Constructing Possibilities for Relationships Full of Love and Passion Through Language.
Dialogic Literary Gatherings and the Union of the Language of Desire and the Language of
Ethics

By

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Abstract

This dissertation contributes evidence on the impact of Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) among a diverse group of adolescents' language of desire oriented towards non-violence. To that end, I have divided it in three studies that deepen knowledge on 1) the replicability of the language of desire towards non-violence in 9 diverse DLG groups, to confirm whether those findings that are published are found in more schools with diverse students; 2) how adolescents use the language of desire oriented towards non-violence in 9 diverse DLG groups, in order to better understand what such language looks like in such diverse groups of students; and 3) what characteristics of DLG are related to student interactions that challenge the CDD, so as to better understand what it is about DLG that promote the language of desire towards non-violence. To that end, I have conducted observations of 26 DLG sessions in 9 different groups from 5 schools located in Spain. 193 students and 8 teachers have participated in the observations. In addition, I have conducted interviews with 51 students and 6 teachers from those groups. Study 1 examines key concepts of desire and ethics emerging in DLG across diverse contexts. Findings show three key concepts: the value of friendship in choosing relationships, rejection of violence and peer pressure, and discussion of non-violent relationships with desire. Study 2 delves deeper into adolescents' language of desire towards non-violence in DLG. Findings reveal students' confident rejection of violence, ridicule of coercive discourse, and admiration for non-violence, emphasizing the importance of constructing alternative discourses. Study 3 explores characteristics of DLG related to interactions away from the coercive dominant discourse (CDD). Findings show the presence of five dialogic learning principles and of the universal themes of a classic book in dialogues in which students reject coercive behaviors and use the language of desire towards non-violence. Overall, this dissertation contributes to understanding DLG as a space for challenging the CDD and fostering the language of desire oriented towards non-violence. Future research includes replicating findings in varied and

diverse contexts and studying the impact of DLG in adolescents' selves, desires and relationships.

Introduction

Motivation for the study

This dissertation comes out of three main personal motives. First and foremost is the concern over the spread of gender violence. Much data show alarming rates of violence against women and, increasingly, against adolescent and young girls. According to the CDC's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey from 2015, 81.3% of female victims who had suffered completed or attempted rape had experienced it before the age of 25, and 43.2% experienced it prior to being 18 (2015 Data Brief – Updated Release). In addition to research, my concern increases when I see and hear personal stories of adolescent and young girls who are pressured to hook up with boys who think of them as prey, as one more conquer to add to their list. The normalization among many adolescents and youth of the disdain and humiliation with which some boys treat many girls, both during and after the relationship – spreading disgusting details of their sexual intimacy, regardless of whether what the boys say really happened or not – is astonishing (Puigvert et al., 2023). This leads me to the second motive. Both through research and through talking to young girls, I have seen that the subjugation to such disdain in sexual-affective relationships moves many of them away from the dreamed sexual-affective relationships they once had. Engaging in what the literature has termed "disdainful hookups" (Puigvert et al., 2023) has consequences not only in their physical and mental health, but also in their future relationships, both increasing the risk of being revictimized again and in being unable to feel passion in egalitarian relationships. Last, and in light of the depth and spread of the problem, this research comes out of my deep motivation and commitment to contributing to improving people's lives from research. I have seen through my own eyes – and this has been backed by multiple scientific projects and publications – that Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) improve children's learning, happiness, and relationships

(Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023). Existing research evidence on the social impacts of DLG pushes me to move forward in studying how they transform students' language of desire.

Throughout this introduction I will provide an overview of the theoretical and research foundation on which this research is grounded, my positionality in conducting it, and the methods I have used.

For centuries, human beings have written, composed, painted, sculpted, and created all sorts of cultural creation on the grandeur of love. As early as in the 6th century BC, Sappho, considered to be one of the first feminists in history, wrote the following words of admiration about a man and his lover:

> He seems to me equal to the gods that man
>
> whoever he is who opposite you
>
> sits and listens close
>
> to your sweet speaking
>
> and lovely laughing

But love has not been easily granted; for centuries, lovers have had to fight against feudal and other sorts of impositions that decided who each person, especially women, should marry or have sex with. Legend tells that the Catalan town Vilanova i la Geltrú was created as a result of two lovers' conquer of love. The two lovers did not want to subjugate to La Geltrú's feudal lord's *droit du seigneur*, which gave him the power to take the virginity of his vassals' new brides in the night of their wedding. Instead, they decided to flee the town and established in a new vila, which is the Catalan meaning of Vilanova, and soon more and more lovers who also did not want to subjugate to the feudal love went to Vilanova, finally founding Vilanova i la Geltrú.

Unfortunately, many adolescents and youth today are still robbed of their right to the pleasure of love and condemned to relationships where either they believe they feel passion and

excitement but are constantly disdained and mistreated, or where they are treated with respect but lack passion. Jesús Gómez (2004, 2015) dedicated most of his life to better understanding why this was so common for more and more people, as well as in movies, TV shows, songs, and other media. He theorized and provided empirical evidence to demonstrate that love and attraction are social, and that through social interactions we construct, develop, and learn patterns of attraction, and desire (Gómez, 2004, 2015). He found that, among the different patterns of attraction and desire people are socialized in, a specific pattern predominated: one that unites attraction with violence. This line of theory and research is called preventive socialization of gender violence. It explains that, through the interactions that reinforce that predominant pattern of attraction, many people are socialized in viewing people with violent behaviors as attractive, which pushes individuals to engage in relationships where there is violence and disdain. Therefore, the prevention of gender violence comes through a socialization or re-socialization in a different pattern of attraction, one that unites attraction with goodness and lack of violence.

Research evidence on this line has demonstrated the existence of a coercive dominant discourse (CDD) that imposes the pattern of violence as attractive and goodness as boring (Puigvert et al., 2019; Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Merodio, et al., 2020). Such a discourse pressures many individuals, particularly adolescents, to have relationships based on violence or disdain (Puigvert et al., 2019; Torras-Gómez et al., 2020). At the same time, the CDD portrays egalitarian partners as boring and lacking attractiveness, thus forcing the binary mindset of desire vs. love, separating what is known as the *language of desire* and the *language of ethics* (Flecha et al., 2013; Gómez, 2015; Rios-González et al., 2018). The former refers to the language used to describe feelings and emotions linked to desire and attraction, whereas the latter is used to portray moral and ethical values (Flecha et al., 2013; Melgar Alcantud, Puigvert, et al., 2021).

Research has found that the CDD is not contextual, only affecting girls from certain cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic contexts, countries, or with certain academic levels (Puigvert et al., 2019). For instance, Puigvert and colleagues (2019) found a similar pattern among 100 high school female students aged 13 to 16 in England, Spain, Cyprus and Finland: boys with violent attitudes were preferred as partners for hook-ups. In addition, although more research is needed on the presence of the CDD in LGBTI+ groups, recent analyses of many of today's TV shows and movies with characters that identify as LGBTI+ do show the existence of this discourse in the community (Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2022). Another example can be found in globally heard songs. Rihanna and Eminem's song "Love the way you lie" spent at least a week as the number one song in countries such as the US, Australia, Denmark, New Zealand, or France, and spent nine weeks as the top song in world singles charts[1]. The CDD is a serious problem that affects many adolescents and youth and condemns them to unsatisfactory relationships where either care or passion is missing.

The use of violence to subjugate people, especially women, to non-desired relationships is, of course, not new. There is evidence on the normalization of the *droit de seigneur*, explained above, in feudal Europe (Cortazar, 2023). There is also evidence of the use of rape as a war weapon throughout history and in different cultures, both Western and non-Western (Heineman, 2011).

Therefore, the socialization in the normalization of violence in sexual-affective relationships is deeply embedded within the collective social imaginary, at least in many Western societies. However, in the last decades, this subjugation has deepened and expanded exponentially. This is due to the "predatory capital" that has emerged in the 20th century (Torras-Gómez et al., 2024), which makes profit out of worsening people's lives. Such capital found in nightlife a

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[1] Data source can be found here: https://acharts.co/song/55808

niche market to get very high benefits at a low cost – think of the difference between what the drinks sold in a nightclub cost the owners vs the consumers. In order to make youth spend their savings there, the predatory capital promoted a coercive dominant discourse that portrayed those that did not go to nightclubs as boring and not cool, while "selling" the "disdainful hookups" (Puigvert et al., 2023) that happened there as exciting and desirable:

> Being fully aware that quality human relationships do not cost money, and that love and friendship do not generate profit, the most sexist capitalist sector has ruthlessly pursued maximum profit at the expense of the deterioration of citizens' lives. (…) Thus, predatory capital has seen in the CDD a niche market, promoting practices and contexts aligned with it that contribute to its domination, despite this being at the expense of people's wellbeing (Johansen et al., 2019; Puigvert et al., 2023). Through these practices, this form of capital has fostered the idea that sexual-affective relationships are disposable, promoting a throwaway culture linked to ugliness in sex (Torras-Gómez et al., 2024, p. 5)

Many girls were made believe that, to be "in" and viewed as attractive, they needed to hook up with boys who pressure them, who in some cases sexually force them, and who talk about the girls in a disdainful way after hooking up with them. These dynamics were soon spread to other contexts, including festivals, alternative parties, dating apps, etc. As a result, such subjugation to undesired relationships with people with disdainful behaviors is portrayed through the CDD as attractive and desirable. It was not hard for me to find the following tweet when searching for posts around this issue: "I was 16 years old and was exercising my sexual freedom, I felt empowered, when in reality I was being raped. When one grows up, she realizes that society will take advantage of how lonely adolescent girls are to pressure them in the name of exercising their "freedom".

This has created a huge crisis among many adolescents and youth who think that they need to choose between being loved and cared for or having fun while suffering. The CDD has created a separation between the union of beauty and goodness that authors like Sappho have long supported: "what is beautiful is good, and who is good will soon also be beautiful". Adolescents are often not given the opportunity to contest such discourses that separate the realm of desire from the realm of ethics, to question who they desire and why. Most of them have no tools nor orientations to counteract and challenge this current which, little by little, drags them towards those relationships imposed by the CDD, with consequences that can mark their whole lives (López de Aguileta et al., 2021).

Despite the depth and graveness of the problem, there is reason to be hopeful. As research on the preventive socialization of gender violence shows, we can socialize or re-socialize ourselves away from violence if we engage in social interactions that reject it and portray egalitarian people as attractive. Jesús Gómez drew a parallel between the socialization in the attraction to violence and the socialization in salty food: if someone has been eating salty food much of their lives, they will not like a meal that does not have any salt. However, they can decide to stop eating salt because it is bad for their health and, after much effort and will to stop eating salty food, they will end up liking non-salty food and find the former disgusting.

History and context of Dialogic Literary Gatherings

Schools are a site of hope in this regard, given it is one of the spaces where adolescents spend much of their time. Dialogue is a key tool that can help adolescents challenge the CDD and explore the feelings, desires and relationships they dream of without subjugating to those the market tells them they should have. Dialogue allows us to transform our relationships, contexts, institutions, and societies into more egalitarian and democratic ones (Flecha, 2000). As Flecha (2022, p. 16) states:

> The rights are conquered through dialogues, including the initial disagreements and the sometimes very difficult process to get agreements avoiding and preventing any possible violence. In fact, there are only two ways to organise human relationships: dialogue or violence. Dialogue is the only road for eliminating violence.

Dialogue is therefore a key to creating alternative discourses that unite the language of ethics and of desire and lead to relationships based on passion and care.

There is a particular educational activity based on these notions of dialogue that has shown promising results in this regard: Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) (Flecha, 2000; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023). DLG are a dialogic reading activity based on the theory of dialogic learning in which participants share their perspectives, interpretations, opinions and feelings around literary works such as the *Mahabarata*, the *Arabian Nights*, the *Odyssey*, *Romeo and Juliet*, or the *Metamorphoses*, among others. They are based on an egalitarian dialogue that encourages and respects all participants' voices and perspectives and seeks to eliminate power relations and impositions that favor some people's perspectives due to their social status.

The very creation of DLG was an act of freedom and of overcoming power relations. They were co-created in 1978 by a movement of adult learners in the neighborhood La Verneda-Sant Martí, which was one of the poorest and most marginalized in Barcelona at that time. This movement was mainly formed by non-academic women who refer to themselves as the "other women", which are those that have been traditionally excluded from mainstream feminist movements and groups. In that period, classist and elitist affirmations, in many cases backed by reproductionist and structuralist theories, claimed that people like them – with no academic background, in many cases with low literacy levels – could not read and understand what was considered highbrow or classic literature (Bourdieu, 1979). This group of adult learners challenged such claims and opposed the practice that, for centuries, has denied women the freedom to read what they want to read. They therefore co-created a DLG together with now

Professor Emeritus of Sociology from the University of Barcelona Ramon Flecha and decided they would start by reading James Joyce's *Ulyses*. Ana Lebron, one of the co-creators of DLG, explains this transformative process through her first-person experience:

> Writer Carlos Mayoral has declared: "I deny to believe that anyone has enjoyed reading James Joyce's Ulysses". I only went to school until I was eight, but I have already read it four times and now I'm in the fifth. I belong to a gathering of universal classic literature in which we read many classics (…). We enjoy the reading of *Ulysses* in the gathering; we meet once a week and share paragraphs, sentences and analyze what we have read and understood during the week, that gives us a lot of satisfaction; for us it is a challenge to read a literary masterpiece. (…) Reading Joyce's "Ulysses" we realize that an "Odyssey" is not only lived by a strong hero who makes wars, but that any common person lives his daily "Odyssey"[2].

As Lebron's words show, they have defied such classist authors not only showing that they can indeed read and understand the type of literature that many academics have not read – as Mayoral's quote indicates – but also by showing that they enjoy reading it. Overcoming such power relations was the first impact of DLG, which were soon transferred into more than 15.000 diverse contexts worldwide.

Since their creation, DLG have two main pillars: the reading of what the DLG creators refer to as the best literary works from all over the world, and dialogic learning. They decided to read only such type of literature instead of other literature, such as best-sellers, for several reasons, the main one being the universal and deep issues they portray (Ruiz, 2015; Rupiper & Zeece,

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[2] https://eldiariofeminista.info/2017/12/18/nosotras-si-disfrutamos-de-la-lectura-de-ulises-de-james-joyce/

2005; Zuñiga-Lacruz, 2024). They created a list of readings[3] to be read in DLG, which is public, updated periodically, and open to being democratically revisited. Of course, participants would never force anyone to read this type of literature. They are very clear that everyone has the right to read whatever they want to, and their only request is that anyone who participates in DLG respects the foundations with which they were created. If anyone wants to read best-sellers and share the reading with more people, DLG participants encourage them to do so, but they will not allow to call DLG such different activity, as it does not fulfill at least one of the foundational principles of DLG. This is important, as reading non classic books and discussing them in group has not been shown to yield the positive results that DLGs haven proven to yield in very diverse contexts (Ruiz-Eugenio et al, 2023). Unfortunately, the freedom to choose what to read is not always respected for DLG participants who freely and democratically decide to read what is often referred to as classic literature. Many participants, especially adult women, have been pressured by some people, even academics, to read other types of literature in DLG. They and the researchers who developed and analyze DLG are aware of the criticism towards the literary canon (Alejos García, 2023; Eardley, 2007), composed mainly by white, Western male authors. However, there is a wide body of scientific publications with empirical evidence showing the transformative impact of reading universal literature considered of great cultural and literary value in different time periods and cultures on people from very diverse cultural backgrounds. The very act of reading what has been often considered elitist or highbrow literature is especially empowering for young and adult individuals from minoritized groups, as Ana Lebron's quote reflects (Soler, 2015). Indeed, much scientific literature has shown the transformative impact of reading such literature on participants from marginalized groups, as

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[3] The list of literary works that are read in DLG can be found in the Learning Communities website: https://comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net/actuaciones-de-exito/tertulias-literarias-dialogicas/tertulias-literarias-dialogicas-tld/

it overcomes reproductionist discourses and theories that consider such literature appropriate only for groups from high SES (Torras-Gómez et al., 2021). Having been a volunteer in many DLG groups from different neighborhoods in Spain, I have seen and heard adult women who did not finish high school express the great pride and increased self-esteem due to reading literary works that are supposedly too difficult, cultured or refined for them to understand. And the fact that in many cases the contexts of the books' characters are highly different from participants' is no impediment for them to understand and even feel reflected on the books, as they portray issues that move and are relevant to most human beings across time and cultures, such as love, freedom, loneliness, goodness, and many others.

Of course, this comes hand in hand with the other DLG pillar: the principles of dialogic learning, among which is egalitarian dialogue (Flecha, 2000). After having read the agreed upon part from the reading, participants share a part they have chosen and explain why they have chosen it – be it because they liked it, hated it, feel reflected on, or any other reason. The egalitarian dialogue, along with the rest of the principles of dialogic learning, allows them to freely express whatever they feel and think without being judged or looked down upon. The goal is not to find the "correct" meaning of the reading or to understand the author's interpretation; the only consensus is that all opinions, perspectives and feelings will be respected as long as they respect human rights. There is a constant and aware search for overcoming power positions, leading the DLG group to a collective effort not to let anyone pretend to be the expert and/or disrespect others. Participants know that they need to provide arguments to support their own perspectives rather than imposing them based on power positions. A moderator ensures that the principles of dialogic learning are fulfilled, and as participants engage in more DLG, they internalize such principles, taking care of preserving and ensuring the principles.

It is through this dialogue, knowing that not only they are allowed to bring their whole selves to the gathering, but that by doing so it will be enriched, that they create a meaningful dialogue that constantly builds bridges between the readings and their lives and backgrounds. In doing so, they authorize and recreate the readings in light of their own backgrounds, which allows them to give meaning to the readings through their lifeworlds and experiences and, at the same time, to create new meanings in their lives. In this regard, the principle of cultural intelligence within dialogic learning encourages participants from diverse backgrounds to contribute their own perspectives, understandings and interpretations on the readings. In this way, participants co-create new meanings of the readings and their lives, enriching the dialogue through such diverse voices (Roca et al., 2022).

The social improvements of DLG in terms of improving academic and cultural learning, developing argumentative and communicative skills, promoting friendship and solidarity, or encouraging social inclusion, among others, have been extensively demonstrated in more than 40 scientific articles published in journals indexed in Web of Science or Scopus. Such impacts are gathered in Ruiz and colleagues' systematic review (2023). Research has also provided evidence of the emergence of the language of desire towards non-violence in DLG. However, there is a need for more research in this direction to better understand DLG as a space where students unite the language of ethics and of desire in a direction that is preventive of violent relationships, and how that might happen.

Positionality statement

I have been lucky to see DLG first-hand in the place where they were born: La Verneda-Sant Martí Adult School. The first one I ever saw was a group of people over 60 years old who were reading Ibsen's *A Doll's House* in English. I was amazed by the depth of their comments, by how meaningful the reading was to them, by the personal narratives they shared, and by their

will and effort to read and understand such a text in a foreign language. I fell in love with the dialogues participants engaged in. I soon started to volunteer in DLG in different schools in Spain with adolescent students. Once again, I was amazed by their deep and insightful comments about the books they read. Among the things that most struck me was the fact that they were constantly building bridges between the books, the dialogues, and their lives, bringing their backgrounds into those dialogues and vice versa. I could see how meaningful such dialogic space was; for some of them it was the moment in which they could freely express how they felt, their concerns, their joys, their support and help to one another.

Seeing DLG impacts first-hand motivated me to pursue research on them, contributing to the wide body of literature on their social impact. As I have stated in the beginning of this introduction, one of my biggest concerns is the coercion and violence many adolescents and young people suffer, stealing the dreamed relationships many of them once had. Wanting to contribute to improving this problem through research, I started noticing that during DLG, many students talked about love and relationships in a way that was very different from how people influenced by the CDD talk about those issues. I will never forget a young girl, about 12 years old, who stated she would love to have someone dedicate to her words like the ones Romeo dedicates to Juliet:

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the East, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

Who is already sick and pale with grief

That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.

Be not her maid since she is envious.

Her vestal livery is but sick and green,

And none but fools do wear it.

Cast it off.

It is my lady. O, it is my love!

O, that she knew she were!

I could see and feel the meaning of her words in her sweet voice and sparking eyes. Therefore, I decided to study whether similar dialogues were present in more DLG, and what those looked like in different contexts.

To take on this endeavor I chose five schools in Spain that are part of the Learning Communities movement (Morlà Folch, 2015), which are schools that overcome the walls between schools and neighborhoods and engage the whole community in a dialogic and democratic functioning to transform the whole context towards the highest quality interactions. Before beginning my dissertation, I was a volunteer in two of those schools, to which I went on a weekly basis to observe and participate in DLG and other Successful Educational Actions. Moreover, I knew some of the teachers and principals of the other three schools. Having been a DLG volunteer for a few years in different schools in Spain, I approached the research both as a researcher and as an observer of DLG. I was aware that my presence in the DLG groups I observed might make some students shy or less willing to share such deep reflections. However, bearing this in mind, I previously spoke to the teachers and principals about my goal to not disrupt the DLG and to be present as one more observer, listener and learner. In the first DLG session I observed in each school I explained I was there because I was conducting research on the impact of DLG, and that I knew I would learn a great deal from them. I also explicitly stated that if at any point they would like me to stop audio-recording them or taking notes, they could express it to me or their teacher, and I would stop. While in the first session in some of the schools I could feel some students were shier than they probably usually were, I could sense that as I observed more sessions, they started to pay less attention to me; in some cases it even seemed they forgot I was there to conduct research.

Still, I am aware of the hierarchical position that the context put us in, being an academic, a PhD student from outside their neighborhood, and from the best School of Education in the US. Moreover, I am culturally and ethnically different from many of the students that participated in the study, which also contributes to the hierarchical differences. Nonetheless, both DLG and the communicative methodology I used in the dissertation aim at overcoming these power differences while being aware that they exist (Flecha, 2000; Gómez et al., 2019). Most of these students had participated in DLG for many years and had internalized the principles of dialogic learning. They knew I would not say they were wrong or judge them or give the "correct" interpretation. Also, out of caution, I never participated during the DLG I observed for the dissertation. When conducting the interviews, students were already familiar with me as I had been with most of them for several weeks. Following the communicative methodology, I explained broadly my research goal and based my questions on scientific literature about it. I told them the interview was not a test, but that I would ask questions they could answer any way they wanted. I also told them they could share as much or as little as they wanted, that they did not have to answer to all questions, and that I would never use their personal information. I also made them aware that, while I might write some of their quotes from the interviews and DLG sessions in the dissertation and subsequent scientific publications, no one would know they said what they said, not even their teachers. Throughout the whole study, thanks to the egalitarian dialogue the communicative methodology and DLG involve, my attitude was dialogic, understanding, and listening to students' contributions, which helped diminish the hierarchical differences.

After observing the first DLG sessions I asked the teachers what they thought about how they went, and all of them expressed they were happy about how students had participated. Some of them even shared very personal and intimate stories. Therefore, even though I am aware that my presence in the DLG sessions inevitably impacted how some students participated, the very

methodology I used and the foundation of DLG helped me overcome power relations to the extent possible.

Dissertation methodology overview

I have selected 9 different DLG groups in 5 different schools throughout Spain, with students between 10 and 17 years old. Because my research is intended to have a transformative impact, as stated in the previous section, I have chosen to frame this research within the communicative methodology (CM). The CM is based on an intersubjective dialogue between researchers and research participants aimed at co-creating new knowledge and reality agreed upon by all subjects (M. Soler & Gómez, 2020). The CM aims at overcoming the interpretive hierarchy by recognizing that researchers do not hold the truth and that interpretation validity is based on the arguments the different agents contribute to the dialogue, regardless of whether they have an academic background or not (Gómez et al., 2019). Hence, through an egalitarian dialogue between researchers and participants in which the former provide knowledge from scientific evidence and the latter provide knowledge from their lifeworld and life experiences, new knowledge is co-created, overcoming the traditional view of researchers as subjects of research and participants as objects to be observed from above.

Due to its egalitarian nature and transformative orientation, the CM has achieved scientific, political and social impact, especially with vulnerable populations, by including all voices throughout the whole research process (Gómez et al., 2019). In this sense, the European Commission has recognized and prioritized this methodology due to the social impact – i.e. social improvements resulting from research – it promotes (Flecha, 2018). Indeed, co-creation, understood as the dialogue in which researchers and diverse citizens engage, is now a requirement for all research projects funded by the European Commission (European Commission, 2022), as it is the most adequate one to achieve social impact.

The two methods I have used are DLG observations and interviews/focus groups. The data collection took place from January to December 2023. I chose five schools from the Learning Communities movement because they have been implemented DLG successfully for over 10 years and because they provide geographical, socioeconomic and cultural diversity to the study. One of the schools is located in the Basque Country, another one in Valencia, and the other three in different cities in Catalonia. Four of them serve families from low SES, and one serves mostly middle-class families. All schools have students from different nationalities, mostly Spanish, Moroccan, and from different Latin American and Asian countries. One of the schools has a particularly high rate of Roma students. In all, 193 students (103 female and 90 male) and 8 teachers (all female) have participated in this study.

In this dissertation, I define diversity as "an individual's difference in the same variables compared with other unit members" (Quin et al., 2014, p. 136) and use individual participants' gender, nationality, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geographical location, age, and educational level to report on the sample's diversity.

I explicitly sought diversity in this dissertation with a twofold purpose. On the one hand, to contribute to overcoming the classist and racist stereotypes that deny certain groups the right to read and engage in dialogues around classic literature. On the other hand, to contribute more research on the transference of the social impact of DLG in adolescents' language of desire. In line with these two goals, I have the data on the schools' and students' diversity for informational purposes. In the future, I would like to make a step forward by using data on such diversity for analytical purposes. In particular, I intend to analyze what students' identity characteristics mean for the prevention of gender violence, providing evidence on how students' backgrounds and cultural intelligence contributes to the language of desire towards non-violence in DLG.

In all, I have conducted 26 DLG observations and 45 interviews, 39 with students and 6 with teachers and principals. This has allowed me to analyze a great diversity of dialogues around different books, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Pride and Prejudice*, the *Iliad*, *Oliver Twist*, or *Don Quixote*.

I will now provide a brief summary of the specific approaches, research questions, methods and findings from each of the three studies in which I have divided this work.

Study 1. Identifying Key Concepts of the Language of Desire and the Language of Ethics in Dialogic Literary Gatherings

Given the high prevalence of gender violence among adolescents and youth, research has underscored the importance of preventing it from an early age. The literature has clarified that the prevention of gender violence requires the union of the language of desire and of ethics to promote egalitarian relationships as desirable. Some research has shown the emergence of the language of desire towards non-violence Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG), in which students engage in an egalitarian dialogue on classic literature. Nevertheless, there is a need for a more in-depth and extensive analysis of the key concepts that emerge in DLG implemented in diverse contexts to better understand the potential of DLG as a space for the prevention of gender violence. To contribute to filling this gap, in this study I explore key concepts of desire and ethics that adolescents surface in DLG implemented in 5 schools from the Learning Communities movement have in common. To that end, I have conducted 26 observations in 9 different DLG groups with students aged 10-15, as well as 45 interviews with students and teachers. Results show three key concepts of desire and ethics in these DLG: students reflect on the value of friendship and how to choose good friends; they reject violence and peer pressure; and they talk about non-violent relationships with desire. I discuss implications of these findings for the prevention and overcoming of gender violence.

Study 2. "I Think It's Amazing What You Can Do for Love If You Really Feel It". The Language of Desire United with the Language of Ethics in Dialogic Literary Gatherings

The scientific literature has identified a coercive dominant discourse that imposes a link between violence and attraction, using the language of desire to describe people and relationships with violent behaviors as the attractive and desirable ones. What is more worrisome, much research analyzing adolescents' interactions has shown that many of them reproduce such discourse, which can lead to having their identities, desires and relationships subjugated to violence and disdain. It is therefore essential that adolescents have the opportunity to construct alternative discourses that unite the language of desire and of ethics in portraying egalitarian relationships as desirable and exciting. Although some research has shown the emergence of the language of desire towards non-violence in Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) in which students read and engage in egalitarian dialogues on classic literature, more extensive and deeper analyses of what such language of desire looks like are needed. To that end, in this study I analyze what different adolescents' language of desire towards non-violence looks like in DLG implemented in schools. I have conducted 26 observations in 9 different DLG groups from 5 schools with students aged 10-15. Results show that many students use strong words and a firm, confident tone to reject violence and coercion; that they ridicule violence and the coercive discourse through a mocking tone and words that portray them as non-attractive; and that they use words full of beauty and desire and a tone of admiration to talk about non-violence. I discuss implications of this study for the preventive socialization of gender violence.

Study 3. Characteristics of Dialogic Literary Gatherings Related to Student Interactions Away from Violence

There is a whole body of literature on the coercive dominant discourse (CDD) that influences many adolescents to use of the language of desire to describe violent and disdainful

relationships as more attractive than egalitarian ones. On the contrary, research has also found spaces based on an egalitarian dialogue that challenge the CDD and in which students use the language of desire to talk about egalitarian people and relationships as attractive and exciting. One such space are Dialogic Literary Gatherings, in which students read and engage in dialogues around classic literature. However, how and why the language of desire united to the language of ethics emerges in DLG remains unknown. To advance in this direction, in this study I make the first exploration on what characteristics of DLG are related to interactions about relationships away from the CDD. To that end, I have observed 6 DLG sessions in a third-grade high school classroom (15-17 years old) in Spain. I have complemented the observations with 5 interviews, 4 with students and 1 with the teacher. Results show that five of the principles of dialogic learning, on which DLG are grounded, and the classic book's universal and profound themes are present in those dialogues in which students reject coercive behaviors and relationships and talk with desire about egalitarian ones. I discuss future research directions to corroborate the replication of these findings in other contexts.

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Study 1

Title: Identifying Key Concepts of the Language of Desire and the Language of Ethics in Dialogic Literary Gatherings

Abstract

Given the high prevalence of gender violence among adolescents and youth, research has underscored the importance of preventing it from an early age. The literature has clarified that the prevention of gender violence requires the union of the language of desire and of ethics to promote egalitarian relationships as desirable. Some research has shown the emergence of the language of desire towards non-violence Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG), in which students engage in an egalitarian dialogue on classic literature. Nevertheless, there is a need for a more in-depth and extensive analysis of the key concepts that emerge in DLG implemented in diverse contexts to better understand the potential of DLG as a space for the prevention of gender violence. To contribute to filling this gap, in this study I explore key concepts of desire and ethics that adolescents surface in DLG implemented in 5 schools from the Learning Communities movement have in common. To that end, I have conducted 26 observations in 9 different DLG groups with students aged 10-15, as well as 45 interviews with students and teachers. Results show three key concepts of desire and ethics in these DLG: students reflect on the value of friendship and how to choose good friends; they reject violence and peer pressure; and they talk about non-violent relationships with desire. I discuss implications of these findings for the prevention and overcoming of gender violence.

Introduction

Gender-based violence is a major concern today (UN Women, 2021). According to the CDC's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey from 2015, 81.3% of female victims who had suffered completed or attempted rape had experienced it before the age of 25, and 43.2% experienced it prior to being 18 (Smith et al., 2018). Such violence affects women of all ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, countries, cultures, and ethnicities (Stöckl et al., 2014; Trygged et al., 2014; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). Moreover, gender-based violence can happen in both stable and sporadic relationships (Puigvert et al., 2019). The literature has reported several negative consequences of suffering and not overcoming gender violence, including consequences in health (Puigvert et al., 2023; Steine et al., 2021) or in future relationships (López de Aguileta et al., 2021), among others.

What is even more worrisome, it affects adolescent and young girls at an alarmingly increasing rate (Smith et al., 2018). Indeed, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), the population that is most affected by intimate partner violence is 15 to 19, and by the age of 19, 1 out of 4 girls who have had a relationship have been abused by their partner, either physically, sexually or psychologically (WHO, 2021). This means that many female high school students are especially vulnerable to suffering such violence, not only from their partners, but also from non-partners and sporadic relationships.

It is therefore urgent to tackle gender violence from an early age. There is emerging research on the potential of Dialogic Literary Gatherings, where participants engage in an egalitarian dialogue around classic literature (Flecha, 2000; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023; Soler, 2015), as a space for the prevention of gender violence (López de Aguileta et al., 2020). However, more research is needed to better understand what key concepts highlighted by the research on the preventive socialization of gender violence surface in Dialogic Literary Gatherings, a classroom intervention that is part of the curriculum in over 15.000 centers. To that end, I

present findings from the analysis of 9 different DLG groups of adolescents from 5 different schools in Spain.

Preventive socialization of gender violence

Over the last decades, much research has been conducted on gender violence, trying to understand why it happens and why it is so prevalent among adolescents and youth. Some theories on love, attraction, and choice of sexual-affective relationships consider these to be biological and inherent, dependent of factors including chemistry, physical similarity, or fertility (Kuna & Galbarczyk, 2018; Lindová et al., 2016; Żelaźniewicz et al., 2021). Other theories talk about love and attraction as something instinctive, mysterious, which happens just like that and escapes each person's understanding or will (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). What these different theories have in common is that a person cannot choose who they feel attracted to and fall in love with, and therefore, having a violent or egalitarian relationship is a matter of luck, chemistry, or destiny. These theories leave little to no agency on human beings to decide who they desire and are attracted to.

