is what enables people to share their lives with and learn from other people, EFL should promote from its teaching attitudes of union and interaction (d'Ydewalle & Pavakanun, 1997, p. 145).

Indeed, these general objectives can be achieved through the different topics established in the contents, but only if the teacher and the materials allow an approach that encourages their fulfilment, such as introducing authentic materials and topics (Perez Garcia & Sanchez Manzano, 2015, pp. 86-87; Purba, 2011, pp. 51-55). In addition, the contents should be, when possible, approached in a way that they connect students to real-world situations and interactions, as well as situations that allow for social and personal development. As Larrea-Espinar and Raigón-Rodríguez (2019) studied, the intercultural component of communication is built when "attitudes, knowledge, skills, learning to learn abilities and critical awareness" are developed (p. 35), which indeed demonstrates how communication, in any language, needs certain personal skills, as the curriculum establishes. It also depicts the different topics that will have to be worked on during the school year.

Particularly, regarding 4th of ESO, the stage that will be discussed in the didactic proposal, the aforementioned curriculum states that these particular students should learn about homes, everyday activities, family and friends, jobs, free time, sport, travel, health, education and studies, shopping, food, transportation, language and communication, the environment, nature and the weather, and information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Conselleria d'Educació i Universitat, 2015, p. 28). Nonetheless, the curriculum does not establish how these topics should be approached, which makes the teacher and the EFL department responsible for planning how to approach them. As well, the syntactical-discursive elements (pp. 41-42) do not have an established order or teaching method assigned, which also leaves their teaching to the EFL instructor or language department.

Regarding the speaking skill, the curriculum (Conselleria d'Educació i Universitat, 2015) establishes that students of 4th of ESO should be able to:

- Devise a message with clarity and coherence, distinguishing all the ideas within this message (p. 14).

- Adjust the text to the audience, the context and the channel with the appropriate register and structure, readjusting the task or the message when necessary (p. 14).

- Build on their previous knowledge (p. 14).

- Compensate for the linguistic shortcomings through linguistic and paralinguistic procedures (p. 14).

The curriculum also establishes several communicative functions that students should master during the year (Conselleria d'Educació i Universitat, 2015, p. 14). These include maintaining personal and social relations and describing physical and abstract qualities of people, objects, places, and activities (p. 14). Regarding the oral use of tenses, students will learn to narrate past events, describe present states, and express future happenings (p. 14). They will learn to request and offer information, opinions, instructions, advice, recommendations, and warnings, and to express knowledge, certainty, conjecture, and doubt (p. 14). As well, there will be a focus on the expression of will, intention, decision, promise, orders, authorizations, and prohibition (p. 14). Concerning emotions, students will learn to express interest, approval, esteem, friendliness, satisfaction, and opposition (p. 15). As for interactions, they will engage in offering suggestions and expressing desires, conditions, and hypothesis (p. 15). Finally, the curriculum establishes they will need to learn to maintain conversations with others and how to organise a discourse (p. 15).

Apart from the academic-regulating document that the curriculum is, there is a program in public high schools that aims, as it was learnt during the Practicum of the master's degree in Teacher Training, at deconstructing inequality, and it is called *Coeducation*. The Coeducation Program of the Balearic Islands (created according to the general fundamentals of Coeducation), promotes knowledge and techniques to defy inequality in all its forms and shapes, like abuse, relationships of power, sexism, racism, ableism or LGTB phobia, to prevent, detect and act to fight any sort of discriminatory, abusive, or oppressive

behaviours inside education (Institut per a la Convivència i l'Èxit Escolar, n.d., pp. 29-30). This program seeks to promote an education in values of equality and diversity from an intersectional approach, and it is supported by the legislations of the Balearic Islands regarding education and human rights, and the general education legislation in Spain. According to Scott (1988), who studied the process of deconstruction that has been mentioned and that will be expanded in the following section, it is important to defy the long traditions that build societies in terms of hierarchical separations (p. 33). For this reason, the intersectional approach of Coeducation can eliminate this notion and offer the educational process the opportunity of teaching students that differences unite people when diversity is celebrated.

2.2. Cultural Studies in the EFL Classroom

A theory that was created to defy structuralist views to move to a post-structuralist world was the *theory of Deconstruction* (Derrida, 2001). This theory, which Jacques Derrida established as very difficult to explain (Derrida & Caputo, 2000, p. 31), depicts deconstruction as a constant process that happens inside of people and that consists of analysing our internal determinations and beliefs, not always to eliminate them, but to judge whether they are fair (p. 17). Scott (1988) also expanded on this idea and pointed out it is an important type of exercise to eliminate binary oppositions (p. 37), which eventually turned it into nowadays conception of the theory: revising our attitudes and beliefs to eliminate those that are harmful and discriminary. In this way, diversity and difference would regain their role as an opportunity to reach our full potential in a diverse world (Arnaudova, 2006, pp. 6-7) and stop being a source of discriminatory discourses. Indeed, this process is constant, and it never stops, because there is always something that a person can improve and, to do so, education proves as crucial as developing cultural awareness, something that can be done in the EFL classroom considering language is a central focus of poststructuralist ideas (Scott, 1988, p. 34). In fact, according to Citron (1995), a person with an open mind is more likely to learn a new language than a person with a closed one. Therefore, cultural awareness and acquisition of knowledge in EFL learning seem interrelated.

The more traditional pre-communicative approach to EFL teaching was based on a very structuralist way of viewing a language, in which culture and context did not matter (Arnaudova, 2006, p. 2). Deconstruction, on the contrary, aims at fighting against the structuralist views of the world and, hence, it aims at defying this traditional approach to teaching a language, and not only at offering personal development. To introduce this process, the cultural aspect of teaching a language becomes necessary. According to Arnaudova, including Cultural Studies in EFL teaching allows the development of a positive attitude towards cultural diversity and the development of tolerance (p. 4). Besides, they give a very powerful basis on which to build effective communication (p. 4). Nonetheless, there is a common belief that culture only deals with national characteristics, as some reviewed studies contemplate (Alptekin, 1993; Liu, 2014; Purba, 2011) when this notion should include an intercultural approach to "other culturally important aspects such as gender, age, ethnic origin, regional background and social class" (Arnaudova, 2006, p. 5). However, because of the lack of cultural input, students usually rely on the knowledge they have because of pre-existing stereotypes, and teachers should not let stereotypes be the basis of cultural knowledge and education (p. 3).

According to Ali et al. (2015), culture is not a biological phenomenon, but rather a learnt pattern of social behaviours, and it is inevitably linked to the use of a language (p. 2). In fact, according to Purba (2011), EFL acquisition and cultural learning are necessarily interrelated because language and culture are inseparable (p. 48), which supports the belief that developing the intercultural competence facilitates learning how to communicate in a foreign language context (Ali et al., 2015, p. 5), a notion that is also established in the EFL curriculum (Conselleria d'Educació i Universitat, 2015, p. 9). Nevertheless, the latter poses one of the problems about including Cultural Studies in the EFL classroom, together with the methodology and the materials (Arnaudova, 2006, p. 3). For these reasons, Coeducation and TV series can solve the difficulty. Moreover, teachers should be trained in Cultural Studies (p. 3), something which already happens in some degrees such as the English Studies degree in the University of the Balearic Islands, where at least two compulsory subjects tackle

the topic, and there are also optional subjects that do so. If teachers were more prepared to introduce cultural learning, they could effectively increase learners' motivation, which would enhance their English acquisition process (Liton & AL Madanat, 2013; Purba, 2011, p. 48).

The relevance of including cultural awareness in education is a topic that has also been discussed by renowned names inside Cultural Studies. Scott (1988) and his approach to deconstruction show that analysing a language allows people to understand the way social relations around them work (p. 34). However, if these are not based on diversity and cultural awareness, according to Bourdieu (1998/2002), the lack of exposure to different identities and existences can provoke invisibilisation (p. 119). To fight this, he proposed that institutional organisms should not participate in the reproduction of damaging discourses (p. 87). Bordo (1993) also defended that self-normalising everyday problematic habits can, in the long run, make people do these habits "voluntarily" because they will not see them as problematic (p. 191). Related to how institutions silence certain topics, Foucault (1976) introduced how we must start conversations about issues that are not often discussed and, hence, become taboos. Nevertheless, how a large portion of our society, including institutions like the educational one, decide not to include certain subjects may be due to the hegemonic discourses dominating our society and, therefore, the establishments that reflect its ideas (Connell, 2005, p. 78). Consequently, what these renowned researchers of the Cultural Studies field demonstrate is that institutions ought to include cultural awareness and that, in not doing so, they reinforce a lack of complete knowledge, since one relevant aspect of human beings, their culture, is eliminated.

As this section has indicated, culture is a very relevant element in English teaching that is often ignored or tackled superficially only focusing on national identity traits, something that defies what is stipulated in the curriculum. For this reason, materials that allow English acquisition together with the development of cultural awareness are needed and, according to some studies (Arnaudova, 2006; Larrea-Espinar & Raigón-Rodríguez, 2019), TV series could allow this since they are a cultural product.

2.3. TV Series in the EFL Classroom

The usage of TV series in the language classroom is defended by many researchers, one of the main reasons being the fact that they grant a relevant cultural input together with English acquisition and motivation enhancement. A very relevant study regarding this cultural product is Pujadas and Muñoz (2019), who explored how extensive exposure to TV series could prove much more beneficial than just watching some episodes alone. This study was ground-breaking because, usually, EFL lessons include only some fragments of episodes, or short episodes, of a TV series, but not an extensive exposure to the material (p. 2). According to d'Ydewalle and Pavakanun (1997), even watching a small fragment of a cultural product can enhance language acquisition (p. 153). Therefore, watching a whole TV series could prove even more beneficial. Pujadas and Muñoz's (2019) research focused on bilingual EFL students (who speak Catalan and Spanish), and their achievements at a lexical level after a whole year of watching a TV series. This could be related to the idea that languages that share some similarities enhance incidental acquisition (d'Ydewalle & Pavakanun, 1997, p. 153), and even if Catalan and Spanish do not share many similarities with the English language, the ones they do could contribute to a better acquisition process. The results were successful, and they highlighted that TV series offer a very relevant input of vocabulary, even more when previewing activities are done to activate vocabulary before watching the episodes (Pujadas & Muñoz, 2019, p. 14). Furthermore, they discovered that proficiency levels are a crucial aspect when choosing whether to use L1 or L2/FL subtitles (p. 10). Frumuselu et al. (2015) also studied how TV series can improve EFL learning, and they also considered the relevance of proficiency as an important factor for choosing the language of the subtitles.

According to d'Ydewalle and Pavakanun (1997), the imagery component of TV series allows a better language acquisition process, since the pictorial discourse can be related to the oral discourse (p. 153). Nevertheless, one of the reasons why teachers are sceptical about using authentic audio-visual materials in class is the difficulty to work on them (Ahrabi, 2016, p. 25). This problem, then, could be solved by introducing activities that allow working on them successfully,

as will be explored in the following sections. In fact, according to the author, it is important to design new activities since the traditional workbook ones are insufficient (p. 26). Related to traditions, it ought to be mentioned that the TV series that Ahrabi contemplates is the stereotypically studied cultural product in many EFL classrooms: *Friends* (1994-2004). This highlights a preference for shorter episodes and less exposure to TV series, which has already been stated. It could be interesting, however, to start introducing new and more current cultural products in the classroom, as many new products deal with more recent topics and worries that can enhance cultural awareness. In our present society, we pay much more attention to cultural topics than we did in the past, so it is highly likely that newer cultural products discuss these themes with much more insight.