However, the theory of preventive socialization of gender violence provides a different rationale. According to this theory and to the empirical evidence supporting it, love and attraction have a social basis, and it is through social interactions that we construct, develop, learn and internalize certain patterns of love, attraction, and desire (Gómez, 2004, 2015). Although there are multiple and diverse patterns of love and attraction that different individuals are socialized in, this research line has identified a traditional socialization pattern that unites attraction and violence (Puigvert et al., 2019). This pattern can be learned through direct or indirect experience, and research has found that adolescents are particularly vulnerable to such socialization (Gómez, 2015; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2022, 2018).

This socialization pattern is reproduced and reinforced through a coercive dominant discourse (CDD) that is present in many of today's media, movies, TV shows, music, commercials,

books, etc., as well as peer interactions (Racionero-Plaza, Duque, et al., 2021; Ríos Gonzalez & Peña Axt, 2022; Rodrigues-Mello et al., 2021; Villarejo et al., 2020; Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2022). Framed within the patriarchal imbalance in current societies, the CDD shapes many individuals' socialization into linking attractiveness to people with violent attitudes and behaviors: "people with violent attitudes and behaviours are socially portrayed as attractive and exciting (…) [whereas] people and relationships with non-violent attitudes and behaviours are portrayed as less exciting" (Puigvert et al., 2019, p. 2).

The CDD is not internalized only by engaging in disdainful and violent relationships, but also through interactions around them (López de Aguileta et al., 2021). Research has shown that many adolescents only engage in such relationships for the first time due to peer pressure (Racionero-Plaza, Duque, et al., 2021), and many of them acknowledge they had feelings such as disgust, disappointment, and lack of pleasure when they did (Flecha, 2022; Torras-Gómez et al., 2022, 2020). However, having shared those feelings with their peers would make them look bad, as if they were not good or experienced with sex (Torras-Gómez et al., 2022, 2020). Instead, many feel they have to reproduce the narratives dictated by the CDD, telling their peers that they felt pleasure and that the boy was handsome. Telling those narratives over and over to their friends and themselves leads many adolescents to internalize and assimilate them as their memories, feelings, and desires (Flecha, 2022; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2022). In this way, their sexual desire becomes associated to stimuli related to disdain and violence, increasing their likelihood to subjugate to relationships where there is violence or disdain (López de Aguileta et al., 2021). The CDD is therefore a risk factor for gender violence victimization (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2018; Ruiz-Eugenio, Racionero-Plaza, et al., 2020).

Language and interaction play a key role in reinforcing or rejecting the CDD socially and individually. As dialogic people, we are who we are as a result of the "multiple and diverse external and internal dialogues with individuals and teams" (Flecha, 2022, p. 34), and our brain

is constantly reacting to and being modified by such dialogues (López de Aguileta et al., 2021).

These external and internal dialogues – also known as inner speech – shape and configure our

feelings, identity, and action (Bakhtin, 1981; J. Bruner, 1987; Flecha, 2022; McAdams, 2011).

The concepts *language of desire* and *language of ethics* are particularly relevant to this matter.

The language of desire is conceptualized as all signs of communication used to describe

individuals, relationships or behaviors in terms of desire, attractiveness, passion, feelings and

excitement. The language of ethics is defined as all signs of communication used to describe

and talk about individuals, relationships or behaviors in terms of their moral values, goodness,

and ethics. The former falls within the realm of aesthetics, having "the capacity to raise

attraction and be desired" (Flecha et al., 2013, p. 100), as well as to trigger emotions and project

desire towards others (Puigvert et al., 2019); whereas the latter falls within the realm of ethics.

The language of desire is the language through which adolescents mostly communicate,

meaning that they often speak in terms of who or what is attractive, fun, exciting, and so on

(Melgar Alcantud, Puigvert, et al., 2021). Families and institutions such as schools, in turn,

tend to communicate through the language of ethics, describing reality and, in particular,

relationships in terms of goodness or badness (Rios-González et al., 2018).

The CDD produces a dichotomy between the language of desire and of ethics, between

goodness and attractiveness, between love and desire (Gómez, 2015). It uses the language of

desire to describe violence as fun, exciting and desirable, and the language of ethics to talk

about egalitarian relationships as convenient but boring. It thus socializes many adolescents

and youth in a double standard (Duque Sanchez et al., 2022; Rios-González et al., 2018) that

makes them believe that desire, attractiveness and excitement can only be found in

relationships based on disdain, humiliation and aggressiveness. As a result, many believe they

have to choose between good but boring or tempestuous but pleasurable.

The CDD decides and imposes, through power interactions, who is attractive and who is not, which relationships are exciting, and which are not. Instead of providing a plurality of relationships, it dictates a single model or pattern of sexual-affective relationships and individuals as attractive, while hiding its negative consequences (Puigvert et al., 2023). Thus, it is difficult for many adolescents to be critical and reject it. However, it is possible to reject it, to be socialized in different patterns of attraction, and to feel that egalitarian relationships are fun, exciting, and desirable, uniting the language of ethics and of desire (Duque et al., 2021; Joanpere et al., 2021; Puigvert, 2014). Human beings do have agency to choose which relationships we want to have without giving up pleasure or goodness (Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Merodio, et al., 2020). In the same way that the CDD is configured, imposed and internalized through language, we can create dreamed realities, feelings, desires and relationships through dialogue. Dialogue-based successful actions provide adolescents with a space to critically reflect on desires and relationships at an early age. They offer the possibility to defy the CDD and unite the language of desire and of ethics towards relationships full of "affection and excitement, friendship and passion, and stability and madness in the same person" (Gómez, 2015, p. 77).

Successful Educational Actions tackling gender violence from schools

Given that schools are where children and adolescents spend a lot of their time and socialize most, it is essential to tackle the prevention of gender violence from schools (Oliver, 2014). There are many educational programs and actions implemented in educational contexts to prevent and overcome gender violence. However, not all of them have been found to be effective. The report "Achieving student well-being for all: educational contexts free of violence" (Flecha et al., 2023) was commissioned by the European Commission's Network of Experts working on the Social dimension of Education and Training (NESET) to review consequences and the prevention of violence against children, which includes gender violence.

Out of all the programs tackling violence against children the report reviewed, only 13 had empirical evidence published in journals indexed in Web of Science (WoS) and/or Scopus supporting their effectiveness.

Five of those are what has been defined as/fall within the group of "Successful Educational Actions" (Flecha, 2015; Flecha & Soler, 2013b). Successful Educational Actions (SEA) are educational initiatives that fulfil four main criteria: 1) they promote improvements in practice; 2) such improvements are transferable, meaning that regardless of the context in which the initiative is implemented, it promotes the same success; 3) the two previous points are demonstrated through research following the communicative orientation; and 4) that empirical evidence demonstrating such improvements are published in scientific journals, i.e., indexed in WoS and/or Scopus. In 2006, the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme of Research selected and funded the INCLUD-ED project (2006-2011), becoming the project on schooling that had received the most funding until that moment. Led by Ramon Flecha and composed by 15 European research institutions, the project collected data in schools all over Europe and analyzed what those that were successful in improving academic performance and social cohesion were doing. The analysis led to the identification of seven SEA that were promoting such improvements (Morlà-Folch et al., 2022). The project's findings have been recognized by the European Commission by selecting it as the only Social Sciences and Humanities project in the Commission's list of 10 success stories of research (European Commission, 2011). More recently, the European Toolkit for Schools has included several SEA as recommended resources to promote school success for all (*School success for all*). Even after INCLUD-ED ended, researchers have continued replicating those SEA in schools across Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa, as well as identifying new SEA that are contributing to the overarching goal of promoting quality education and spaces free of violence for all students. The impact of such work has been recognized once again by the European

Commission by recently selecting for funding a new research project, REVERS-ED, led by Flecha with the aim of reverting trends of school failure across Europe through SEA.

SEA are grounded on the theory of dialogic society (Flecha, 2022), that is, on the human potential to transform our relationships into more egalitarian and away from violence through dialogue. There are more than 70 scientific articles published in WoS or Scopus-indexed journals reporting the social impacts of SEA, understanding social impact as the social improvements generated by research in relation to goals defined democratically, such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. These include improvements in academic achievements and instrumental learning – i.e. learning mathematics, language, history, and other related subjects and skills – and social cohesion and inclusion – i.e. social and emotional learning, including developing solidarity, empathy and friendship; decreasing school conflicts, etc. Among all SEA, the NESET report has included five as being especially successful for the prevention of violence against children. Based on the analysis of the NESET report, the common characteristics that render these actions successful in this regard are: promoting spaces free of violence through the coordinated action of the whole community to reject any form of violence; training the whole community on how to prevent and overcome it based on research evidence of social impact; promoting quality friendships as protective factors; and addressing and overcoming violence during lockdowns and other emergencies. In what follows I provide a brief description of two of them as I will later discuss them in light of this study's findings.

Dialogic Feminist Gatherings

One of the SEA are Dialogic Feminist Gatherings (DFG), in which students read and engage in egalitarian dialogues around scientific articles, books or other types of texts that are based on the theory and empirical evidence on the preventive socialization of gender violence, with a specific focus on the language of desire. They are implemented in a variety of contexts, from primary (elementary and middle) and secondary schools (Racionero-Plaza, Tellado, et al.,

2021; Rodrigues de Mello et al., 2021; Ruiz-Eugenio, Puigvert, et al., 2020) to universities (Puigvert, 2016; Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Vidu, et al., 2020; Ugalde et al., 2022) or institutionalized care centers (Salceda et al., 2020), among others. In these gatherings participants share reflections, feelings and experiences on topics such as love, sexual-affective relationships, attraction, choice, and the coercive dominant discourse (CDD). Among their social impacts, these gatherings have been found to increase participants' critical consciousness and rehection toward the CDD (Rodrigues de Mello et al., 2021; Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Merodio, et al., 2020; Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Vidu, et al., 2020; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2018; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020; Salceda et al., 2020). Many participants are better able to identify the CDD in their environment and become more aware of how it has influenced their patterns of attraction and choice in relationships and partners. During the interviews, some of them affirm that, after having participated in a DFG, they reject the CDD and the relationships dictated by it (Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Vidu, et al., 2020; Salceda et al., 2020; Ugalde et al., 2022).

These gatherings also provide participants with a space to freely talk about love as something they desire and dream of, which many of them recognize is challenging outside of the DFG (Rodrigues de Mello et al., 2021). Indeed, until very recently, some Spanish programs and campaigns supposedly addressing gender violence have spread the hoax that romantic or ideal love promotes gender violence, telling adolescents and youth that they should stop searching for love and find freedom in hookups instead (Cañaveras et al., in press; (Yuste et al., 2014). Even if some of them are not aware, through these messages they are pushing adolescents to the double standard that separates love from desire. On the contrary to the hoax they spread, research has shown that ideal love, understood as love in sexual-affective relationships in their multiple forms, is inherently free of violence and can prevent adolescents and youth from it (Duque et al., 2015):

We propose the "ideal love" of the 21st century as diverse and plural. Ideal love is not associated with any particular sexual option or form of relationship in particular, nor specific time of duration, and it does have a common feature: the absence of gender violence. Socialization in the desire for "ideal love" contributes to preventing gender violence, as it combines the absence of gender violence with sexual freedom and freedom of choice in relationships (Duque et al., 2015, p. 15).

A key element to the success of DFG is that they promote the use of the language of desire to associate desire and attractiveness with goodness and see violence as disgusting and despicable. In other words, many participants in these gatherings use the language of desire to refer to individuals with egalitarian values as desirable partners for sporadic or stable relationships and to reject individuals with disdainful behaviors as disgusting, cowards, and losers (Puigvert, 2016; Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Vidu, et al., 2020).

Zero Violence Brave Club

Another Successful Educational Action included in the NESET report is the Zero Violence Brave Club. It has been reported to decrease school conflicts through involving the whole community in acting against any form of violence (Roca-Campos et al., 2021). It fosters relationships based on solidarity and friendship, as students who help their peers and stand on their side when they are suffering violence are reinforced and seen as brave. As in the abovementioned dialogic gatherings, this reinforcement is not done through the language of ethics only (i.e., saying things like "helping victims is good"), but also through the language of desire, making those who help victims visible, valuable, and admirable. Breaking the silence and defending victims is portrayed as attractive and desirable, whereas exercising violence is portrayed as cowardly, removing attention and attractiveness from the person with violent behaviors (Campdepadrós-Cullell & De Botton, 2021). This action socializes students in not

normalizing violence, in rejecting it, and in emptying it from the attractiveness that the CDD puts on it.

In addition to the language of desire, another key aspect of the Zero Violence Brave Club is the promotion of friendship. Friendship is key to overcome challenges and live happy, healthy and successful lives (Bosle et al., 2022; Gairal-Casadó et al., 2023; Glaser et al., 2023; Gómez et al., 2022; León-Jiménez et al., 2020). Furthermore, the literature has found that friendship is a key protective factor against violence (Kendrick et al., 2012), including gender violence (Gómez, 2014). Friends provide victims with important support networks (Melgar Alcantud, Campdepadrós-Cullell, et al., 2021) that can help them report and overcome violence. They can also help each other resist and reject the CDD (Racionero-Plaza, Duque, et al., 2021; Torras-Gómez et al., 2020). For instance, a study by Torras-Gómez and colleagues (2020) showed that some participants were able to recall past "disdainful hookups" (Puigvert et al., 2023) in a more critical and nuanced way thanks to engaging in dialogues with their friends. Such dialogues helped them understand the influence that the CDD had in their internalization of the memories, feelings, and desires towards such relationships, and they were able to remember them with disgust and rejection, transforming their language of desire (Torras-Gómez et al., 2020).

Considering the language of desire in programs and actions aimed at preventing and overcoming gender violence is essential to make them successful. Indeed, in many of these programs the language of desire is missing, referring to non-violent people and relationships only in terms of how good and convenient they are (Melgar Alcantud, Puigvert, et al., 2021; Puigvert, 2016). When using that kind of language they do not appeal to attractiveness, and many adolescents view egalitarian relationships as boring, feeding the CDD that uses the language of desire to glamorize violent relationships. Those programs and actions ignore, or forget, that desire is an essential human drive, more so for adolescents.

Dialogic Literary Gatherings as a potential space of preventive socialization

Successful Educational Actions as the ones discussed above have shown to be effective in providing many children and adolescents with an alternative socialization pattern that unites ethics and desire. However, most of the research on the preventive socialization of gender violence has focused on studying the effectiveness of SEA which are directed specifically at preventing and overcoming gender violence.

Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) are similar to Dialogic Feminist Gatherings but, instead of reading scholarly works on the prevention of gender violence, participants read and engage in an egalitarian dialogue (Flecha, 2000) around what the creators of DLG understand to be the best universal literary works of humankind, which they define as "those that endure over time"[4]. Since their creation in the La Verneda-Sant Martí Adult School in Barcelona, DLG have been transferred to diverse contexts – primary and secondary schools, out-of-home child centers, penitentiary centers, universities, primary healthcare centers, or mental health care centers, among others – and to different countries – the UK, Italy, Malta, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Perú, or Ghana, among others. There are currently more than 15.000 DLG implemented all over the world. They have also been selected by the European Commission to be included in the European Toolkit for Schools due to their scientific, political and social impacts. These include promoting and improving learning and academic achievements (Flecha & Soler, 2013b; Marifa Salceda et al., 2022), reading and communication skills (Fernández-Villardón et al., 2021; Santiago-Garabieta et al., 2022), prosocial behavior (Khalfaoui-Larrañaga et al., 2021; Villardón-Gallego et al., 2018), creation of meaning (Munté, 2015), inclusion (García-

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[4]More on the literary works that are read in DLG can be found in the Learning Communities website: https://comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net/actuaciones-de-exito/tertulias-literarias-dialogicas/tertulias-literarias-dialogicas-tld/

Carrión et al., 2018), mental health (Zubiri-Esnaola et al., 2023) and many other personal and social transformations (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023; M. Soler, 2015).

DLG are based on dialogic learning, which "leads to the transformation of education centers into learning communities where all the people and groups involved enter into relationships with each other. In this way, the environment is transformed, creating new cognitive development and greater social and educational equity" (Flecha, 2000, p. 24). Upon this basis, every week, either the teacher or the group decides the number of pages or chapters they want to discuss in the following gathering. At home – or in some cases in the classroom, with a teacher's or classmate's help – participants read the pages agreed upon and choose a paragraph or sentence they would like to share in the gathering. When sharing the paragraph, they have to argue why they have chosen it. In the gathering, the facilitator, who might be the teacher, a student, or a volunteer, gives the floor to the students who would like to share their paragraph, always prioritizing those who have participated less.

The interactions that prevail in DLG are dialogic rather than power-based, that is, participants need to provide arguments to support their interpretations and reasoning rather than imposing them as the correct or best ones (Searle & Soler, 2005; Soler & Flecha, 2010). Indeed, the aim of the DLG is neither to interpret what the author's or the text's message is nor to convince others of one's own interpretation of the text. Rather, the goal is to have an egalitarian dialogue co-creating new meanings through people's different interpretations, feelings and ideas, with the consensus that all ideas are respected as long as they respect Human Rights. It is this plurality of voices in the free interpretation of the book that provides such richness to the dialogues in which participants engage. Students engage in a chain of dialogues (Bakhtin, 1981) in which their previous dialogues, experiences, interpretations, and feelings take part, and which will become part of their future dialogues, experiences and relationships (Flecha, 2000).

DLG are integrated in the school curriculum in many contexts and countries. Of all the SEA, DLG are the ones implemented in most schools and centers. Although they are not specifically aimed at preventing and overcoming gender violence, some research has shown that DLG promote the emergence of the language of desire united with the language of ethics towards non-violence relationships (G. López de Aguileta et al., 2020). This indicates that there are concepts of desire and ethics that emerge in DLG which other studies' findings have highlighted as key in the prevention and overcoming of gender violence. However, there is a need for more research on what those concepts are to better understand what makes DLG, which integrate curricular and cultural work, also a space for the prevention of gender violence from schools. To contribute to this end, this article poses the following research question:

> What key concepts of desire and ethics do adolescents surface in Dialogic Literary Gatherings in schools?

Methodology

This study is framed within the communicative approach (Gómez et al., 2019, 2011; Puigvert et al., 2012). The Communicative Methodology (CM) is based on an intersubjective dialogue between researchers and research participants aimed at co-creating new knowledge and reality agreed upon by all subjects (Soler & Gómez, 2020). Through an egalitarian dialogue in which researchers provide knowledge from research evidence and participants provide knowledge from their lifeworld and experiences, new knowledge is created.

Due to its egalitarian foundation and transformative orientation, the CM has achieved scientific, political and social impact (Racionero-Plaza, Vidu, et al., 2021; Ramis-Salas, 2020; Soler-Gallart & Flecha, 2022), especially with vulnerable populations, by including all voices throughout the whole research process (Gómez et al., 2019). For instance, the European

Commission now requires that all research projects funded by it be conducted in co-creation and oriented towards achieving social impact (European Commission, 2022).

Research site and participants

The study was conducted in five schools from the Learning Communities movement located in Spain. The Learning Communities movement (Flecha & Soler, 2013; García-Carrión et al., 2020; Gatt et al., 2011; Morlà Folch, 2015) is an international network of educational centers that implement Successful Educational Actions, as are DLG. The whole community, including teachers, students, families and other neighborhood members engage in an egalitarian dialogue to transform the educational and social context towards the highest quality education for all. The main criteria to select these five Learning Communities were: 1) having implemented DLG successfully for at least five years; 2) providing a diverse sample of schools in terms of geographical location and student background. All of them have been implementing DLG for 10 to 22 years. Three of them are located in Catalonia, one in the Basque Country, and one in Valencia. Three are primary schools (elementary and middle schools) and two are primary and high schools. In terms of population, four of them serve families from low SES, and one serves mostly middle-class families. All schools have students from different nationalities, mostly Spanish, Moroccan, and from different Latin American and Asian countries. One of the schools has a particularly high rate of Roma students. Table 1 provides a summary of the schools' main characteristics.

Table 1. Summary of participating Learning Communities

School	Location	Population	Years DLG
Escolaica	Cullera (Valencia)	Mostly Spanish, middle class	10

Joaquim Ruyra	L'Hospitalet de Llobregat (Catalonia)	Mostly immigrants, low SRS	11
Mediterrani	Tarragona (Catalonia)	Mostly Roma, low SES	12
Montserrat	Terrassa (Catalonia)	Mostly immigrants, low SES	22
Soloarte	Basauri (Basque Country)	Mostly immigrants, low SES	12

In these schools, I observed a total of 9 DLG groups: three in 5th grade (ages 10 to 12); two in 6th grade (ages 11 to 12); one in 1st grade high school (ages 12-13); one in 2nd grade high school (ages 13-14); two in 3rd grade high school (ages 14-17). Data about students' gender considers male/female identifications. In all, there are 103 girls and 90 boys. Nationalities include several countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Table 2 provides a summary of all the groups that participated in the study.

Table 2. Summary of participating DLG groups

School	Groups	Gender	Nationalities	Age
Escolaica	6th grade	17 female, 6 male	China, Honduras, India, Morocco,	11-12

			Romania, Spain, Ukraine, Venezuela	
Joaquim Ruyra	5th grade A, B	28 female, 23 male	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Georgia, Honduras, India, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Paraguay, Perú, Philipines, República Dominicana, Spain, Venezuela,	10-11
Mediterrani	1st, 2nd, 3rd high school	32 female, 28 male	Ecuador, Morocco, Peru, Spain (Roma ethnicity)	12-15
Montserrat	5th and 6th grade	18 female, 27 male	Morocco, Romania, Spain	10-12
Soloarte	3rd grade high school	8 female, 6 male	Colombia, Honduras, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Spain	15-17

Overall, 193 students and 8 teachers who facilitated DLG participated in the observed DLG. Of these, 51 students (32 female and 19 male) and six teachers (all female) also participated in the interviews. Three of the teachers interviewed are also the schools' principals. Some of these

students have attended their Learning Community all their lives, so they are used to participating in DLG. For others, this was the first time in which they participated in a DLG.

Data collection

Data collection took place from January to December 2023, although most of the data were collected between May and June, towards the end of the academic year. Two methods were used: DLG observations and communicative interviews.

First, I contacted the school principals and one of the teachers via email or WhatsApp to inform them on the dissertation, its objectives and its methods, and asked them whether they would like their school to participate. Once the school principals agreed, we decided which classrooms would participate. The criteria for the classroom selection were age (adolescence) and the principals' or teachers' understanding of which classrooms would fit better due to the classroom dynamics. The classroom dynamics considered were that students always or almost always respected the DLG principles, that there were no conflicts among students and they got along with each other, and that they made contributions to the gatherings that the principals or teachers considered interesting related to the study goals. The principals then distributed the informed consent forms to the students, their parents, and the teachers who were in charge of each DLG. After they signed the consent forms, I went to the schools to observe the DLG and conduct interviews.

In all, I observed 26 DLG sessions across the 9 groups. The observations took different forms and were conducted at different times. I conducted all observations in person except for the ones from Soloarte and Escolaica. In Soloarte, I observed the first 5 DLG sessions via zoom and the last one in person. In Escolaica, the DLG teacher audio-recorded the first 4 sessions, and I was also present in person in the last one. I have audio recordings of all DLG sessions in Soloarte and Escolaica. I also have audio recordings in some DLG sessions in Montserrat. In

the rest of the schools I did not audio-record the observations and, instead, took notes on the most relevant things students said related to the study objective.

I also conducted 45 interviews, 39 with students and 6 with teachers. Interviews took various forms and were conducted at different times. In Montserrat's 6th grade I conducted 5 individual student interviews (3 boys and 2 girls), 3 focus groups (two with three girls and one with three boys), and 1 interview with the teacher, who is also the principal. In Soloarte I conducted 1 individual interview with a female student, three mixed focus groups formed by three students each, and 1 teacher interview. In Joaquim Ruyra I interviewed 20 students individually (6 boys and 14 girls) and the teacher. In Escolaica I conducted 7 individual interviews (3 boys and 4 girls) with students and 1 with the teacher, who is also the principal. I did not conduct any interviews with students from Montserrat's 5th grade nor with the teacher. In Mediterrani I conducted 1 interview with the school principal. All interviews were audio-recorded. Interviews lasted from 5 to 25 minutes. Table 3 provides a summary of the numbers of observations and student interviews in each group and the books they read in the DLG.

Table 3. Summary of observations and student interviews

School	Group	Observations	Interviews	DLG book
Escolaica	6th grade	5	7	Romeo and Juliet
Joaquim Ruyra	5th A	2	9	Don Quixote
	5th B	2	11	Don Quixote
Mediterrani	1st grade	1	0	Mar i Cel
	2nd grade	1	0	Oliver Twist
	3rd grade	1	0	Romeo and Juliet
Montserrat	5th grade	2	0	The Aeneid
	6th grade	6	8	The Iliad

Soloarte	3rd grade	6	4	Pride and Prejudice

The interviews were semi-structured. Rather than having a script, I had a list of main themes I wanted to focus the dialogue on, but the interview questions changed based on what participants were sharing with me (G. López de Aguileta et al., 2021). In the interviews with students, I started the dialogue by asking them whether they had ever felt any pressure to do something they did not want to do. As we dug in on that issue, I would also ask about the type of people that are more popular or considered more attractive in their environment, engaging in a dialogue on why they thought so. We also talked about whether the DLG provided them with a space to talk about these issues and, if so, how that helped them personally. At the end of the interviews, I asked them whether they knew Romeo and Juliet's story, as I knew many of them had read it in previous years or would read it in upcoming years in DLG, and those who were familiar with it shared their views on the love story and on the main characters. Moreover, it is one of the most popular and well-known love stories of all time, so it was likely that they would at least have some references about it. I used *Romeo and Juliet* or other love stories from the books they were reading in DLG to engage in a dialogue around relationships that unite the language of desire and of ethics, as is the case of the love words and passionate affection Romeo and Juliet exchange with each other. Despite there being violence in their surrounding and the deaths at the end, there is no violence in their relationship, they try to fight for the freedom to be with the person they love, and only after Juliet's parents force her to marry Paris and their plan to reunite in Mantua fails, they kill themselves. In the interviews with teachers, we engaged in a dialogue on how they thought the ways in which students talked about issues related to love and relationships changed over time, and whether they thought that change was related to DLG. We also deepened on what characteristics of DLG they thought

led to those changes, and what impacts they could have on participants' lives and relationships. (For full interview protocol, see Appendix A.)

Data analysis

In order to analyze the data, I first transcribed all audio-recordings with the help of the Box automatic transcription feature in their original language (all interviews were conducted in Spanish, some DLG were conducted also in Spanish and others in Catalan). I then revised all transcriptions and the notes of the DLG I did not audio-record. I used *interaction events* as the unit of analysis (Díez-Palomar et al., 2021). In this study, I define interaction events as any utterance or group of utterances from students and/or teachers. Each interaction event is defined in terms of themes, that is, each interaction event includes utterances around the same theme. Therefore, an interaction event can be a single utterance or a dialogue with several student and teacher exchanges.

I conducted the analysis in two main steps. The first step was a thematic analysis which I started inductively and finished deductively. I read all transcriptions and notes several times. In the first round I identified and analyzed all interactions on issues related to love, sexual-affective relationships, violence, or coercion. In the second round I made several categories based on common themes across the different DLG sessions and interviews. After a few rounds, I re-categorized the data following the scientific literature on the preventive socialization of gender violence coupled with the main themes I identified in the data. This led to three main categories: friendship, CDD, and love, which I then broke into more specific subthemes.

In the second step, I deductively analyzed all those interaction events paying attention to language, specifically whether they were said a) from the language of desire only or b) from the union of the language of desire united with the language of ethics (Flecha et al., 2013). In the former, I included those interaction events in which participants talk about characters, relationships, or situations in terms of the values they represent (i.e. good, bad, wrong, etc.) in

a way that does not portray them as attractive. In the latter, I included interaction events in which participants portray characters, relationships or situations that are good or ethical as attractive and reject those that are not good as non-attractive or non-desirable. I guided my analysis through scientific articles that use these two categories when analyzing children's, adolescents', and youth's language. For ease of reading, I will call these two categories "language of ethics" and "language of desire", although it is implicit that, in this study, all interaction events that I identify as belonging to the "language of desire" category unite the language of desire with the language of ethics. In some cases, within a single interaction event, I identified some utterances from the language of ethics and some from the language of desire. These two categories were transversal throughout all interaction events categorized in the three abovementioned thematic categories: friendship, CDD, and love. Examples from the data of interaction events categorized as "friendship" and "language of ethics" would be: "friendship is very valuable", or "Friar Laurence is the only one who understands her because she doesn't want to marry Paris". Examples of interaction events categorized as "friendship" and "language of desire" include: "why would I be friends [with cocky classmates]? I don't even pay attention to them".

As a result, I developed a conceptual matrix with two axes (Miles et al., 2019), one representing the three thematic categories, and another one that crossed these three in terms of language of desire and of ethics. Table 4 shows the final conceptual matrix.

Table 4. Data analysis categories.

	Friendship			CDD			Love		
Language of ethics		Friends support		Identify coercion	Understand the		What is and		Want good

Language of desire	Friendship as valuable	and don't coerce	How to choose friends		influence of CDD	Reject CDD and violence	isn't love	How to choose partners	relation ships

In all, I found 37 interaction events in the category of friendship from the language of ethics; 16 categorized as friendship from the language of desire; 32 categorized as CDD from the language of ethics; 21 as CDD from the language of desire; 49 as love from the language of ethics; and 46 as love from the language of desire. Once I had all interaction events categorized, I translated the most relevant ones into English.

Ethical considerations

The study followed ethical standards included in the Declaration of Helsinki. All data were anonymized, all personal names that are used in this article are pseudonyms, and only I have access to the personal information of each participant. All parents, students and teachers were provided with an information sheet about the study goals, the methods, and the implications of participating, including the benefits and potential risks. All teachers and students who participated, as well as their parents, signed the informed consent forms. This study received approval from the IRB at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Approval number is 2022-1444.

After collecting the data, I asked the school principals' or teachers whether they wanted the school's name to appear published or not. They discussed these issues in their schools' committees, assemblies or councils, in which all members of the communities participate. All schools agreed to have their name appear, stating they felt proud of what they were doing.

Results

Many of the interaction events throughout the DLG observed revolve around issues of friendship, the CDD, and love. In most cases, students use the language of ethics to talk about these issues. However, there are also several instances in which they use the language of desire to talk about love and egalitarian relationships with desire, as well as to reject the coercive discourse as non-attractive. This section presents some of the most common interaction events around the three main themes.

Valuing and choosing friends wisely

Dialogues around friendship are common in all DLG observed. Friendship is seen as valuable and essential in life. Jamal's question to his classmates during a DLG on *The Iliad* reflects this:

Jamal	you think that friendship is a treasure, right?	1

Montserrat 6th grade, DLG

One of the aspects that many students value of friendship is the help and support they receive from their friends:

Noor	my friends always help me	1
Naim	one of my best friends, I always talk to them, wherever he is, and I have three friends who always help me and they do whatever they can to make me feel better	2
Janna	I have best friends, we always help each other	3

Montserrat 6th grade, DLG

As shown in the interaction event, many students associate their friends with feeling better and with helping each other overcome challenges, whatever they may be, as seen in line 2 when Naim states that his friends always help him feel better whenever he needs them.

In many cases, in addition to explaining situations in which they have helped their friends or received their help, they analyze similar situations in the books they are reading. An example can be found in a DLG on *Pride and Prejudice*. In the following interaction event, students are discussing whether the main character, Elizabeth, is being selfish or helping her friend Charlotte by warning her of Collins's despicable attitudes, whom Charlotte is about to marry:

Claudia	Well, I don't know, I don't think it's selfish, maybe she knows what she knows about Collins, right? About his personality, his way of thinking and all that. Maybe she doesn't want him to be with her friend because he can hurt her or something like that	1

<div align="right">Soloarte, DLG</div>

In this quote we see that Claudia interprets the moment in which Elizabeth tells Charlotte she should not lower her standards and marry Collins as a way of preventing her friend from making a decision that can harm her.

Nonetheless, students' reflections and dialogues on friendships do not only show analyses of what friendship is or is not on paper. Some of the teachers from different schools confirm that these dialogues often transcend the gatherings, as they encourage many students to help their friends when they need it. One of these teachers shares a case in which two girls helped their friend speak out about a very difficult situation she was going through:

Andrea	I think that [talking about these issues in the DLG] strengthens them, it gives them confidence (…) a very big case we have had this year, of a girl who came new last year (…) and two other girls [became her friends]. Well, this girl this year has dared to report a case (…). She trusted these friends to tell them, and the first thing these friends did was to tell the tutor and me. "You have to report, you have to tell the tutor, you have to	1

| | do this, you can't take this because it's not right, it's not right". And I think that this is also, well, a little bit the result, because these other two girls have been in the gatherings for a longer time, where they talk about relationships, about how they have to be, and so in that case, I think that it has transcended | |

As the teacher states, talking about relationships, about friendship, about what is right and wrong, does not remain only in the discourse level, but it helps many students act in accordance with those values. In this case, the girls who had spent more years participating in DLG and engaging in dialogues on these issues were confident that they needed to help their new friend when she was facing a very difficult situation.

This is not an isolated case in a particular school; throughout the various DLG observed, there are many interaction events in which students build bridges between their lives, the readings, and the dialogues. An example observed in different DLG is when students question or ask for advice on whether they should be friends with someone who has hurt or betrayed them:

Farûq	a friend has betrayed me, what would you do?	1
Kala	I don't know whether I would still be their friends	2
Hasan	(…) I would tell Farûq that you need to see how that friend treats you. If he betrayed me I would no longer trust him	3
Kala	you can't trust everybody, you have to know how to choose your friends	4

Montserrat 6th grade, DLG

In this case, Farûq explains in the first line that, similar to what happens in *The Iliad*, a friend has betrayed him, and asks others what they would do in his case. This creates an interaction event among several students on how to choose friends and on the importance of identifying

when someone is being a good friend or not, as Kala says in line 4. The need to know how to choose friends has also been present in different DLG observed:

Ibtissan	there are bad and good people, that's why you have to be a good person, but at the same time you need to be strict (…)	1
Claudia	yes, what Ibtissan said, you need to make others respect you, you have to be a good person, but don't allow others to step on you	2
	(…)	
Claudia	you can trust other people, you just have to be careful about who you trust	10
Martin	of course, you have to be smart	11

Soloarte, DLG

This and other similar interaction events show that students are aware that not everyone can be trusted or considered a friend, but that they need to be careful when choosing friends. As Claudia says in line 10, "you can trust other people, you just have to be careful". Furthermore, whereas in the abovementioned interaction events students talk about friendship from the language of ethics, talking about trust, treating others well or helping each other without projecting attractiveness to those values, in this example we see the language of desire. Students oppose the idea that being a good person means letting others do whatever they want with you, for instance when Ibtissan says "you need to be strict" (line 1) or Martin says "you have to be smart" (line 11). Through the language of desire, they talk about the importance of being not only good, but also smart when it comes to choosing other people.

Along this line, many students analyze certain characters' behaviors and attitudes, questioning whether they are being good friends or not:

| Ainara | I think the nurse is telling her [Juliet] "this boy [Paris] is much better for you", I think she's like a fake friend, she's a little bit fake. (…) Because before she was telling her that Romeo was the best man in the world, but now she's saying that Paris is the best man in the world, I think she's a little bit fake (…) I think she was a little bit jealous that [Juliet] is happy with Romeo | 1 |

<div align="right">Escolaica, DLG</div>

The particular moment in *Romeo and Juliet* when the nurse, instead of supporting Juliet in her wish not to marry Paris, pushes her to marry him, sparks a big debate among students. In previous DLG sessions many of them talked about how good the nurse is with Juliet when she helps her be with Romeo. But when she starts talking bad about Romeo and pushing her to marry Paris, they question whether is acting as a good friend this time. Moreover, in this example the student does not use the language of ethics to reject the nurse's behavior, but does it from the language of desire, using words such as "fake friend" or "jealous", removing attractiveness from her behavior.

Related to this quote, another topic many students talk about is peer pressure, particularly from people thought to be friends. For instance, during one of the interviews, a student reflects on this issue and expresses that she would stop being friends with anyone who pressured her:

| Chirine | There are people to whom their peers say things like "if you don't do this, I will stop being your friend, I want you to do it, so if you don't….", I would stop being your friend, because you will not pressure me to say something I don't want to do | 1 |

<div align="right">Montserrat 6th grade, DLG</div>

The tone of confidence in which Chirine states she would not give in to people who pressure her to do things she does not want to do shows the language of desire to reject dominating and

coercive attitudes. As these quotes evince, not only is friendship an important aspect in many students' lives, but the DLG provide them with a space to talk about what friendship really is and how to choose friends in a smart way, in some occasions talking about these issues from the language of desire.

Rejecting violence and the coercive dominant discourse

As the previous interaction event shows, coercion or pressure and violence are another main theme on which the dialogues throughout the DLG and interviews revolve. In some gatherings, especially with younger students, they ask questions about whether certain types of behaviors are considered violence or not:

Habib	if they force you [to do something] is that violence?	1
Nadia	yes, because they're forcing you to do something you don't want to do, they're pushing you. If they're forcing you and you don't want to do it, why would you do it?	2

Montserrat 6th grade, DLG

In this interaction event, Habib is unsure about whether pressure or coercion can be considered violence (line 1), and Nadia replies with confidence that it is indeed violence. Moreover, she finishes with a rhetorical question that shows her unwillingness to do something others pressure her to do, inviting others to think about why anyone should do it.

Throughout the different DLG there are many interaction events about the coercion or violence that some characters from the books use. However, in some DLG sessions, in addition to identifying and criticizing such violence in the books, students once again make connections with the real world:

| Ainara | I think that the nurse shouldn't pressure [Juliet] not to marry Romeo, because if she truly loves Romeo, she should go with him. And I think that even though this happened a long time ago, we have seen that many times people pressure others, for instance if someone says that another person is very cool or fun and at the end the person to whom they're saying this will end up believing it | 1 |

Escolaica, DLG

Here, Ainara again rejects the nurse's advice for Juliet to marry Paris instead of the person she is in love with, calling such advice "pressure". However, in this quote she goes a step further and connects that passage with the real world. She compares the pressure in the book to the CDD, or in her own words, to the pressure that many people use to make others believe certain people are fun or cool. In this particular DLG session, coercion and peer pressure are a main topic, sparked by the pressures Juliet suffers from her family, who tell her that if she does not marry Paris they will kick her out and no longer consider her their daughter. Many students debate whether those pressures might influence someone's decisions when choosing sexual-affective relationships or not:

| Ariadna | I think that pressure has a big influence when choosing someone to marry, because if the nurse says that she doesn't think [Romeo] is good and the nurse is someone Juliet trusts, right? Then maybe Juliet, fortunately it doesn't happen, but she could have chosen what the nurse says | 1 |

Escolaica, DLG

In this case, even though she talks specifically about the book's example, Ariadna's reflections about how some people's pressures might influence others to choose certain partners or relationships go beyond fiction. She acknowledges that, although it has not happened in Romeo and Juliet's case, peer pressure can have a big influence when making important decisions. A

similar interaction event can be found in the DLG on *Pride and Prejudice*, when students debate whether Lidia's decision to run away with Wickham is her own decision or is influenced by his, her family's and society's pressure:

Maria	I think here we shouldn't blame the family, the only one responsible for making that decision is Lidia, as she is old and mature enough to make such a decision, and that's what she did. Because she wanted to, right? Well, and we don't know whether Wickham pushed her to make that decision. So I wouldn't blame the family nor the mother	1
Alicia	I would. As Maria says, she's the one who made the choice, and she's the one who run away. But as Ibtissan says, it's also the family pressure, the mom, like she has taught them that they can only live to get married	2
	(…)	
Ibtissan	here they have already realized, after something bad has happened, that they were supporting, or forcing her to do something bad. But before that they were telling her "you need to get married, what a shame", but after it's happened, now they feel guilty	6

Soloarte, DLG

Whereas Maria blames only Lidia and Wickham for the decision of running away, Alicia and Ibtissan consider that the family's pressure to get married is an influential factor that might have led her to make that decision. In line 6, Ibtissan reminds them of the constant pressure the family, especially the mother, has put on Lydia and her sisters to get married. Although in this example students are focused on the book, there are many instances in which their reflections on the role that peers or society can have in pushing someone to make certain decisions are connected to the non-fiction world. In many of those interaction events, some students show a clear rejection towards this kind of pressure:

| Samira | If you see that someone might be alone you can try to be with them, and don't join the ones who tell you not to be with the person who is alone | 1 |

<div align="right">Montserrat 6th grade, DLG</div>

Here, Samira advices her classmates not to listen to the coercive discourse that tells them who they should and should not be with. In addition to showing that she would not listen to what they say, she states she would reject them and not be their friends. Whereas Samira's quote does not show a rejection from the language of desire, in some cases students use the language of desire to express that they consider that rejecting the coercive discourse is attractive and desirable. The DLG on *Pride and Prejudice* sparks many interactive events in which some students view Elizabeth's attitudes against the pressures from her mother, from Collins and from Lady Catherine as attractive:

| Alicia | I liked it, I really liked it, as I have said in previous sessions, she is very determined. She has a very determined personality, and she is very self-confident. And whenever someone is pressuring or vulnerating her, she stops them | 1 |

<div align="right">Soloarte, DLG</div>

In Alicia's quote we can see the language of desire when she says she "really like[s]" her attitude of not letting anyone pressure or coerce her using words such as "determined" and "self-confident" to describe her. Other students also view this attitude as brave, stating that it is not always easy to say no to coercion:

| Ibtissan | I think it's very brave that she has rejected that, that situation. I mean it's not always easy to reject things | 1 |

<div align="right">Soloarte, DLG</div>

The word "brave", which also indicates the language of desire, is heard several times when referring to Elizabeth's stance against the pressures, as can be seen in yet another example:

| Clauria | I think Elizabeth is brave, she knows what she is worth and she makes others know her worth. (…) Many people here, well, here and everywhere, wouldn't be able to be like Elizabeth | 1 |

Soloarte, DLG

All these examples show that many students admire Elizabeth's attitudes not only for her goodness when rejecting something that is not right, but for her bravery and the self-worth she shows when doing so, which are described as attractive. As Claudia states, it is not always easy to reject the coercive discourse; only the people who know their worth are able to do it.

Conversely, there are also several interaction events in which students reject the people who pressure Elizabeth and other characters in the book. Many students particularly reject Lady Catherine, Darcy's aunt, who did not want Elizabeth and Darcy to get married, and who seemed to decide over everybody else's lives:

Martin	The second dash. "[reads the passage he selected]". Like… she's a bitter and rude woman and she comes here to, I don't know what for. I don't know, I completely dislike this lady	5
	(…)	
Claudia	her buffoons. Franco's first cousin	18
Mikel	she thinks she's superior to others, this old bitter lady	19
Martin	the witch, she's missing the broomstick	20
Andrea (teacher)	but Mikel, you've said that "she treats everyone as if they were inferior"	21
Mikel	as if they were supposedly inferior to her, as if she's superior because she's married, because she has money, because she says so	22
Claudia	because she's Tutankhamun	23

Andrea	so she decides who is inferior, right?	24
Mikel	inferior in her way, according to her point of view	25
Amagoia	economically	26
Claudia	according to social status	27
Mikel	but for me she's inferior to me, I mean…	28

Soloarte, DLG

The words that these students use to refer to Lady Catherine are charged with a rejection from the realm of desire, describing her as a "witch" (line 20), "bitter" (line 5), "Franco's [Spanish dictator] first cousin" (line 18) and even "Tutankhamun" (line 23), therefore removing attractiveness from an authoritarian and coercive figure. They particularly reject her feeling superior to everybody else and her will to decide who should marry whom.

Similarly to the theme of friendship, these interaction events do not always remain in the gatherings, but they may transcend and help them make certain decisions or act in certain ways in their own lives. In the interviews, a few students express that when some of their friends or classmates experienced these types of pressures, they helped them reject the coercion:

Interviewer	have you or any of your friends ever felt pressured to have relationships?	1
Andreu	I haven't, but I think that some friend has	2
Interviewer	and what type of pressures did he receive?	3
Andreu	I don't know, there were many people telling him to do something and he didn't want to do it. But in the end me and other friends from class convinced him not to do things he didn't want to do	4
Interviewer	very well. What types of pressures were those, what did they tell him to do?	5

| Andreu | they wanted him to talk to a girl, I don't know if she wanted to, but he didn't want to do it, we were in a school trip and Jon felt pressured. And in the end nothing happened, because a few of us impeded it | 6 |

<div align="right">Escolaica, Interview</div>

When asked about peer pressure, although Andreu does not identify any coercion towards him, he quickly remembers a case in which a friend of his was coerced to talk to a girl. He clearly states in lines 4 and 6 that his friend did not want to do that thing which he was being pressured to do, which was to talk to a girl, and he is even unsure whether she wanted to talk to him. As he explains, instead of joining the people who were coercing his friend, Andreu and other classmates felt the need to support him in not doing what he did not want to do, and they helped him resist and reject the peer pressure.

Desiring love and goodness

Last, love and sexual-affective relationships were a major topic students talk about during the DLG as well as in the interviews. In several gatherings, students have dialogues on what love is and is not, whether love is more important than money to be happy, or why people fall in love, among others. In one of those interaction events, for instance during the DLG on *Pride and Prejudice*, students have differing views on whether Lidia and Wickham were truly in love when they ran away:

Aurora	teacher, I think that if they love each other they should be happy	1
Andrea (teacher)	well, my question is whether they love each other, actually I don't think so…	2
Aurora	if they ran away to Scotland…	3
Andrea	it doesn't seem a love relationship to me	4
Martin	right, right, right	5

Andrea	you say "right, right, right"?	6
Aurora	well, teacher, but it's their live	7
Andrea	Martin	8
Martin	I think it has been very… maybe they've done it without thinking about it. I also don't think they love each other.	9

Soloarte, DLG

Some students show disagreement on what the decision to run away means and entails. Whereas Aurora thinks that running away to Scotland means they must love each other (lines 1 and 3), Martin agrees with the teacher that it probably was not a very good decision, agreeing with her that they do not love each other and have made the decision without thinking about it (line 9).

As has happened when talking about friendship and the coercive discourse, it is common for students to talk about their own feelings, experiences, and reflections on love during the gatherings. During one DLG session in the same group, Aurora says that, at some point in life, everyone will betray them. Other students have different views on this, some agree that it is difficult to trust people, while others disagree saying that they have many friends and relationships who have never betrayed them. It is evident, even expressed by students, that Aurora has had negative sexual-affective experiences, as she herself has recognized. However, at the end of this particular interaction event about betrayal, Aurora says:

Aurora	teacher, I also believe in love, despite all the pain	1

Soloarte, DLG

Although we do not know whether she has changed her mind about the fact that everybody will betray her, this quote shows that she has not lost confidence in love, and she wants to make it clear that she, too, believes in love.

One of the teachers interviewed explains that students in her DLG also have many dialogues around love, and she considers it to be very positive for them to, hopefully, make good decisions:

Laura	They know that very well, very well. They know very well what love is, what it isn't, that they need to treat you well, what it means not to be treated well, respect, lack of respect… which is already a lot. Then I don't know whether they will take it into practice, but at least in my time we didn't even talk about that	1

<div align="right">Joaquim Ruyra, teacher interview</div>

Laura expresses that having dialogues around what love is and what it is not and about the importance of being treated well and respected is essential for them to have certain criteria when choosing sexual-affective relationships. Although she does not know whether these dialogues have an impact when it comes to making such decisions, she states that talking about it is positive and more than she was ever taught in school.

Whereas the words the teacher and some students use to talk about love are related to the language of ethics, describing it in terms of goodness, respect, or being treated well, this is not always the case. Many of the dialogues on love and sexual-affective relationships are full of desire. Some of these are related to *Romeo and Juliet*, both during the gatherings and also during the interviews, when students are asked what they think about this story. Many students view it as a great love story, and they value love as one of the greatest things in the world:

Manuel	I think it's amazing what you can do for love if you really feel it. Love sometimes can be everything in your life	1

<div align="right">Mediterrani 3rd grade, DLG</div>

| Alicia | I think that a couple that wants to fight against the world to be together, I would say… I don't know, love can overcome everything | 1 |

Soloarte, interview

| Susana | I would go to Mantua to look for Romeo | 1 |

Escolaica, DLG

In these examples from different gatherings and interviews, students view Romeo and Juliet's love as something invincible, that can give them enough strength to go against the current, something worth fighting for. The words and phrases they use to describe love, such as "amazing", "fight against the world" or "go to Mantua to look for Romeo" make it seem something desirable and attractive, rather than something "good" or "convenient".

Another topic within love that I found across different groups is whether and how one chooses sexual-affective relationships. During one of the focus groups from Soloarte, Aurora and Martin engage in an interaction event around knowing whether someone will hurt them or not:

Aurora	guys are stupid at this age, I don't know what's happening to them… they only think about…	1
Martin	no, not necessarily, it's about the type of guys. The heart, you know, you can see it	2
Aurora	what are you saying?	3
Martin	yes, yes!	4
Interviewer	please explain this more because it's interesting	5
Martin	I don't know how to explain it, let's see. Well, yes, there are many assholes, that's that's for sure (…) but if you search for [a relationship] in a place where, I don't know…	6
Aurora	all they do is smoke	7

Martin	yes, I mean, and his group, his group of friends, are assholes, and if you hang out with them, what do you think you will get?	8
Aurora	yes, you're right	9
	(…)	
Martin	Aurora has a terrible taste, I'm sorry to say that	13

Soloarte, DLG

Whereas in the beginning of the interaction event, in line 1, Aurora seems to want to blame all boys for all she's suffered in relationships, Martin clarifies that it is not all boys, but that it is about whom she chooses to have a relationship with (line 2). He explains in line 6 that one can see whether another person is good or not based on how they behave. After Martin's reflections Aurora agrees that one can see what they will get depending on where they search for a relationship. In his last quote, Martin criticizes Aurora's decisions on partners from the language of desire, equating choosing people who have hurt her with having bad taste.

In a similar case, during a DLG on *Pride and Prejudice*, Ibtissan questions Lidia's decision to run away with Wickham, stating she made a mistake:

| Ibtissan | Lidia made the mistake of wanting to run away with a person without getting married, without thinking about it. Here she doesn't have her self-esteem, her worth | 1 |

Soloarte, DLG

Not only does Ibtissan think it was a mistake, but she thinks that Lidia's lack of self-confidence or self-worth influenced her decision to run away with someone who was not good. Here she criticizes or questions Lidia's choice from the language of desire, referring to her lack of self-esteem as the reason for making a bad choice.

The union between the language of desire and of ethics can also be seen when, during the interviews, some students talk about who they like or what kind of relationship they would like to have. For instance, when asked about what she thinks about Romeo, Ariadna states:

| Ariadna | he is a nice, handsome boy, who shows respect | 1 |

Escolaica, interview

Even without seeing him, Ariadna imagines Romeo as someone who is not only good, but also handsome, attractive, using words from the language of ethics ("nice") and of desire ("handsome") to describe him. Similarly, when asked about their ideal love, some girls during a focus group in Montserrat talk about boys they like uniting the language of ethics and of desire:

Interviewer	what type of boys do you value more, the nice ones or the others?	1
Aida	the nice ones	2
Nadia	nice and handsome	3
Aida	to me those are the handsome ones	4
Cala	both things	5

Montserrat 6th grade, focus group

Here again, we see words from the language of ethics and from the language of desire (lines 2-4) to refer to the boys they like. The girls clearly show a preference towards nice boys, but not because they are nice and will treat them well, but because in fact those are the types of boys they find attractive and desirable. Indeed, in line 4 Aida clarifies that nice boys are "the handsome ones" for her. This type of language breaks with the double standard that separates goodness from attractiveness. Students in a DLG session on *Pride and Prejudice* engage in an interaction event on precisely this issue:

Aurora	yes, because saying "I have a hot boyfriend" looks better than saying "I have a boyfriend who treats me well"	1
Andrea (teacher)	it gives you like more…	2
Mikel	but I don't know what is better, someone who treats you better or who is hot	3
Claudia	someone who treats you well	4
Martin	there has to be a balance. There has to be a bit of both, because you…	5

Soloarte, DLG

Whereas some students fall into the dichotomy between being good or being attractive, stating that they prefer goodness over attractiveness when choosing someone (lines 1, 3, 4), Martin expresses that the two have to go together by stating that "there has to be a balance" in line 5. As the previous example shows, he thinks that being attractive, beautiful or desirable is not at odds with being good, therefore showing the use of the language of desire when talking about egalitarian relationships.

In all, love is seen by most students as something good, even though many have not experienced it in a sexual-affective relationship yet. Importantly, many students view it as something desirable and, possibly, something they would like to aspire to:

Ane	I really like the part where [Romeo and Juliet] separate, and they turn off, but then they turn the light on and they come together, Romeo climbs walls to see her, and so they are together again. I like this story very much	1
Interviewer	why?	2

| Ane | I like it because they never give up and they always try to see each other | 3 |

Even though Ane expresses in the interview she has not read the book, she is familiar with Romeo and Juliet's love story. Her metaphors of darkness and light and climbing walls – not only in the literal sense – are full of desire towards an ideal love that makes each other overcome obstacles and fight for what is worth.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to identify key concepts of desire and ethics that adolescents surface in nine different DLG implemented in five schools from the Learning Communities movement. As the findings show, there are three main concepts that all the observed DLG have in common: dialogues around friendship, violence and the CDD, and love. The review of the scientific literature on gender violence confirms that these three are key concepts in its prevention and overcoming.

Many students' interaction events in the DLG observed revolve around friendship. Friendship is seen and talked about as valuable and important in their lives, as friends are always there to help each other when they need it. As previous research shows, friendship is key to prevent and overcome violence, as friends can help victims break the silence and support them when facing challenges or adversity (Kendrick et al., 2012; Ríos-González et al., 2021). The specific example in which two students helped their friend break the silence shows that the dialogues students have on the importance of friendship can encourage students to act accordingly. Similar to the Zero Violence Brave Club (Roca-Campos et al., 2021), the person who breaks the silence is not considered a telltale, but rather a brave person who defends anyone suffering violence.

The literature on the preventive socialization has also underscored friends' protective factor when it comes to resisting and rejecting the CDD (Racionero-Plaza, Duque, et al., 2021; Torras-Gómez et al., 2020). Unlike many peer groups which are dominated by the CDD and make it difficult for adolescents to reject it (Racionero-Plaza, Duque, et al., 2021), DLG provide students with a safe space to talk freely about peer pressure. Not only do students identify the CDD through these dialogues, but many of them are critical towards it, questioning whether someone who pressures them can be considered a friend. While many adolescents who are influenced by the CDD do not even consider the election component in relationships (Gómez, 2015), including friendship, in DLG students share advice on how to choose friends wisely, aware that the relationships they have will have an important impact in their lives.

Importantly, not only do the observed DLG show that students are able to identify violence and the CDD in the books they read, but they are able to make connections with the CDD in real life. Unlike the theories on love that Jesús Gómez (2015) reviewed which talk about attraction and choice of sexual-affective relationships as being innate or biological, many participants in this study are aware of the social influence when making those choices. Many students in the observed DLG reject the people who pressure them to do things they do not want to do and admire those who do not subjugate to the pressure. Identifying, being critical towards and rejecting the CDD align with some of the social impacts of actions such as Dialogic Feminist Gatherings (Ruiz-Eugenio, Puigvert, et al., 2020). As reported by the literature, many girls who participate in Dialogic Feminist Gatherings see how the CDD influenced their sexual-affective relationships and choices, and make the conscious decision of not letting it govern their lives anymore (Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Merodio, et al., 2020; Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Vidu, et al., 2020; Ugalde et al., 2022). Although this study's participants have not expressed whether DLG have helped them make the conscious decision of not letting the CDD influence their

lives, there is evidence on students who do reject and defy it, such as when they help their peers not to subjugate to peer pressure.

Last, love is one of the most talked-about topics across the different DLG observed. The gatherings are a safe space in which students often talk about what is love, what it is not, whether certain relationships are based on love or not, and so on. DLG are free of the CDD's attacks against ideal or romantic love; students make comments about beauty, love, feelings or dreams knowing that no one will make fun of them. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. The CDD breaks the union between beauty, goodness and truth (Flecha, 2022), spreading lies on love that are harmful for children's wellbeing and health. Many adolescents are bombarded with interactions that tell them that love does not exist, or worse, that romantic love leads to gender violence. They do not only hear these interactions from peers, but also from many adults in official programs or campaigns (Yuste et al., 2014). Therefore, DLG go against this reactionary current by allowing students to freely talk about love and giving them the opportunity to socialize in the desire towards the ideal love, which is another protective factor against gender violence (Duque et al., 2015).

In some of the observed interaction events it is evident that the CDD has left a mark on some students, leaving them with a very pessimistic idea about relationships and love, as is the case of Aurora. However, the transformative impact of the egalitarian dialogue (Roca et al., 2022) on which DLG are grounded (Flecha, 2000) has been evinced when seeing her change her mind on several occasions, even saying that she believes in love after all. In general, the dialogues on love during the observed DLG are positive and full of hope, dreams and sometimes desire, expressing that love is worth fighting for and can be the greatest thing in life. Hence, even when pessimistic views on love influenced by the CDD are present, DLG can turn such negative views and focus on the grandeur of ideal love, whichever form it may take.

Furthermore, many students also show they are aware that they choose partners or sexual-affective relationships, once again defying the theories on love and attraction that remove the individual's agency to choose who to desire and have a relationship with (Gómez, 2015). Whereas many people wonder why they got such bad luck in love (Gómez, 2015), students in DLG are critical about who and how they choose, showing awareness that, depending on who they choose, they will have good or bad experiences.

Although in many cases, when students in the DLG talk about friendship, the CDD and love they do so from the language of ethics, there are also several examples in which they use the language of desire united with the language of ethics to talk about them. The use of the language of desire takes many forms, from rejecting people who use coercion as not being attractive, to valuing and admiring relationships based on love and away from violence as desirable. The language of desire is often missing in many programs aimed at preventing and overcoming gender violence (Melgar Alcantud, Puigvert, et al., 2021; Puigvert, 2016). In that way they do not overcome the CDD and, even without wanting to, they might actually reinforce it. By talking about non-violent relationships only as good and not acknowledging that desire is a human drive, these programs leave the realm of desire to the CDD, which removes attractiveness from goodness. This dichotomy that the CDD imposes is present in some DLG observed, for instance when some students say they prefer someone good over someone attractive. Without the intention to do so, these interactions not only make it seem that one has to choose between goodness or desire, but also that good people are not attractive. However, some students reject this imposed binary and express that values, attractiveness and desire can and do actually go together, uniting the language of ethics and the language of desire towards non-violent relationships. Engaging in these dialogues during DLG provide other students the opportunity to see that relationships different from the single model that the CDD dictates are possible. Plurality of options is freedom, and by engaging in these dialogues that help them see

that other kinds of relationships exist, students have more freedom to choose goodness and stability and passion and attractiveness in the same person, in the same relationship.

Conclusions

This study contributes to the scientific literature on the prevention and overcoming of gender violence from schools by providing evidence on DLG, a successful action implemented in more than 15.000 contexts all over the world. The evidence show that adolescents from 9 DLG implemented in 5 schools from the Learning Communities movement surface key concepts of the language of desire and of ethics that coincide with some key factors that the literature has identified as contributing to the prevention and overcoming of gender violence. These three elements are the importance of friendship to support victims and resist and reject the CDD; becoming critical toward the CDD and admiring people who reject it; and engaging in dialogues around love, sexual-affective relationships, and how one chooses them. Most importantly, many of these dialogues and interactions unite the language of ethics with the language of desire, contributing to removing attractiveness from violent people and relationships and to perceiving love and non-violence as desirable and attractive.

Nevertheless, some limitations and prospective research must be considered. On the one hand, this study does not deepen on the impact of DLG in promoting dialogues on those three elements. It remains unknown whether students who engage in those interactions, especially from the language of desire, do so as a result of participating in DLG or as a result of other interactions and socializations. Along this line, all the schools that have participated in this study also implement other successful actions focused specifically on the prevention of gender violence, such as Dialogic Feminist Gatherings and the Zero Violence Brave Club. Therefore, it is hard to assess how much of the findings is influenced by these other actions. Future research should study DLG in the long term in order to identify changes on students' dialogues

related to these topics, particularly on whether the language of desire changes throughout their participation in the gatherings. To better understand the social impact of DLG in this sense, future research should also delve into the characteristics of the DLG that contribute to the dialogues observed in this study. Furthermore, the ways in which these dialogues might impact students' future decisions on sexual-affective relationships also remain unknown. Future research should study whether and how students are influenced by these dialogues outside of DLG. Last, these findings are not generalizable to all DLG. Similar studies should be replicated in different countries and different contexts to see whether these findings are transferable or not.

The findings report in this study cannot determine what kind of relationships students will choose in the future, and we know that the CDD has a great influence among many adolescents (Gómez, 2015; Puigvert et al., 2019; Racionero-Plaza, Duque, et al., 2021). Yet the literature on the preventive socialization of gender violence has shown that the elements found across these 9 DLG are key protective factors against gender violence. Whereas that alone does not mean these adolescents are necessarily protected from gender violence, in DLG they have an alternative socialization free from the CDD. Given that language creates thought and reality (Flecha, 2022), even though many students in those DLG have a strong socialization on the CDD, being part transformative interactions that unite the language of desire and of ethics has an impact on their inner speech. In that way they might internalize the rejection towards the CDD and the desire towards non-violent relationships. The dialogues they have had during the DLG are already in these students' chain of dialogues, they will always be part of them and of their future dialogues, and if they want, they can be part of their future decisions, dreams, desires and relationships.

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Study 2

Title: "I Think It's Amazing What You Can Do for Love If You Really Feel It". The Language of Desire United with the Language of Ethics in Dialogic Literary Gatherings

Abstract

The scientific literature has identified a coercive dominant discourse that imposes a link between violence and attraction, using the language of desire to describe people and relationships with violent behaviors as the attractive and desirable ones. What is more worrisome, much research analyzing adolescents' interactions has shown that many of them reproduce such discourse, which can lead to having their identities, desires and relationships subjugated to violence and disdain. It is therefore essential that adolescents have the opportunity to construct alternative discourses that unite the language of desire and of ethics in portraying egalitarian relationships as desirable and exciting. Although some research has shown the emergence of the language of desire towards non-violence in Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) in which students read and engage in egalitarian dialogues on classic literature, more extensive and deeper analyses of what such language of desire looks like are needed. To that end, in this study I analyze what different adolescents' language of desire towards non-violence looks like in DLG implemented in schools. I have conducted 26 observations in 9 different DLG groups from 5 schools with students aged 10-15. Results show that many students use strong words and a firm, confident tone to reject violence and coercion; that they ridicule violence and the coercive discourse through a mocking tone and words that portray them as non-attractive; and that they use words full of beauty and desire and a tone of admiration to talk about non-violence. I discuss implications of this study for the preventive socialization of gender violence.

Introduction

Research has shown the existence of a coercive dominant discourse (CDD) that imposes violence as attractive by portraying violent and dominant attitudes and relationships as desirable (Puigvert et al., 2019; Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Merodio, et al., 2020). Such a discourse pressures many individuals, at increasingly younger ages, to have "disdainful hookups" (Puigvert et al., 2019, 2023) which in many cases include physical and/or sexual violence. The coercion, however, is not only to hook up with them, but also to say they had fun in those hook-ups, even if many recognize they did not (Torras-Gómez et al., 2020). By sharing with peers a narrative in which those with disdainful and violent behaviors are described as attractive and desirable, many adolescents end up internalizing them and, hence, remembering those relationships and individuals as fun, having their memories and desires subjugated to them (Gómez, 2015; Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019). At the same time, the CDD portrays egalitarian people as boring and lacking attractiveness, imposing love and desire as two opposing binaries. The CDD separates what is known as the *language of desire* and the *language of ethics* (Flecha et al., 2013; Gómez, 2015; Rios-González et al., 2018). The former refers to the language used to describe feelings and emotions linked to desire and attraction, whereas the latter is used to portray moral and ethical values (Flecha et al., 2013; Melgar Alcantud, Puigvert, et al., 2021).

There is a wealth of research on the CDD, on how it is reproduced through interactions – including peer interactions, TV shows or social media, among others – and on its consequences (Puigvert et al., 2023; Pulido et al., 2023; Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2022). By contrast, there are also emerging cases that challenge and oppose the CDD. For instance, some research has identified the emergence of the language of desire towards non-violence among adolescents in a classroom practice grounded on an egalitarian dialogue around classic literature (López de Aguileta et al., 2020). Such spaces are known as Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG), which

are currently implemented in more than 15.000 diverse centers – including schools, prisons, hospitals, after-school programs, and many more – and have shown to transform many participants' lives. However, more research is needed to analyze what such language of desire looks like in DLG to better understand how and why it emerges in such a classroom practice that is part of the school curriculum in more than 15.000 centers. To provide a step in this direction, this article analyses what the language of desire towards non-violence looks like in 9 different DLG groups of adolescents from 5 different schools.

How language has an impact in reality and in ourselves

Language is vital for human beings. It is what makes us who we are, as well as who we can be, in relation to others. The way we communicate – defined here as the action and effect of communicating with others[5] – and interact – defined here as engaging in reciprocal action[6] – has an impact in our relationships, in our environment, and in ourselves. Our thoughts, memories, tastes, desires, emotions, feelings, dreams, and everything that makes us who we are, are constantly being constructed and reconstructed through social interactions (Compton-Lilly, 2006; Gee, 2000; Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019; Racionero-Plaza, 2015). In short, language shapes both identity – i.e., everything that makes up who we are (McAdams & McLean, 2013) – and reality; it does so in a bidirectional way. As James Gee (1999, p. 11) frames it:

> Language has a magical property: when we speak or write, we design what we have to say to fit the situation in which we are communicating. But, at the same time, how we speak or write creates that very situation. It seems, then, that we fit our language to a situation that our language, in turn, helps to create in the first place.