Nevertheless, even if Ahrabi's study contains a very frequently-used and relatively classic TV series, the findings of his research demonstrate that students appreciate being taught with this audio-visual material, that their motivation is enhanced, and that they know they can benefit a lot from watching TV series (2016, p. 41). Therefore, devoting time in the lessons to discuss the episodes can improve the learnings, and controversial topics found in the selected TV series can activate students' interest to give their opinion and allow a fluid discussion in which they can activate the language items they have learnt (p. 41). Widodo and Cirocki (2015) also developed in their study how TV series enhance students' interest and, hence, they increase their motivation to participate in classroom discussions about the TV series. Nevertheless, both studies focus on the motivational aspect regarding these cultural products and their respective discussion, but not on how they may be a basis for EFL learning (with a special focus on the speaking skill) in a whole academic year.

According to these different authors, TV series have great potential when enhancing English acquisition, especially through vocabulary gains and the improvement of the listening skill. Besides, they review the material in terms of motivational factors. A recent study carried out by Alerwi and Alzahrani (2020) covers how sitcoms are useful to improve speech acts, but these authors only focus on requests, refusals, apologies, and compliment responses. None of them cover how TV series offer a very effective basis on which to build enough

linguistic and cultural knowledge to engage in any spoken activity, and how they can be a successful guiding thread (to design didactic units) for a whole academic year to replace textbooks.

2.4. The Speaking and Critical Thinking Skills

As explained above, when talking about TV series, it is usually the listening skill and the acquisition of vocabulary that receive more attention. Nonetheless, considering the motivational factor these audio-visual resources offer, it would be feasible to also consider that they give a very good basis on which to build speaking activities. According to Arnaudova (2006), to introduce Cultural Studies satisfactorily, it could be a good idea to promote discussions about cultural topics along with the watching of TV series (p. 6). Therefore, it seems that the speaking skill could act as a successful bridge between cultural development and watching TV series. Even if vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar are very important factors of a language, they are not enough to achieve effective communication since this process needs to include many non-linguistic components such as attitudes or thinking (Liton & AL Madanat, 2013, p. 2). According to the researchers, a successful communicative exchange can occur when elements related to the way we behave in a culture happen, and developing critical thinking skills could, then, encourage students to speak. Moreover, "globalization has increased the need for cross-cultural communication, but culture teaching has been neglected in foreign language education, resulting in students' lack of cultural knowledge, which is one of the major concerns that need careful attention" (Liton & AL Madanat, 2013, p. 9).

Furthermore, some of the factors that affect working on the speaking skill inside an EFL classroom are sharing a first language, lack of participation and spontaneity, lack of opportunities to speak in the foreign language, a restrictive curriculum and lack of motivation (Perez Garcia & Sanchez Manzano, 2015, p. 82). To counter these difficulties, TV series offer the solution: a) they are in a foreign language; b) they motivate students to discuss them; c) in this discussion students will have to use the vocabulary they have learnt in the foreign language; and, d) cultural products can become a way of developing a whole curriculum if

they are carefully selected. Importantly, it should be considered that the cultural context in Spain makes EFL successful learning really dependant on factors "such as enjoyment, personal satisfaction or interest" (p. 82). Whether EFL educators agree with introducing the enjoyment factor in their lessons or not, the context in which education occurs has proved to relevantly influence the outcome.

For these reasons, EFL teaching should follow current contexts to offer an education that students not only have to acquire but also want to acquire. An overemphasis on grammar or monotonous and tiring lessons can cease motivation in students regarding the speaking skill, which at the same time can lead to students losing their interest (Perez Garcia & Sanchez Manzano, 2015, p. 84). Considering that the speaking skill is already marginalised, not being able to modernise English lessons based on explaining and practising grammar will continue to eliminate the communicative approach to learning a language (p. 84). As the authors also studied, "a shift to a more communicative and integrative teaching style is necessary in order to develop students' oral skills as they would really like to practice more speaking in the classroom and have more opportunities to talk and interact" (p. 85). These ideas agree with what the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) establishes: that the EFL subject should aim at creating "competent language users" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 18), and not English theorists. Additionally, according to Hussain (2017), the "majority of languages even with writing scripts use their spoken forms more than the written ones" (p. 14), which indicates that if we want education to be adapted to learners' communicative realities, foreign language users need to develop their speaking skill, even more than their written one. As a consequence, "all students need or will need to be able to speak English outside the classroom", which entails an "absolute necessity to develop the communicative competence as an integral part of an effective EFL syllabus and [to] expose students to a variety of speaking strategies" (Perez Garcia & Sanchez Manzano, 2015, p. 85).

Among those strategies, according to Parker and Bickmore (2020), teachers must make sure that they are not rising the expectations about speaking quality, but rather letting students develop this ability focusing on what they

communicate, rather than on how they do it (p. 9). This again connects to the CEFR and its emphasis on encouraging students to use a language (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 18). Therefore, EFL students should be motivated to use English, even if not always in the best way possible. In fact, as Perez Garcia and Sanchez Manzano (2015) stated in their study, teachers must let students take risks and experiment with the language in speaking activities, making clear "that mistakes are tolerated as a natural part of the learning process" (p. 86). In addition, Liton and AL Madanat (2013) stated that linguistic accuracy is important, but that it has to be accompanied by sociolinguistic appropriacy if communication aims at being effective (p. 3), which demonstrates that, in communication, sociolinguistic factors are crucial, and not just grammar mistakes.

Indeed, giving that sort of spotlight to the speaking skill over the others, and over extreme grammar accuracy, may seem impactful, but it allows working on grammar and vocabulary as much as on any other skill. Something that would turn the traditional method into a more innovative one would be integrating the speaking skill in activities that involve other skills, like the reading or listening ones (Perez Garcia & Sanchez Manzano, 2015, p. 85). This could be done when watching TV series (you listen to the dialogues while reading the subtitles) and then discussing those out loud. Additionally, according to Iman (2017), the teaching of the speaking skill should be crucial in EFL classrooms because, if students develop this skill, they will be more able to communicate in English and, for that reason, the skill needs "the special treatment" (p. 93).

Even if traditional teachers and textbooks can help in the learning process to build understanding and knowledge, the memorisation factor their methods contain cannot result in successful learning (Zare & Othman, 2013, p. 1506). On the contrary, it is believed that debates offer the possibility of discussing and learning any subject because when learners are encouraged to think aloud, they can use their own experience and apply it to the knowledge they are building, creating a connection between previous knowledge and new knowledge (p. 1507). Additionally, the fact they feel personally connected to what they are learning makes the learnt information last longer (p. 1507). Apart from that, debating issues in the EFL classroom can result in the changing of perspectives

and viewpoints regarding a topic, which encourages listening to opinions and reflecting on your own beliefs (p. 1509). Therefore, engaging in discussions can make learners activate their EFL knowledge while they also activate their critical thinking skill and their social and cultural abilities.

Relevantly, debates do not only foster the speaking skill but, also, very successfully, the listening, reading, and writing skills, because students have to listen to other people's opinions, read to inform themselves about topics and also reflect on what they have learnt and even perhaps write about it in future essays (Zare & Othman, 2013, p. 1510). While it might be easy to think that giving the spotlight to the speaking skill might marginalise the others, studies like that of Zare and Othman prove otherwise. After the authors' study, some of the participants claimed to have learnt to have fun while learning English, to enjoy speaking the language even if they believed they did not speak it quite well, to consider they had to be more informed about cultural issues, and to learn to defend their opinions with information as a basis (p. 1511). Consequently, not only did practising the speaking skill make these students feel motivated enough to develop their linguistic ability, but it also indirectly made them more aware of the need of being informed and developing their cultural awareness.

According to Iman (2017), debates have very successful effects on critical thinking and the speaking skill. Since English is an international language and the language of globalization, we must learn how to practice it orally (p. 88). Students are usually unable to express their opinions and ideas because they have become used to the teacher-centred approach, in which they could not develop their critical thinking skills (p. 90). To change that, debates started to potentiate these skills considering they are an exciting activity for high school students, and also a way of encouraging research and thinking (pp. 90, 94). When doing oral activities that involve providing arguments, it is important to offer materials so students can inform themselves and acquire knowledge of relevant topics that will be discussed later (p. 104). For that reason, involving cultural products in the speaking skill could be useful, since one can learn a lot with them and from them, and then use this knowledge to create arguments in an exchange of opinions and to activate critical thinking skills.

Related to that, the process of deconstruction that has already been reviewed establishes that critical thinking is crucial to be able to see which knowledge gaps or problematic information we have in order to change this situation (Scott, 1988, p. 38). To undergo this process, critical thinking can be accentuated so individuals can "build up their own particular manners of intuition by evaluating the current information so as to be fruitful in their lives" (Akdag & Kirkgöz, 2020, p. 200). Developing critical thinking skills is crucial for widening the horizon of language learners, encouraging success, enhancing competency, and even working on the writing and speaking skills (p. 201). Moreover, developing these skills can also help when achieving the goals of the language curriculum and to develop personally (both emotionally and intellectually) (p. 201). Therefore, it could be said that critical thinking is relevant to develop not only the speaking skill but even the others. However, to do so, conversations about many topics should be started, and there are places in the world where introducing controversial topics is not viable because of the traditional educational system (Sudha, 2018, p. 48).

There is not just one definition for what controversial is, but, usually, controversial issues evoke strong feelings and views, they deal with social and cultural matters or with topics regarding personal values that can divide opinions between people inside a society (Sudha, 2018, p. 49). Moreover, they can include issues regarding human rights, such as gender or diversity (p. 49). Nevertheless, even if controversial, talking about these issues can develop empathy and allow young generations to grow with enough knowledge to handle disagreement, build strength, improve their judgement, and manage conflicts (p. 50). Sudha's research allowed discovering that students felt that starting serious conversations about controversial issues helped them reflect on topics they had not reflected on before, such as gender violence, sexual harassment or bullying (p. 54). This idea is supported by Case et al. (2017) and their discussion about how teachers ought to normalise taboos to allow students to have comfortable and rich conversations, and to teach them that they do not need to hide their inner world from adults.