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[5] https://dle.rae.es/comunicaci%C3%B3n
[6] https://dle.rae.es/interacci%C3%B3n?m=form

Scientific advancements are currently able to show the ways in which our interactions with the environment change the architecture of our brains and our biology (Ramón y Cajal, 1989). As neuroscientist and Nobel Prize Laureate Eric Kandel wrote, "if you remember anything of this book, it will be because your brain is slightly different after you have finished reading it" (Kandel, 2006, p. 276). Indeed, the impact of the environment in our genes is increasingly being proven, for instance by showing the ways in which environmental factors such as toxic stress caused by violent relationships influence the epigenome (Hayes, 2018; Zhang & Meaney, 2009), or the negative impacts of the deprivation of quality social interactions during childhood in brain structure and brain functioning (Callaghan et al., 2020; Humphreys, 2019). Along this line, authors such as George Herbert Mead (1934) have argued that human nature is essentially social, that there is no self without the generalized other, and that human beings develop ourselves in the process of social experience and interaction. Mead (1934) posed that it is through the interaction between the "me", what he refers to as the attitudes of others, and the "I", understood as the individual's response to the former, that our self is socially constructed. Regarding how language shapes reality, John Austin is one of the main authors who theorized how the ways in which we use language have an impact in social reality. He developed the theory of speech acts, which clarifies that words play a transcendental role in the construction of reality: the utterances we express have specific resulting actions that impact ourselves, our relationships with others, and reality itself. He provided a theoretical framework to study the relationship between words' or utterances' meanings, intentions, and resulting action to better understand how we "do things with words". He used the example that, by saying "I do", two people might get married. The speech acts are therefore sentences that, in the very process of uttering them, perform an action.

Nonetheless, while Austin's theory has made a great contribution to better conceptualizing language and its impact in the construction of reality, his theory focuses only on speech acts,

which only account for words and the intentions and meanings associated to them. Disregarding other signs of communication other than words leads to incomplete and, often, incorrect analyses. The same words can have very different meanings and consequences depending on the context in which they are expressed, the tone with which they are used, the person who says them, and many other elements. For instance, the question "do you want to have a beer?" has very different implications if expressed by a friend to another friend, or from a university professor to a student whose grade depends on the former. Several authors have noted this challenge and developed theories and methodologies to consider different signs of communication when analyzing its impacts in identity and reality. Among them, Gee makes a distinction between "discourse", defined as language in use, and "Discourse", which integrates discourse together with "non-language "stuff" to enact specific identities and activities" (Gee, 1999, p. 7). He argues that, in order to understand how communication constructs identities and reality, it is not enough to look at speech alone, but also other elements such as the ways in which a person writes, speaks, dresses, feels, acts, uses objects, and does everything. Discourse, with capital D, is therefore a combination of elements in addition to speech that make a person "a certain kind of person".

The shortcomings of only focusing on speech acts are especially significant on issues of consent in sexual-affective relationships, a topic still much debated and unresolved in many societies. Some feminist scholars have discussed the advancements as well as drawbacks of the language on consent, for instance in campaigns and slogans addressing it (Flecha et al., 2020; Srinivasan, 2022). While the "no means no" slogan became relevant to put the focus on consent and women's agency to reject an unwanted sexual relationship, several scholars and feminist activists argued for the need to move to "yes means yes" or "anything less than yes means no" (Afloarei & Martínez, 2019; Muehlenhard et al., 2016). This further focused on active and affirmative consent rather than placing the responsibility to explicitly say "no" on women. Still,

these slogans have been increasingly problematized by several scholars precisely because the focus is placed only on words, overlooking coerced "yeses" (Duque et al., 2023; MacKinnon, 1994; Setty, 2023; Soler-Gallart, 2017). Two people who are having consensual sex will usually not explicitly say "yes" or "I want to" all the time. Yet, many of their gestures, gaze, caresses, sounds and other signs of communication express they are giving their consent. On the contrary, a girl might say "yes" or "I want to do it" if she thinks not doing it will have consequences for her, such as being called "prude" or "boring", even if she really does not want to have sex.

To address these issues, Ramón Flecha and Marta Soler developed the theory of communicative acts (Flecha, 2022; Flecha et al., 2020; Soler & Flecha, 2010; Soler-Gallart, 2017). This theory considers all signs of human communication when studying how we construct reality, relationships and identities in our communication, such as words, tone, gaze, caresses, body language, smell, emotions, feelings, likeness, social status and power position, intentions, desires, or consequences. All those signs of communication can be summarized into five main dimensions: verbal language, non-verbal language, the social context of the interaction, the speakers' intentions, and the resulting consequences (Flecha García & López de Aguileta, 2021). In this way, the communicative acts frameworks overcomes the "dualism that opposes speech and body language, intellect and emotions, soul and matter" (Soler-Gallart, 2017, p. 30), involving all dimensions of what makes us who we are. Communicative acts are therefore the signs that lead up to a specific situation or reality, as well as that very outcome, as the very concept of communicative acts includes the consequences of social interactions, not just the subjects' intentions, as essential elements in the analysis of how we construct social reality in and through communication. In this way, this theory allows a more nuanced understanding on how different discourses lead to different identities, activities, and relationships.

The theory of communicative acts allows us to distinguish situations and relationships where there is violence – symbolic or physical – from situations and relationships where there is freedom and equality (Soler & Flecha, 2010). Such a distinction is essential to identify, develop and promote interventions and actions that prevent and overcome violence. To better understand the types of relationships that are affected by different discourses and vice versa, Flecha and Soler (Soler & Flecha, 2010; Soler-Gallart, 2017) have developed two typologies: *power relationships*, which are "based on the physical or symbolic violence of an individual or collective subject that turns other subjects into instruments for the achievement of one's goals", and *dialogic relationships*, "based on the communication that leads all involved subjects to freely share an action, agreement, feeling or desire" (Soler-Gallart, 2017, pp. 28–29). In the former, there is a prevalence of *communicative acts of power*, which are all those signs of communication that are used to seek action through coercion and pressure, deceit, imposition, or even violence. In dialogic relationships, in turn, *dialogic communicative acts* prevail, which are all those signs of communication based on honesty, respect, solidarity, and a desire to achieve action through consensus and based on freedom and equality. This, however, does not mean that dialogic relationships are free from power communicative acts whatsoever. Paraphrasing Soler's example (2017, p. 29), a businessman can be friends with one of his female employees; whereas the dialogic communicative acts that make up their egalitarian friendship might prevail in the relationship, the power communicative acts that are present due to the hierarchical labor relationship cannot be denied. In this case, the power communicative act is what the authors define as institutional power, that is, the power structure that "usually exists within institutions influencing their organigram and hierarchy" (Flecha et al., 2020, p. 9). On the contrary, there are also relationships where there is no institutional power but there are other power communicative acts, such as interactive power. This type of power refers to

"that power provided by the interactions established among people", such as when a student threatens one of his classmates through sextortion (Flecha et al., 2020, p. 9).

Although this theory and the typologies of power and dialogic communicative acts and relationships are applied in analyses of very different realities, when it comes to sexual-affective relationships, it provides key elements to better understand whether a person's tone, gaze, body language, power status, peers and other people involved, and other elements suggest a relationship is based on consent or on sexual violence. Given the high prevalence of gender violence, especially among young individuals, it is necessary to study what types of communicative acts and Discourses forge relationships where there is violence, how they influence identities subjugated to violence, and how other forms of communication lead to relationships and identities free from violence.

Socialization, through language, in violence or in love

So far, I have argued that our communication and social interactions has a great influence in shaping our relationships, identities, and resulting actions. In this section I will explain how social interactions socialize us into patterns of attraction and sexual-affective relationships from the moment we are born to argue that the root of gender violence can be found in one of those patterns in which many adolescents are socialized through certain discourses based on power communicative acts.

Jesús Gómez (2015) theorized and demonstrated through research evidence that we learn who we love, find attractive and feel excitement with through a socialization process since the moment we are born. That socialization is forged through the activities and communication we share with others. Therefore, the types of people we surround ourselves with, the types of relationships we have with them, and the types of discourses we share with them will greatly influence who and what we find attractive. Today, many youth and adolescents, and even children, are socialized in believing that people with violent behaviors are more exciting and

attractive than people with egalitarian ones. This is done through a coercive dominant discourse (CDD) that imposes a connection between attraction and violence: it portrays violent relationships and individuals as the most attractive and exciting ones. Puigvert and Flecha (2018), who developed this concept, define it in Creative Commons as:

> the discourse which, shaped by an imbalance in power within relationships, influences socialization into linking attractiveness to people with violent attitudes and behaviors, while non-violent people and relationships are – because of this coercive dominant discourse – mostly perceived as convenient but not exciting

The CDD creates, through different communicative acts, a double standard between love, goodness, and egalitarian values on the one hand, and attractiveness, passion, desire, pleasure, and sexual excitement on the other (Rios-González et al., 2018). When analyzing different individuals' and groups' communicative acts, several research studies have provided evidence on the existence of the *language of ethics* and the *language of desire* (Flecha et al., 2013; Melgar Alcantud, Puigvert, et al., 2021). The language of ethics is defined as those communicative acts used to describe and talk about individuals, relationships or behaviors in terms of their moral values, goodness, and ethics. The language of desire is conceptualized as all communicative acts used to describe individuals, relationships or behaviors in terms of desire, attractiveness, passion, feelings and excitement. The former falls within the realm of ethics, whereas the latter falls within the realm of aesthetics. The two can go together or separate, but only the language of desire has "the capacity to raise attraction and be desired" (Flecha et al., 2013, p. 100), as well as to trigger emotions and project desire towards others (Puigvert et al., 2019). The language of ethics and desire go together when egalitarian relationships are depicted as exciting and desirable. However, the CDD presents ethics and desire as two opposing binaries and depicts egalitarian relationships as convenient and boring, while depicting violent or disdainful ones as passionate and attractive. This dichotomy is best

exemplified in the following quote by a teenager: "My parents tell me to marry a good boy, and I really do what they say; before I marry, I'm having fun with the bad boys" (Gómez, 2004).

Much research evidence from different studies on how these two languages are used finds that, in most cases, parents, schools, and other institutions often use the language of ethics to talk about good or convenient relationships, whereas many adolescents find these relationships boring or moralistic, precisely because they are described only from the language of ethics (Puigvert et al., 2019). This makes many individuals, especially younger ones, not choose egalitarian relationships despite knowing they are good or right. On the contrary, the CDD is much more effective in influencing many adolescents' choice of relationships where there is violence or disdain because it plays with people's attractiveness, portraying those who have disdainful attitudes and the people who have a relationship with them as attractive, and those who do not as boring, through the language of desire.

Indeed, the CDD is reinforced and imposed through power communicative acts. Such communicative acts include providing social status given people who use violence and treat others with disdain, pressuring others to hook up with people with disdainful behaviors, or using degrading language to talk about girls' bodies and sexuality, among others (Rios & Christou, 2010). Along this line, when analyzing interactions in the peer group, Racionero-Plaza and colleagues (2021) found the reproduction of the CDD among the sample's peer group talk, in which participants who stated to prefer boys with dominant attitudes used more adjectives associated with violence to talk about their preferences for a relationship. In addition, when analyzing peer group pressure, researchers found a high frequency of arguments related to boys being popular or being experienced with other girls when recommending a boy for relationships, especially for sporadic ones (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2021). Furthermore, communicative acts by women and men which include ridiculing, reprimanding and/or teasing

egalitarian men for their egalitarian behaviors – such as complaining that they did not do the dishes right – reinforce the CDD by removing attractiveness from kindness (Valls-Carol et al., 2021).

The CDD is especially strong among adolescents and youth (Padrós Cuxart et al., 2021; Puigvert et al., 2019; Racionero-Plaza, Duque, et al., 2021; Ríos & Christou, 2010). Many of them are pressured to hook up with people with disdainful or violent attitudes. For instance, in interviews conducted with several adolescent and young women, they explained that peer pressure to be *in* led them to hook up with boys with disdainful attitudes (Torras-Gómez et al., 2022, 2020). However, the pressure is not only to have such hookups, but also to tell their peers that they felt pleasure and sexual excitement in them. Even though in the interviews all participants said they felt a deep disgust and that they only hooked up with those boys due to peer pressure, they thought that if they told what they considered to be the truth to their peers, they would be seen as inexperienced, or as losers. Therefore, they shared a different story, one that fit and reproduced the CDD. They told their peers they had a lot of fun, that the boys were very handsome, and that they were the most exciting relationships they ever had. By sharing these interactions and receiving a positive and approving response from their peers, many of them internalize them and they become part of their memories and desires. The contradiction between what many of them recognize to be the truth and the fake stories they tell can be understood due to such social response:

> When important people in a person's life agree with his or her interpretation of a personal story, he or she is likely to hold on to that story and to incorporate it into his or her more general understanding of who he or she is and how he or she came to be (McAdams & McLean, 2013, p. 236).

In this process, we can see what Gee refers to as the "magical" property of language: to enact the identities that fit the people they consider attractive, many adolescents engage in

interactions that portray violent or disdainful people as desirable and exciting, and in doing so, their very identities become subjugated to this attraction to violence.

The generalization of the CDD in many Western societies (Puigvert et al., 2019) makes it likely that many children and adolescents have at least heard or received an interaction from the CDD. This, of course, does not mean that they are all socialized in thinking violent relationships are desirable. There are many who are socialized in love and the desire of sex, not of power, who find violent relationships and people who exercise violence disgusting. However, it is essential to be aware of the maneuvering and effects of the CDD to tackle its prevention and overcoming at early ages, as adolescents are particularly vulnerable to such discourses. As Erikson (1968) (1986) states, adolescents are "preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others" (p. 128) and "so eager to be affirmed by peers" (p. 130). They are particularly sensitive to social exclusion and to the evaluation of their peers. In order to be recognized by their peers as certain kinds of individuals, many of them feel the need to "pull off" the Discourses that are "similar enough to other performances to be recognizable" (Gee, 1999, p. 27). Due to the power communicative acts on which the CDD is forged, many adolescents therefore feel the pressure and need to reproduce it in order to be regarded by those peers the CDD portrays as cool and exciting. Although using and creating communicative acts that reproduce the CDD does not mean their desires and relationships are necessarily influenced by it, it is part of their language and, therefore, of their identities. Internalizing disdainful and violent relationships as desirable, fun and exciting can have very negative consequences. These include a greater probability of suffering gender violence (Puigvert et al., 2019; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2018), negative mental and physical health outcomes (Puigvert et al., 2023; Racionero-Plaza, Piñero León, Morales Iglesias, et al., 2020), or not finding pleasure in egalitarian relationships (López de Aguileta et al., 2021; Torras-Gómez et al., 2020), among others.

Dialogic Literary Gatherings: a space where the language of desire and of ethics unite

Given such a deep and socially embedded problem, it is essential to give adolescents the opportunity to be socialized in interactions alternative and opposed to the dominant coercive discourse. Language has an infinite creative potential, we can use it in new ways to create new realities and identities. In other words, when we communicate with each other, we can reproduce the discourses we are socialized in, or we can choose to create and use other discourses. Dialogue allows us to transform our way of communicating and, with that, our relationships, contexts, institutions, and societies into more egalitarian and democratic ones (Flecha, 2000). It is therefore a key to creating alternative discourses that unite the language of ethics and of desire towards the rejection of violent relationships and the desire of non-violent ones. In this study, I use Soler-Gallart's definition of dialogue, as it specifically involves notions of ethics and desire:

> *dialogue* is defined as people's interactive use of all types of language (words, gestures, gazes, and caresses) for all types of meaning (reasoning, emotions, feelings, and desires). Indeed, if we deepen the etymological roots of 'dialogue', we find that Socrates' understanding of 'logos' has been identified with 'argumentation' as a result of a Western reductionism to the Apollonian dimension of rationality in a strict sense. However, the early Greek philosopher Heraclites understood *logos* to be the principle that guides the evolution of everything, considering the Apollonian (reason, argument) and Dionysian (desire and emotion) dimensions of both social reality and our personalities (Soler-Gallart, 2017, p. 52).

When dialogue is understood in this way, as uniting both rationality and feelings, it challenges the CDD and makes the overcoming of its imposed dichotomy between both dimensions possible. Only by uniting ethics and desire is it possible to overcome the CDD and have identities and relationships free of violence. As Puigvert (2016) argues, most interventions or programs on the prevention and overcoming of gender violence are based on the language of

ethics, and there is a need for more programs that also consider the language of desire. If we tell adolescents that they have to choose between convenient or passionate relationships, we are leaving the realm of aesthetics and attraction to the CDD, reinforcing the link between attraction and violence even if we are unaware.

The preventive socialization of gender violence, the theory and research line that has demonstrated the social root of gender violence, has provided research evidence on dialogic spaces where violence is always rejected, never normalized and, especially, never depicted as fun or attractive, while egalitarian relationships and behaviors are portrayed as attractive and desirable (Oliver, 2014; Puigvert, 2014). Aware of the influence of the CDD on more and more individuals, such dialogic spaces are based on an egalitarian dialogue, defined as the type of dialogue that arises "when it takes different contributions into consideration according to the validity of their reasoning, instead of according to the positions of power held by those who make the contribution" (Flecha, 2000, p. 2). Research has provided evidence on the social impact – i.e. the social improvements generated by research – of one of those dialogic spaces: Dialogic Feminist Gatherings (DFG). In DFG, participants read and engage in an egalitarian dialogue on scientific articles, books or other types of texts that are based on the theory and empirical evidence on the preventive socialization of gender violence, with a specific focus on the language of desire. A study by Puigvert (2016) analyzed the impact of a DFG with female university students. Findings revealed that after participating in the DFG, the percentage of girls who had previously stated they would like to hook up with a violent man decreased from 38,5% to 14,9% (Puigvert, 2016). Racionero and colleagues (2020; 2020) found that after young girls who had suffered gender violence participated in DFG, their memories of their own past violent relationships changed, becoming more critical and aware of the violence they had suffered after the DFG.

There is also emerging evidence of another dialogic space and its potential to provide children and adolescents with a socialization away from the CDD: Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG). These gatherings follow the same grounding principles as Dialogic Feminist Gatherings: they are grounded on the theory of dialogic learning (Flecha, 2000). However, whereas the main characteristic of the Feminist ones is that the texts participants engage with are feminist contributions specifically focused on the prevention and overcoming of gender violence, in the Literary ones participants read universal literary works, such as *Ramayana*, *The Metamorphoses*, *The Arabian Nights*, *Ulysses*, *Mahabharata*, or *Romeo and Juliet*, among many others (Flecha, 2000; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023; Soler, 2015). They were created in La Verneda-Sant Martí Adult School in 1978, by a group formed mostly by non-academic and low-literate women who opposed the practice that, for centuries, has denied women the freedom to read what they want to read (Torras-Gómez et al., 2021). They did not accept discourses that claimed they could not read what was considered "highbrow" or classic literature, so they decided that in DLG they would only read what they consider to be the best universal literature, which they define as "those that endure over time"[7]. They still do not accept impositions from the capitalist market to read other types of literature in DLG, so they created a list of readings for DLG. This list is updated periodically and is revised democratically.

Because they are grounded on an egalitarian dialogue, DLG seek to eliminate power communicative acts and promote dialogic ones (Flecha, 2000). Therefore, participants of very diverse backgrounds, ages, countries, languages, ideologies, academic degrees, and identities provide their own interpretations and reflections without imposing them over others. Through such diverse perspectives, participants co-create new interpretations of the texts and of their

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[7] More on the literary works that are read in DLG can be found in the Learning Communities website: https://comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net/actuaciones-de-exito/tertulias-literarias-dialogicas/tertulias-literarias-dialogicas-tld/

own lives. Of course, as any other space, DLG are not free of power communicative acts. However, because self-reflection and self-criticism are constant and participants know that any contribution to the dialogue needs to be based on arguments rather than on impositions, dialogic communicative acts prevail. The aim of eliminating power communicative acts and relationships contributes to increasing participants' critical reflections and positioning not only during the gatherings, but also in other spaces in which they participate.

There is a whole body of scientific literature on social impacts that DLG have achieved in some of the more than 15.000 centers in which they are implemented worldwide, including primary and secondary schools, universities, healthcare centers, prisons, residential care institutions, adult schools, and many more contexts (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023). Some of their social impacts are related to language and communication, among others: promoting students' interactions and inclusion in learning second languages (De Botton et al., 2014; M. Santiago-Garabieta et al., 2022; Maite Santiago-Garabieta et al., 2023); developing school-relevant language skills, such as argumentative reasoning (Lopez de Aguileta, 2019); or promoting language, literacy and communication skills among students with disabilities (García-Carrión et al., 2018; Molina Roldán, 2015), among others. One particular study has also shown some adolescents' use of the language of desire towards non-violence in the context of DLG (G. López de Aguileta et al., 2020). However, this impact requires more research to better understand DLG as a space promoting interactions, relationships and identities free from violence. To advance in this pathway, in this study I aim at analyzing what the language of desire towards non-violence looks like in different DLG groups with adolescents from different backgrounds. I therefore pose the following research question:

> What does different adolescents' language of desire towards non-violence look like in the framework of Dialogic Literary Gatherings?

Methodology

To that end, I have framed the study within the communicative approach (Gómez et al., 2019, 2011; Puigvert et al., 2012). The Communicative Methodology (CM) is based on an intersubjective dialogue between researchers and research participants aimed at co-creating new knowledge and reality (Soler & Gómez, 2020). Its aim is not to simply describe reality, but to identify among citizens and communities, including the most vulnerable ones, element that are and can contribute to transforming their lives. Indeed, the CM is always oriented towards achieving social impact, that is, social improvements on the issues societies have democratically established, such as the Sustainable Development Goals. Due to its diverse scientific, political and social impacts (Racionero-Plaza, Vidu, et al., 2021; Ramis-Salas, 2020; Soler-Gallart & Flecha, 2022), the European Commission now requires that all research projects funded by it be conducted in co-creation and oriented towards achieving social impact (European Commission, 2022).

Research site and participants

I have selected five schools located in Spain which are part of the Learning Communities movement to conduct the study. In Learning Communities (Flecha & Soler, 2013; García-Carrión et al., 2020; Gatt et al., 2011; Morlà Folch, 2015), the whole community, including teachers, students, families and other members engage in an egalitarian dialogue to transform the educational and social context towards the highest quality education for all. They implement educational actions validated by the international scientific community – i.e., published in journals indexed in JCR or Scopus – as are DLG.

I followed two main criteria to select these five Learning Communities: 1) that they have successfully implemented DLG for at least five years; and 2) that they provide a diverse sample of geographical location, student background and ages. The five schools have been implementing DLG for 10 to 22 years. Three are located in Catalonia, one in the Basque

Country, and one in Valencia. Three are primary schools (elementary and middle schools) and two are primary and high schools. In terms of population, four of them have mostly families from low SES, and one has mostly middle-class families. All schools have students from different nationalities, mostly Spanish, Moroccan, and from different Latin American countries. One of the schools has a particularly high rate of Roma students. Table 1 provides a summary of the schools' main characteristics.

Table 1. Summary of participating Learning Communities

School	Location	Population	Years DLG
Escolaica	Cullera (Valencia)	Mostly Spanish, middle class	10
Joaquim Ruyra	L'Hospitalet de Llobregat (Catalonia)	Mostly immigrants, low SRS	11
Mediterrani	Tarragona (Catalonia)	Mostly Roma, low SES	12
Montserrat	Terrassa (Catalonia)	Mostly immigrants, low SES	22
Soloarte	Basauri (Basque Country)	Mostly immigrants, low SES	12

A total of 9 DLG groups (one per classroom) distributed across the five schools participated in the study: three in 5th grade (ages 10 to 12); two in 6th grade (ages 11 to 12); one in 1st grade high school (ages 12-13); one in 2nd grade high school (ages 13-14); two in 3rd grade high school (ages 14-17). Data about students' gender considers male/female identifications. In all, there are 103 girls and 90 boys. Nationalities include several countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Table 2 provides a summary of all the groups that participated in the study.

Table 2. Summary of participating DLG groups

School	Groups	Gender	Nationalities	Age
Escolaica	6th grade	17 female, 6 male	China, Honduras, India, Morocco, Romania, Spain, Ukraine, Venezuela	11-12
Joaquim Ruyra	5th grade A, B	28 female, 23 male	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Georgia, Honduras, India, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Paraguay, Perú, Philipines, República Dominicana, Spain, Venezuela,	10-11

Mediterrani	1st, 2nd, 3rd high school	32 female, 28 male	Ecuador, Morocco, Peru, Spain (Roma ethnicity)	12-15
Montserrat	5th and 6th grade	18 female, 27 male	Morocco, Romania, Spain	10-12
Soloarte	3rd grade high school	8 female, 6 male	Colombia, Honduras, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Spain	15-17

In all, 193 students and 8 teachers who facilitated DLG participated in the observed DLG. Three of the teachers are also the schools' principals. Some of these students have attended their school all their lives, so they are used to participating in DLG. For others, this was the first time in which they participated in a DLG. All data about the schools and participating students has been facilitated by either teachers or principals.

Data collection

I collected data between January and December 2023. In order to pursue my research question, I conducted DLG observations.

First, I contacted the school principals and one of the teachers via email or WhatsApp to inform them on the dissertation, its objectives and its methods to ask them whether they would like their school to participate. They all agreed and showed a great enthusiasm to participate. Then, we decided which classrooms would participate from each school. The main criterion for the classroom selection was age (adolescence). Another criterion was classroom dynamics. The classroom dynamics considered were that students always or almost always respected the DLG principles, that there were no conflicts among students and they got along with each other, and

that they made contributions to the gatherings that the principals or teachers considered interesting related to the study goals. The principals and, in some cases the teachers, were the ones who chose the classrooms bearing such dynamics in mind. Then, either the principals or the teachers from the selected classrooms distributed the informed consent forms to the students and their parents. After they and the teacher who facilitated the DLG signed the consent forms, I went to the schools to observe several DLG sessions.

In all, I observed 26 DLG sessions across the 9 groups. The observations took different forms and were conducted at different times. I conducted all observations in person except for the ones from Soloarte and Escolaica. In Soloarte, I observed the first 5 DLG sessions via zoom and the last one in person. In Escolaica, the DLG teacher audio-recorded the first 4 sessions, and I was also present in person in the last one. I have audio recordings of all DLG sessions in Soloarte and Escolaica. I also have audio recordings in some DLG sessions in Montserrat. In the rest of the schools I did not audio-record the observations and, instead, took notes on some of the most relevant things students said related to the study objective. Table 3 provides detailed information about all the observed DLG sessions.

Table 3. Summary of observations

School	Group	Observations	DLG book
Escolaica	6th grade	5	Romeo and Juliet
Joaquim Ruyra	5th A	2	Don Quixote
	5th B	2	Don Quixote
Mediterrani	1st grade	1	Mar i Cel
	2nd grade	1	Oliver Twist
	3rd grade	1	Romeo and Juliet
Montserrat	5th grade	2	The Aeneid

	6th grade	6	The Iliad
Soloarte	3rd grade	6	Pride and Prejudice

Ethical considerations

The study followed ethical standards included in the Declaration of Helsinki. All data were anonymized, all personal names that are used in this article are pseudonyms, and only I have access to the personal information of each participant. All parents, students and teachers were provided with an information sheet about the study goals, the methods, and the implications of participating, including the benefits and potential risks. All teachers and students who participated, as well as their parents, signed the informed consent forms. This study received approval from the IRB at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Approval number is 2022-1444.

After collecting the data, I asked each school's principal whether they wanted the school's name to appear published or not. They shared this issue as part of each schools' committees, assemblies or councils, in which all members of the communities participate periodically to share dialogues and make decisions regarding the school. After these dialogues, all schools decided they wanted their name to be published.

Data analysis

In order to analyze students' language of desire towards non-violence in the DLG observed, I first transcribed all audio-recordings with the help of the Box automatic transcription feature in their original language (DLG were conducted in Catalan, Valencian, and Spanish), as it is easier and more accurate to identify the language of desire in students' own words. I then revised all transcriptions and the notes of the DLG I did not audio-record.

I used *interaction events* as the unit of analysis (Díez-Palomar et al., 2021). In this study, I define interaction events as any utterance or group of utterances from students and/or teachers.

Each interaction event is defined in terms of themes, that is, each interaction event includes utterances around the same theme. Therefore, an interaction event can be a single utterance or a dialogue with several student and teacher exchanges.

For this particular study, it was necessary not just to look at language (i.e., speech acts) but also to different signs of communication. Indeed, even though words themselves can denote the language of desire (e.g. "handsome", "I like"), other elements like forceful or confident tone can fill words with desire. Considering the type of data collected – in some cases audio-recordings and in other notes –, I have analyzed the following signs of communications: words, tone, and context – students' relationships with each other and how classmates react, e.g., whether they laugh, remain silent, or use onomatopoeias. In the cases in which there are no audio-recordings, I conducted the analysis based on my notes on those elements of communication. In order to respond to the research question with these pieces of data, I have developed a new analytic framework combining the two main theoretical frameworks on language and action used in this study: Gee's Discourse analysis and Flecha and Soler's communicative acts analysis. In particular, I have used Gee's building tasks and Flecha and Soler's communicative acts that are significant to better understand the language of desire towards non-violence. Table 4 shows the final analytic framework I have used.

Table 4. Data analysis framework

Building tasks	Question
Significance and connection	How is this piece of language* significant to connect or disconnect the language of desire with someone or something?

Identities and relationships	What identities are enacted through this piece of language in terms of rejecting or desiring others? What relationships of desire or rejection does this piece of language create?
Consequences and activities	What is the resulting consequence of this piece of language in terms of validating, rejecting or distancing the student from others?
Interactive power, status, and politics	How is this piece of language used to impose someone or something as attractive? What perspective of social goods, understood as attractiveness, is this piece of language communicating?

*For ease of reading I use the term "piece of language" to refer to the communicative acts and Discourses I have analyzed within each interaction event.

The data analysis included several steps. First, I read all the transcriptions and notes several times to deductively identify those interaction events that contained the language of desire towards non-violence. I also listened to the recordings where transcriptions indicated someone's tone or other students' reaction could denote the language of desire. Once I selected all those interaction events, I classified them into two main categories, also established deductively, based on how research on the preventive socialization of gender violence defines language of desire towards non-violence: 1) rejecting violence, and 2) desiring non-violence. In the first one I included all interaction events in which students spoke in a way that showed rejection, criticism, disgust or dislike towards people who use violence, coercion or imposition.

For instance, when a student says "when someone is violent with you we denounce them and isolate them until they become brave", he is showing his rejection ("we isolate them") towards someone who uses violence. In the second category, I included all interaction events in which students showed desire, attraction, admiration or likeness towards people who have behaviors that are away or opposed to violence, coercion and imposition. An example would be "if I were Juliet, I would have gone with Romeo". Although the book ends in the two lovers' deaths and they are dragged into violence due to their families' enmity, Romeo is never violent, coercive or imposing towards Juliet. On the contrary, he shares words full of passion, love and admiration towards her, and it is only after Juliet's parents force her to marry Paris and their plan to reunite in Mantua fails that they kill themselves. In her quote, this student uses the language of desire by claiming she would not listen to her family and would fight for the person she loves.

After having divided the data into these two main categories, I created three subcategories which arose inductively from the data: 1.1) rejecting or distancing themselves from violence or anything related to the coercive dominant discourse; 1.2) detaching attractiveness from relationships or people with violent, coercive or imposing attitudes; and 2.1) giving attractiveness to relationships or people with egalitarian and non-violent attitudes.

In all, I identified 31 interaction events that contained the language of desire towards non-violence. Of these, I categorized 6 within the 1.1 subcategory; 6 within 1.2; and 19 within 2.1. In most interaction events not all utterances were said from the language of desire. However, in the analysis I have included all those utterances which, within each interaction event, help better understand those utterances that include the language of desire. Once I had all interaction events categorized, I translated the most relevant ones into English.

Results

In this section I present the analysis of the communicative acts and Discourses that express and create the language of desire in the three main subcategories discussed in the methodology section: to reject violence or the CDD; to detach attractiveness from it; and to give attractiveness to non-violence. In order to help understand the language of desire in the context in which it is expressed, I provide the entire or almost entire interaction event in which it is said.

Reject those who exercise violence or the CDD

Pressure and coercion are one of the main topics found across all the DLG groups observed. More specifically, many students talk about peers who pressure them to do things they do not want to do and, in many occasions, use the language of desire to reject them, not considering them friends. During a DLG on *Romeo and Juliet* in 6th grade, some students commented on the passage in which Mercutio blames Romeo for his death after starting a fight with the Capulets. Overall, the students who participated in such dialogue did not agree with Mercutio, and one of them explicitly stated that if he were Romeo he would have ignored him:

| Marcos | It's on page 69. The last comment Romeo makes: [he reads the part he selected]. I think that's what you never have to do, if you have done everything you could and in the end .. it hasn't turned out well and moreover it's not your fault .. I don't know why he blames himself, as much as Mercutio told him. If I were Romeo I wouldn't have listened to him | 1 |

DLG2 Escolaica

Several communicative acts and Discourses, such as the words and the tone with which he uses them, express Marcos's rejection of Mercutio from the language of desire. On the one hand, the words he uses express he would not have subjugated to someone who treated him that way.