Nevertheless, what the studies supporting debates fail to depict is that they offer very few opportunities for language use versatility and, thus, implementing

their use for a whole year might disregard all the other speaking contents students need to acquire according to the curriculum. Additionally, some individuals state that debates make them anxious and that they feel unable to apply critical thinking skills (Zare & Othman, 2013, p. 1508). However, despite their disadvantages, they are one of the speaking activities that seem to enhance motivation the most, and motivated learners are the ones who want to participate the most (Kondal, 2015, p. 73). According to Lyster (2007), "more important than whether the lesson is a whole-class or small-group activity is the quality of the interaction and the extent to which it contributes to educational objectives" (p. 88). Consequently, it is important to find communicative activities that allow a successful interaction and that are versatile, rather than just finding interesting activities that can lead to failure when working with the language. Debates encourage motivation, but they can evolve into an unsuccessful lesson if they get uncontrollable. Even if students might enjoy an uncontrollable lesson inside very structured ones, teachers should deconstruct the belief that a noisy classroom means a fun lesson (Diana, 2014, p. 39) to teach them that there are many ways to enjoy the learning process that do not involve making it a disarray. Therefore, a solution that keeps the best qualities of debates while compensating for its drawbacks is needed to give the speaking skill the relevant place it should have inside EFL teaching. The solution could be found in restorative circles.

2.4.1. Restorative Practices and Restorative Circles

Inside restorative practices, restorative circles maintain the motivational aspect of debates but introduce a guided approach that can avoid disorganisation. In addition, they allow versatility and approaching any topic in any way as long as the dialogue has been designed to cover certain issues.

The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) establishes that this resource originated in the 1970s as restorative justice: a way to reconcile victims and offenders (Pomar Fiol & Vecina Merchante, 2013, p. 217; Wachtel, 2015, p. 2). They are defined as "a social science that studies how to build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making" (Wachtel, 2015, p. 1). They can be used to reduce discriminatory or

violent attitudes (such as crime or bullying), improve human behaviour, strengthen societal relationships, provide efficient leadership, repair relationships, and repair harm (p. 1). Inside restorative practices, one can find restorative circles, a versatile methodology in which a group of people sit in a circle of chairs and start conversations to develop relationships, exchange information, and respond to and prevent conflicts (p. 7).

When the IIRP was created, it made restorative practices a fundamental pillar of educational systems (Pomar Fiol & Vecina Merchante, 2013, p. 217). In the educational context, they are used to prevent conflict and to improve coexistence and, secondarily, to solve conflicts once they have happened to repair the damage and restore relationships (p. 216). They "provide additional support to students across all tiers in building relationships, learning empathy, reinforcing academic content and practising problem-solving in a structured and predictable manner" (Evanovich et al., 2019, p. 7), which agrees with the stipulated general objectives of the EFL subject. Indeed, all these emotions are a part of how the learners will interact culturally in a diverse society.

As aforementioned, restorative circles are commonly used to solve conflict or to prevent it. However, according to Evanovich et al. (2019), they can also be used as a teaching method (p. 5). Therefore, restorative circles and teaching are compatible according to these authors, which makes them much more than a pedagogical method. Curiously, according to Schumacher (2014), the circles should be separated from the academic environment (p. 3). Nevertheless, it should be considered that guaranteeing a healthy and safe space of communication inside a classroom could have many benefits, even more so considering that, according to the same author, they include "a sense of safety grounded in trust, confidentiality, not feeling alone, and not being judged; freedom to express genuine emotions; and increased empathy and compassion" (p. 4). This idea is supported by Perez Garcia and Sanchez Manzano (2015), who also depicted how a good class environment is crucial for a correct motivation regarding the speaking skill (p. 86). Moreover, the circle of chairs methodology defies the notion of the typical teacher-fronted class, which usually does not

encourage students to participate, whereas sitting down in a circle could be a more appropriate way of creating a social environment of equality (p. 86).

Furthermore, to compensate for the debates' lack of guidance that has already been mentioned, restorative circles have some rules that make communication organised and effective. Everyone should be sitting in a circle, everyone participates in equal terms, there is a facilitator who actively participates without dominating the circle (it can be a teacher or a student who simply facilitates the interaction), everyone has to be honest and respectful, and a talking piece, an object that you hold in order to speak, will be selected (Evanovich et al., 2019, p.3). These different rules do not dictate the interaction that will occur, they just establish the context in which it will happen and, therefore, they do not limit the possibilities of working on all the oral production contents established in the curriculum. Additionally, there are four principles of restorative dialogue: "nonviolence and mutual respect in student interactions", "inclusion of diverse students in peer talk", "talk[ing] about social conflicts" and, finally, the depth regarding the quality of student talk (Parker & Bickmore, 2020, p. 4). Regarding this last principle, restorative dialogue proves beneficial to improve the speaking skill and it also aims at improving this skill while also respecting some societal rules and allowing the beginning of discussions about any topic, including those that can raise cultural awareness. Nevertheless, the same as they could include these topics, they could involve role-plays to discuss these topics, talking about dreams or ambitions, group work, or other common speaking activities in secondary education, which Hussain (2017) takes into account.

According to Anuradha et al. (2014), there are some principles to follow when teaching the speaking skill: to encourage students to speak from the first day, to tolerate that at the beginning they provide short answers or just repeat what they hear, and to let speakers use English according to their level of knowledge. Apart from that, the authors establish that teachers should propose structures that learners can use, encourage them to produce long sentences, promote as much pair-work as possible, be prepared with activities, and let the learners make mistakes at their primary stage without constant corrections. All these characteristics could be found in a restorative circle because their guided

nature allows repetitions, level adaptation (they are designed for the students), the creation of structure (since the dialogue is structured), and production encouragement (they include personal exchanging, which improves motivation). In addition, they contain group and pair activities, they are prepared beforehand (with an RC guideline), and their nature prioritises intervention rather than only grammar accuracy. Moreover, at the end of the restorative circles, the interaction is evaluated (Evanovich et al., 2019, p. 3), and in it, common mistakes could be noted to be worked on in the following grammar lessons.

In order to successfully use them as speaking activities, preparatory activities before the restorative circle can improve the quality of the dialogue (Parker & Bickmore, 2020, p. 8). With this as a basis to improve the advantages of the activity, the nature of restorative circles compensates for the drawbacks that have been observed in debates. For instance, the use of a talking piece can promote control and focused listening and it can make the communicative process more organised and without interruptions (Schumacher, 2014, p. 9), as usually happens in a debate, in which many times the speaking is done abruptly and without respecting the times of interaction. This is something that the study of Parker and Bickmore (2020) also considered while adding the pedagogical element of the restorative practice. To exemplify the issue, the already mentioned research by Sudha (2018) becomes illustrative. The bigger challenges the researcher encountered when doing the debates were introducing the topic, ensuring a healthy environment, and making students get involved (p. 55), all difficulties easily solved in restorative circles.

For these reasons, the circles could be extremely useful, because they allow to sort all the mentioned difficulties and to start a speaking exchange about any topic in an organised manner. Related to this, this method could allow the development of all the contents established for the oral production skill in the curriculum. Additionally, this methodology involves feedback after a restorative dialogue, something that Sudha's research also considered extremely relevant when discussing controversial topics (2018, p. 56). Therefore, they could be a very useful resource to discuss the different topics established in the curriculum,

and to cover all the grammar structures in the interaction, with a TV series as a basis.

2.5. Approaches

To include restorative circles on TV series as an activity to enhance the speaking skill and cultural awareness as the bases of a whole academic year, an instructional approach that supports these ideas should be explored. There are three of them that, combined, could allow the development of all the issues mentioned above.

2.5.1. Counterbalanced Content-Based Approach Mixed with Focus on Form

According to Lyster (2007), there is a consensus among researchers regarding the relevance of content-based lessons because they compensate for the lack of engagement with language common in more traditional methods (p. 99). Conversely, this approach promotes authentic situations in which the exchange of information can be done by encouraging learners "to stretch their language resources" (p. 114) from an early immersion into the English language to develop a better proficiency and "a more positive attitude towards the second language and its native speakers" (pp. 11, 13). Additionally, content-based instruction allows the integration of language and cognitive development, something that is connected to thinking and, therefore, to critical thinking skills (p. 2). In fact, the author considers that approaches that encourage students to use the foreign language as a communicative tool, and as a way to develop cognitively, have a remarkable potential (p. 22). Therefore, this approach seems to benefit learners both linguistically and culturally since it also raises awareness of cultural diversity, and it favours the use of authentic materials, like TV series.

Nevertheless, according to Lyster (2007), a pure content-based approach is only feasible in countries in which English is the main language. Instead, a counterbalanced approach could be implemented since it is necessary to introduce grammatical items, but only after having worked on the contents, or while introducing them (p. 29). To compensate for this, the author suggests combining the approach with form-focused instruction, which allows to introduce

the grammar input after having observed, noticed, and worked with it in activities based on the different contents (pp. 133-134). However, according to Long (1998), the most beneficial instructional method would be the focus on form approach (and not form-focused), which aims at students using linguistic elements and drawing their attention to them before introducing these contents as theory (p. 40). As opposed to form-focused approaches, the focus on form approach only involves the form-focused activities that involve engaging in communication and using linguistic elements in tasks before introducing the theory of these elements (p. 41). Hence, this instructional approach agrees with the use of TV series as a material that allows working with the language before being introduced to it theoretically, and it agrees with the use of restorative circles since it emphasises activities that involve communication.

2.5.2. Communicative Approach

The approach that contributes the most to communication and the speaking skill is, as its name depicts, the Communicative Approach. Combining this approach with the counterbalanced content-based and focus on form approaches could have a lot of benefits, like being able to introduce the speaking skill with the leadership it has already been reviewed that it deserves. Related to this issue, Dos Santos (2020) defended the relevance of including the Communicative Language Teaching approach because of the encouragement it might give to students to share their ideas without many limitations and because it could be successfully implemented in the EFL classroom (p. 108).

On the one hand, Liton and AL Madanat (2013) stated that the main objective in teaching English is allowing communication among people (p. 7). Indeed, the main goal of communicative instruction is precisely to develop the students' communicative competence in a world of interdependent relationships (Kasumi, 2015, pp. 156-156). In this approach, the teacher allows this communication to happen and acts as a facilitator and guide, not as the traditional figure of the information provider (Diana, 2014, p. 38). The problem with the idea of the teacher as a facilitator (which is precisely the word that is used for the person who guides the restorative circles) is that teachers tend to forget that

diversity in a classroom has to be taken into account and that for students to successfully communicative, sometimes they need a little bit of guidance, and not to be left alone to speak with each other (p. 38). Therefore, effective communication needs to involve a sort of guide without being excessive, something that restorative circles provide.

On the other hand, in communicative language instruction, authentic materials are expected to be included (Diana, 2014, p. 40) and, as has already been studied, TV series constitute a very current and renowned authentic material. Regarding their discussion through restorative circles and the development of the speaking skill, even according to Lyster (2007) and his revision of content-based instruction, classrooms that follow the content-based approach and language immersion create a more authentic environment for communication (p. 23). Consequently, not only would the communicative approach enhance spoken interactions, but it would also do so combined with content-based teaching. According to Perez Garcia and Sanchez Manzano (2015), students are generally more motivated to speak English when there is a real-life communicative and interactive approach to the skill without taking too much into account errors since not stopping them continuously to correct them can allow them to speak fluently (pp. 86-87). Nevertheless, according to Diana (2014), errors should be corrected, and that can be done either in the moment or after the speaking activity (p. 40). Either way, the teacher must choose one method taking into account which one could work better in their class to guarantee that students still feel motivated and free to speak (p. 40). For these reasons, the subsequent feedback that restorative circles offer could favour avoiding interruptions for corrections to not demotivate the students.

According to schools specialised in communicative instruction, what is important is to learn to speak a language, and not to learn how it works (Kasumi, 2015, p. 157), as the CEFR establishes. When students depend too much on the teacher for language learning, they lose the opportunity to use language in a relaxed environment (p. 157). For these reasons, as has been stated before, the communicative approach emphasises the role of the teacher as a guide and facilitator.

Regarding the cultural factor, this approach and its interactive nature allow the implementation of cultural teaching strategies to help non-native learners acquire communicative skills (Ali et al., 2015, p. 3). As a result, "these activities also enhance cultural behaviour and attitude of learners as per the patterns of communicating the target language in context" (p. 3). Therefore, communicative instruction deals with raising cultural awareness, as content-based and focus on form teaching also do. In fact, "in the 1990s, the emergence of the communicative approach in language teaching was a turning point for the conception of culture" because the notion about cultural awareness was developed (Larrea-Espinar & Raigón-Rodríguez, 2019, p. 35). Hence, this approach seems extremely connected to the cultural component that this dissertation has already analysed, to the speaking skill, and to cultural products as authentic materials.

3. Objectives

A common conclusion that can be extracted from the different studies reviewed in this dissertation is that even if the speaking skill and TV series have been analysed in many of them, they are not usually connected. No reviewed TV series study contemplates their potential to work on and emphasise the speaking skill apart from motivational factors, and no speaking skill study contemplates how introducing restorative circles inside the EFL classroom can preserve the motivational factors of a debate while eliminating uncontrollability. Resultantly, to the best of my knowledge, there are no studies that have explored how combining extensive exposure to TV series and restorative circles can allow a successful process of English acquisition in which the speaking skill takes the main role and in which cultural awareness is developed as complementary to the language acquisition process.

Extensive exposure to carefully selected TV series can combine a successful learning of the established EFL contents with relevant cultural input that will enhance oral productions. Moreover, restorative circles can help students to learn that semi-guided interactions preserve the enjoyment that debates contain with the extra help that can benefit them linguistically. Apart from that, this versatile resource would allow classroom interactions to take place in a safe

environment of respect, empathy, union, and equality, which agrees with the EFL curriculum's general objectives. Additionally, the starting of conversations and exchanging of ideas with a cultural product as a basis would contribute to the development of an open-minded attitude, which would help students to understand the social and diverse world around them. All this cultural awareness process would be inseparable from the EFL acquisition process and would make the secondary education path much more complete since it would include the deconstruction process that has already been mentioned. Importantly, this idea is based on Coeducation and, hence, on education legislation. As learnt during the Practicum of the master's degree in Teacher Training, EFL is the subject that allows including coeducational contents the most, which indicates that it should do so.

For these reasons, this dissertation aims at designing a didactic proposal for a 4th of ESO group of approximately between 15 and 20 students in which a TV series acts as the guiding thread on which to build the whole academic year, as a textbook would usually do in more traditional approaches. The viewings would be done in English and with English subtitles because of the students' level. To discuss this TV series orally, restorative circles would be implemented inside the EFL classroom, which would favour practising the most marginalised skill in the English classrooms and one of the most fundamental for their future as social beings: the speaking skill. Apart from that, the learning process would be inseparable from the deconstruction process, and cultural awareness would be enhanced as crucial in EFL acquisition.

4. Didactic proposal[3]

4.1. Justification

The TV series selected for this didactic proposal is *Sense8* (2015-2018). This cultural product has two seasons, and it was created by the Wachowski sisters, two renowned directors, and J. Michael Straczynki, and it was produced by Netflix. It deals with eight main characters from all around the world (Chicago,

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[3] It should be remembered that, because of space restrictions, this dissertation will develop only four of all the restorative circles sessions that would take place during the whole academic year.

San Francisco, Mumbai, Nairobi, Seoul, Berlin, Mexico City, and Reykjavik) who belong to a different kind of human species that is somehow connected mentally and emotionally: *homo sensorium*. This connection allows them to share their thoughts, abilities, languages, and emotions, among all the other qualities that make them who they are. The TV series emphasises the importance of interculturality, transnationalism, empathy, cultural diversity, the fight for righteous causes, and connection. In fact, according to Zilonka et al. (2017), what this TV series portrays is that, to deconstruct violence, people ought to choose love and defy damaging discourses (pp. 393, 398). To develop this message, the TV series follows the story of the eight main protagonists, called *sensates*, and their journey from discovering the connection they share to fighting the violent powers that want to destroy them because they find their ability to share what they are with other people dangerous. In the end, what this TV series demonstrates, with a gripping plot, is that people should promote values of empathy, respect, and solidarity through cultural awareness in order to deconstruct the discourses that try to break these values.

Apart from all these characteristics, this TV series was selected for its depiction of very relevant issues of cultural interest and because of its versatility of topics. Indeed, students will develop their listening comprehension and their vocabulary, but they will also be developing a cultural awareness that will improve their critical thinking skills in English, both being general objectives in the curriculum, while being able to work on any topic established in the same curriculum due to its versatility. Therefore, students will acquire all the necessary contents established in the curriculum, even if not divided into established didactic units, but rather as interconnected fields with the TV series as the source to work on the different topics. This will imitate how topics are discussed in real life. In real-life conversations and exchanges of information, topics are not discussed alone, but rather connected to other ones, and that is why education should aim at allowing students to have the ability to interconnect their knowledge and be able to use it in authentic environments. This agrees with the ideas of deconstruction and how it originally aimed at defying the structuralist view in which everything has an established position and order. Connected to this idea,

the speaking skill proves again crucial since it will probably be through oral communication how the students will mainly use the language in the future. Nevertheless, the fact this proposal places the spotlight on the speaking skill and TV series does not mean that the other skills, together with vocabulary and grammar acquisition, will be forgotten.

According to school calendars, the EFL subject is taught in approximately thirty-five weeks, with three lessons each week. For this reason, the viewing of the TV series will be done once a week, the first of the three days in which EFL lessons are taught. In these viewing lessons, a fifteen-minute previewing activity will be done to activate the students' previous knowledge and prepare them to focus on the topics. Then, *Sense8* will be played until the moment the bell rings. The next viewing day, the TV series will be played from the moment it was left, and this is how the different lessons dedicated to the cultural product will be carried out. Nevertheless, there will be an exception during the Christmas and Easter holidays, in which students will be given the resources to watch three episodes (a two-hour episode during the Christmas holidays and two one-hour episodes during the Easter holidays) in English with English subtitles. The last episode of the TV series, considering it lasts two and a half hours, will be worked on in two restorative circles. According to the calculations made for the proposal, taking into account the total number of minutes of the TV series and the lessons, students will finish the viewing of *Sense8* approximately six weeks before finishing the school year, depending on whether there are delays.

To register their progress watching the TV series, students will have to keep a portfolio in which they will write a summary for each of the episodes and in which they will keep a list with all the vocabulary they learn in the viewings. During the holidays, they will also have to write all the ideas they have extracted from the episodes in order to discuss them in the restorative circles that will take place once they start their lessons again. This portfolio will be marked at the end of the school year, as part of their formal formative assessment. It will account for 25% of the final mark, and students will be required to obtain a minimum mark of 5 out of 10 to pass the subject. In case of obtaining a failing grade, they will get a second opportunity to submit it during the September resits. The other 75% of

the mark will be divided between the regular exams (40%) and the students' performance in the restorative circles (35%), which at the same time will replace the typical speaking exams.

The restorative circles in which the TV series will be discussed will take place once every two weeks, in the third of the three days of EFL lessons. They will take place on the third day because the second day will be dedicated to working with the vocabulary learnt in the TV series and with grammar because this knowledge will be necessary for the restorative circle, which will be based on the topics discussed in *Sense8* and the grammatical structures they are learning. Additionally, they will cover all the different communicative functions established in the curriculum, with some of the main ones attributed to each circle, even though it will also be possible to work on others during the activity. Similarly, in the weeks with no restorative circle, the two remaining lessons apart from the viewing one will be used to work on vocabulary, grammar, and the other skills, always using materials that connect directly or indirectly to the TV series and the topics it discusses.

The restorative circles will be prepared with a document to guide the students' interaction[4], which will be made available to the students prior to the circle so they can prepare for it if they want to. The document's title will be based on the title of the episode (or one of the episodes) watched before doing the circle. Each circle will have an assigned topic, or topics, and some verb tenses, even though students will also be encouraged to use their knowledge of other topics and verb tenses. The idea is that the restorative circles become an activity that allows students to activate their English knowledge as much as they can, which includes both the new one and the existing one. In addition, the circles will cover all the different communicative functions established in the curriculum for the oral production skill due to the adaptability of the speaking activity. In their nature, restorative circles consist of improving personal and social relationships, maintaining communication, and organising a discourse, while at the same time they include requesting and offering information and opinions and expressing

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[4] The template that will be used to prepare the restorative circles can be found in Annex A.

knowledge. For this reason, the objectives of each restorative circle will be to include these communicative functions as bases for the restorative circles to be successful. Furthermore, they will relevantly include topics that are established in the Coeducation Program. Considering the curriculum ones will also be worked on during the sessions not dedicated to the viewings and the circles, Coeducation topics will mostly be included in the circles because their pedagogical nature allows working on them with effectiveness.

In the circles, there will be a facilitator, who will be the teacher and will create the guidelines of the activity prior to doing it. The activities will consist of different rounds (in pairs and with the whole group) in which different issues will be discussed through questions or topics. During the pair rounds, the teacher will walk around the circle to check how the activity is developing. Regarding the group rounds, a talking piece (the object that students must hold during their speaking turn in restorative circles) will be used, which will be selected in each of the lessons. If possible, it will be related to one of the topics that are being worked on (i.e., if students are discussing sports, it will be a ball; if students are discussing traditions, it will be an object related to tradition). After each circle, the teacher will write some feedback about the different mistakes made, gaps of knowledge, or other issues that need revision to work on them in the sessions that are dedicated to grammar revision. In the last six weeks in which students will not be watching the TV series because they will have finished it, the restorative circles will take place once a week, and not once every two weeks as planned during the viewing. Therefore, approximately, the school year will allow for fourteen restorative circles based on the viewings of the episodes and six additional restorative circles, which will still contain topics related to the TV series.

This didactic proposal follows the counterbalanced content-based approach mixed with focus on form and the communicative approach. It gives a special focus to communication through the circles, and it uses authentic material (the TV series *Sense8*) to observe the use of the language before being taught the theory. All skills are worked on, especially the listening skill (through the viewings) and, as this proposal highlights, the commonly marginalised speaking skill (through the restorative circles). Related to the TV series, written

comprehension will be developed indirectly in the TV series with the subtitles and written production will be practised in the portfolio. Moreover, they will be worked on during the lessons dedicated to them each week. Vocabulary and grammar will be present in the cultural product, the restorative circles, and the additional lessons devoted to them as well. Therefore, even if this proposal includes an innovative approach in which a TV series replaces the textbook and the speaking skill takes an unusual spotlight, it will not disregard the contents students must acquire during 4th of ESO or obstruct their EFL acquisition process. Instead, this proposal has been designed to make them as competent as they can get in the English language and in the cultural component that accompanies it.