To indicate he would have ignored him he uses the words "havera passat de ell", which can literally be translated to "I would have crossed over him". This expression in Valencian, Catalan and Spanish is highly charged with the language of desire, as it implies the decision not to pay attention to someone in a very explicit way. In this way, Marcos uses communicative acts and Discourses to give significance to his rejection of Mercutio. The identity he enacts – or how he wants others to recognize it – is, therefore, opposed and distant from Mercutio. Furthermore, Marcos makes the statement without fear or doubt, with a tone of confidence and forcefulness. At the same time, he shows a tone of indignation with Romeo's lack of rejection towards Mercutio. In terms of politics, he thinks it is incorrect for Romeo to blame himself, and implicitly makes Mercutio responsible for his actions.

Similarly, during a DLG on *Pride and Prejudice*, some students shared their reflections and experiences regarding the pressures that some family members exert when asking when they will have a partner.

Andrea (teacher)	there was a huge pressure, I, my brother and I, they always treated us as the weird ones, they treated us as if we were the weird ones. And they asked about things like a girlfriend, or "bring your girlfriend". I didn't have a boyfriend nor a girlfriend, "I will not bring anyone here". So this obsession of the pressure for sentimental relationships, for marriage. And as you grow up, "and you still… and you still…" and that thing of having to justify yourself	1
Martin	they ask it as a joke, but you say "whenever I want to"	2

DLG6 Solo

Martin expresses that, faced with questions about when he would have a partner, he would potentially reject such pressure. Instead of feeling shame or the need to justify why he did not have a partner in such a hypothetical situation, he expresses that he would not subjugate to such

pressure. The tone he uses denotes confidence and strength rather than fear or insecurity. Moreover, the words last words he uses in Spanish are "cuando me dé la gana", which is a very strong assertion that portrays agency. He gives significance to his lack of submission to those pressures through the way he uses such words and tone, clarifying he is the one who will decide when he will have a partner. The imagined relationship with and interactive power of the people making that question also change with his reply: they move from being the ones with the authority to impose a personal question to being the ones who have no saying in that. He, in turn, enacts the identity of the one who is in charge.

Another example of the language of desire to reject people who exercise violence or the CDD can be found in the DLG on the *Iliad* when some students talked about hurting others. While most students reflected on how bad they would feel if they did hurt another person, using the language of ethics only, one of them talked about the consequences of being surrounded with bad people from the language of desire:

Amin	if you're with bad people you will get infected	1

DLG1 Montserrat 6

Although, since there is no audio-recording for this DLG session, his tone cannot be analyzed, he uses a communicative act that is particularly significant in this context: the word "infected". Such word portrays disgust and lack of desire to be surrounded by those people. There is usually not a desirable connotation related to getting infected. In fact, common sense tells us we should avoid being surrounded by people who have some virus, and it is usually not very appealing to be around someone who has an infectious disease. Implicitly, he seems to say he does not want to have any sort of relationship with bad people. He connects being with those people to a feeling of rejection, even disgust. In this way, when it comes to the distribution of social goods, he depicts them as people who have no power nor attractiveness.

The rejection towards people who use violence or coercion was not only expressed towards book characters or hypothetical people, as the previous examples show; in one case, a student used interactive power to impose her own vision on relationships as the true one, and other students ended up rejecting her claims. This was the case in another DLG session on *Pride and Prejudice*.

Aurora	In the first dash, at the very end. "People vary and one can't trust anyone". This sentence is right because even the person you least expect will, will betray you, they betray you	1
Andrea (teacher)	you mean everyone will betray you?	2
Aurora	yes teacher	3
Andrea	what a sentence, right?	4
Aurora	it's true, you can't trust anyone	5
Martin	people are very mean	6
Andrea	so what are we doing here?	7
Claudia	we have been born, it is what it is	8
Andrea	we can't trust any of us? No one can trust anyone?	9
Mikel	based on her logic, no	10
Andrea	so Aurora, are you saying that no one can trust you, because you will end up betraying them?	11
Aurora	everyone ends up saying something about someone else	12
Andrea	Claudia has raised her hand	13

Claudia	I don't think everyone will betray you. Now, if you provoke someone to betray you, it's ugly for someone to betray you, but imagine that I'm with Mikel, we've dated, if I start treating him badly, whatever, and he ends up tired of me. Well, obviously it can reach a point in which he's sick of me and says "I can't anymore", and he says things he shouldn't about me or about whatever. But of course, to say that everyone will betray you, no…	14
Aurora	yes	15
Claudia	I have people who have not betrayed me yet	16
Aurora	yet	17
Claudia	that's why I say "yet". And people I don't think will betray me. But give it time	18
Aurora	when you least expect it they will end up betraying you	19
Andrea	it makes me think, I don't know what's your concept of the word "betray", maybe you have some I don't know what, because you talk about betraying as if it were something easy. I think that betraying someone is hard, I mean, you have to reach a point that, I don't know, Claudia's example, right? Maybe you lose control with your friend Mikel, right? He's a super friend and… and I don't know, you start doing things that are not convenient for him, or you speak badly, or whatever. I think Mikel can say "hey, you're doing this, realize it, look at what's happening", right? "I don't like that". And maybe he makes you reflect, he makes you realize that… right? And you go back to being with him as you used to	20

Claudia	yes, but in the case that you don't change, that's what I meant	21
Andrea	it can happen, but [do you think] everyone will do that to you?	22
Claudia	I don't believe that	23

DLG2 Solo

There are different communicative acts and Discourses worth analyzing in this interaction event. In the beginning, Aurora uses interactive power to impose the idea that they cannot trust anyone, as if wanting others to identify her as someone who knows what relationships are about. This can be seen in her words and strong tone in lines 1, 3, and 5, when she not only claims that they cannot trust anyone, but imposes such a statement as a fact, for instance when she says "it's true" raising her tone a little. At first, it seems Martin and Claudia follow her (lines 6 and 8). At this point of the interaction event, the only one who shows an opposition to her is Mikel. Rather than letting himself be carried away by her extremely negative view on relationships and human beings, his strong tone and words indicate he wants to distance himself from her. The words "based on her logic" in line 10 disconnect himself from her belief that everyone will betray them. He makes it seem that she is the one who has that particular view, and deprivileges her claims to knowledge about relationships. Claudia seems to slightly change her opinion after this, although her communicative acts in line 14 do not include the language of desire yet, as it seems she does not dare to directly oppose Aurora. For instance, when saying "I don't think everyone will betray you", her tone is low and seems rather shy; moreover, she gives an example in which she seems to justify why someone would betray her. Even in line 16, when she says there are people who have not betrayed her, she adds the word "yet" at the end, and Aurora repeats it in a higher volume, again using interactive power to impose herself as the one who knows that, at some point, Claudia will also be betrayed. However, in line 23, after the teacher asks Claudia whether she really thinks everyone will betray her, she explicitly states she does not believe that. Her tone and volume in this sentence, unlike earlier, shows

confidence and lack of doubt, it is stronger and louder. She is conclusive, both with her words and the calm and serious tone. She changes her relationship with Aurora, from being "on her side" to contradicting her. With Claudia's last sentence, Aurora no longer has the authority to decide what everyone must believe, she has a lower status. Instead, Claudia enacts a confident and independent identity.

Detach attractiveness from violent people and relationships, and those who like them

In addition to showing rejection towards people who exercise violence or coercion, students created several communicative acts and Discourses that portrayed such people and relationships as non-attractive. During one of the DLG on *Romeo and Juliet*, there were several interaction events in which students criticized Mercutio. In one of them, some students' communicative acts and Discourses portray him as non-attractive, even ridiculous, due to the way he treats Romeo and his will to always start a fight.

| Andreu | about what you're saying, the day of Juliet's party it wasn't sunny and he also wanted to fight them. I think that's a way of, there are people who like, I think there are people who like arguing and they never want to fix things. And in the end you end up alone, because in the end even the people who are there, who don't say anything don't agree with what you're doing, and there comes a day in which they stop talking to you. And I think that's not the solution, I think he should ??. If every day it's warm I would want to fight everyone who wanted to fight me it would be a constant fight. It's an excuse to put, to fight with his family, because I also think it's clear that he's not willing to fix the problems | 1 |
| | (…) | |

| Joan | I wouldn't have ignored him because I would have helped him reflect, but what he has done is ??, but those are things that used to happen a lot, in fact there are movies in which only that happens, they make a fight, one kills the other and he starts to curse and whatever and he says "you have caused it". And in the beginning he was so, Mercutio was so supportive of them not fighting and then he has shown that I think we all know many people who have two faces, and in this way he demonstrates you can never trust someone you don't know a 100% | 4 |

DLG2 Escolaica

Here, students do not talk about Mercutio, who has started a fight, as someone attractive; nor do they try to justify why he does that. Rather, the words and the tone with which they talk about him, especially Andreu, describe him as someone ridiculous. Andreu gives significance to the fact that Mercutio is only looking for an excuse to start a fight. His tone indicates he is mocking Mercutio, seeing him as someone inferior because all he wants to do is fight. Moreover, stating he will end up alone indicates the opposite of being someone who attracts people towards him. His communicative acts remove social status and goods, in this case friends or people in general, from him. Although Joan is not so forceful with Mercutio and says he would help him change, he also uses communicative acts that make him seem ridiculous. He uses the term "have two faces" to indicate he is fake. He is giving significance to the fact that Mercutio is not such a good friend as he thought he was in the beginning.

Another example of how students ridicule and portray people who use coercion as non-attractive can be found in a DLG about *Pride and Prejudice*. Lady Catherine, Darcy's aunt, sparked an interaction event in which most students were indignant due to her coercive, superiority and disdainful attitude towards everyone, and showed their disgust towards her through several communicative acts and Discourses.

Ibtissan	I think first [her attitude] is one of a mean person, if the aunt ?? with rudeness, because the fact that [Elizabeth] is not from the same class as Darcy doesn't mean there can't be love between them. I think the aunt is an arrogant person because she thinks she can control her nephew, but she doesn't know that he's a grown-up, I mean, he's a grown-up, he can exercise, he can make his own decisions, he can choose the person with whom he wants to spend his life, right? ?? to her daughter so that ??, he should do whatever he wants	1
Andrea (teacher)	you said she is an arrogant person because she wants to control his nephew's life. [to the rest] Do you want to say anything? Yes Ángel	2
Ángel	the lady wants her nephew to marry ??	3
Andrea	are you asking, that seems to you, why, right? Did you just realize that? Well, we advance, you don't want to say anything else? Claudia, Martin had [a selected passage] on page 161, and then we move to Claudia	4
Martin	The second dash. "[reads the passage he selected]". Like… she's a bitter and rude woman and she comes here to, I don't know what for. I don't know, I completely dislike this lady	5
Andrea	she's bitter and rude. And what has she come here for, did you say?	6
Martin	yes, to do nothing!	7
Mikel	to marry her nephew	8
Claudia	and she doesn't even achieve that, so…	9
	(…)	

Andrea	[she wants to] be in charge. Do you remember how she said goodbye to people when they went to her home? She got bored and said "well this is over, you're no longer useful for me, you no longer entertain me, out of my home". I mean, she treats everyone as if they were…	16
Mikel	inferior	17
Claudia	her buffoons. Franco's first cousin	18
Mikel	she thinks she's superior to others, this old bitter lady	19
Martin	the witch, she's missing the broomstick	20
Andrea	but Mikel, you've said that "she treats everyone as if they were inferior"	21
Mikel	as if they were supposedly inferior to her, as if she's superior because she's married, because she has money, because she says so	22
Claudia	because she's Tutankhamun	23
Andrea	so she decides who is inferior, right?	24
Mikel	inferior in her way, according to her point of view	25
Amagoia	economically	26
Claudia	according to social status	27
Mikel	but for me she's inferior to me, I mean…	28
Andrea	for example, I don't know, I'm thinking of respect, human quality, she's quite inferior, right? For example	29
Mikel	respecting se le da un poco como el culo	30
Andrea	well, you all quite agree that she's a witch. So 164, Claudia	31
Mikel	I think we all agree that she's a witch	32
Andrea	Claudia?	33

| Claudia | well in addition to what Ibtissan has said, the aunt, I mean, she wanted to choose who will Darcy marry and all that, because Elizabeth is of an inferior social status to Darcy for whatever reason, so the aunt doesn't want him to marry her, in addition to the fact that she wanted to marry him with her [daughter]. (…) It's funny to me, it's called my attention that suddenly, it's gone from being super cool in a chapter, a super wedding, so beautiful, whatever, to this one in which we have Tutankhamun and a young woman arguing about Tutankhamun's nephew, so… I don't know, I find it funny and, well, yes, this lady is very arrogant, a witch, rude, and the one who shows to be inferior is her, with her attitude and how she treats others | 34 |

<div align="right">DLG6 Soloarte</div>

From the very beginning, Ibtissan and Martin use words such as "arrogant", "bitter" and "rude" (lines 1 and 5) to describe her. Ibtissan's tone in line 1 is confident and forceful and, at the same time, calm. Martin's tone in line 5 is more indignant, his volume is higher, especially when he says he "completely dislike[s] this lady". Both of their uses of language enact an activity that makes the whole classroom recognize they do not like Catherine due to her attitudes. The very term "this lady", rather than saying her name, gives significance to his distance from her. He asks rhetorically what she went there for, to which Mikel replies she came to marry her nephew. Claudia's tone in line 9 when saying "she doesn't even achieve that" is also that of ridiculing her, making fun of her for not "even" achieving what she supposedly went there for. Their identities are strong and forceful against her, they position themselves against a coercive person. These first utterances establish the tone for the rest of the interaction event, which is increasingly outraged and mocking, even with despise. As more students join the dialogue, they start using stronger words, even insults. For instance, in lines 18, 20 and 23 words such as

"Franco's [Spanish dictator] cousin", "Tutankhamun" or "witch" portray her as non-desirable. Their tone also reflects that they enliven as more of them join the critiques. In this way, they build a relationship in which they are united to stand up against someone who wants to put other people down. Furthermore, when in line 25 Mikel says she is "inferior in her way" he is clarifying that he does not give her the status other characters from the book give her. Rather than justifying or trying to understand why she acts as she does, or feeling insecure and inferior due to the interactive power she uses throughout the book, students condemn her attitudes as ridiculous and despicable, portraying her as someone they would not want to spend time with. In other interaction events students also used communicative acts and Discourses that ridicule people who try to use interactive power. Going back to the aforementioned interaction event in which a student tried to impose the idea that everyone will betray them, other students not only showed their opposition, but they also insinuated that the reason why she believes that is because of whom she has relationships with. Here I will show the end of the interaction event to highlight this particular aspect.

Claudia	I don't believe that	23
Aurora	I do	24
Claudia	she has traumatic experiences	25
Andrea (teacher)	of course, everything depends on what people we're with, maybe, right? If they make us think that they can do that at some point, maybe we need to reconsider…	26
Martin	imagine who this woman has been with	27

DLG2 Solo

Whereas in the beginning of the interaction event, as shown in the previous section, Claudia tries to justify Aurora and does not dare to oppose her, she becomes more confident throughout the interaction event in contradicting her. In this passage, she enacts an identity away from

Aurora, even making fun of her. She makes it seem as if Aurora were the "weird" one by saying that. Her rationale, as she insinuates in line 25, is that it is her "traumatic" relationships that have made her have such a destructive belief on relationships. Her tone when saying "she has traumatic experiences" indicates confidence and even superiority, as if she were mocking Aurora for having such a negative view on relationships and human beings. In her communicative acts and Discourses, the activity has switched from following what Aurora says to contradicting and mocking her. The teacher then deepens on what Claudia says, and in line 27 Martin further makes fun of her by suggesting that the people she has been with are not very desirable. The relationships and politics here help better understand why they are removing attractiveness from a person who has used interactive power. From what I have been able to observe throughout the DLG sessions with this group, it seems the two of them are quite close to Aurora, especially Martin. It also seems that, often, Aurora speaks as if she were more experienced and knowledgeable than the rest when it comes to sexual-affective relationships. She often tries to impose what is considered valuable and normal. This can be seen in the previous example where she insisted to Claudia that all her friends will betray her, even managing to get Claudia a little bit carried away. In this part of the dialogue, however, they have removed her supposed status when it comes to relationships. Instead of portraying her as someone who knows a lot about relationships, they suggest she has had very negative experiences. Her "knowledge" and her imposing way of expressing it, therefore, becomes deprivileged through their communicative acts and Discourses.

Portray egalitarian people and relationships with attractiveness

Most interaction events in which students used the language of desire were to refer to people with egalitarian behaviors as attractive and desirable. As an example, during several DLG sessions around the *Iliad*, students talked about the importance of breaking the silence and defending victims. In one of them, some students talked about bullying and the need to break

the silence to stop it. While much of the session focused on the goodness in the people who break the silence, from the language of ethics only, some students used communicative acts and Discourses that portrayed breaking the silence as an attractive behavior.

Aaron	Abraham, you would feel proud of breaking the silence if someone is suffering bullying, and you don't care about ??, right? Because you are proud of what you've done and you know you've done something good	1
Lidia (teacher)	you've been brave, right?	2
Najat	I agree with Aaron because if you break the silence you're a brave person	3
Juan	but there are people who don't break the silence because they are afraid to suffer bullying	4
	(…)	5
Najat	I mean when you have a friend who in the beginning is a very good person and always helps others and then they become friends with ?? and that good person learns from the bad person and then they become a bad person	6
Farûq	maybe for example you help a bad person, sometimes maybe that person will think that you're encouraging them to continue being bad, sometimes they can change and sometimes they can't and you can ??	7
Lidia	and what do you do if the person doesn't change? Are you still their friends?	8

students who participated in that interaction event agreed with this separation, one of them questioned it, supporting the idea of the union between values and attraction.

Aurora	yes, because saying "I have a hot boyfriend" looks better than saying "I have a boyfriend who treats me well"	1
Andrea (teacher)	it gives you like more…	2
Mikel	but I don't know what is better, someone who treats you better or who is hot	3
Claudia	someone who treats you well	4
Martin	there has to be a balance. There has to be a bit of both, because you…	5
Andrea	wait Martin, Mikel said "I don't know what's better or worse", you've said "I don't know what's better", but you've said it as a rhetoric question, right? You have the answer clear	6
Mikel	it's better that they treat you well than being hot, than being hot	7
Martin	well	8
Andrea	Martin?	9
Martin	I mean there has to be a balance between the two, I mean, the boy or girl has to be a good person, but you also have to like him or her, if you don't, imagine waking up every day with him next to you in your bed and you say "I have a monster next to me!", do you know what I mean? I mean, there has to be a middle point where you say…	10
Amagoia	but you have to like him or her	11
Martin	exactly	12
Amagoia	not others [have to like him or her]	13

Martin	that's it	14
Claudia	of course, he or she has to treat you well, I mean, there is a balance, but I prefer someone who treats me well than someone who is super hot, who is Spain's bombshell and all of a sudden he beats you, right?	15
Andrea	Martin?	16
Martin	well, there has to be a balance between the two, I don't know	17

DLG6 Solo

In this interaction event, most students follow and reproduce the double standard. Especially Aurora, Mikel and Claudia, make it seem as if being a good person equals not being attractive. In other words, they present attractiveness and goodness as two opposing binaries; in their view, they have to choose between one or the other. This can be seen in lines 1, 2, 4 and 7, for instance when Mikel says "it's better that they treat you well than being hot". However, Martin, even knowing that many of his classmates do not agree with him, expresses that there has to be a balance between being good and being attractive (line 5). Whereas many of his classmates associate attractiveness as a social good that belongs to non-egalitarian people, he questions that notion and attributes attractiveness to good people. He enacts an identity of someone who dares to think differently and who breaks the double standard, opening the possibility for other people to change their minds. His tone is confident. He does not doubt nor show insecurity when saying it, he strongly affirms it. Even when the teacher asks him to explain himself more, his voice volume is a bit higher, without yelling, but denoting confidence and strength (line 10). He is not afraid of breaking a connection with his classmates on this matter. Even one of the students who previously stated that it is better to be with someone who treats them well in line 4, now in line 15 she agrees with Martin, saying "there is a balance", although she continues to indicate she prefers goodness over attractiveness; but her tone this time is softer

than when she first speaks. Still, Martin finishes the interaction event holding onto his belief that goodness and desire can go together.

Although not so explicitly, there are also other interaction events in which more students oppose the idea that being a good person means being non-attractive. In another session in the same classroom, some students talked about the importance of being a good person but not letting others disrespect them.

Ibtissan	there are bad and good people, that's why you have to be a good person, but at the same time strict, bad people don't [unintelligible] talk with respect. You don't have the space for them to talk about that, but one can't trust anyone because the one you trust most	1
Andrea (teacher)	you think that each of us has to be a good person and make ourselves respectable, right? With our goodness, I mean, I have the values well defined, right? I have them very clear, and I will not let you go ahead. Well it's an advice, right, Aurora? So that no one can betray you. Very well Ibtissan, I will make a self-note [on the advice]. And, but you also say you cannot trust anyone?	2
Ibtissan	when, for example, you're with a good person and like many days of, but suddenly he or she becomes bad	3
Aurora	but people are very fake	4
Andrea	well, I think you're making generalizations, I mean, you're taking it for granted with everyone. Claudia did you raise your hand?	5

Claudia	yes, to say two things. Yes, what Ibtissan has said, you have to make yourself respected, be a good person, but don't allow others walk over you. Let's see if I can give you an example, a friend of mine has been since December, I can tell you, or earlier, talking to a friend of hers, she doesn't stop walking over her, treating her badly [Claudia's friend], and she's not able to face her because she doesn't want to hurt her, she doesn't want to respond in a way she shouldn't and she doesn't want to hurt her, but however she allows her to walk over her. She is insulting and disrespecting her	6
Aurora	Claudia, your friend is a little bit…	7
Claudia	I've told her	8
Martin	a bit stupid	9
Claudia	and the other, I mean, you can really trust others, you only have to be careful on who you trust. I mean, you won't know someone for two days and tell them your deepest secret, you know?	10
Martin	of course, we also have to be smart	11

DLG2 Solo

In this interaction event, several students express the need for good people to make themselves respectable, using words such as "strict" (line 1), "make yourself respected" (line 6) or "be smart" (line 11). These words and their firm tone give significance to being good and making themselves worthy at the same time. They do not like the idea that being good means letting others fool them, and claim that being good and respectable can and should go hand in hand. When Claudia says the have to be "careful on who you trust" in line 10 she is giving value to knowing who to choose, deprivileging those who do not. Moreover, the word "smart" in line

10 gives attractiveness to knowing how to choose relationships. Ibtissan's, Claudia's and Martin's tone when making these statements is confident and forceful.

Along similar lines, there were several interaction events among the same group in which many students showed admiration towards Elizabeth due to her behaviors and attitudes, which they previously described in other sessions as good, caring and helping to others.

Alicia	I like how Elizabeth, she, Catherine tells her, well she tells her whether she knows how to draw. And I like how Elizabeth responds firmly, she says "not at all". I mean, it's not like her voice trembles to say no, she knows, she's not afraid that they will classify her or they will…	1
	(…)	
Alicia	The paragraph after "at the fourth day". [he reads the passage she selected]. I liked it, I liked very much like, what, what I've said previously, she's very decided. She has a decided character and she's very confident in herself, and she stops any attack against her	4
Andrea (teacher)	she knows how to stop others, right? How do the rest of you see Elizabeth? Maria, did you want to say something? No? Claudia?	5
Claudia	I see Elizabeth a brave girl, she knows what she's worth and she makes herself worthy in front of others without any fear of being judged by "oh look, you are, you have less money and still you think you're whatever". She ignores people, and many people here, well, here, everywhere, wouldn't be capable of being like Elizabeth, at least with what she's shown in what we have read	6

DLG3 Solo

Elizabeth sparks admiration among some students. Alicia says several times that she really "likes" her (lines 1 and 4), a word that denotes desire, and explains that it is her self-confidence

and firmness that she likes. She portrays her as someone who will raise her voice if someone attacks or tries to subjugate her. While saying it, her tone is also confident and calm, she finds Elizabeth attractive, her voice and tone indicate admiration. Similarly, Claudia refers to Elizabeth as "brave" in line 6, showing admiration towards her brave and confident attitude. By saying that not many people act like her she is giving social goods to those who do not let others coerce them, while deprivileging those who do not stand up against coercion. Both of them give significance to the fact that Elizabeth does not let anyone subjugate and trample her. Furthermore, they are building a connection with her, portraying her as someone to look alike. Last, there were communicative acts and Discourses that showed desire towards egalitarian relationships, especially that of Romeo and Juliet. During a DLG on that book, the characters' love story led to an interaction event about love in sexual-affective relationships, what it means, what it looks like, and what it feels like.

Najat	it's not the same to say "I love you so much, I would die with you" to someone, than showing it. Love is not simply saying "I love you", it's showing that I love you, that's how you know whether he or she loves you	1
Leo	anyone can say "I love you"	2
Marc	if you really love someone it's easy to demonstrate it. It's a different thing that the other person is not able to see it because he or she has a very closed vision	3
Jon	I think it's easy to say it, but it's very hard to demonstrate it	4
Manuel	I think it's amazing what you can do for love if you really feel it. Love sometimes can be everything in your live	5

DLG1 Mediterrani 3

Throughout the interaction event there is a debate on whether it is easy to demonstrate love for someone, and whether saying "I love you" is enough to show it. Although students have

different points of view, none of them talk about love in a disdainful way, or making fun of it, or making it seem like love is for losers. On the contrary, they talk about it in a positive way showing confidence and forcefulness. Through these communicative acts and Discourses, students give significance to love when it is true and demonstrated. Furthermore, the words they use to talk about love are full of beauty. And, at the same time, they do not talk about love as something good only; their communicative acts and Discourses are full of desire towards love. Particularly Manuel uses words full of admiration and desire, such as "amazing" or "can be everything in your life" in line 5. His tone also indicates admiration. He acts as if he dreamed with having a similar love story.

Discussion

This study aimed at analyzing what the language of desire towards non-violence looks like among different groups of adolescents in the framework of Dialogic Literary Gatherings. To that end, I have conducted an analysis of communicative acts and Discourses of student interactions in nine different DLG groups.

Findings confirm that, in order to analyze reality, especially when it comes to how adolescents use the language of desire, it is essential to go beyond words (Flecha, 2022; Flecha et al., 2020; Soler & Flecha, 2010; Soler-Gallart, 2017). The theories of communicative acts and Discourse analysis have contributed to this end. Indeed, results show that analyzing elements such as the tone of confidence or admiration, the lack of fear or doubt, the relationships among students, or the general lack of the CDD are essential elements in students' use of the language of desire towards non-violence. To analyze the language of desire even better, future research should consider more communicative acts, such as gaze, gestures, or body language, among others.

Overall, I have found three main ways in which participants used the language of desire towards non-violence in DLG. On the one hand, many students have shown a rejection towards

people or relationships with violent behaviors. This has been seen, for instance, through the confident and firm tone with which many students have explicitly indicated they would stop being friends with people who coerced or pressured them. Second, along this line, many students used words and tones that ridiculed people who exert violence or the CDD. When talking about people with such behaviors they do not only condemn them from the ethics point of view, but they also detach attractiveness from them. In many occasions they use adjectives that denote a lack of likeness or desire towards them precisely due to such coercive attitudes. Detaching attractiveness from such behaviors is essential to dismantle the CDD and break the connection it imposes between violence or disdain and attractiveness (Melgar Alcantud, Puigvert, et al., 2021). Even in the few cases in which some students have tried to impose their own view on relationships, others have teased them and made them seem to have a weird attitude on relationships rather than feeling insecure. Last, and in contrast, students use many communicative acts and Discourses that describe people and relationships with non-violent behaviors as attractive and desirable. In some cases, there are students who have literally stated those are the people they like. In other cases, they have used a tone of admiration towards people who break the silence and challenge coercion. Some of them have also used words full of beauty to express desire towards non-violent relationships. These communicative acts and Discourses break the CDD's double standard that poses goodness and attractiveness as a binary (Rios-González et al., 2018). Importantly, some students have been more aware or explicit about breaking this double standard, assuring that goodness and attractiveness can and, in fact, go hand in hand.

In many dialogues, students talk about hypothetical situations or about the relationships and characters described in the books rather than about personal experiences and relationships. It is therefore hard to know how they will act when directly receiving the CDD or when choosing a sexual-affective partner. It is also possible that a few students have said things they think the

teachers and I want to hear. However, the fact that they are creating and/or receiving communicative acts and Discourses that include the language of desire towards non-violence is of great relevance in and of itself. Language creates identity and reality, our brains are literally transformed through it (Flecha, 2022; Kandel, 2006; Mead, 1934). These interactions are already part of themselves, they have internalized them, and they can reinforce them the more they feed them – both with others and with themselves, in their inner speech (Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky, 1986). Whenever they face the CDD, they will at least have a language that opposes and challenges it from desire, which gives them more strength to not subjugate to it. They have an image of themselves as individuals and communities who reject the CDD and desire non-violent relationships; if not in the "real world", that image already exists in their minds, and they can choose to act upon it. Adolescents are at a critical age of socialization in sexual-affective relationships (Gómez, 2015). The more they use and/or are exposed to the language of desire towards non-violence, the more alternatives to the CDD they will have.

I also need to acknowledge, however, that there has been some presence of the CDD or some attempt to impose particular views on relationships on classmates. The CDD wants to break anything that is beautiful, good, and true so that individuals are not able to enjoy beautiful and passionate relationships (Flecha, 2022). Students who have participated in the study live in today's world, and it is likely that they have at least heard interactions that reproduce and reinforce the CDD. One of the students tried to impose her own negative view of relationships on others, pretending she knows more than the rest when it comes to sexual-affective relationships. Similar power communicative acts have been found among girls who have tried to make their "friends" break beautiful relationships and engage in disdainful hookups (Puigvert et al., 2023; Racionero-Plaza, Duque, et al., 2021). Nevertheless, some students have not subjugated to her beliefs, they have challenged her from the language of desire, for instance mocking her. This is also highly relevant, especially given how much adolescents care about

what their peers think of them (Erikson, 1968) and how hard it is for many of them to challenge the CDD.

From the data collected, it is hard to determine whether their use of the language of desire towards non-violence is due to the DLG and, if so, what about them contributes to such language of desire. Regardless, data show that students use the language of desire towards non-violence within the framework of DLG. Future research should delve into this important matter.

Conclusions

This study makes important contributions to the theory and research line on the preventive socialization of gender violence. Much research in this line has studied the potential and impact of egalitarian dialogue to transform the memories and desires of individuals, especially girls, who have previously suffered gender violence, mostly in disdainful hookups (Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019; Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Merodio, et al., 2020; Ugalde et al., 2022). Research has also shown the impact of Dialogic Feminist Gatherings in challenging the CDD and breaking the link it imposes between attraction and violence (Puigvert, 2016; Rodrigues de Mello et al., 2021). However, this article makes a twofold contribution to this body of research. On the one hand, there is a need for more published research on what the language of desire towards non-violence looks like. On the other hand, the potential of DLG to serve as a space for the preventive socialization of gender violence remains underexplored. This study has provided a detailed analysis of the communicative acts and Discourses through which adolescent students in nine different DLG create and use the language of desire towards non-violence.

Still, the study is not without limitations. Socialization in sexual-affective relationships starts at earlier ages; it is likely that 10 or 20 years ago adolescents did not have so many interactions about sexual-affective relationships or about attraction and desire. In addition, the ways in which I have collected data might also pose some limitations. Collecting only audio-recordings

and, in some cases, only observation notes, has removed the possibility to analyze other communicative acts such as body language, gestures or gaze. Taking these elements into account could potentially change or provide more nuanced findings. Last, these findings are not generalizable to all DLG. It is unknown whether the language of desire towards non-violence has been influenced by the DLG themselves, or whether it is those particular students' own socialization outside of school, or a mixture any other factors.

Despite the lack of generalizability, it remains important to highlight that I have found such language of desire in nine different classrooms from five different schools with very different students from different ages and backgrounds. Currently, DLG are implemented in more than 15.000 diverse contexts. Although we do not know whether the language of desire towards non-violence is present in all of them, it is relevant to study the potential replicability of these findings so they reach more and more students. Given the world in which we live, where more and more interactions are influenced by the CDD, the fact that in the DLG analyzed there is a low presence of it, that no participant has made fun of those who use words full of beauty to talk about love, and that there are participants who have dared to challenge the CDD is a highly relevant finding. Not all adolescents use and are exposed to such types of interactions, and it is encouraging and inspiring to see that some of them have this opportunity in their schools, one of the main spaces where their socialization happens (Gómez, 2015).

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Study 3

Title: Characteristics of Dialogic Literary Gatherings Related to Student Interactions Away from Violence

Abstract

There is a whole body of literature on the coercive dominant discourse (CDD) that influences many adolescents to use of the language of desire to describe violent and disdainful relationships as more attractive than egalitarian ones. On the contrary, research has also found spaces based on an egalitarian dialogue that challenge the CDD and in which students use the language of desire to talk about egalitarian people and relationships as attractive and exciting. One such space are Dialogic Literary Gatherings, in which students read and engage in dialogues around classic literature. However, how and why the language of desire united to the language of ethics emerges in DLG remains unknown. To advance in this direction, in this study I make the first exploration on what characteristics of DLG are related to interactions about relationships away from the CDD. To that end, I have observed 6 DLG sessions in a third-grade high school classroom (15-17 years old) in Spain. I have complemented the observations with 5 interviews, 4 with students and 1 with the teacher. Results show that five of the principles of dialogic learning, on which DLG are grounded, and the classic book's universal and profound themes are present in those dialogues in which students reject coercive behaviors and relationships and talk with desire about egalitarian ones. I discuss future research directions to corroborate the replication of these findings in other contexts.

Introduction

There is a wealth of research on the benefits and positive impacts of interactive and dialogic classroom environments for students' learning and social and emotional development (Aubert, 2015; Galton & Hargreaves, 2009; García-Carrión, López de Aguileta, et al., 2020; Howe et al., 2019; Mercer et al., 1999). Several authors have argued and demonstrated that even when we are alone, when we silently talk to ourselves and think about our problems, or days, anticipating future events or fantasizing with the person we like, we are interacting with the people we have previously interacted with (Bakhtin, 1981; J. S. Bruner, 1996; Mead, 1934; Soler Gallart, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, human beings' problems – which are also society's problems – need also be tackled through social interactions.

One such problem that is particularly concerning due to its pervasiveness is gender violence. Gender-based violence is a major concern in today's societies (UN Women, 2021) that affects women of all ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, countries, cultures, ethnicities, etc. (Stöckl et al., 2014; Trygged et al., 2014; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). Moreover, it also affects adolescent and young girls at an alarmingly increasing rate (Smith et al., 2018). According to the CDC's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey from 2015, 81.3% of female victims who had suffered completed or attempted rape had experienced it before the age of 25, and 43.2% experienced it prior to being 18 (Smith et al., 2018). Some research has found that in Dialogic Literary Gatherings – where participants engage in an egalitarian dialogue around classic literature – there is an emergence of the language of desire towards non-violence, which other studies on the prevention of gender violence have identified as key (G. López de Aguileta et al., 2020). However, what design features of Dialogic Literary Gatherings contribute to such language of desire remains underexplored. To contribute to this gap, this study identifies and analyzes the characteristics

of a Dialogic Literary Gatherings in a high school to better understand the relationship between the gatherings' design features and students' interactions away from violence.

The coercive dominant discourse socializing in violence

For decades, love and attraction have not received so much scientific interest as other relevant aspects for human beings. They have often been regarded as supersticious phenomena that escape our understanding and control. The few authors that have attempted to theorize and empirically study them have provided little explanations on why we love the people we love and feel attracted to some people and not others (Gómez, 2015). However, several research studies conducted over the last 20 years have shown that love does not just strike us like thunder, and that we are not born inherently programmed to feel attracted to certain people. As social beings, we learn and develop through social interactions. Vygotsky (1986) argued that learning and development occur first as an external activity, at the social level, and that it is through social interaction that it then becomes internalized and gets organized in the learner's thought, becoming part of the individual. Along similar lines, Nobel prize laureate Kandel has shown that our brain and biology get transformed through simply reading a book (1991), and even earlier than him, Ramon y Cajal (1989) demonstrated brain plasticity, that is, that our neural wiring is shaped through social experience and interactions. The same way we learn how to talk, read and write through interacions, we learn who to love and feel attracted to (Gómez, 2004, 2015; Ruiz-Eugenio, Racionero-Plaza, et al., 2020). Children and adolescents are surrounded, from a very young age, by interactions and discourses – language in use – which socialize them into certain models and patterns of attraction and relationships (Gómez, 2015). We are therefore in a continual construction and reconstruction of our beings, tastes, desires, feelings, dreams, and relationships through social experiences and interactions.

Research has identified a hegemonic coercive dominant discourse (CDD) that claims that violent and disdainful relationships, behaviors and attitudes are more attractive and exciting

than egalitarian ones (Puigvert et al., 2019; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2022). The CDD is imposed, reinforced and reproduced through peer interactions, social media, movies and TV shows, music, literature, and other socializing agents (Puigvert et al., 2019; Racionero-Plaza, Duque, et al., 2021; Rodrigues-Mello et al., 2021; Villarejo et al., 2020; Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2022). The CDD influences many adolescent and youth's socialization in connecting violence with attraction by portraying people with violent behaviors as attractive and desirable and people with non-violent behaviors as less exciting (Puigvert et al., 2019).

The CDD creates a "double standard" between what researchers have termed the *language of desire* and the *language of ethics*. The language of desire is defined as all communicative acts used to describe individuals, relationships or behaviors in terms of desire, attractiveness, passion, feelings and excitement. The language of ethics refers to those communicative acts used to describe and talk about individuals, relationships or behaviors in terms of their moral values, goodness, and ethics. The CDD uses the language of desire to portray individuals with disdainful and violent behaviors as the sexy, fun, attractive and desirable ones (Torras-Gómez et al., 2020; Torras-Gómez et al., 2022). On the other side of the coin, the CDD used the language of ethics to describe individuals with egalitarian and non-violent behaviors as good and nice but boring and non-desirable (Flecha et al., 2013; Rios-González et al., 2018). In this way, the CDD socializes many adolescents and youth in the double standard that separates excitement and goodness as if they were opposing binaries, and many end up believing they need to choose between passion or goodness (Gómez, 2015). Giddens wondered: "why can't a good man be sexy and why can't a sexy man be good?" (Giddens, 1993, p. 156).

The double standard towards women has been prevalent for centuries, separating them into two types: those useful for marriage and those useful to have sex. Stability, love, care and family were provided by the former, while passion, sex and desire were saved for the latter. An example from literature can be found in Tennessee Williams' 1947 classic play, *A Streetcar*

Named Desire. Stanley – the main character famously portrayed in the film version by Marlon Brando – is married to Stella, who would represent the former female model. Her sister, on the contrary, is portrayed as the latter model and, after Stanley learns about her past, he ends up raping her, as it is understood that is what she serves for, while Stella is still in labor with their child.

The CDD also imposes this same double standard on men, classifying some in the "friendzone" and others in the "fuckzone". This is the type of language many adolescents and youth use to categorize relationships: when, in a friendship, one of the two people have non-reciprocal feelings towards the other one, the latter puts the former in the "friendzone", viewing them as just a friend that does not spark desire (Moreira et al., 2021); when a person is viewed as fuckable, or instrumentalized for sex, usually in sporadic relationships, they are grouped in the "fuckzone" (de Aguileta, 2021). While both women and men – and other identities – are categorized by some people into these terms, today they are often used to refer to men (Duque, 2021). In this way, the CDD pushes women to reproduce the instrumental and disdainful actions that the worst and most sexist men have had for centuries, reverting the double standard those men use (Gómez, 2015). Boys and men who do not have disdainful behaviors and attitudes are dismissed, looked down upon, instrumentalized and ridiculed by those who do have those behaviors, as well as by many girls who fall within the double standard (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2021; Valls-Carol et al., 2021). Another literary example can be found in the *Madame Bovary*, Gustave Flaubert's best-known novel published in 1857. It tells the story of Emma, a woman married to Charles, a good and respectable man puts her in a pedestal and treats her like a queen while, in her eyes, he is boring and stupid, and spends most of the book looking down on him, blaming him for the lack of passion in her life. Instead, she ends up finding excitement with another man who, as we learn from the moment he appears in the story, instrumentalizes and deceives her to have sex and leaves her once he gets bored. The book

provides very specific details on the double standard between the repulsion she feels for Charles and the desire she feels for Rodolphe, the man she has an affair with: "Her tenderness, in fact, grew each day with her repulsion to her husband. The more she gave up herself to the one, the more she loathed the other. Never had Charles [the husband] seemed to her so disagreeable, to have such stodgy fingers, such vulgar ways, to be so dull as when they found themselves together after her meeting with Rodolphe" (Flaubert, 2018, pp. 246–247). This double standard is therefore not new, and it can be found across classic literature and films from different countries, epochs and cultures. However, the CDD has managed for many people to associate this disdain and instrumentalization of some men as feminist, freeing and attractive[8] (Torras-Gómez et al., 2024).

The CDD is enforced through "power communicative acts". The concept of communicative acts refers to all signs of communication involved when we interact with others, such as words, tone, gaze, caresses, body language, smell, emotions, feelings, likeness, social status and power position, intentions, desires, or the consequences of the interaction. Different communicative acts serve different purposes and lead to different activities, identities and relationships. To better understand how different communicative acts have different outcomes, the authors of this theory have developed two main typologies: power communicative acts and dialogic communicative acts (Soler Gallart, 2017; Soler & Flecha, 2010). Power communicative acts are all those signs of communication that seek action through coercion and pressure, deceit, imposition, or even violence. They are based on the desire to impose a person's or group's own goals, turning other individuals or collective subjects into instruments for the achievement of such goals. On the contrary, dialogic communicative acts are all signs of communication based on honesty, respect, solidarity, and a desire to achieve action through consensus and based on

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[8] https://www.businessinsider.com/ashley-madison-cheating-survey-empowers-women-2019-3

freedom and equality. Rather than imposing one's goals over others, dialogic communicative acts lead all subjects involved in the interaction to freely share an action, agreement, feeling or desire. This, however, does not mean that dialogic relationships are free from power communicative acts whatsoever. What it means that, in relationships that are non-violent and egalitarian, there is a prevalence of dialogic communicative acts, and in many such relationships there is a conscious effort to overcome power communicative acts.

The CDD is reproduced through and framed within communicative acts of power that impose the connection between violence and attraction. An important aspect to better understand how this is achieved is the difference between the intentions and the consequences. When we analyze social interactions, we need to pay attention to the intention with which an utterance is saying but, most importantly, we need to analyze the consequences of all the communicative acts involved in the interaction, including of the social status of the subjects involved. A male boss might ask one of his female employees to have a beer only with the intention of having a beer if she freely wants it. Although his intentions are good, the hierarchical position of the labor that situates the employee below him might make her feel pressured to accept the invitation and, as a consequence, say yes to having the beer despite not desiring it (Flecha et al., 2020). Communicative acts are everything that goes from the subjects' intentions to the outcomes of the interaction, going through the words, gestures, tone, gazes, social status, or feelings – and any other signs of communication. The very concept of communicative acts includes the consequences of social interactions, not just the intentions, as essential elements in the analysis of how we construct social reality in communication.

Some of the specific power communicative acts through which the CDD operates include: providing social status to people with disdainful behaviors, using words such as "hot", "sexy" and others that portray them as attractive, as well as gestures or gazes that show desire or admiration; removing attractiveness from people who like and enjoy beauty – i.e. who enjoy

listening to classical music – through words such as "loser" or "sucker", or making gestures or side-eyes to mock them; using degrading language to talk about girls' bodies and sexuality; or pressuring girls to give the first kiss or lose their virginity, calling them "prude", "boring", or similar words if they do not do it (Ríos & Christou, 2010; Torras-Gómez et al., 2024). Such communicative acts establish a huge pressure to see people with violent or disdainful behaviors as attractive, and by constantly listening to and repeating that discourse, many adolescents and youth internalize this pattern that connects violence with attraction (Gómez, 2015; Torras-Gómez et al., 2020). Research has shown that even girls who, pushed by the peer pressure to have disdainful hookups in which they felt disgust and no pleasure, were afraid to not meet their peers' expectations or to lose social status and told them they felt pleasure and the boys were handsome (Torras-Gómez et al., 2022). The CDD is therefore a risk factor that leads many young individuals to have "disdainful hookups" that create terrible consequences for individuals and society, including lack of passion in egalitarian relationships (López de Aguileta et al., 2021; Torras-Gómez et al., 2020), being revictimized in the future (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2018), or even suicide (Puigvert et al., 2023).

The good news about love and attraction patterns being learned via socialization is that language can be transformed (Gómez, 2015). With interactions that challenge and are free from the CDD, adolescents and youth can be socialized or re-socialized in interactions that unite desire, passion, excitement, goodness, beauty and truth, all in the same person, making satisfactory relationships possible (Gómez, 2015; Torras-Gómez et al., 2020).

Dialogic Literary Gatherings and the language of desire towards non-violent relationships

Schools play a critical role in providing students with interactions away from the CDD that show them the possibility of constructing relationships free of violence and full of passion. Dialogue, understood in the way in which Heraclites conceived "logos" as uniting both reason-argument and desire-emotion, enables the transformation of discourses that separate rationality

from feelings towards alternative ones that unite goodness and desire (Soler Gallart, 2017).

Research evidence has identified an educational intervention based on that notion of dialogue that is allowing adolescents to challenge the coercive dominant discourse: Dialogic Gatherings (DG). They have been identified by the INCLUD-ED project[9] as a "Successful Educational Action" due to the social impacts – i.e. social improvements – demonstrated in scientific articles published in journals indexed in Web of Science or Scopus (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023). In Dialogic Gatherings, different people gather to engage in dialogues around cultural creations of humanity, including literature, operas, scientific articles, paintings, sculptures, theatre, or films, among others (Flecha, 2022). Therefore, there are different types of DG depending on the texts or media around which the dialogues are centered: Dialogic Literary Gatherings, Dialogic Mathematics Gatherings, Dialogic Intellectual Gatherings, Dialogic Feminist Gatherings, Dialogic Scientific Gatherings, Dialogic Gatherings of Films, Dialogic Artistic Gatherings, etc.

The first one of all these gatherings was a Dialogic Literary Gathering (DLG). It was created in 1978 by a movement of adult learners in La Verneda-Sant Martí Adult School (Aubert et al., 2016; Cuevas & Valls, 2022; Sánchez-Aroca, 1999), located in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Barcelona at that time. It is no coincidence that DLG were created in such a neighborhood in that exact period; the movement did it as a response to the classist and elitist affirmations made back then that adult, low-literacy people like them could not read and

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[9] The INCLUD-ED project (2006-2011) was selected by the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme of Research for funding, becoming the project on schooling that had received the most funding until that moment. After analyzing what schools that were being successful in improving academic performance and social cohesion were doing in Europe, the consortium, formed by 15 institutions, identified seven Successful Educational Actions (SEA) that were promoting such improvements (Morlà-Folch et al., 2022). The project's findings were later recognized by the European Commission by selecting it as the only Social Sciences and Humanities project in the Commission's list of 10 success stories of research (European Commission, 2011). More recently, the European Toolkit for Schools has included several SEA as recommended resources to promote school success for all.

understand what was considered highbrow or classic literature (López de Aguileta et al., 2023; Torras-Gómez et al., 2021). The movement was mainly formed by "other women", a term used by international feminist scholars and by these women themselves to refer to women with no academic studies, who have often been left out of the feminist movement and debate (Garcia et al., 2012; García Yeste et al., 2011; Puigvert & Elboj, 2004). They organized together with other adult learners who opposed the practice that, for centuries, has denied women the freedom to read what they want to read. They decided it was about time to overcome the power communicative acts which had excluded them not only from the possibility of reading classic literature, but also from the capacity to understand and enjoy it. Together with sociologist Ramon Flecha, who co-created with them La Verneda-Sant Martí Adult School and provided the theoretical and pedagogical foundation of dialogic learning, they created the first DLG, in which participants decided to read James Joyce's *Ulyses* (Flecha, 2000).

The first social impact of DLG was the overcoming of such power communicative acts by showing that they could read, enjoy, and engage in deep dialogues and reflections around classic literature (Flecha, 2000), which the creators of the first DLG define as the literature that endures over time. Soon, the first DLG was replicated in different contexts – all grades of formal education, afterschool programs, special education schools, institutionalized care centers, hospitals and primary care centers, etc. (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023) – and around different types of texts and media mentioned earlier. The more than 70 scientific articles on the different Dialogic Gatherings published in journals indexed in WoS and/or Scopus show their scientific, political and social impacts in more than 15.000 centers worldwide. The impacts include overcoming cultural stereotypes and barriers (Aubert, 2015; De Botton et al., 2014; Flecha & Soler, 2013a), increasing participants' self-esteem (Alvarez et al., 2018; Elboj, 2015; Marifa Salceda et al., 2022), promoting friendship and solidarity (García-Carrión, Villardón-Gallego, et al., 2020; León-Jiménez et al., 2020; Pulido-Rodríguez et al., 2015), and improving

literacy and communication skills in different languages (Buslón et al., 2020; Molina Roldán, 2015; M. Santiago-Garabieta et al., 2022).

One of those Dialogic Gatherings has shown specific impacts related to challenging the coercive dominant discourse (CDD) and uniting the language of desire and of ethics: Dialogic Feminist Gatherings (DFG). DFG follow the same dialogic learning principles as DLG, which I will explain in the next section. The difference, however, is in the texts read. DFG center around the reading and dialogue of scientific articles, books or other types of texts that are based on the theory and empirical evidence on the preventive socialization of gender violence – the theory that explains the socialization in the CDD and alternative socializations that unite desire and ethics. DFG have transformed the memories, feelings and desires of many girls, and that they promote many students' use of the language of desire towards egalitarian relationships and to reject violent and disdainful ones (López de Aguileta et al., 2020; Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Vidu, et al., 2020; Rodrigues de Mello et al., 2021; Salceda et al., 2020; Ugalde et al., 2022). For instance, Racionero and colleagues (2020; 2022) found that after an intervention program in which participants who had suffered gender violence engaged in a dialogue around Jesús Gómez's *Radical Love*, their narratives of past violent episodes changed. In the pre-test, participants associated more positive feelings with such episodes, while in the post-test they shared more negative feelings and critical memories – memories of violent relationships regarding despise, humiliation, and other characteristics of intimate partner violence towards them (Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Merodio, et al., 2020). Along similar lines, a study by Puigvert (2016) analyzed the impact of a DFG in which female university students read and engaged in an egalitarian dialogue on scientific texts about love, attraction and gender violence. Findings revealed that after participating in the DFG, the percentage of girls who had previously stated they would like to hook up with a violent man decreased from 38,5% to 14,9% (Puigvert, 2016). There are even examples in which, after participating in a DFG, participants decided to

end disdainful relationships, as they explained to researchers in the post-test (Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Merodio, et al., 2020).

Interestingly, there is research that has shown promising impacts in regards to challenging the CDD and uniting ethics and desire in another type of DG: Dialogic Literary Gatherings. This very dissertation, despite not having been peer-reviewed by the scientific community yet, has presented evidence of different students using the language of desire to talk about egalitarian relationships and challenge the CDD in seven different DLG groups. To better understand how and why this might happen, in the following pages I describe the specific features of DLG.

Characteristics of Dialogic Literary Gatherings

DLG have two main pillars: the reading of what the DLG creators consider best literature, and the grounding on the principles of dialogic learning (Flecha, 2000). For the abovementioned reasons, the movement that created the first DLG decided that only the best literary works of humanity would be read in the context of DLG. One of the reasons to choose this literature instead of best-sellers or other literature imposed by the market is that such literature depicts and reflects on deep issues that are universal and touch very different human beings (Ruiz, 2015; Rupiper & Zeece, 2005; Zuñiga-Lacruz, 2024). They still do not accept impositions from the capitalist market to read other types of literature in DLG, so they created a list of readings. This list is updated periodically, as they are always open to revising it democratically. Together with the list of readings for DLG, the website of the Learning Communities movement includes the following explanation of what they understand to be the best literature:

> The best literary works of humanity are those that endure over time. There is a universal consensus that recognizes their quality and their contribution to the cultural heritage of humanity. They are model works in their genre. They are also works that reflect with great quality and depth the great themes that concern humanity, the universals, regardless of culture or time. They are works that do not go out of fashion, that continue

to interest people through generations even if they were written hundreds or even thousands of years ago, such as the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* by Homer. In addition, these classic works provide knowledge, vocabulary improvement, greater understanding of the historical situation, better quality of literature, and ultimately mark history in different cultures, becoming cultural references of the first order to understand and reflect on the world.[10]

Most of these literary works depict contexts, epochs, and traditions that are far from the ones we live today, which many readers might not feel directly identified with. For instance, it is unlikely that a 13-year-old Roma boy living in the poorest neighborhood in Sevilla will relate with the everyday lives of two noble families living in medieval Verona fighting with swords. However, he can identify with the passionate love of two adolescents who are pressured by their own families to end their love and marry people they do not love nor have chosen. Along this line, some research has shown that reading what is often considered as high-brow literature is related to higher levels of theory of mind, that is, the ability to identify and understand other people's emotions (Kidd & Castano, 2013).

Classic literature and tales have often been criticized due to portrayals of power relationships, based on domination and violence, as well as of sexist and racist stereotypes in many of them (Guertzenstein, 2019; Navarro-Goig, 2019). The Spanish *Don Juan Tenorio* tells the story of a man who makes a bet against another man claiming he will "conquer" that man's soon-to-be wife and takes her without her consent, after which the other man decides he will no longer marry her[11]. However, the dialogic communicative acts on which DLG are grounded allow

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[10] More on the literary works that are read in DLG can be found in the Learning Communities website: https://comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net/actuaciones-de-exito/tertulias-literarias-dialogicas/tertulias-literarias-dialogicas-tld/

[11] A similar pattern of sexist and dominant behavior can be found in different cultural works from different times and cultures. In opera, for instance, a parallelism can be drawn between Don Juan and the Duque of Mantua, from Verdi's famous opera *Rigoletto*, based on Victor Hugo's drama *Le roi*

participants to critically reflect on power-based relationships, questioning, criticizing and rejecting not only those portrayed in the books, but also those kinds of relationships they see in their environment.

This leads us to the other pillar. DLG are based on the theory of dialogic learning, developed by Ramon Flecha. Dialogic learning "leads to the transformation of education centers into learning communities where all the people and groups involved enter into relationships with each other. In this way, the environment is transformed, creating new cognitive development and greater social and educational equity" (Flecha, 2000, p. 24). It is grounded on seven principles: egalitarian dialogue, cultural intelligence, transformation, instrumental dimension, creation of meaning, solidarity, and equality of differences (Flecha, 2000). In the following lines I will describe each principle and point out how it relates to the coercive dominant discourse (CDD).

Egalitarian dialogue means that all contributions to the dialogue are considered and valued based on the validity of the arguments and reasoning provided – validity claims (Habermas, 1984) – rather than on the power positions held by the people who make them. The goal is not to find or agree on an interpretation of the text, but rather to share and co-create new meanings and interpretations based on participants' different perspectives, with consensus being that all opinions will be respected provided they respect human rights. Each person's contributions are valued as different, allowing participants to rethink or reconsider things they previously took for granted. There is a constant search for substituting power communicative acts with dialogic communicative acts and relationships. Of course, even in dialogic societies and spaces, such as DLG, power interactions can still be found (Soler Gallart, 2017). For instance, some

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s'amuse. In the opera, the Duque is depicted as a man who conquers women as preys for fun, singing the famous arias "Questa o quella [This woman or that one]" or "La donna è mobile [Woman is fickle]". In Japan, the short story "In a Grove", on which the movie *Rashomon* is based, shows that bandit Tajōmaru decides to rape a woman while she is travelling with her husband, killing him to take her.

participants might feel that their interpretation of the text is "more correct" or better than that of other participants. Nevertheless, dialogic spaces such as DLG, in which self-reflection and self-criticism are constant and imperative to overcome power relations, are what Erik O. Wright (Wright, 2010) defined as a real utopia: although utopias do not exist, there are *real utopias* which are getting closer to them. The aim of eliminating power communicative acts contributes to increasing participants' critical reflections and positioning not only against power interactions in the gatherings, but also in other spaces in which they participate. When it comes to sexual-affective-related issues, this means challenging the power communicative acts of the CDD, not subjugating to its imposed model of attraction and double standard, and daring to wish for and seek egalitarian relationships.

Cultural intelligence entails every human being's intelligence, knowledge and wisdom developed throughout their life experiences and interactions. In the context of egalitarian dialogue, when participants contribute their own interpretations and perspectives, each person is enriched through the knowledge and skills other participants have developed in their own backgrounds, in the interactions with other human beings. Indeed, human beings have an inherent and universal capacity for language (Chomsky, 2012), and the dialogue is enriched when people from all walks of life contribute with the chain of dialogues (Bakhtin, 1981) they have previously held. Unfortunately, there are still many situations, contexts and spaces that favor some types of knowledge and disdain others, for instance, the non-academic ones. However, research has shown that scientific knowledge improves when it is co-created with diverse citizens who contribute knowledge from their lifeworlds (Roca et al., 2022). In the same way that, through dialogue, all individuals can overcome the cultural and social barriers that often favor some types of intelligence or knowledge over others, every person can do the same when it comes to love and attraction. Individuals and groups that exert the CDD impose the image that they hold the knowledge on what relationships and individuals are attractive and

which ones are not. However, interactions based on dialogic communicative acts that give room to and value different types of knowledge and reasoning contribute new interpretations and perspectives that challenge and are free from the CDD.

The *transformation* of the environment and the relationships within it are achieved through dialogue (Freire, 2018). Individuals' and groups' desired transformations are achieved through dialogue and co-creation among different people, and not imposed by only a few. Relationships and communicative acts based on power are progressively transformed and replaced by dialogic and horizontal ones. However, such transformations go beyond the DLG themselves: transforming impositions and other power communicative acts in the DLG changes participants' self-perceptions, which encourages them to overcome more barriers outside of the gatherings, in their own lives. The first transformation of the first DLG, which was overcoming elitist barriers against adults with no academic degrees, was followed by and connected with the transformation of the La Verneda-Sant Martí neighborhood. Through the dialogic and democratic relationships and actions that started in the DLG and in the adult school, the neighborhood soon changed from being a slum neighborhood to having the best library in the world in 2023[12]. The library and so many other transformations of the neighborhood and the lives of its residents are conquers resulting from processes of shared dreaming and co-creation between very different people to fulfil those dreams. Dialogue provides individuals and groups the possibility to become the architects of their own lives, relationships and desires. In seeking to replace power communicative acts with dialogic communicative acts, interactions influenced by the CDD are challenged, diminished and transformed, allowing more freedom for each person to choose who to love, desire and feel attracted to, that is, to transform their language of desire.

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[12] https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/aug/22/barcelona-community-resource-named-worlds-best-new-public-library

The *instrumental dimension* is not at odds with the social and emotional dimension and, in fact, when the two go together, they both feed each other. Learning and acquiring certain instrumental knowledge and skills is necessary to function in today's society. Interacting with diverse people allows such knowledge and skills to be learned and developed in a more intense and profound way (Vygotsky, 1978). Egalitarian dialogue encourages participants to provide arguments and reasoning to express their opinions, which leads to intense reflection and learning. In the same way that people need instrumental knowledge to select and process information and function in society, we also need it to select and process information regarding sexual-affective relationships. Knowing why we feel attracted to certain people and why we choose the people we choose, as well as knowing the consequences of each different choice we can make, provides human beings with more freedom. DFG in which dialogic learning is put in practice around theory and research evidence on these matters provides participants with knowledge, learning and reflections on the social nature of love and attraction and, therefore, on the transformative potential of patterns of attraction.

Creation of meaning refers to every human being's capacity to give meaning to our lives through constantly generating new dreams, feelings, and actions as a response to the loss of meaning in our societies. Such loss of meaning is the result of the replacement of communities by bureaucratic systems (Weber, 1978) and the appropriation of the social, political, spiritual, and work worlds. Each person's contribution to the dialogue is unique and, therefore, irreplaceable; through egalitarian dialogue, all the different perspectives and contributions give way to new dreams, making social and personal changes possible. The gatherings are impacted by participants' past and present interactions in different spaces and, at the same time, the interactions within the gatherings are transferred back to those other spaces (Bakhtin, 1981). In this way, sharing dialogues about deeply human issues, such as love, with people different from them creates and recreates meaning in participants' past, present and future. The CDD

generates a loss of meaning: being cheated on, the incoherence of defending ethical values and being attracted to people who disdain and instrumentalize others, not being able to fall in love with friends, create disenchantment in human beings and relationships. Egalitarian dialogue oriented to the fulfillment of our deepest dreams and feelings helps us overcome such loss of meaning and make steps towards the horizon of satisfactory relationships that unite stability and madness in the same person. Freeing relationships from the double standard fills human beings' lives with meaning.

Solidarity is not learned or developed by being taught about it, but by practicing it. The first DLG was created in the worst moment for movements based on solidarity. It was a moment in which Nietzschean or poststructuralist theories were at their peak and questioned the possibility and even desirability of social transformation, claiming reactionary statements such as that every relationship is based on power. Dialogic learning, in line with theories such as Habermas's communicative action theory (1984) or Freire's emancipatory one (Freire, 2018), affirms that equality, democracy and sexual freedom are better than inequality, dictatorship and rape, and that education should be oriented to achieve the former. In their aim to overcome power relations and communicative acts, DLG are open to all types of people, regardless of their background, and everyone learns together, supporting and helping one another to reach their own and the community's goals. Egalitarian dialogue enables bonds and relationships that give way to solidarity. In the same way that the social cannot be separated from the individual (Mead, 1934), our response to the socialization that unites attraction with violence cannot be done only at the individual level. Therefore, challenging the CDD and uniting the language of desire with the language of ethics requires solidarity among diverse people to help each other advance towards each person's desired pattern of attraction and relationships free from impositions.

Last, *equality of differences* refers to the right of every individual to be different and live in different ways and, at the same time, to have the best opportunities to succeed. All participants, in relationship and interaction with each other, learn from one another, creating new developments (Vygotsky, 1978) and transformations (Freire, 2018). All participants in DLG are equal and different, and equality while respecting each other's differences is not only sought formally, but also in the very dynamics and functioning of the gatherings. During the first DLG, participants came up with different solutions to overcome some barriers they encountered, such as a few people's monopolization of the dialogue. They decided that each participant would choose a passage from the book and introduce their contribution to the dialogue by reading it out loud. It was also decided to have a facilitator that would give the floor to whoever wanted to share their passage and reflection, and that those people who contributed less would be prioritized. In this way, the dialogue promotes each person to share their own personal perspective on the reading and on reality, enriching everyone's interpretations on the same matters. When individuals share their own interpretations, feelings and opinions regarding sexual-affective relationships through egalitarian dialogue, they gain different perspectives that allow them to reflect on their own experiences, finding new meanings, as well as to imagine other possible ones. Encouraging the contributions of diverse people increases the chances for the DLG group to not just make and hear mainstream contributions, such as those influenced by the CDD, but to also hear alternative discourses that might challenge and be free from the CDD. Such contributions can help others in the gathering to see a different perspective on desire and relationships, enhancing their options to make choices regarding sexual-affective relationships.

All human beings have the ability to acquire and use language, as Chomsky (1995) has long argued. Yet, in addition to being able to use language, Chomsky also argues that all human beings have the capacity to use language in novel ways, to create a new language. When

adolescents read the stories that contain the deepest and most human feelings and emotions that have moved us throughout history and across cultures, and especially when they engage in dialogues around those stories, they encounter the possibility of a new language. Through this language they have the opportunity, if they want it, to imagine new worlds, dream of who they want to be, and desire sexual-affective relationships that are not imposed, but born from beauty, courage, and the deepest human sentiments.

Jesús Gómez laid out the ways in which dialogic learning enables and promotes new forms of sexual-affective relationships free from violence and coercion. However, we still do not have evidence on what specific characteristics of DLG promote the language of desire towards relationships free from the CDD. This study makes the first exploration on the matter, which will necessarily be replicated in more and different contexts to corroborate the findings presented her and identify the DLG characteristics leading to such transformation. To that end, it poses the following research question:

> What characteristics are related to interactions about relationships away from the CDD in a DLG centered around questions about romance?

Methodology

I follow the communicative orientation of research, which aims at overcoming the power hierarchies between researchers and participants and establishing an egalitarian dialogue to co-create new knowledge and evidence (Gómez et al., 2019, 2011; Puigvert et al., 2012). Due to its egalitarian foundation and transformative orientation, there is extensive evidence on the scientific, political and social impacts of this methodological framework (Racionero-Plaza, Vidu, et al., 2021; Ramis-Salas, 2020; Soler-Gallart & Flecha, 2022).

Research site and participants

The site I have chosen to collect my data is Soloarte, a high school that is part of the Learning Communities movement, which involves the whole community, including teachers, students, families and other members in the transformation of the educational and social context towards the highest quality education for all (Flecha & Soler, 2013; García-Carrión et al., 2020; Gatt et al., 2011; Morlà Folch, 2015). The school, as all Learning Communities, implements abovementioned Successful Educational Actions, among which are DLG, and transforms all interactions to become more egalitarian, horizontal and democratic.

The school is located in the Basque Country, in the north of Spain. The two main criteria to choose this school were: 1) that it successfully implemented DLG, and 2) that it carried out a DLG with a book about romance during the time of the study. The school population is diverse, with most families from low and middle SES, and a high percentage of migrant families from different nationalities including Spain, several countries in Latin America and in Asia. Within the school, I chose to analyze the 3rd grade classroom (ages 15-17) who were reading *Pride and Prejudice* in one of their DLG. The classroom is composed of 14 students, 8 girls and 6 boys from 6 different nationalities: Colombia, Honduras, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Spain.