4.2. Questionnaire[5]

This proposal contemplates that, at the beginning of the academic year, students will have to answer a questionnaire to understand their expectations, tastes, opinions, and experiences to make sure their EFL acquisition process in this innovative proposal is as successful as possible. As learnt during the Practicum, teachers must create bonds with the students in the way that appropriately fits all of them. Therefore, to start this bond, this survey could help the instructor know more about their students. For this reason, it was designed in Spanish, so students feel more comfortable to express themselves as much as they want, and to make sure they understand every question. To learn this information basing it on the proposal, the questionnaire includes three sections: TV series, Cultural Studies[6], and the speaking skill. Apart from that, some general information is gathered: gender and age of the students. To study the effectivity of the survey, it was tested on eighteen[7] students of 4th of ESO of the public high school IES Ramon Llull to observe a pattern and many common expectations, experiences, and opinions regarding the issues included, which could imitate how the students of the didactic proposal would react as well. The students are all fifteen and sixteen years old. Nine of them identify themselves as men, six of

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[5] The questions included in the survey can be found in Annex B.
[6] This section was created focusing on issues of gender roles and sexism, sexual orientation, gender identity, values of equality and diversity, and the problems of discrimination.
[7] Originally, the questionnaire was intended to be answered by thirty participants. In the end, only eighteen contributed answers.

them as women, two of them as non-binary and one of them preferred not to state the gender. All of them belong to a class of students with a high level of English.

Regarding the questions about TV series, the questionnaire aims at observing whether students watch this type of audio-visual materials outside and inside of high school, and if it helps them learn English. Moreover, it includes some questions on their tastes regarding choosing one cultural product or another. The results of the 4th of ESO students demonstrate that TV series are a cultural product they watch outside of high school but not too much inside of it, that they learn English with them to a greater or lesser extent, and that their personal tastes would coincide with the topics that can be found in *Sense8.* Therefore, administering this questionnaire at the beginning of the year could allow the teacher to see the predisposition of the students regarding the didactic proposal.

Furthermore, it includes questions about past experiences with TV series because the instructor should know if students have worked with this material in the past to adequately introduce them to this new innovative method of constructing an EFL course. These questions were deemed relevant when tested with real students because most of their exposure to TV series seemed to have been through fragments or just one episode, when most of them expressed they would like TV series to be included more often. Finally, it includes questions to observe the cultural product choices that, in their experience, teachers made in the past. The results of the testing highlighted how teachers should include topics that students feel more connected to. Knowing all these answers prior to starting the academic year with the students of the proposal could make the teacher be more prepared to face the diversity of opinions, experiences, and expectations of the students regarding the use of the cultural product. This would help the development of the year considering using a TV series as a guiding thread of the EFL subject is not something the students are used to.

In the section of Cultural Studies, the focus is placed on learning about the students' knowledge about the field, how it is introduced in EFL lessons and the influence of Coeducation. The real 4th of ESO students' answers demonstrated

that, despite their young age, they can observe which audio-visual materials contain topics related to cultural issues. Seeing their perceptions, again it is demonstrated that *Sense8* could be understood by the students of the proposal if they answered similarly. Additionally, inside the section, students are asked about an affirmation that has become popular in social networks lately: that there is a connection between having been a good student in the EFL subject and belonging to the world of activism in the future. This question was selected because it could be interesting to observe whether they believe this subject has the potential of including deconstruction. In the testing, only one student disagreed. They believed that English opens the door to understand the diversity of the world.

Regarding Coeducation, students are asked about relevant cultural topics and whether they have observed if they tend to be included in all their subjects. In the testing, as expected from the students of the proposal, they observed that even if some topics were treated in their high school subjects (like sexism, equality, and racism), LGTBIQ+ diversity, mental health or classism were not common topics, even less in the English subject. Observing this issue could help the teacher prepare to help students become aware of how English acquisition is interconnected with cultural acquisition, something that is reinforced by the following question in which the real students established that including certain topics would make the acquisition process more complete. Connected to that and the use of TV series, the survey includes an item on whether TV series can act as a bridge between EFL learning and Cultural Studies, and a question on whether discrimination occurs because of lack of empathy, lack of education, or both. The results of the testing demonstrate students think that TV series are a good resource and that both education and empathy influence discrimination. Finally, a question about whether education also aims at personal development was included to observe whether they believe they have been experiencing deconstruction during their previous three years or not. Most of them considered they had not, which demonstrates they might not see secondary education as a path in which deconstruction is possible even if they believe education can fight discrimination. Hence, learning about this contradiction before doing the proposal

could allow the teacher to know they have to work on how educating ourselves is one of the first steps of both academic achievement and deconstruction.

In the speaking skill section, students are asked about which skill they consider is more relevant to observe whether they will feel predisposed to an academic year that focuses on the speaking skill. The results of the testing placed this skill as the one which was voted more times as the most relevant. With this as a basis, the students are asked whether they believe English is taught in a more entertaining way than other subjects. Most of the students of the testing voted that it is, which demonstrates that this question is relevant to see their past experiences with the subject and the predisposition they would have to include an innovative approach. Additionally, regarding the connection between TV series and the speaking skill, the questionnaire gathers information about whether this resource would make them feel more motivated to speak, and why students do not usually feel motivated to do so. These questions could be relevant because the teacher would be able to know why students feel demotivated to participate and whether TV series could give a solution to that. The answers of the students demonstrated that they would enjoy engaging in discussions with a TV series as the basis and that they feel demotivated because of shyness, lack of interest, fear of not using English correctly, sense of insecurity in front of the teacher, general insecurity, tiredness, lack of speaking practice, low proficiency, and fear of peer judgement. With this knowledge, the teacher could feel that restorative circles would solve the difficulties because they create a safe space in which to interact, and they would also know which additional measures could be taken to make all students feel included.

Finally, related to that, the survey includes a question in which students have to write which topics would motivate them to speak to take them into account in the restorative circles. When tested with the 4th of ESO pupils, some of the most repeated topics mentioned were inequality, politics, world cultures, mental health, activism-related topics, emotional intelligence, or LGTBIQ+ issues. One student explained that it is important that topics such as the latter are tackled with knowledge and without making students feel tense. Therefore, this demonstrates the need to make each student feel represented and to include diversity not only

in what is taught, but also, very necessarily, in the materials that are chosen, again demonstrating the effectivity of *Sense8* because of the already mentioned characteristics of the series.

In conclusion, this questionnaire aims at discovering the students' expectations, experiences, and preferences before starting the academic year to work with this knowledge as a basis. In doing so, the teacher will be able to adapt any issues that need adapting and to know beforehand which complications can be found. Similarly, observing the students' answers will allow the teacher to learn about their diverse profiles and their previous knowledge and experience regarding cultural awareness.

4.3. Restorative Circles

The RCs' guidelines have been created after watching all episodes and taking into account their different scenes and which topics they tackle. To make sure the proposal is well-explained, this dissertation includes four RCs, selected because they are illustrative to understand how the proposal works.

On the one hand, the first three developed RC sessions will represent how the first fourteen restorative circles will work, which will take place while watching the TV series. First, the objectives of each restorative circle and its prior activities (the viewings and the previewing[8] activities) will be established, with a focus on the linguistic and cultural goals. Because of space limitations, the communicative functions that each restorative circle aims at developing have not been included but can be reviewed in Annex C. Then, the proposal will include the real guidelines that will be used in the RC session since they include the activities that will be executed. Finally, the expected results of each restorative circle, which would be written down in the final section of the template after completing the activity, will be described. On the other hand, to exemplify how the remaining six restorative circles will work when the TV series is finished, one of them will be developed, only focusing on the functioning and the objectives, the restorative

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[8] Including activities before watching a TV series or doing a restorative circle can improve the acquisition process (Parker & Bickmore, 2020, p. 8; Pujadas & Muñoz, 2019, p. 14).

circle session, and the expected results since there will not be any viewing or previewing activities after having finished watching *Sense8*.

4.3.1. Restorative Circle 1: "I Am Also a We"

4.3.1.1. Objectives

The objectives of this restorative circle, and its previous activities, are both linguistic and cultural. Related to the former, students will be expected to activate their previous knowledge regarding verb tenses, specifically paying attention to the past simple tense. In the restorative circle, they will mostly have to retell what they have seen in the viewings, and therefore they will mostly use this tense. Additionally, students will be expected to start working with the communicative functions established for 4th of ESO. Regarding their cultural awareness development, the first two episodes contain relevant themes of Coeducation, most specifically regarding LGTBIQ+ issues and LGTB phobia. For this reason, this lesson aims at introducing students to a very stigmatised topic that is not often discussed naturally in a classroom. In fact, when the questionnaire that was designed for the beginning of the academic year in the proposal was tested on real students of 4th of ESO, one of them explicitly mentioned that this topic is not treated enough and, when treated, it is done creating a tense atmosphere instead of being tackled as something natural.

4.3.1.2. Previewing of the TV Series

During the first two previewing activities of the TV series, students will discuss some topics related to it. First, before starting watching these episodes, students will be asked about science-fiction to see which expectations they have on this type of genre, as well as to observe their preferences. In the same activity, they will discuss globalisation and diversity, since they are two topics that are interconnected and relevant in *Sense8*. This will prepare them for the first viewing. For the second one, students will have to discuss which of the main characters they have liked the most so far and give reasons why. This will be done to check whether they are understanding the different storylines and to make sure they prepare for the restorative circle after the second viewing.

4.3.1.3. Viewing of the TV Series

Before the first restorative circle, students are expected to have watched the first and second episodes of the TV series, or at least the first and a significant part of the second. These two first viewings will be very introductory for the students and probably difficult considering the plot of *Sense8* is not understood at least until having watched the whole first two episodes. Therefore, they will mostly be introduced to the series through the plot and the characters and their characteristics. For these reasons, they will be working with the topics of travelling and globalisation, as the first two episodes begin portraying a story in which very different people from all around the world are connected and can mind-travel, and students should be able to learn about different cultures and what they have in common. They will also deal with jobs, language and communication, and family and friends, because the characters' descriptions are based on this information. Related to Coeducation and cultural awareness, the first two viewings of the episodes will introduce, mainly, the LGTBIQ+ pride and LGTB phobia in the storylines of a lesbian trans activist and a closeted gay actor.

4.3.1.4. Post-viewing of the TV Series: Restorative Circle[9]

Title of the RC: "I Am Also a We"   Group-Class: 4th of ESO

PLANNING

Starting round: The students will be shown some images of the *sensates* and will have to state their names. Also, one by one, they will have to state which country they have liked the most according to what they have seen.

MIXER: People will change seats randomly for each pair round, avoiding sitting next to the same people as much as possible.

MAIN ACTIVITY:

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[9] The dates of this restorative circle and the following ones will not be included because the organization of the school year of the didactic proposal has been calculated approximately and not with exact dates.