Data collection

I collected data between April and June 2023. The main method was observation of weekly DLG sessions, which I complemented with interviews with the teacher and some students in my last observation to gain their insights and triangulate the data. (For full interview protocol, see Appendix A.)

I first contacted the DLG teacher, whom I already knew, via WhatsApp to inform her about the dissertation, the objectives and the procedures, and ask her whether her school would like to participate. She replied with great enthusiasm and, after talking to the school principal, agreed to participate. After explaining I would like to conduct the study on a DLG around romance, she recommended the 3rd grade group due to the book they were reading and because she

considered they made very relevant contributions to this topic. She also thought this classroom would be a good fit due to their group dynamics, as they got along very well with each other and followed the DLG principles. She then talked to the students and their parents and, after they also agreed to participate and signed the informed written consents, I began observing the weekly DLG sessions. I observed all sessions via zoom except for the last one, which I observed in person. In all, I observed and audio-recorded 6 sessions that lasted between 50 and 90 minutes. During the in-person observation I also took notes on the non-verbal interactions. To complement such data, at the end of the observations I conducted and audio-recorded three mixed focus groups with three students each. I conducted the three focus groups in person after the last DLG session I observed. Because one of the students was missing that day and the teacher strongly suggested that I interview her due to her active participation in DLG, I conducted one individual interview with her via zoom a few days later. That same day, I individually interviewed the teacher via zoom, as she was not available the day I visited the school. The focus groups lasted between 15 and 20 minutes, while the individual interviews lasted 11 and 19 minutes each. The focus groups and interviews followed the communicative orientation (G. López de Aguileta et al., 2021), which means that while I had a list of main themes and questions I wanted to talk about but built upon and asked different questions based on what they were sharing. The full interview protocol can be found in Appendix A, and the main topics on which interviews revolved were: peer pressure and coercion; what type of persons they and their classmates found attractive and why they thought that was; how they felt about certain characters from the book; and whether and how the DLG provided them with a space to talk about these issues or had helped them challenge the CDD in any way.

Ethical considerations

The study followed ethical standards included in the Declaration of Helsinki. After collecting the data I anonymized it and gave students pseudonyms. All parents, students and the teacher

were provided with an information sheet about the study goals, the methods, and the implications of participating, including the benefits and potential risks. All of them signed the informed consent forms. This study received approval from the IRB at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Approval number is 2022-1444.

After collecting the data, I asked the teacher whether they wanted the school's name to appear published or not. They discussed it in their Learning Community's assembly, in which all members of the community participate, including students of all grades, teachers, and family members. They finally decided they wanted the name of their school to appear with great pride.

Data analysis

I first transcribed all DLG observations and interviews with the help of the Box automatic transcription feature in their original language, Spanish. I used *interaction events* as the unit of analysis (Díez-Palomar et al., 2021). In this study, I define interaction events as any utterance or group of utterances from students and/or the teacher. The way I select each interaction event is in terms of themes, that is, each interaction event includes utterances around the same theme. Therefore, an interaction event can be a single utterance or a dialogue with several student and teacher exchanges.

I conducted a deductive data analysis that consisted of two steps. First, I used concepts and definitions from the scientific literature on the preventive socialization of gender violence to identify interaction events around the CDD and sexual-affective relationships and desires challenging it. In other words, I first identified all interaction events in which students talked about issues related to coercion and peer pressure; rejected relationships and characters or individuals with violent, coercive or disdainful attitudes; and/or talked about relationships and characters or individuals with non-violent behaviors as attractive, desirable and/or admirable. I paid particular attention to those interaction events in which students used the language of desire to either reject relationships and people related to the CDD or show attraction towards

egalitarian ones based on how research on the preventive socialization of gender violence defines language of desire. For instance, I paid attention to those interaction events in which students spoke in a way that showed rejection, criticism, disgust or dislike towards people who use violence, coercion or imposition, such as saying "when someone is violent with you we denounce them and isolate them until they become brave". I also paid attention to interaction events in which students showed desire, attraction, admiration or likeness towards people who have behaviors that are away or opposed to violence, coercion and imposition, such as when students say "I like her" to refer to Elizabeth, the book's main character who shows good and brave behaviors.

Second, I used both Flecha's (2000) and Gómez's (2015) definitions of each principle of dialogic learning to guide the analysis of the pillars of DLG (classic literature and the seven principles of dialogic learning) that were present in those interaction events. I therefore read each interaction event several times to identify whether 1) egalitarian dialogue, 2) cultural intelligence, 3) transformation, 4) instrumental dimension, 5) creation of meaning, 6) solidarity, 7) equality of differences, and 8) universal issues of the classic book were present in any of them. Of these 8 items, I identified 6, finding elements of classic literature and all principles of dialogic learning except for cultural intelligence and solidarity. Last, I read all interviews several times to identify whether students and/or the teacher referenced, explicitly or implicitly, any of the 6 items I found in the analysis of the observations. Once I had all interaction events categorized, I translated the most relevant ones into English.

Results

In this section I will present and analyze some of the most significant examples of student dialogues that show which characteristics of DLG are related to interactions about relationships away from the CDD throughout the sessions observed. I have divided this section into six

subsections, one per each of the principles of dialogic learning found, and the last one related to the deep and universal themes of the classic book. Many of the quotes I present here are related to more than one characteristic of DLG, so I have included them under the one that is more salient in each case.

Egalitarian dialogue

The principle of egalitarian dialogue is present in most of the interaction events in which students either criticize and reject behaviors related to the CDD or speak with attraction and admiration towards characters or people who have egalitarian values, feelings and behaviors. Students are used to providing arguments to show and support their own interpretations of the texts and the realities they connect them with, as well as to question other participants or the texts when they do not agree. On many occasions there are differing opinions among students, but rather than searching for the right interpretation or imposing one over others, they share their own arguments and feelings to co-create new interpretations and reasoning. As an example, some students and the teacher discuss whether Lydia and Wickham love each other or not, and why they think so. Not all of them agree on this matter, and they share their own interpretations. Some of them show disagreement with each other while respecting each other's ideas. The need to ground their opinions and interpretations on arguments makes some students search for the reasoning behind their running away, which leads them to talk what love is and is not.

Aurora	teacher, I think that if they love each other they should be happy	1
Andrea (teacher)	well, my question is whether they love each other, actually I don't think so…	2
Aurora	if they ran away to Scotland…	3
Andrea	it doesn't seem a love relationship to me	4

Martin	right, right, right	5
Andrea	you say "right, right, right"?	6
Aurora	well, teacher, but it's their live	7
Andrea	Martin	8
Martin	I think it has been very… maybe they've done it without thinking about it. I also don't think they love each other.	9
	(…)	
Claudia	I think she's so obsessed with getting married with, that, either she has done it because she was too obsessed with getting married or because she said "they're putting pressure on my sister, so I'll get married before". And then, the fact that she's also pressuring her sister, it's funny to me that the sister doesn't give a shit. "I don't mind getting married now or when I'm 30 if I don't find a person I love and who loves me"	15
Martin	and why get married now? Why get married?	16
Aurora	you can get divorced	17
Claudia	well, to survive, because your parents will not last all your life unfortunately. So you need to find a safe place	18
	(…)	
Claudia	peer pressure. It's as if, I don't know, imagine you arrive late to class, the teacher says the person who comes late will be marked red. What are others going to say, that it's green? No, and the person who, wouldn't say it's green	20
Aurora	not me, I will say the color I see	21

Claudia	ok, but when you have peer pressure, as cool as you are…	22
Andrea	but in this example Claudia has given it's very easy to position oneself, but when we're talking about sentimental relationships or hookups or…	23
Claudia	of the 400 hookups that await	24

DLG session 5

In the first line, Aurora states that the fact that they ran away to Scotland must mean they love each other. However, the teacher and another student seem reluctant to accept this interpretation. When the teacher prompts Martin to further explain why he questions whether they truly love each other, he argues it does not seem they put much thought to the decision of running away in line 9, affirming he does not think they truly love each other. This sparks a debate on why, then, they made such decision. An alternative reasoning to that of being in love is, as Claudia states in line 18, the family's and society's pressure for women to get married. At first it seems that Martin and Aurora do not understand such pressure to get married (lines 16 and 17). So, to strengthen her argument on the influence of peer pressure when making decisions, Claudia tries to give an example on how difficult it is to say something when everybody else says the opposite in line 20. After seeing that Aurora still does not think peer pressure is such a big deal to her, stating "not me" (line 21) to clarify she does not do what other people tell her to do, Claudia references in line 24 the pressures and coercion for instrumental hookups that exists today.

Egalitarian dialogue entails that all opinions are respected and that, through basing the dialogue on arguments, validity claims and feelings, power communicative acts are progressively replaced by dialogic ones. This does not mean that there are no instances of power communicative acts, as the following example shows, but these are minimized and transformed towards dialogic ones. In the beginning, one of the students uses power communicative acts to

impose her own view on relationships as the true one, and does not let others contradict her. However, towards the end, some students dare to give their own interpretation on relationships, weakening the other student's influence to state what is "true", and they progressively replace those power communicative acts with dialogic ones.

Aurora	In the first dash, at the very end. "People vary and one can't trust anyone". This sentence is right because even the person you least expect will, will betray you, they betray you	1
Andrea (teacher)	you mean everyone will betray you?	2
Aurora	yes teacher	3
Andrea	what a sentence, right?	4
Aurora	it's true, you can't trust anyone	5
Martin	people are very mean	6
Andrea	so what are we doing here?	7
Claudia	we have been born, it is what it is	8
Andrea	we can't trust any of us? No one can trust anyone?	9
Mikel	based on her logic, no	10
Andrea	so Aurora, are you saying that no one can trust you, because you will end up betraying them?	11
Aurora	everyone ends up saying something about someone else	12
Andrea	Claudia has raised her hand	13

Claudia	I don't think everyone will betray you. Now, if you provoke someone to betray you, it's ugly for someone to betray you, but imagine that I'm with Mikel, we've dated, if I start treating him badly, whatever, and he ends up tired of me. Well, obviously it can reach a point in which he's sick of me and says "I can't anymore", and he says things he shouldn't about me or about whatever. But of course, to say that everyone will betray you, no…	14
Aurora	yes	15
Claudia	I have people who have not betrayed me yet	16
Aurora	yet	17
Claudia	that's why I say "yet". And people I don't think will betray me. But give it time	18
Aurora	when you least expect it they will end up betraying you	19
Andrea	it makes me think, I don't know what's your concept of the word "betray", maybe you have some I don't know what, because you talk about betraying as if it were something easy. I think that betraying someone is hard, I mean, you have to reach a point that, I don't know, Claudia's example, right? Maybe you lose control with your friend Mikel, right? He's a super friend and… and I don't know, you start doing things that are not convenient for him, or you speak badly, or whatever. I think Mikel can say "hey, you're doing this, realize it, look at what's happening", right? "I don't like that". And maybe he makes you reflect, he makes you realize that… right? And you go back to being with him as you used to	20

Claudia	yes, but in the case that you don't change, that's what I meant	21
Andrea	it can happen, but [do you think] everyone will do that to you?	22
Claudia	I don't believe that	23
Aurora	I do	24
Claudia	she has traumatic experiences	25
Andrea	of course, everything depends on what people we're with, maybe, right? If they make us think that they can do that at some point, maybe we need to reconsider…	26
Martin	imagine who this woman has been with	27

DLG session 2

In the beginning, Aurora uses power communicative acts to impose a very negative perspective on relationships and human beings by stating everyone will betray them. This can be seen in lines 1, 3 and 5, when she states with a strong tone that they cannot trust anyone and, even when the teacher questions her claim, she replies saying "it's true, you can't trust anyone" (line 5), imposing her belief as a true fact. She makes it hard for other students to contradict her. Indeed, at first some students follow along with her, as can be seen in lines 6 and 8 when Claudia and Martin seem to agree with her, and the only one who distances himself from her is Mikel. By saying "based on her logic" in line 10, he is clarifying that not everyone thinks that way, that only people who follow her logic do. However, as the teacher tries to question her and facilitate an egalitarian dialogue, Claudia, who at first goes with the flow and does not dare to disagree with Aurora, in line 14 provides arguments to support her own perspective, which is different from Aurora's. Aurora still makes it hard for Claudia to contradict her, for instance when in line 15 she says "yes" after Claudia says she does not think everyone will betray her, and again in line 17 when she says "yet", as if she knew that Claudia will be betrayed at some point. Whereas in lines 14, 16 and 18 Claudia tries to provide her view but does not

entirely contradict Aurora, such as when in line 18 she replies to Aurora "that's why I say "yet"", as the interaction event goes on, she becomes more confident. In lines 23 and 25 she forcefully contradicts her, saying "I don't believe that", and even mocks her in line 25 suggesting that the reason why Aurora has such belief on relationships is because she has had negative experiences. Even though Aurora does not change her opinion, at the end states it with less force than in the beginning, replying "I do" to Claudia in line 24. This indicates that the affirmation that everyone will betray her is her opinion, rather than the solemn truth, as she indicated in the beginning of the interaction event. Martin also changes his communicative acts, going from justifying Aurora in line 6 to also ridiculing her for having such pessimistic views on relationships in line 27. In these last utterances, Claudia and Martin use the language of desire to remove Aurora's self-imposed image of knowing what relationships are about stating she has not had positive relationships. In this sense, the use of the language of desire to remove attractiveness from her pessimistic views is related to the transformation of power communicative acts to dialogic ones, becoming the most effective way to overcome Aurora's imposition.

Still, this is the only example across all the DLG sessions analyzed in which a student uses power communicative acts. Throughout the rest of the DLG sessions students have shown great respect and value towards one another, despite not always agreeing. When talking about beautiful feelings and relationships, such as the love between Darcy and Elizabeth, some students have used the language of desire stating they like it, and no one has laughed at or made fun of them for expressing beautiful feelings. Far from the power communicative acts shown in the previous example, in the next interaction event students show an egalitarian dialogue in which they express not only their interpretation or opinion about the book's ending with Elizabeth and Darcy getting together, but also their feelings about it.

Ajar	I think it's very beautiful that they have ended up together, after all this time	1
Andrea	you think it's beautiful? It has been like a tense story, right? Until the end	2
Claudia	very well, they've now gotten married	3
Mikel	I have chosen the same one	4
Andrea	why Martin? Uy, Mikel, sorry	5
Mikel	for the same reason, because I think it's good that they have ended up together after all	6

DLG session 6

Both Ajar and Mikel express they liked the fact that Elizabeth and Darcy finally end up together. They share their feelings in different ways and using different words. In the first line, Ajar says she finds it beautiful, and Mikel expresses in line 6 that he thinks it is good they have finally ended up together. No one laughs at them or makes disdainful comments regarding their contributions in favor of the love story.

Last, hearing different perspectives, arguments and feelings can also lead students to change their minds or consider other options, in some cases retracting from things they have previously said or realizing their own mistakes – even though this is not the DLG's goal. The following interaction event, which occurred in the same DLG session in which Aurora tried to impose her view on relationship, shows that she has a different view about love and relationships at the end of the session.

Andrea	Claudia, you said you do believe in love. To me that's also love	1
Aurora	teacher, I also believe in love, despite all the pain	2

DLG session 2

In line 2, Aurora offers a new, quite opposite perspective to the abovementioned one on relationships. After Claudia and Martin challenge Aurora's negative views through the language of desire, other students have continued talking about love, pressure, and the importance of taking care of friends to protect and help them not fall into social pressures. Sharing their personal experiences and feelings related to these topics is followed by Aurora's apparent retraction from the previous statement that everyone will betray her. Although she does not explicitly state she was wrong, or that she has changed her mind, "despite all the pain" seems to make a reference to the "traumatic experiences" Claudia mentioned earlier. Instead, now she wants to clarify that she, too, believes in love. Moreover, stating that she believes in love seems contrary, or at least far, from the idea that everyone will betray her. Therefore, in this context of an egalitarian dialogue in which power communicative acts are minimized and student contributions are valued based on the arguments and feelings they provide, there is room for even students who have had negative experiences to speak positively about and defend love.

Equality of differences

The egalitarian dialogue, in which all participants' contributions are valued and respected, is related to the principle of the equality of differences, that is, the right of every person to live in their own manner. When it comes to the DLG observed, this principle is especially salient when students provide very different, sometimes opposing, interpretations and perspectives over the reading without the need to convince others or change their minds. One such example involves students' interpretation on who is to blame for Lydia's escape with Wickham. Two of the students have very different interpretations, especially regarding whether the family is to blame or not. However, rather than each imposing their own, they provide arguments to support their own perspectives.

Ibtissan	but we also need to take into account that the responsibility is also of the family. Because, I mean, they must trust each other, I mean, these things can't happen	1
Andrea (teacher)	Maria?	2
Maria	I think here we shouldn't blame the family, I think the only one responsible of having made that decision was Lydia, as she was grown and mature enough to make such a decision, and if she did it, well, [it's] because she wanted to, right? Well, or maybe we don't know whether Wickham also dragged her to make that decision. So I wouldn't blame the family nor the mother	3
	(…)	
Ibtissan	here they [the family] have already realized they were supporting or like forcing her to do something bad when something bad has happened. Before that they were saying "you have to get married, whatever, what a shame", but when this has happened, I mean, they have felt like guilty	6

DLG session 5

In the first line, Ibtissan thinks that even the family has realized that their pressure for their daughters to get married might have pushed Lydia to make such decision. In turn, Maria thinks the family should not be blamed, clearly contradicting Ibtissan in line 3. To support her position, she introduces a new argument that had not been considered until this point in the interaction event: that maybe Wickham is the one who pressured her to make the decision. Although Ibtissan does not change her mind about the family's responsibility in line 6, Maria's argument might help students think about the pressures exerted by people like Wickham, who,

as some students shared during this session, has been known to deceive women and commit fraud, among other despicable behaviors. This back and forth of sharing their opinions and arguments sparks a reflection about pressure, coercion, and whether others can or should be held accountable over a person's decision when it comes to sexual-affective relationships.

Another example in which students' differing views allow them to listen to and reflect on different interpretations about sexual-affective relationships took place when some students engaged in a dialogue around what aspects influence people when choosing a sexual-affective partner. In particular, some students engaged in a dialogue about whether they prefer attractiveness or values in a relationship. Whereas most students agreed on a similar idea, one of them expressed his own idea despite being different from everyone else's, at least in the beginning of the interaction event.

Aurora	yes, because saying "I have a hot boyfriend" looks better than saying "I have a boyfriend who treats me well"	1
Andrea (teacher)	it gives you like more…	2
Mikel	but I don't know what is better, someone who treats you better or who is hot	3
Claudia	someone who treats you well	4
Martin	there has to be a balance. There has to be a bit of both, because you…	5
Andrea	wait Martin, Mikel said "I don't know what's better or worse", you've said "I don't know what's better", but you've said it as a rhetoric question, right? You have the answer clear	6
Mikel	it's better that they treat you well than being hot, than being hot	7
Martin	well	8

Andrea	Martin?	9
Martin	I mean there has to be a balance between the two, I mean, the boy or girl has to be a good person, but you also have to like him or her, if you don't, imagine waking up every day with him next to you in your bed and you say "I have a monster next to me!", do you know what I mean? I mean, there has to be a middle point where you say…	10
Amagoia	but you have to like him or her	11
Martin	exactly	12
Amagoia	not others [have to like him or her]	13
Martin	that's it	14
Claudia	of course, he or she has to treat you well, I mean, there is a balance, but I prefer someone who treats me well than someone who is super hot, who is Spain's bombshell and all of a sudden he beats you, right?	15
Andrea	Martin?	16
Martin	well, there has to be a balance between the two, I don't know	17

DLG session 6

While in lines 1, 3, 4 and 7 we can see that many students agree that there is a separation between values and attractiveness and that it is better to be with someone who treats them well than who looks well, Martin brings a new perspective by claiming that there needs to be a balance between the two in line 5. The egalitarian dialogue and the equality of differences allows Martin to defend and provide arguments to support his position in line 10 despite knowing most other students do not agree with him, offering the option that the realms of ethics and of aesthetics can go together. Daring to share a different mindset than most of his classmates allows the group to consider and think about the double standards that separate values, feelings and goodness from attractiveness and desire. He introduces a perspective that

had not been considered until this point in the interaction event – nor in any other session I observed – , as most students seemed to assume that they need to choose between goodness or attractiveness. Even in line 15, Claudia seems to indicate she agrees with him, stating "of course (…) there is a balance". Therefore, Martin's unique or different perspective challenging the CDD's double standard allows students to consider a different way of viewing relationships, one that unites the language of desire with the language of ethics.

The importance of listening to different perspectives was highlighted in one of the focus groups with students as a key of the influence of the DLG in reflecting on and considering things or interpretations they had not thought of before.

Interviewer	do you think that the things you talk about in the DLG makes you think and can help you to…	1
Claudia	yes	2
Interviewer	to see things? Has this ever happened to you, for example?	3
Claudia	yes, many times, in the gathering we have… of course, we have listened to different points of view of people, so you can… you can think other things. For example, the same has happened to Andrea [the teacher], she thought one thing, she has listened to what I said and to what others have said and she has said "ok, I hadn't thought about that"	4

Mixed FG 1

As the student states in line 4, listening to and engaging in dialogues with different perspectives might help them in their own lives and relationships.

Creation of meaning

The abovementioned interaction event on the union between the language of desire and of ethics is not the only one where students break the double standard that separates love from

passion. When students talk about good people as desirable rather than as losers, they overcome the disenchantment or disappointment the CDD creates by separating the two realms. In previous DLG sessions many students shared how good they think Elizabeth is, for instance when she tries to protect her friend from Collins, who uses his money and power to marry her. In the following interaction event they show their admiration towards her due to her self-confidence when not subjugating to Lady Catherine's pressures.

Alicia	I like how Elizabeth, she, Catherine tells her, well she tells her whether she knows how to draw. And I like how Elizabeth responds firmly, she says "not at all". I mean, it's not like her voice trembles to say no, she knows, she's not afraid that they will classify her or they will…	1
	(…)	
Alicia	The paragraph after "at the fourth day". [he reads the passage she selected]. I liked it, I liked very much like, what, what I've said previously, she's very decided. She has a decided character and she's very confident in herself, and she stops any attack against her	4
Andrea (teacher)	she knows how to stop others, right? How do the rest of you see Elizabeth? Maria, did you want to say something? No? Claudia?	5
Claudia	I see Elizabeth a brave girl, she knows what she's worth and she makes herself worthy in front of others without any fear of being judged by "oh look, you are, you have less money and still you think you're whatever". She ignores people, and many people here, well, here, everywhere, wouldn't be capable of being like Elizabeth, at least with what she's shown in what we have read	6

DLG session 3

As Claudia's and Alicia's utterances show, they do not talk about Elizabeth only through the language of ethics, but they also use the language of desire. Alicia uses the words "I like" several times in lines 1 and 4 to express her admiration towards how Elizabeth challenges and does not subjugate to Lady Catherine. She also uses words like "firm", "decided" or "confident" to describe her. As her last words in line 4 show, she describes Elizabeth's active defense of her worth against any attacks towards her with attractiveness and admiration. Similarly, in line 6 Claudia describes her as "brave", a word associated with positive connotations. In this way, they create meaning by uniting all human dimensions, rationality and emotionality, and therefore break the connection between violence and attractiveness and between goodness and boredom that the CDD imposes. They use the language of desire to refer to Elizabeth's goodness, bravery and self-confidence, creating meaning through the union between goodness and attractiveness.

Many students also break the connection between attractiveness and violence or coercion when they talk about Lady Catherine and her disdainful and coercive attitudes. In the next interaction event students use a series of adjectives that have negative connotations to describe her, showing their rejection towards her mistreatment of others. In this way, students create meaning by freeing values from the double standard that often portrays people who treat others with disdain or superiority as the attractive and desirable ones; in this interaction event we see the opposite.

| Ibtissan | I think first [her attitude] is one of a mean person, if the aunt ?? with rudeness, because the fact that [Elizabeth] is not from the same class as Darcy doesn't mean there can't be love between them. I think the aunt is an arrogant person because she thinks she can control her nephew, but she doesn't know that he's a grown-up, I mean, he's a | 1 |

	grown-up, he can exercise, he can make his own decisions, he can choose the person with whom he wants to spend his life, right? ?? to her daughter so that ??, he should do whatever he wants	
Andrea (teacher)	you said she is an arrogant person because she wants to control his nephew's life. [to the rest] Do you want to say anything? Yes Ángel	2
Ángel	the lady wants her nephew to marry ??	3
Andrea	are you asking, that seems to you, why, right? Did you just realize that? Well, we advance, you don't want to say anything else? Claudia, Martin had [a selected passage] on page 161, and then we move to Claudia and Juan	4
Martin	The second dash. "[reads the passage he selected]". Like… she's a bitter and rude woman and she comes here to, I don't know what for. I don't know, I completely dislike this lady	5
Andrea	she's bitter and rude. And what has she come here for, did you say?	6
Martin	yes, to do nothing!	7
Mikel	to marry her nephew	8
Claudia	and she doesn't even achieve that, so…	9
	(…)	
Andrea	[she wants to] be in charge. Do you remember how she said goodbye to people when they went to her home? She got bored and said "well this is over, you're no longer useful for me, you no longer entertain me, out of my home". I mean, she treats everyone as if they were…	16
Mikel	inferior	17

Claudia	her buffoons/jesters. Franco's first cousin	18
Mikel	she thinks she's superior to others, this old bitter lady	19
Martin	the witch, she's missing the broomstick	20
Andrea	but Mikel, you've said that "she treats everyone as if they were inferior"	21
Mikel	as if they were supposedly inferior to her, as if she's superior because she's married, because she has money, because she says so	22
Claudia	because she's Tutankhamun	23
Andrea	so she decides who is inferior, right?	24
Mikel	inferior in her way, according to her point of view	25
Amagoia	economically	26
Claudia	according to social status	27
Mikel	but for me she's inferior to me, I mean…	28

DLG session 6

Throughout the interaction event, many students explicitly show their dislike and rejections towards lady Catherine because of the way she treats others as if they were inferior and should subject to her desires and needs. From the very beginning, Ibtissan expresses her rejection to Catherine's controlling behaviors, and Martin joins her criticism in line 5. As the interaction event progresses, more students join them in showing their discontent and rejection towards Lady Catherine (lines 8, 9). However, they are not discrediting or rejecting her only from the language of ethics (for instance when Mikel says "she's inferior" in line 28). Importantly, they use the language of desire as well to reject her portraying her as someone undesirable through words like "Franco's first cousin" (line 18), "bitter" (line 5), "witch" (line 20), or "Tutankhamun" (line 23). As the more students contribute their opinions and perspectives on

her, they collectively unite coercion and disdain with rejection, opposing the disenchantment that the CDD creates by separating values from attractiveness and connecting attractiveness with violence or coercion.

Last, there is an interaction event in which some students talk more explicitly about the disenchantment in many sexual-affective relationships. The following example comes after some students share the passage when Elizabeth's friend Charlotte states she gives up on love and will marry Collins because she has no better choice. This leads some students, together with the teacher, to talk about her disenchantment with love as something sad that should not happen, reflecting on why some people decide not to pursue true love in a relationship.

Martin	I had the same as Alicia. Uhm, because yes, because it's sad that only for having such a position that's advantageous, as they say, she will marry him just for that. And well, and that's sad to me. And in that period it's true that when, if a woman is poor, well, if she doesn't marry a rich dude she will be screwed	1
Andrea (teacher)	yes, in that, well, I have chosen that because I also thought it's sad and very pessimistic, because not only thinking of that period, but I was thinking that a girl today could say something like that, right? And she could say "I understand what you feel, but when you have time to reflect on it you will be happy of what I've done. I'm 27 years old and I'm not pretty, I've never had a good concept or men nor of marriage, but I think it's the most dignified solution for a well educated and poor young girl. I'm not romantic nor have I ever been, all I aspire is to have a comfortable home". And it makes me think of people, especially girls, who are disenchanted by love, right? By relationships,	2

	because they think that maybe they can't expect anything from…. Having a relationship with a boy, or that they don't believe in romance, and it's sad that she says "I'm not romantic (…)". But I think it's something super sad, because I think a girl and a boy, the most beautiful thing there is is true love, in freedom, right? Being able to choose who you want to love, others to love you, to respect you, to take care of you, not being treated badly, not being treated as a thing, as a trophy, as Martin said. And the fact that one thinks they don't deserve such love or that, it does exist but maybe you're, you're seeing things in your environment that make you be faithless, right?	
	(…)	6
Claudia	you're right with what you said that everyone has the right to truly be in love and well, everything that you said. But of course, in that period to truly be in love with someone is quite difficult, because finding someone who truly loves you and that due to certain circumstances has money to provide for you, well, imagine that Elizabeth falls in love with one who is good, but poor. That's the person she loves, but not the one who can provide for her	

DLG session 2

Martin opens the interaction event by stating he feels it is sad to marry someone just because of their money or power position. The teacher agrees with his feelings and tries to compare Charlotte's loss of meaning in relationships to many of today's youths who might have similar feelings towards love. In line 6 Claudia states she agrees with them on how the right that everyone should have to be in love. Still, even when she talks about some people's

impossibility to choose love, as is the case of Charlotte, she refers to that specific period; she does not seem to connect such disenchantment with her life. Opposed to that sadness and disenchantment, she talks about love as a right everyone should have. Interaction events like this one about disenchantment in sexual-affective relationships can help students create or gain meaning by allowing them to value and dream about relationships away from such loss of meaning. These reflections on the right to love and on some factors that hinder many people to pursue such right can help them create meaning in love, in not giving up on it despite social pressures and coercion. These dialogues can reinforce their search for relationships that are the opposite of such disenchantment, realizing they do not need to conform to relationships that are empty of love and meaning.

Transformation

DLG are oriented towards transformations, and the rest of the principles of dialogic learning lead students to share interactions that, in many cases, transform their previous reflections, perspectives and feelings. I have previously shown part of a DLG session in which some students shared different interpretations on Lydia and Wickham's relationship, with Aurora first claiming they love each other. However, later in that same session, after other students provide a different reasoning to argue why they think they do not love each other, Aurora seems to have a different opinion about their decision to run away, suggesting she has changed her perspective on it.

| Martin | Maybe it's been a decision without thinking, running away with him. And actually yes, it's heavy, she leaves, she will escape her home to leave and I think she hasn't thought about it very well | 1 |
| Aurora | I had the same thing as Martin | 2 |

| Andrea (teacher) | you have the same, Aurora? And why have you chosen it? | 3 |
| Aurora | because we must think things before doing them, and she hasn't thought about it | 4 |

In this later part of the interaction event, Aurora no longer holds the interpretation that the fact that they run away together means they love each other. Instead, now she agrees with Martin, who had a different view than her in the beginning of the interaction event, and firmly states in line 4 that Lydia did not put much thought into the decision to run away with Wickham, implying that it was not a good decision. Although Aurora does not explicitly state she has changed her mind, after listening to different interpretations and arguments, she no longer seems to think they love each other or, at least, that their love is the reason why they run away. There is therefore an implicit transformation on her perspective regarding Lydia's and Wickham's relationship.

Importantly, in addition to instances in which some students transform their minds and feelings towards the relationships portrayed in the book or towards real-life ones, there are examples of transformations within the group dynamics themselves. One such example is the previously analyzed one where Aurora's initial power communicative acts diminish and are progressively replaced by dialogic communicative acts. Another example is when some students who usually remain silent during the DLG participate and make relevant contributions to the whole group. For instance, Ángel is not one of the students who participate in all the gathering sessions, he is usually listening carefully to others, but sometimes he is encouraged to share a passage he has chosen and express his feelings towards it. In DLG, the facilitator, who in this case is the teacher, gives priority to those who speak less. In the following interaction event, when several

students share their outrage towards Collins for pressuring Elizabeth to marry him through money, the teacher notices that Ángel has raised his hand and asks him to share his quote:

| Ángel | it doesn't have anything to do with fortune, only if they love each other | 1 |

<div align="right">DLG session 1</div>

While during most of the session Ángel has remained silent, at one point he feels like sharing the part of the text he chose, and provides an argument in support of love and against money as the reason to get married. The horizontal nature of this space transforms situations of exclusion into participation, benefiting not only the protagonists of such transformation but also the rest of the group. Although other students who are listening do not reply directly to Ángel's comment, his contribution can help his classmates reflect on the importance of love over anything else, especially material, in a relationship.

Along this line, during the interview, the teacher reflected on the contributions that boys like Ángel make to the whole group. Despite participating less than some of their classmates, the teacher highlighted the relevant and valuable contributions they make about love and sexual-affective relationships.

| Teacher | I realize that the profile of boys who maybe are more, who go unnoticed, who are the good guys or, well, who are not into certain things, I do see that they speak calmly, they nod a lot, they say things, beautiful sentences too, I mean sometimes they drop sentences that seem like mottos, right? And they're not ashamed. "oh, love is this", but in a good way. Or phrases or sentences, well, very powerful ones, and… and there's a lot of respect too, I mean, with the things that are said | 1 |
| | (…) | |

Interviewer	you don't notice, I mean, for instance, in another place where they don't do these things, it could be normal for someone to laugh at a comment like that, right?	3
Teacher	yes, I think so	4
Interviewer	and you don't notice that, or you notice that tendency decreasing?	5
Teacher	yes, I don't see that, I see a lot of respect in what they say, yes. And I think each of them expresses as they are and as you see them, and… yes, I have never… I mean in these groups this year I haven't seen any comments like "oh, come on", or "that's so corny", or whatever, no, no	6

Individual interview with teacher

In line 1, the teacher confirms that many students, particularly boys, who are usually not participative or go unnoticed, sometimes make very relevant contributions related to love or sexual-affective relationships in the gatherings. Although in the interview it is not clear whether this has always been the case, in lines 4 and 6 she does acknowledge that, in other contexts, it would be easy to see reactions trying to remove attractiveness from such contributions, for instance mocking or making fun of them. Instead, she highlights the respect with which the rest of the group listens to these students' contributions.