- Whole group: How did this TV series portray globalisation in the first two episodes?
- In pairs: How were the different families represented in the first two episodes? Were they normative?
- Whole group: What countries are the main characters from? Did you think they were shown as they are in real life or were they stereotyped?
- In pairs: Which different traditions or cultural elements have you observed in these countries?
- Whole group: (The facilitator will project some images about jobs). Which are the different jobs in the images? Did any of the main characters have one of these jobs? Are these jobs stereotypical in the countries that have appeared in *Sense8*?
- In pairs: Are the main characters' jobs stereotypically attributed to a particular gender?
- Whole group: How was gender represented in this episode? Are the women very feminine and the men very masculine according to cultural beliefs?
- In pairs: Was homosexuality shown in the TV series as something that constructs masculinity? Think about the characters of Lito and Wolfgang.

REFLECTION: Related to the topic of gender, and more specifically gender identity, the students will be asked to discuss, in turns, how LGTB phobia has been represented so far in the first two episodes.

ENERGIZER: Students will place their thumbs upwards if they agree with the opinions of their classmates. They will also be able to point their thumbs downwards if they can counterargue what their classmates have said.

ENDING ROUND: The facilitator will ask each student to state what they have liked the most about the first two episodes. They will be able to choose any element from the TV series.

4.3.1.5. Expected Results[10]

It is expected that students successfully activate their previous knowledge about the different topics worked on in the episodes and about the verb tenses they had studied during their previous years in high school. Additionally, if the restorative circle develops as expected, students will begin to learn how all topics can be connected to other topics, which will teach them about having richer and more intersectional conversations. Related to that, they will learn that the subjects of Coeducation are found in many cultural products, either directly or indirectly, and that discussing them can amplify their English vocabulary and their cultural knowledge. This will allow their minds to be open for the following restorative circles and the following topics that will be discussed. Nevertheless, it is expected that this first restorative circle will pose a main difficulty, which will consist of the lack of exposure to more episodes and, therefore, less understanding of the cultural product, which is why the RC's questions are simpler than the ones in the following RCs.

4.3.2. Restorative Circle 8: "Who Am I?"

4.3.2.1. Objectives

On the one hand, regarding the linguistic objectives of this restorative circle and its previous activities, students will be expected to put into practice the knowledge they will have acquired about modal verbs using the TV series, and what they have learnt so far from it, as a basis. They will be expected to know which modal verb to use when speaking in each context, that is, to introduce them in a natural way in oral speech. These types of verbs are frequently used in formal or written contexts, and the objective of this restorative circle is that students use them in a

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[10] As can be observed in Annex A, the RC template includes an "Assessment" section in which the achievements, the difficulties, and the proposals to improve are written down. This part has been eliminated in all the RC tables of the proposal. Instead, an approximation of what could be included there will be developed in the "Expected Results" section of each RC.

group conversation, learning to see them as a part of their usual speech. On the other hand, in the coeducational and cultural context, the circle aims at making students understand that labels are sometimes used to discriminate but that they are also an identity creator and, therefore, they will be necessary until people are not denied their own identities anymore. Related to this, they will learn about the importance of innovative studies, how relationships of power work, and how ICTs and, inside of them, the media, can be extremely influential in a society. Also connected to ICTs, the RC will aim at showing students how there is a very powerful side of them: cultural products. Considering the whole didactic proposal has been designed around one, they will observe how people learn with them and how they are an effective tool to develop cultural awareness.

4.3.2.2. Previewing of the TV Series

In the two activities before watching the TV series, students will be asked to discuss some elements that will be found in the two episodes they will watch during the two viewings prior to the restorative circle. In the first previewing activity, students will be required to talk about whether labels are important when building identities. They will be expected to use all the examples seen so far in the cultural product. In the second previewing activity, the students will be shown different images of headlines and they will have to discuss, using them as a reference, how ICTs affect the discourses of our society.

4.3.2.3. Viewing of the TV Series

During the viewing sessions before the eighth restorative circle, students will be expected to have watched, or almost finished watching, the second and third episodes of the second season. These two episodes are extremely relevant because, in them, we can observe the use of labels in a symbolic speech about them, the discourses of discrimination inside jobs, how ICTs have a lot of power when legitimising or defying discourses, and how scientific and psychological studies have helped understand human evolution and human connection, interconnected with the topic of health. In addition, tackling the topic of free time, these episodes demonstrate how cultural products affect many people, as represented in the story of one of the protagonists, who discovers his true identity

while watching them. Furthermore, the students will finally understand the main conflict of the TV series, built on relationships of power, and how everything is constructed on different moments or ideas, which imitates how RCs are built on interconnected topics.

4.3.2.4. Post-viewing of the TV Series: Restorative Circle

Title of the RC: "Who Am I?"   Group-Class: 4th of ESO

PLANNING

Starting round: To activate previous knowledge, students will be asked to say a label that people (or themselves) use to refer to them, whether they like it or not, and to explain why. The facilitator will be the first to say theirs to encourage students to follow their example.

MIXER: People will change seats randomly for each pair round, avoiding sitting next to the same people as much as possible.

MAIN ACTIVITY:

- Whole group: Can labels help fight invisibilisation? Discuss examples seen in *Sense8* and other cultural products you have watched.

- In pairs: Are labels used to create identities? Discuss whether people should use them as such or not.

- Whole group: Discuss the following statements:

  o Television reporters must always report everything, despite the consequences this may have for other people.

  o ICTs need to use their power to defy damaging discourses.

  o Filmmakers ought to make more movies that include all types of people.

- In pairs: Can academic studies help us understand identities and diversity better? Take as an example Dr Kolovi's research on *homo sensorium*.

- Whole group: Discuss the following statements:

  - If scientific studies focused more on what unites people rather than what differentiates them, discrimination might cease existing.

  - Scientific studies should focus more on Biology and less on Psychology.

- In pairs: Each pair will be assigned a film or TV series genre. They will have to say using "can", "could", "should", "must", or "might", depending on what they want to express, what their assigned genre could do to be more inclusive.

  - Example: For comedy movies to be less *fatphobic*, they could stop making the bigger character the focus of all jokes.

- Whole group: Each pair will discuss their contributions with the whole group.

- In pairs: Are relationships of power present in a high school? Discuss this question with your classmate.

- Whole group: Focus on how the Biologic Preservation Organisation (BPO) is depicted in the TV series to discuss how relationships and exercises of power influence the worlds' ideologies.

REFLECTION: What is your opinion about labels after having done the circle?

ENERGIZER: The students that were paired before each group round will have to high-five if they agree with what another student states.

ENDING ROUND: Each student will have to build a sentence with a modal verb that the facilitator will choose. The sentence will have to be related to the restorative circle activities or what has been seen in the episodes.

4.3.2.5. Expected Results

This restorative circle, placed in the middle of the TV series, is expected to result in students being better experts on the cultural product and the way it discusses different topics by interrelating them. Specifically, this restorative circle will hopefully teach students about the duality of labels as tools for building identities but also for discriminating against people, and how relationships of power work in a world dominated by diversity. As well, they will be expected to learn about the importance of studies in the academic and the health fields, mostly innovative ones. This will hopefully encourage them to do research on their own, and the teacher will offer some recommendations for those interested. Additionally, if the circle goes as expected, students will activate their modal verbs' knowledge in oral speech and will see that they are crucial to convey many messages, even if using them correctly might pose one of the main difficulties of the circle.

4.3.3. Restorative Circle 14: "Amor Vincit Omnia" Part 2

4.3.3.1. Objectives

Considering this will be the last restorative circle while watching the TV series, the aims are slightly more demanding. Linguistically, it will aim at activating the students' knowledge about all the verb tenses they will have learnt so far during the school year. They will have watched a whole cultural product with different tenses used in it, and they will have done many grammar lessons, so their level of English will be expected to have improved by then. As for the cultural objectives, students will have dealt until this point with a whole TV series based on raising cultural awareness. Consequently, this restorative circle will aim at demonstrating this development in the world of Cultural Studies and Coeducation topics. For these reasons, the circle will include topics of transnationalism, non-normative relationships, gender roles, deconstruction, and feelings and emotions.

4.3.3.2. Previewing of the TV Series

During the two previewing activities before the last restorative circle, students will only focus on the second part of the final episode of *Sense8*. They will have already watched two seasons and will have worked with the TV series for almost a whole year. For this reason, in the first previewing activity they will be asked about deconstruction and what they have learnt about this process, which will have been introduced previously but will be developed in more depth in the circle. In the second previewing activity, since it will be the last one before finishing *Sense8*, students will be asked to hypothesize about the ending considering everything they have watched so far, and to state what type of ending they would like.

4.3.3.3. Viewing of the TV Series

The last viewings will consist of the second part of the final episode of *Sense8*. It contains many different topics and scenes since the creators, after the cancellation of the third season, had to include all its plot in a two-and-a-half-hour finale. For this reason, students will be able to observe the resolution of every topic that the TV series has raised during its whole course. Language and communication will be depicted intertwined with travel and transportation in the topic of transnationalism since the episode will show all the characters finally coming together to save themselves. Moreover, non-normative relationships will be exemplified in the topic of polyamory and women empowerment, heteronormativity will be defied inside the field of friends and families, and feelings and emotions will be shown in a moving final speech. Finally, deconstruction will be relevantly depicted in how all the characters have been unable to remain unchanged after this whole experience. Hopefully, this finale will imitate the linguistic and deconstruction processes that students will have gone through during the year. It will also depict how acquiring knowledge and tackling topics can have a very satisfactory resolution, as *Sense8* portrays: in the second half of the final episode, the *sensates* finally defy the discriminatory discourses that tried to erase their characteristic human connection.

4.3.3.4. Post-viewing of the TV Series: Restorative Circle

Title of the RC: "Amor Vincit Omnia" Part 2   Group-Class: 4th of ESO

PLANNING

Starting round: Students will be asked, one by one, to say whether they have liked the ending, why, and if they would change anything about it.

MIXER: People will change seats randomly for each pair round, avoiding sitting next to the same people as much as possible.

MAIN ACTIVITY:

- Whole group: What have you learnt about transnationalism watching the TV series?

- In pairs: If you could travel to Naples, which three characters of the TV series would you take with you and why?

- Whole group: Would you say all the characters became friends or a family? What builds a family?

- In pairs: What do you think would have happened to the main characters if they had never met each other? Use the 3rd conditional tense to build the sentences.

- Whole group: The facilitator will show students some slides with images of characters when the TV series started and now. They will discuss how they have changed.

- In pairs: Would you say these characters experienced deconstruction?

- Whole group: Regarding deconstruction, which are the non-normative relationships we have seen so far during the TV series?

- Whole group part 2: After discussing the previous question, students will be shown some of the relationships. They will have to state why they are not normative.

- In pairs: What do these different relationships have in common?

- Whole group: The wedding scene discusses topics of feelings and emotions. Do you think expressing your feelings is accepted? Why?

- In pairs: Have you ever experienced a moment in your life in which you thought you could not show your feelings?

- Whole group: The first restorative circle and the second episode of the TV series were titled "I Am Also a We". Do you understand the meaning of this sentence better now? What does it mean?

REFLECTION: Students will be given some free time to discuss, without a guide, what they liked the most about this last episode. This reflection will imitate a normal conversation.

ENERGIZER: When students agree with what another student says, they will have to stand up and smile at that person.

ENDING ROUND: All the students will summarise the most important issues they have learnt with the TV series.

4.3.3.5. Expected Results

After watching all *Sense8*, it is expected that students will have learnt many new words and expressions and how to use as many verb tenses in oral speech as they can. Additionally, they might feel motivated and confident enough to engage in spoken discussions and spoken exchanges in general, regardless of their EFL level. Importantly, the expected result of this restorative circle and all the previous ones is that students will have developed cultural awareness while improving their EFL knowledge. The teacher will check whether having used a cultural product and having prioritised the speaking skill has proved beneficial for them. As for the complications, each restorative circle will be expected to face less complications

than the previous one. However, this RC could face the difficulty of time restrictions and having too much to discuss.

4.3.4. Restorative Circle 16 (After the TV Series): *Sense8* Quotes

4.3.4.1. Objectives and functioning

This will be the second restorative circle that students will do after having finished the TV series and the second one in which they will work with the reported speech. Therefore, they should have improved when using this structure in English. The last one concentrated on reporting people's opinions, and this one will consist of remembering who said each of the *Sense8* quotes that have been chosen for this activity to start a discussion about what they could mean. There will be three pair and group rounds. For each pair round, the students will be assigned two quotes. Each student in the pair will have to state, using reported speech, who said one of the quotes. Then, they will discuss their opinions about them using the different verb tenses they have learnt so far. In the group rounds, two students (different in each round) will say out loud who said each quote using reported speech. Then, they will discuss their opinions about the quotes with the whole group based on two questions that the facilitator will provide them with.

The objective of this activity is that they learn to use the reported speech in spoken form using material extracted from the TV series. Related to that, this activity also aims at making students reflect on the relevance of words and the different messages that the cultural product portrays. As opposed to other lessons, which include the topics found in the curriculum, this lesson is mostly dedicated to discussing Coeducation topics.

4.3.4.2. Restorative Circle

Title of the RC: *Sense8* Quotes   Group-Class: 4th of ESO

PLANNING

Starting round: All students will impersonate the character they liked the most without saying the name. The others will try to find out who that character is.

MIXER: People will change seats randomly for each pair round, avoiding sitting next to the same people as much as possible.

MAIN ACTIVITY:

- In pairs: Who said the following two quotes? What is your opinion about them? Can their ideas be interrelated?

    o "Today, I march to remember that I'm not just a me. I'm also a we" (Wachowski et al., 2015a, 9:02).

    o "The real violence, the violence I realized was unforgivable, is the violence that we do to ourselves when we're too afraid to be who we really are" (Wachowski et al., 2015c, 33:20).

- Whole group: Two students will state out loud who said each of the quotes. Then, the facilitator will ask them these questions:

    o What builds a community?

    o Do communities commit violence when they deny their people's identities?

- In pairs: Who said the following two quotes? What is your opinion about them? Can their ideas be interrelated?

    o "Your life is either defined by the system, or by the way you defy the system" (Wachowski & Straczynski, 2017, 42:50).

    o "It's obedience, not resistance. That's the glue of every country, every army, every religion in the world" (Wachowski et al., 2015b, 2:20).

- Whole group: Two students will state out loud who said each of the quotes. Then, the facilitator will ask them these questions:

    o Can defying the system imply something good or does it always entail something bad?

- o Can the system be compared to hegemonic discourses and how they dictate what we should do?

- In pairs: Who said the following two quotes? What is your opinion about them? Can their ideas be interrelated?

  - o "Love is not something we wind up, something we set or control. Love is just like art: a force that comes into our lives without any rules, expectations or limitations. Love, like art, must always be free" (Wachowski et al., 2015c, 21:45).

  - o "Amor Vincit Omnia. Love conquers all things" (Wachowski et al., 2018, 1:38:20).

- Whole group: Two students will state out loud who said each of the quotes. Then, the facilitator will ask them these questions:

  - o Do you think that saying "love conquers all things" only deals with romantic love? Could it deal with empathy and fighting hate?

  - o What does the saying "love must always be free" mean?

REFLECTION: The facilitator will ask which was the students' favourite quote. They will have to state which one and why.

ENERGIZER: The students will clap two times if they agree with what another student states in the group rounds.

ENDING ROUND: Every person in the circle, including the facilitator, will have to say which character they think said the best quotes in the TV series.

4.3.4.3. Expected Results

This activity is expected to result in students learning how the different messages conveyed in the cultural product and, therefore, in cultural products in general, can be analysed in-depth and can contain powerful ideas to start conversations

and to activate critical thinking. As well, it is expected that students will finally have mastered the reported speech construction after two restorative circles and all the grammar lessons dedicated to teaching the structure. Considering this tense may be difficult for students, it is expected that discussing carefully selected quotes from *Sense8* will allow them to feel motivated to speak and to try to use their grammar abilities to connect their linguistic knowledge to their cultural one.

5. Conclusion

This dissertation has attempted to portray how deconstruction and the academic processes are similar, and then, compatible. Considering adolescence is a very formative process in a person's life, including personal development together with academic proves crucial. To help with this situation, Coeducation appeared very recently and contributed to legislate the inclusion of certain topics that allow the enhancement of cultural awareness by focusing on deconstructing inequality and acknowledging diversity. However, the fundamentals of this program are not always easily adaptable, but, as has been stated, the EFL subject has the potential of including Coeducation topics because of its versatility and because of how English is the language that allows people to learn about the world's diversity. This is supported in the general objectives of the EFL curriculum, which establishes the need of teaching the students some social and cultural values to help them evolve and coexist in a diverse world.

Regarding this cultural factor, the speaking skill was found to have a lot of potential for including cultural topics, since it is orally how many people start conversations and exchanges of opinions. Moreover, it could be considered the most marginalised skill in EFL lessons when there are approaches, such as the communicative and the focus on form ones, that defend its importance. However, motivation must be present for the speaking skill to be successfully developed. One of the spoken activities that motivate students the most is debates, yet they are uncontrollable and unguided, which can evolve into unsuccessful speaking lessons. As an alternative, restorative circles can compensate that as a sort of guided interaction that has a pedagogical nature, which at the same time can enhance class cohesion, allowing the beginning of conversations and creating a

safe space for students to develop themselves academically and culturally. In fact, in schools, RCs are used to avoid conflict and raise empathy and respect, which agrees with some of the general objectives of the EFL subject and can make the EFL acquisition process similar to deconstruction. To develop these circles, it was demonstrated that TV series, as authentic material, could be an effective source of English learning while at the same time a source of topics that enhance our cultural competence. Furthermore, they contribute to motivation and learning enjoyment, very necessary qualities to develop our speaking competence, which takes us back to the skill that has been given the spotlight in this dissertation.

After reviewing this information, a didactic proposal was developed in which a TV series acts as the guiding thread of the whole academic year instead of the regular textbook and in which the speaking skill is prioritised in the EFL acquisition process. To do so, as stated, restorative circles bridge the gap between the audio-visual material and the skill, and between English learning and cultural awareness development. Because of its versatility of topics, hooking plot, and how its message is one of empathy and connection, the TV series *Sense8* was selected for this proposal. Its viewings, once a week, would allow the development of the whole academic year, with a portfolio as proof of the students' progress, while restorative circles would be the main activity to reflect on what is being learnt, always basing their functioning on the curriculum contents and Coeducation. For this reason, this proposal will not disregard any of the other skills, nor vocabulary or grammar, since the curriculum has been followed strictly to avoid developing an incomplete proposal in which the EFL acquisition process is not as successful as it can and should be. To guarantee that, the remaining lessons in which there are no viewings nor restorative circles will be dedicated to the other skills, grammar, and vocabulary, which are also worked on, either directly or indirectly, in the TV series and the circles. This would make sure that using a TV series as a textbook and prioritising the speaking skill does not disattend the contents, learning needs, and objectives of the EFL subject.

Nevertheless, this proposal found a main limitation: how it has been impossible to test it during the Practicum considering it involves a whole school

year. To compensate for that, the questionnaire that was designed and tested on the 4th of ESO students offered a glimpse of the fact that it could have been successful. In fact, what their longest answers depict is that students are eager to learn more about Cultural Studies issues and that the few times these topics are tackled, it is not in a natural way. Therefore, it could be interesting to continue doing further research on the proposal and its different components. For instance, how extensive exposure to cultural products can offer a good opportunity of enhancing the speaking skill could be studied, maybe analysing other types of TV series or other types of speaking activities. Regarding these, one could research how restorative circles can be used to work on other skills apart from the speaking one since they are a method that can be easily adapted in a classroom.

In conclusion, this dissertation has intended to demonstrate that there is a way of allowing education to aim at guiding students through a difficult path in which academic knowledge should not be contemplated without personal development. Teachers should also be educators and educating involves some relevant values that are finally being included thanks to Coeducation. Importantly, not only does learning vocabulary that deals with Cultural Studies and diversity accomplish the general aims of the EFL subject, but it also makes students linguistically knowledgeable in social and cultural contexts, which can make them better English speakers and learners. In that sense, restorative circles step in as one of the best discoveries of the master's degree in Teacher Training. As a particularly interesting pedagogical speaking activity, they should be regarded as a powerful ally to develop the speaking skill. In the end, placing this skill in the spotlight and including a cultural product as deconstructing as *Sense8* could make EFL learners discover that English is a language that, as much as it contains relevant linguistic contents for them as learners and future workers, it also contains the keys to understand the diversity of the world with empathy, respect, and solidarity, as the EFL curriculum notably expresses.

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Annexes

Annex A: Restorative Circle Template

<u>RESTORATIVE REFLEXIVE CIRCLE</u>[11]

Date: Group-Class:

Title of the RC:

PLANNING

Starting round:

MIXER:

MAIN ACTIVITY. (There will be consecutive rounds in pairs and with the whole group. All of them will be related. At all moments, students will be able to ask doubts or explain worries and concerns).

- Whole group:
- In pairs:
- (repetition)

REFLECTION:

ENERGIZER:

ENDING ROUND:

ASSESSMENT

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[11] This restorative circle template has been translated and adapted from the following document (provided by the professors of the master's degree in Teacher Training of the University of the Balearic Islands):
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Zz2Rhi1aP26yMz9iAqzOO889cEbHKHVMnveA54E_3JI/edit.

ACHIEVEMENTS	DIFFICULTIES	PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE

Annex B: Questionnaire[12]

Información sobre ti

- Género

- Edad

Series de televisión

1. ¿Miras series de televisión o películas fuera del instituto en inglés (ya sea con subtítulos en inglés o subtítulos en tu lengua materna)?

2. Si lo haces, aunque sea solo a veces, ¿crees que te ayudan o te han ayudado a mejorar tu inglés como método complementario a tus clases dentro del instituto?

3. De la siguiente lista, elige las características que te gusta encontrar en series. Puedes elegir más de una opción. Si falta alguna relevante, escríbela en "Otra(s)".

   a. Que sea de ciencia ficción / fantasía

   b. Que trate temas o tenga personajes realistas o con los que empatizar

   c. Que contenga diversidad (racial, representación LGTBIQA+, de capacidades…)

   d. Que trate el tema de roles de género (empoderamiento de la mujer, crítica al sexismo, crítica a la masculinidad tóxica)

   e. Que contenga temas políticos

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[12] The questionnaire can be accessed (to check the different answer options) in the following link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1UeVZ54gw8MuujnbmzSM7tgY-BFhOXV3JWGnc9YnnwL8/edit?usp=drive_web

f. Que la trama enganche

g. Que te sientas representado en los personajes

h. Que te haga reflexionar sobre temas que ya conocías o sobre temas que desconocías / Que te haga aprender

i. Que trate temas de amistad y/o amor

j. Que sea histórica o trate temas históricos

k. Otra(s):

4. ¿Han usado tus profesores y profesoras series de televisión durante tu educación secundaria?

5. Si lo han hecho, o si usaron películas (que es una opción más típica), ¿crees que te ayudó a mejorar tu inglés?

6. Si lo han hecho, o si usaron películas (que es una opción más típica), ¿sentiste que aprendías y a la vez te lo pasabas mejor en el proceso de aprendizaje?

7. ¿Te gustaría que se implementase el visionado de series enteras en la asignatura de inglés?

8. ¿Crees que el profesorado elige bien las películas o series que ponen en clase (tratan temas interesantes, te identificas con ellas, no caen en demasiados estereotipos, no hay falta de representación, se puede aprender con ellas…)?

Estudios Culturales (cuestiones de roles de género y sexismo, orientación sexual, identidad de género, valores de igualdad y diversidad, y la problemática de la discriminación)

9. ¿Alguna vez has visto una película o serie con la que hayas aprendido algo acerca de roles de género y sexismo, orientación sexual, identidad de género, valores de igualdad y diversidad, y/o discriminación? Escribe la(s) que recuerdes:

10. Hay una relación entre haber destacado en la asignatura de inglés en el instituto y acabar perteneciendo al mundo del activismo en la vida adulta.

11. Si respondiste de acuerdo o totalmente de acuerdo en la pregunta anterior, marca las razones por las que consideras que existe esta creencia. Puedes marcar más de una opción y/o aportar una respuesta.

12. ¿Conoces que existe en tu centro la Coeducación (que tiene como intención desaprender la desigualdad)?

13. Ahora que existe la Coeducación, se hace un mayor esfuerzo para incluir temas en las asignaturas como los mencionados en el título de la sección. ¿Has notado que en tus clases de inglés se hablase de los siguientes temas? Puedes seleccionar más de uno. Si crees que no se ha hablado de ninguno, selecciona la casilla correspondiente.

    a. No he notado o apenas he notado que se incluya ninguno de los siguientes contenidos.

    b. Sexismo, violencia de género o roles de género

    c. Importancia de la igualdad

    d. Diversidad sobre orientación sexual

    e. Diversidad sobre identidad de género

    f. Racismo

    g. Clasismo

    h. Salud mental

    i. Otro(s) (añade tu respuesta):

14. Se cree que la asignatura de inglés es una asignatura que permite de manera efectiva incluir estos temas, ya que los contenidos son muy diversos y adaptables (por ejemplo, si se habla de deportes, se puede hablar del sexismo en el deporte, o si se habla de cultura, se puede hablar

del racismo). ¿Crees que incluirlos en el aprendizaje de la lengua puede hacer que el aprendizaje sea más completo?

15. ¿Crees que las series de televisión pueden ser un buen recurso para empezar conversaciones sobre estos temas?

16. ¿Por qué crees que se dan actitudes discriminatorias?

17. Basándote en tu experiencia, ¿crees que la educación secundaria está diseñada para ayudar al alumnado a desarrollarse personalmente aparte de académicamente?

Speaking (and the English subject)

18. ¿Cuál crees que es la habilidad más importante cuando aprendes lengua inglesa? Puntúa de la más relevante a la menos relevante.

19. ¿Dirías que las clases de inglés se imparten de manera más divertida o interesante que las de otras asignaturas?

20. ¿Dirías que aprender con series de televisión temas culturales puede motivarte a participar oralmente en clase (opinando en debates, contestando preguntas, iniciando conversaciones…)?

21. Si te cuesta participar en clase o alguna vez te ha costado en el pasado, ¿por qué crees que pasa? Si no te ha pasado nunca, escribe por qué crees que a otra gente le pasa. Contesta con las palabras que quieras.

22. ¿Te gustaría que cuando practicas la *speaking skill*, sea con temas con los que puedas conectar personalmente y que te hagan formar una opinión que tengas ganas de expresar?

23. Si tu respuesta en la pregunta anterior fue "Sí", escribe aquí alguno de los temas que te gustaría que se tratasen.

Annex C: Summarised Table of Restorative Circles

RC and Title[13]	RC Topics[14]	Grammar: Verb Tense(s) Used[15]	Main Communicative Functions[16]
RC 1: "I Am Also a We" (developed)	Travel (globalisation), jobs, language and communication & family and friends [human connection and different families], [LGTBIQ+ pride], [LGTB phobia]	- Past simple revision and reactivation of previous knowledge of already learnt tenses	- Describing physical and abstract qualities of people and places - Narrating past events - Describing present states
RC 2: "What's going on?"	Family and friends, health, language and communication (body language), sports (stereotypically female vs. male sports), shopping (medicine and classism), [classism and racism]	- Past simple and past continuous	- Narrating past events - Expressing doubt - Expressing opposition
RC 3: "Art Is Like Religion"	Food (rich people vs. poor people, foods of the world), travel and family (cultures), [taboo against sex]	- Present perfect and past simple	- Expressing opposition - Offering suggestions - Narrating past events
RC 4: "We Will All Be Judged	Information and communication technologies (cinema and	- Present perfect and past simple	- Narrating past events - Expressing approval or opposition

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[13] All the names of the restorative circles' titles have been extracted from the real titles of some *Sense8* episodes.

[14] All the topics worked on in the RCs come from the EFL curriculum. The ones between square brackets are additions made because of the Coeducation Program and the contents it includes.

[15] The different verb tenses have been extracted from the curriculum and the Programming of the EFL subject of IES Ramon Llull, referenced in the reference list. The communicative functions have been extracted only from the curriculum.

[16] The fundamentals of RCs include improving personal and social relationships, maintaining communication, and organising a discourse. As well, they include requesting and offering information and opinions and expressing knowledge. For this reason, these communicative functions will not be included to avoid unnecessary repetitions, even if they are found in all RCs.

by the Courage of Our Hearts"	computers), [sexism], free time (spaces), education and studies, family (family you choose, *sensates*, and pets)		
RC 5: "Death Doesn't Let You Say Goodbye"	Travel, [feelings and emotions], [hegemonic masculinity], [invisibilisation], nature	- Past perfect and past simple	- Expressing opposition - Expressing friendliness
RC 6: "What is Human?"	Language and communication, family (dysfunctional families and culturally-diverse families), [identities], environment and weather	- Past perfect and past simple	- Narrating past events - Expressing approval or opposition - Expressing friendliness
RC 7: "A Christmas Special"	Travel (cultures), [diversity and discrimination], friends and family (acceptance and deconstruction), everyday activities (dance and music as activities that unite people), [sexuality], free time (Christmas)	- (All tenses worked on so far)	- Narrating past events - Expressing friendliness - Offering suggestions
RC 8: "Who Am I?" (developed)	[Identities and labels], education and studies & health, information and communication technologies (public image), [relationships of power], free time (cinema as cultural source)	- Modal verbs	- Expressing doubt - Offering suggestions - Expressing intentions
RC 9: "Fear Never Fixed Anything"	Homes (what makes a house a home?), language and communication, shopping (poverty, lack of resources), [politics and poverty], sports (fight sports), friendship (friends	- Modal verbs	- Expressing doubt - Offering suggestions - Expressing intentions - Giving advice

	as family and family as friends), homes (poor vs. rich areas),		
RC 10: "I Have No Room in My Heart for Hate"	Transportation (physical vs. mind transportation), [AIDS stigma], [LGTBIQ+ celebration], nature and the environment (green areas), information and communication technologies (*sensate* connection as alternative)	- Future tenses	- Expressing future happenings - Expressing intentions
RC 11: "What Family Actually Means"	Family (what is family?), [transphobia], language and communication (social politics), jobs (job discrimination), [defying gender roles], information and communication technologies (online videos)	- 1st and 2nd conditionals	- Expressing conditions - Expressing intentions - Expressing hypothesis - Requesting advice
RC 12: "If All the World's a Stage, Identity Is Nothing but a Costume"	Travel (escaping problematic places), information and communication technologies (Hollywood industry), shopping (fashion), jobs (social politics), [sexism], language and communication (justice)	- 1st and 2nd conditional	- Expressing conditions - Expressing intentions - Expressing hypothesis - Requesting advice
RC 13: "Amor Vincit Omnia"	Families (family violence), [mental] health, friends (loyalty), education and studies (when science is used for the wrong purposes)	- 3rd conditional	- Expressing hypothesis - Expressing opposition and approval - Expressing desires
	Language and communication and travel (transnationalism), [non-	- (All tenses worked on so far)	- Expressing conditions - Expressing hypothesis

RC 14: "Amor Vincit Omnia" Part 2 (developed)	normative relationships: polyamory], friends (masculinity and heteronormativity), transportation, [feelings and emotions], families (deconstructing adults and chosen family)		- Expressing esteem - Requesting advice
(Approximate end of the TV series)			
RC 15[17]: *Sense8* recapitulation: What happened in the TV series?	Family and friends, travel (cultures of the world), language and communication (human connection)	- Reported speech	- Expressing interest and satisfaction - Expressing approval or opposition
RC 16: *Sense8* Quotes (developed)	Family and friends, travel (cultures of the world), language and communication, education and studies, [discrimination], [diversity]	- Reported speech	- Expressing interest - Expressing approval or opposition - Expressing satisfaction - Expressing certainty, conjecture, and doubt
RC 17: TV Series and Cultural Studies	Information and communication technologies (how TV series are used to depict certain issues)	- Passive voice	- Offering suggestions - Expressing certainty, conjecture, and doubt - Narrating past events and describing present states
RC 18: Hidden discourses in the scenes	Family and friends, jobs, sports, health, [sexism], [LGTB phobia], [racism]	- Passive voice	- Expressing friendliness and esteem - Expressing certainty, conjecture, and doubt - Narrating past events, describing present states, and

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[17] This circle is mentioned in the last RC developed in the proposal. It consists of expressing opinions about the TV series and reporting the opinions other students express to practice the reported speech.

			expressing future happenings
RC 19: Beliefs that contribute to discrimination	Family and friends, jobs, sports, food, shopping, health	- Revision of all tenses	- Expressing desires - Expressing decision - Offering suggestions and advice - Expressing warnings
RC 20[18]: What have you learnt during this year?	(As many topics as students will mention)	- Revision of all tenses	- Expressing approval and opposition - Expressing recommendations - Expressing will and promise - Expressing interest

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[18] If there are delays, it will not be possible to carry out this last RC. If this happens, students will have to write about this in an essay that will help the teacher assess if the academic year has been as successful as planned.