Instrumental dimension

The last principle of dialogic learning related to the object of study that I found across the analyzed DLG sessions is instrumental dimension. Although not in an explicit or necessarily conscious way, there are some instances in which students talk about issues related to socialization, such as who we choose and why, who we are attracted to and why, peer pressure for hookups, or how sexual-affective relationships impact us. An example would be the previously analyzed one when Martin and Claudia make a connection between Aurora's

negative view on relationships and her "traumatic" sexual-affective experiences, inferring that who we have a relationship with can influence our attitudes towards future ones.

There are also interaction events in which some students talk about the importance of choosing relationships well. For instance, after Martin and Claudia contradict Aurora when saying they cannot trust anyone, Ibtissan highlights the importance of not letting others trample them, leading to an interaction event on the importance of making oneself worthy to others and of knowing another person well before engaging in a relationship with them.

Ibtissan	there are bad and good people, that's why you have to be a good person, but at the same time strict, bad people don't [unintelligible] talk with respect. You don't have the space for them to talk about that, but one can't trust anyone because the one you trust most	1
Andrea (teacher)	you think that each of us has to be a good person and make ourselves respectable, right? With our goodness, I mean, I have the values well defined, right? I have them very clear, and I will not let you go ahead. Well it's an advice, right, Aurora? So that no one can betray you. Very well Ibtissan, I will make a self-note [on the advice]. And, but you also say you cannot trust anyone?	2
Ibtissan	when, for example, you're with a good person and like many days of, but suddenly he or she becomes bad	3
Aurora	but people are very fake	4
Andrea	well, I think you're making generalizations, I mean, you're taking it for granted with everyone. Claudia did you raise your hand?	5

Claudia	yes, to say two things. Yes, what Ibtissan has said, you have to make yourself respected, be a good person, but don't allow others walk over you. Let's see if I can give you an example, a friend of mine has been since December, I can tell you, or earlier, talking to a friend of hers, she doesn't stop walking over her, treating her badly [Claudia's friend], and she's not able to face her because she doesn't want to hurt her, she doesn't want to respond in a way she shouldn't and she doesn't want to hurt her, but however she allows her to walk over her. She is insulting and disrespecting her	6
Aurora	Claudia, your friend is a little bit…	7
Claudia	I've told her	8
Martin	a bit stupid	9
Claudia	and the other, I mean, you can really trust others, you only have to be careful on who you trust. I mean, you won't know someone for two days and tell them your deepest secret, you know?	10
Martin	of course, we also have to be smart	11
	(…)	
Andrea	well, as Martin said, we have to be smart and not let ourselves get carried away by appearances, right?	13
Mikel	appearances can be false	14
Martin	you have to know what the person is like	15

DLG session 2

Ibtissan's contribution in line 1 on the importance of being a good person but at the same time making oneself respected by others leads other students to reflect about the importance of

knowing who to trust. In line 6, Claudia again affirms that she does not believe everyone will betray her, but this time she reinforces her opinion through Ibtissan's reflection on the importance of "being strict" and not letting others trample them. This seems to also connect with Martin, who agrees that they need to be smart (line 11). These reflections contain knowledge about relationships: students show they are aware that they have agency to choose relationships rather than thinking they just happen. These lessons are essential to, first, realize the choices that are behind the people we have relationships with, and most importantly, to be aware that smart choices can and need to be made to have satisfactory relationships free from the CDD. These students emphasize that the key to having trust-based relationships is to choose people in a smart way based on what they are like, how they behave, how they treat others, or how they act, for instance. Through the use of words like "smart" they are not only appealing to the ethics of making good decisions, but also to the attractiveness of it, using the language of desire.

Another example of a reflection that contains knowledge regarding sexual-affective relationships and the CDD can be found during the discussion on why Lydia decided to run away. During the interaction event, Ibtissan introduces a line of reasoning that had not been considered thus far: Lydia's lack of self-esteem.

| Ibtissan | Lydia made the mistake of wanting to run away with a person without getting married, without thinking, she doesn't have her self-esteem, her self-worth here | 1 |

DLG session 5

Ibtissan affirms that a person who is insecure of their worth, or who does not have a high self-esteem, might be more likely to choose a partner who deceits, instrumentalizes, and pressures her to do things she does not want to do. She explains the importance of self-esteem and knowing and showing one's worth to have relationships different from the one Lydia and

Wickham have, which many students have described as lacking love and being based on deceit. Even though her classmates do not comment on her contribution, the reflection is out there for others to think about the relationship between one's self-esteem and making decisions on relationships under the influence of the CDD. Moreover, by talking about Lydia's lack of self-esteem she is removing attractiveness from her decision to run away with a disdainful person like Wickham.

Deep and universal themes of the classic book

As the interaction events analyzed throughout this section show, the book contains deep and universal themes that spark dialogues in which different students share their reflections and feelings not just on the specific situations portrayed in the book, but also on how they see those reflected in their own worlds and realities. During an interview, one of the students stated that some scenes they read and shared during the DLG help her imagine how she would face similar situations in her life.

Interviewer	have you ever felt that? How the things you talk about or read in the gatherings and you say, "this encourages me or gives me strength to fight in my life and not let myself go?	1
Alicia	yes, and they have also been like mirrors, to say it somehow, because let's say, for example I read a scene in which the girl, I mean, the boy is in trouble and for example the boy has problems at home, so the girl doesn't pay attention to him, she doesn't care about him, so I consider certain scenes that I would recreate if that were my case	2
Interviewer	so it makes you think of how you would act, or…	3
Alicia	yes	4

Individual interview with student

Alicia uses the word "mirrors" in line 2 to talk about the books they read in the DLG. Far from thinking such books and the stories they narrate have nothing to do with her, she imagines herself in similar situations to reflect on how she would act or react in certain difficult or important moments in her own life.

Similarly, during one of the DLG sessions observed, a student expresses the feelings Austen made her feel through the book. She makes her contribution during the interaction event in which students talked about Darcy's declaration of love to Elizabeth.

Alicia	I like it, I like Austin's way of writing. She knows very well how to… her paragraph knew very well how to make us, well, how to make me feel different ways, do, know how to understand different feelings	1

DLG session 4

Alicia highlights two important aspects related to the book. On the one hand, she affirms that reading this particular part of the book has made her feel and explore different feelings. On the other hand, she states that the book helps her understand the characters' feelings, behaviors, and actions. Given that *Pride and Prejudice* is centered around issues related to romance and love, the book gives them the opportunity to reflect on and engage in dialogues around those issues, reflecting on things they might not have thought of otherwise.

Along this line, there are many other examples in which students focus on certain characters, their actions and feelings, and get in their shoes, better understanding their actions and decisions, as well as reflecting on how they would act or feel in those situations. In the following interaction event, a student shows her empathy towards some characters and shares her own perspective and positioning towards the situation the characters face.

| Alicia | I chose this because in this, in this part I get into the shoes of both parents, right? Because the mother wants [Elizabeth] to get married so they don't lose the money and to have her, to have a life insurance so that she's insured for when they're no longer there. But I also understand the father more, the family doesn't want her to marry someone she doesn't love. So the parents' dilemma is understandable. And I'm on the father's side | 1 |

DLG session 1

Alicia shares her empathy towards Elizabeth's parents, who face a dilemma she feels is understandable: whether their daughter should marry Collins just for the money or not. She expresses she understand both parents, who have opposing perspectives, and finally states that she is "on the father's side", that is, that his daughter should not marry someone she does not love just because he is rich and has power. By sharing this part of the text and her feelings towards it, she is not only reflecting on the characters' situation, but she opens the possibility for other students to engage in a dialogue on whether love is all that matters in a relationship or there are other things, like money, that also matter. As previous examples show, this issue is a recurring one throughout the different DLG sessions observed, with many students concluding that they should not care about money or other people's pressures when choosing a sexual-affective partner.

Despite instances in which students are empathetic or try to understand the book's characters' feelings and situations, there are also examples in which they are critical towards them or towards certain situations depicted in the book. In the following interaction event, several students criticize the fact that Collins can choose a wife without her consent, without even considering whether she wants to or not. This leads to a shared reflection on what is truly important in a relationship, on love, consent, and choosing someone based on love.

Alicia	We're back in the period and it shocked me that, first of all, when he says he came to look for a wife, I mean he says it, "I came to look for a wife, and if I like her, then it will be her". Without thinking what they want, I mean, whether she needs, "I tell her to marry me and she will"	1
Andrea (teacher)	do you want to say anything else about this?	2
Mikel	that it looks like a supermarket to choose anyone	3
Andrea	well, Alicia has highlighted, she has underscored the phrase "we're back in the period", and it makes me think, Martin?	4
Martin	that in any way, he pressures anyone, to anyone he would get [he would say] "my wife", and I don't know, making a partner happy, and maybe he doesn't even know her last name or what she's like	5
Claudia	well, at least he thinks that, I don't know, that he's in a kennel and he picks the doc he wants to, but no, it shouldn't be like that. Moreover, I think not all men in that period were necessarily like that. Maybe others who, really it was pretty difficult, but who wanted to be happy with that person and for that person to be happy with him, despite having money or not	6

DLG session 1

As line 1 shows, Alicia is critical not only to Collins specifically, but to the epoch in which the story is contextualized, inferring that it was the common rule to act like Collins in that period when she says "we're back in the period". On the other hand, Claudia seems critical towards that depiction as if all men were the same, stating that she thinks there must also have been men who married women because they loved them (line 6). This interaction event shows that students do not always agree with the issues depicted in the book or with how they are depicted,

and that sharing their perspectives on those issues allows them to show their disagreement and to provide arguments to support their criticism.

Last, as some previous examples show, students continuously make connections between the issues portrayed in the book and their own lives and backgrounds. In one specific example, students make explicit comparisons between money as a central theme many people from the book cared about, and the things that today's societies care about.

Claudia	now we don't care so much about money, what people pay most attention to is how that person dresses and whether they're pretty or not. I mean, in the case that there are feelings	1
Andrea (Teacher)	yes, so the physical and the appearance determines and conditions relationships a lot	2
Claudia	yes	3
Andrea	and maybe a little bit of social pressure, for instance, I don't know in your group of friends, "how can you be with that person?", or "how can you like that person?", right? Maybe today we don't think, we don't talk about money as in the book, but we talk about other things	4
Aurora	the body	5
Claudia	the physical [appearance]	6

DLG session 6

In line 1, Claudia points out that even though today many people do not place such a high importance on money when choosing or thinking about a sexual-affective relationship, many people care about other things that might seem as unimportant as money, such as "whether they're pretty or not". Aurora picks up on that in line 5, replying to the teacher that many people today think about "the body" as an important aspect when choosing a person to have a relationship with. Even though the specificities of the sexual-affective relationships depicted

in the book are very different from the realities most – if not all – students live, it seems easy for them to build bridges between the two. Claudia specifically wants to clarify that, while they criticize the fact that money moves many of the characters' choices of marriage, there are other material or superficial things that still move many people today when choosing a sexual-affective partner.

Discussion

Much research is being conducted on the CDD (Puigvert et al., 2019), on the interactions and communicative acts through which it is enacted (Racionero-Plaza, Duque, et al., 2021; Ríos & Christou, 2010), on how it socializes individuals – particularly adolescents and youth – in uniting violence with attraction (Ruiz-Eugenio, Racionero-Plaza, et al., 2020; Torras-Gómez et al., 2022), or on the terrible consequences of such socialization (Puigvert et al., 2023; Torras-Gómez et al., 2020). Jesús Gómez already pointed out 20 years ago the potential of dialogic spaces and environments to reflect on the socialization pattern imposed by the CDD and challenge it by creating alternative desires and forms of sexual-affective relationships that are free from violence (Gómez, 2004, 2015).

Since then, much research has shown the social impact of Dialogic Feminist Gatherings on the dialogic reconstruction of memories, desires and choices that enables many participants to reject and break free from the CDD (Puigvert, 2016; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2018; Salceda et al., 2020; Ugalde et al., 2022). It has also shown the impact of DLG in challenging the double standard imposed by the CDD by promoting students' language of desire and of ethics towards non-violent relationships (López de Aguileta et al., 2020). However, what design features or characteristics of DG promote this alternative language of desire has not been laid out yet. As a first step in this direction, in this study I have explored the DLG characteristics that are present in student interactions that challenge the CDD among a group of 15–17-year-olds. To

that end, I have analyzed the two main pillars of DLG: being grounded on dialogic learning and reading the best universal literature. Five of the seven principles of dialogic learning were present during this DLG as well as discussions about the deep and universal themes of classic literature related to dialogues in which students interacted about sexual-affective relationships away from the CDD.

Egalitarian dialogue is the principle that was most salient throughout these types of dialogues. As I have shown through several examples, there were many dialogues in which students shared their own arguments, feelings and personal experiences to provide their interpretations on the sexual-affective relationships depicted in the books (Flecha, 2000). Such dialogues were often enriched by students' knowledge and examples gained from their own backgrounds and experiences, which led them to often talk about the influence of societal and peer pressures when choosing sexual-affective partners. Some students were particularly critical about the pressures to have hookups, which are widespread across many adolescents' peer groups today (Racionero-Plaza, Duque, et al., 2021). Another aspect in which I have identified the egalitarian dialogue in relation to challenging the CDD is in the very dynamics of the group. There was an instance in which one of the students tried to impose her negative views on relationships, influenced by the CDD, through power communicative acts, as if she had a higher social status (Ríos & Christou, 2010) and were more entitled to talk about relationships due to her own experiences. However, these power communicative acts were progressively replaced by dialogic ones when other students dared to express their own opinions and argue that the negative sexual-affective experiences the former student has had are the reason for her negative view on relationships. Throughout the rest of the DLG observed I did not identify any other instance of the CDD among students. There were no interactions making fun of from students who shared feelings that unite desire and ethics, for instance when stating they liked the love story from the book. Trying to remove attractiveness from people who enjoy beauty and love

is quite common among peer interactions that promote the CDD; instead, throughout the DLG it was common for students not to subjugate to the double standard imposed by the CDD.

The equality of differences was also present in these interactions, particularly when challenging the CDD and its double standard. During one of the dialogues, several students promoted the double standard by affirming they prefer someone good than good-looking, thus falling in the CDD's trap that falsely imposes the need to choose between ethics or desire (Gómez, 2015; Torras-Gómez et al., 2020). However, one of the students had a different view, and despite knowing everyone would disagree with him, he shared his interpretation on the matter. In a context in which students know that all opinions are respected and in which they are encouraged to share their own feelings and perspectives to enrich the dialogue (Flecha, 2000), a student offered an alternative to the CDD. His reflection on the need to unite the realm of ethics and of aesthetics can help other students consider the idea that they do not need to choose between being loved and cared and having fun and excitement, that they can have both by uniting the language of desire and of ethics (Flecha et al., 2013; Joanpere et al., 2021).

In this way, through the union between the language of desire and of ethics, students create meaning in relationships and overcome the disenchantment that the CDD produces (de Aguileta Jaussi et al., 2022; Gómez, 2015). Students also broke the dichotomy between goodness and attractiveness when, on the one hand, they talked about good characters such as Elizabeth through the language of desire and, on the other hand, they rejected characters like Lady Catherine due to their coercive behaviors. In this way, students challenge the loss of meaning many individuals feel when, for instance, men who have killed their partners get fan clubs after doing it[13]. A similar loss of meaning is experienced when people who help victims

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[13] https://www.elconfidencial.com/alma-corazon-vida/2022-11-19/chicas-fans-asesinos-en-serie-psicologia_3523967/
https://www.crimeandinvestigation.co.uk/article/why-do-serial-killers-have-fans#:~:text=In%20the%20words%20of%20one,They%20love%20the%20celebrity%20status.

of gender violence are attacked through degrading comments about their professional, personal and sexual lives (Flecha et al., 2024). Nevertheless, students in the DLG observed have the opportunity to recover or create meaning when they share and hear communicative acts that unite the language of desire and of ethics to talk about people who are good, solidary, and loving with attraction and admiration. There are even some dialogues in which students talked in an explicit way about the current disenchantment many people feel today towards sexual-affective relationships, lamenting the fact that not everyone has the chance to fall in love. Engaging in dialogues about the right to love, the loss of meaning in relationships and the union of desire and ethics, as well as rejecting people who exercise coercion and pressure while talking with desire about those who reject them gives them the opportunity to chase dreams and seek relationships that give meaning to their lives.

Indeed, there were instances in which students transformed their perspectives regarding sexual-affective relationships after listening to their classmates' opinions and arguments. Even the student who had shown the most negative view on relationships ended up saying she also believed in love. Not only was this an example of the transformation of a student's opinions and feelings about love, but it is also an example of the transformation of students' relationships and dynamics within the DLG, transforming her previous imposition into dialogic communicative acts.

Another transformation in this regard was seen when students who do not usually participate make highly relevant contributions to the DLG, allowing their classmates to reflect on and learn from them. Even the teacher addressed this during the interview, stating that egalitarian boys are not smashed in the DLG, as often happens to these types of boys (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2021; Valls-Carol et al., 2021). Instead, she affirmed that their classmates carefully and attentively listen to those students' insightful reflections, especially related to love. Furthermore, listening to other students' contributions on issues related to sexual-affective

relationships sometimes spark transformations in how they feel towards and interpret such issues, for instance, whether certain relationships are based on love or not. Although it remains unknown whether the transformations glimpsed during the DLG will cross the boundaries of the classroom, previous research has shown the impact of DG in participants' lives and environments (Pulido-Rodríguez et al., 2015; Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Merodio, et al., 2020; Soler, 2015). The communicative acts shared during the DLG have definitely transformed these students' biology (Kandel et al., 1991; Ramón y Cajal, 1989); it remains yet to be known whether they will use this transformation to become architects of their own brains, desires and lives free from the CDD.

The last principle of dialogic learning related to students' interactions away from the CDD is the instrumental dimension. Several students often shared insightful reflections and arguments that are connected to the theory and research evidence on the socialization in sexual-affective relationships, the CDD, and other people's influence when choosing partners and relationships. There is still a spread of theories or hypotheses that contemplate love and attraction as biological, chemical, inherent, or inexplicable. However, many of the students who participate in the DLG observed do not fall for these hypotheses, and they are aware of their agency when choosing who to love and have a relationship with. Dialogues on the importance of choosing people and relationships wisely were common, whereas such essential lessons are often missing in schools. Moreover, they did not share these reflections as something morally or ethically important, but also as attractive, talking about making smart decisions through the language of desire. There were also dialogues in which, trying to better understand why certain characters or individuals act in particular ways influenced by the CDD, they also shared valuable knowledge on how many of today's relationships work. As an example, during their dialogue on why Lydia decided to run away with Wickham, one of the students alluded to her lack of self-esteem. This reflection on the relationship between self-esteem and sexual-

affective relationships and other valuable knowledge they share during the DLG are already within them, and they will accompany them all their lives when making important decisions, whatever they might be.

Last, many of the students' reflections and feelings related to sexual-affective relationships away from the CDD were connected to the universal and deep topics depicted in the book. Some such topics enabled students not only to engage in dialogues about relevant aspects of love and relationships, but also to connect them with their own contexts and lives, showing that the book crosses temporal, spatial and contextual boundaries. Moreover, as the findings illustrate, the book has triggered several dialogues on issues rooted in feminism, such as the rejection of the double standard and of people who have coercive behaviors, the importance of making smart decisions and of making oneself worthy when it comes to relationships, or the attractiveness and value of people who reject coercion and help others. Even in those instances in which the book depicted sexist issues, such as arranged marriages and the lack of consent, students were critical about them, questioning and rejecting such social norms from the book and the current society.

Whereas a causal relationship between these DLG characteristics and students' interactions around relationships away from the CDD cannot be drawn, the findings presented in this study point at a correlation between the two. These findings contribute to the literature on the impacts of Dialogic Gatherings and, specifically, of Dialogic Literary Gatherings in challenging the CDD by providing a first exploration on what factors might be behind such impacts.

Conclusions

This study makes the first exploration on the characteristics that are related to a group of adolescents' interactions about relationships away from the CDD in a DLG about romance. In order to better understand how the DLG characteristics identified are related with such

interactions, as well as to corroborate the findings, future research should study their replication in more and different contexts. Despite the need for more research, the study makes a relevant contribution to the literature on the impact of DLG in the preventive socialization of gender violence. While much research has been conducted on the impact of DFG in this regard, this study sheds light on specific features of DLG that are present in students' interactions challenging the CDD and uniting the language of desire with the language of ethics. DLG are the most widespread among all DG, with more than 15.000 in over 16 countries across continents. Given that so many adolescents are currently participating in DLG as part of their academic training and learning, it is relevant to understand what makes them fit for the preventive socialization of gender violence.

Nonetheless, I should point out some limitations of the study. The main limitation is that the sample – a single DLG group in one school – and the data collected – 6 observations and 5 interviews – do not allow me to draw causal relationships between the DLG characteristics and the interactions challenging the CDD. While this particular study's goal is not to establish causality, future research should determine whether these findings are replicated in more contexts with different characteristics to better understand what leads to such impacts. Furthermore, these students also regularly participate in the school's DFG in which they explicitly discuss issues related to the CDD and the socialization in love and attraction, which makes it a challenge to separate the impacts of DFG from DLG.

What is clear, however, is that across the DLG sessions observed I have identified several DLG characteristics in many interactions where students challenge the CDD, question the double standard, reject relationships and individuals with disdainful and coercive behaviors, and use the language of desire to talk about egalitarian individuals. Although the impact that participating in these dialogues has or will have in their desires and sexual-affective relationships remains unknown, such dialogues are already part of their DNA, with greater or

lesser strength, but they carry them in their memories, thoughts and beings. Understanding the

CDD, knowing its consequences and the alternatives, not just by listening to it, but by engaging

in dialogues about it, is essential to have greater freedom.

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Conclusion

Through these three studies, this dissertation has provided empirical evidence on a topic that had remained underexplored thus far: the union of the language of desire and the language of ethics in Dialogic Literary Gatherings. The different analytical approaches have allowed me to explore this issue through different lenses, starting from a broader perspective on what key concepts of desire and ethics surface in several DLG groups, to a more nuanced analysis of what the language of desire towards non-violence actually looks like in those DLG, and into a close analysis of the DLG characteristics that are related to those concepts of desire and ethics in one of those DLG. My overarching goal has been to better understand how DLG serve as a space for the preventive socialization of gender violence, despite this not being a goal of DLG in itself. Although the findings do not show how gender violence is being prevented and overcome in the DLG groups analyzed, they do advance relevant knowledge about the language of desire that pave the way for further exploring the prevention of gender violence in this context. Until now, almost all research on the preventive socialization of gender violence has focused on spaces such as Dialogic Feminist Gatherings or other interventions that are specifically aimed at providing individuals opportunities to prevent and overcome gender violence. However, with the exception of the study that showed the emergence of the language of desire towards non-violence in two DLG groups (G. López de Aguileta et al., 2020), there was a need to explore the preventive socialization of gender violence in DLG, which are part of the curriculum in more than 15.000 centers all over the world. Out of all Successful Educational Actions, DLG are the most widespread one. This dissertation, therefore, makes a significant contribution to the analysis of the language of desire united with the language of ethics in the school context.

The first study explored key concepts of desire and ethics that diverse groups of adolescents surface in different Dialogic Literary Gatherings. I found three main concepts in all the DLG analyzed: friendship; violence and the coercive dominant discourse; and love. More specifically, friendship was highlighted by many students as a pivotal aspect in offering support and help, protecting them from the CDD, helping them resist it, and even helping them break the silence. Moreover, DLG provided students a safe space to openly discuss and challenge the CDD, fostering critical thinking about relationships and choices, as well as admiring individuals who reject it. Last, the discussions on love within DLG provided a counter-narrative to the impositions of the CDD, which harshly attacks love, and allowed students to discuss sexual-affective relationships and critical aspects such as how one chooses them. These three aspects have been highlighted by much scientific literature on the prevention and overcoming of gender violence as key to protecting adolescents and youth from violence and to challenge coercive discourses that hinder them to have relationships based on love and full of passion. Most importantly. I have been able to identify that students do not only speak about these issues from the language of ethics. In many of the dialogues I observed, students used the language of desire to talk about friendship as a most valued treasure; to reject the CDD and the people who exercise it; and to dream of sexual-affective relationships full of love and passion. By uniting the language of desire with the language of ethics on these three concepts, DLG encourage adolescents to challenge the dichotomy imposed by the CDD.

In the second study I took a step forward from the previous study's findings on students' use of the language of desire to talk about friendship, the CDD and love. Specifically, I aimed at analyzing at a closer level, breaking down students' different communicative acts and Discourses, what their language of desire towards non-violence looks like in DLG. On the one hand, the findings have confirmed the importance of analyzing not just words, but also other communicative acts and Discourses that shape the very communication, reality, and identity.

Indeed, paying attention to communicative acts and Discourses such as students' tone, their relationships, or status has been essential to better identify and analyze the language of desire towards non-violence. On the other hand, findings have allowed me to identify three main ways in which the adolescents participating in this study use the language of desire towards non-violence in DLG. First, many students reject individuals or relationships that use violence or disdain. To do so, many of them use a confident and firm tone to indicate they would stop being friends with people who coerced or pressured them, showing their rejection towards them from desire. Second, many of them mock people who have violent or coercive behaviors through words and a voice tone that portray them as ridiculous, such as using adjectives that denote a lack of likeness or desire towards them in a mocking way. In this way, they are dissociating attractiveness from such behaviors. Third, many students portray individuals who defy coercion as attractive and desirable, emphasizing the attractiveness of non-violent behaviors. This can be seen through communicative acts and Discourses in which they express they like those people with a tone of admiration, as well as through the use of words full of beauty. These communicative acts and Discourses dismantle the CDD's binary portrayal of goodness and attractiveness, uniting both in the same person. Importantly, in this study I have also been able to contribute a theoretical framework to better understand and grasp the relationship between language, identity and action in the analysis of adolescents' language of desire towards non-violence.

In the last study I aimed at better understanding what characteristics of DLG might be behind the key concepts of desire and the use of the language of desire towards non-violence found in the two previous studies. To that end, I chose to focus on one particular DLG of all the ones I observed. Aware that the methods used would not allow me to establish some causality between DLG characteristics and students' interactions about relationships away from the CDD, I rather intended at exploring the relationship between some of the main DLG characteristics and such

interactions. To analyze the DLG characteristics, I studied the two main pillars: the seven principles of dialogic learning and classic literature. Out of all these characteristics, I found six present in the student interactions about relationships away from the CDD: egalitarian dialogue, equality of differences, creation of meaning, transformation, instrumental dimension, and deep and universal themes of the classic book, *Pride and Prejudice*. Again, in this study I cannot – nor do I intend to – draw a causality between these six characteristics and students' interactions about relationships away from the CDD. Nevertheless, I have found important correlations between those six characteristics and interactions in which many students challenge the CDD, question its double standards, reject relationships and individuals with violent and coercive behaviors, and use the language of desire united with the language of ethics to describe egalitarian individuals and relationships.

In short, the three studies make relevant advancements towards the understanding not just of Dialogic Literary Gatherings as a space where many students unite the language of desire and of ethics, but also of how students use the language of desire towards non-violence relationships in spaces grounded on egalitarian dialogue. Of course, the findings presented here do not allow us to see how DLG prevent and overcome gender violence. As of now, I cannot determine whether the dialogues these students have shared in their DLG will help them reject the CDD and/or choose relationships based on freedom, lack of violence and passion. As I have laid out throughout the dissertation, the influence of the CDD, especially among adolescents, is very deep. It is most likely that these students have, at least, been exposed to some interactions that reproduce the CDD. And it is likely that they have been exposed to such interactions several times, given the prevalence of the CDD not just in many peer groups, but also in many TV shows and movies, songs, social media, and other agents that socialize adolescents. Therefore, it is possible that, at least among some students who have participated in this study, the CDD is part of their everyday interactions and, therefore, identities.

Nevertheless, what I can say with certainty is that all students who have participated in this study have been exposed, at least during the DLG in which they have participated, to alternative discourses that unite the language of desire and of ethics in challenging the CDD and in portraying egalitarian relationships as desirable and exciting. Those interactions are therefore also part of their identities and their realities. Their biology, their memories, their identities and their relationships with their classmates are impregnated with the union of the language of desire and of ethics, an alternative discourse that, unfortunately, not all adolescents are exposed to. Therefore, whenever they face situations in which they are challenged by the CDD, or have to choose friendships or partners to have sexual-affective relationships with, they can decide to pull from the interactions they have had during the DLG if they want to. This gives them, at least, the chance to choose relationships that challenge the CDD and unite goodness with desire. Furthermore, the fact that in many of the DLG I observed students constantly built bridges between the texts they read and their own lives and backgrounds, there is hope to believe that students might bring their DLG interactions that challenge the CDD and use the language of desire towards non-violence to their own lives and relationships. Given that the language of desire is often missing in schools, and even in many programs addressing gender violence, it is worth exploring whether these findings are replicated in other, different contexts in which DLG are implemented to better analyze the extent to which DLG promote the union of the language of desire and of ethics.

This opens up several avenues I would like to explore in future research. Studying whether similar findings can be found in different DLG, implemented in different countries and in schools that serve different populations, would be one of those pathways. Identifying the transferability of these findings to more and different contexts would give us evidence on the social impact of DLG in promoting students' use of the language of desire united with the language of ethics.

In line with replicating these findings in different contexts and with different students, I also hope to explore the language of desire towards non-violence in DLG with students who are homosexual, bisexual, or transgender. Although I did not ask students about their sexual orientation and, in the interviews, made the questions open enough in this sense asking them about the types of persons they like, instead of the types of boys and girls, most of them spoke in terms of heterosexual relationships. Therefore, it would be interesting to study what the language of desire towards non-violence looks like in DLG as notions of gender and sexuality evolve.

Another avenue I am interested in exploring further is what is it about the texts read in DLG that might lead to students' language of desire united with the language of ethics. The third study has allowed me to see a close connection between the deep and universal themes of *Pride and Prejudice* and students' interactions about relationships away from the CDD. However, as I have said above, the methods used are not enough to find a causal relationship. Therefore, in the future I hope to deploy different methods to study why these texts might promote such dialogues. And, along this line, I would like to explore more in depth how the principles of dialogic learning can lead to students' language of desire to challenge the CDD and talk about egalitarian relationships as attractive.

Last, whereas the second study has made important advancements in understanding the different communicative acts and Discourses that shape the language of desire towards non-violence, in the future I hope to explore how more communicative acts and Discourses do so. Specifically, I would like to study how students' body language, gaze, intentions, or their communication's consequences shape and construct the language of desire in union with the language of ethics. This will give me a more holistic, nuanced and specific approach of what the language of desire towards non-violence looks like.

In all, this work contributes evidence the ways in which the language of desire towards non-violence gets used and created in Dialogic Literary Gatherings among adolescent participants from different backgrounds, countries, ages, cultures, ideologies, or religions.

Appendix A: student interview protocol (English translation)

- Have you ever felt pressure to do something you didn't want to do? Can you give me an example?

- Do you think young people have pressures to do certain things or to be or behave a certain way? Can you give me an example?

- And in terms of sexual-affective relationships? Hook-ups, couples... do you think there is pressure to have them? Can you give me an example of what that pressure is like? And is there the same pressure for all kinds of sexual-affective relationships? And for having those relationships with all kinds of individuals?

- Do you talk about sexual-affective relationships with your friends? How do you talk about them with your friends? How have you heard other people talk about relationships? What kind of sexual-affective relationships do you talk about the most? And what types of expressions or language are used to describe them? What expressions or language have you used with your friends or have you heard other people use to talk about the sexual-affective relationships you/they want or desire?

- When you talk or hear about individuals you and your friends like, do you talk about a certain type of individuals more than others? Who is talked about the most, and how? In the movies, in the shows, on the internet, at school, what kind of people are the most popular ones? How do people talk about them?

- In general, how do you and your friends talk about good people, about nice people? Are they the popular ones? Why yes/no?

- With your friends, what kind of people do you value the most? Both for friendship and for relationships. How do you talk about these people? And what kind of people do you think are valued most in class/school?

- What is your ideal relationship like? And how is the person to have that relationship? What things do you look at a person you like/find attractive?

- Which characters do you admire from the books you have read in the gatherings? Why? What do you like about these characters?

- What do you think of the relationships shown in the books you've read? Why do you like/dislike them? Would you like to have such a relationship? Why yes/no?

- Is there any dialogue of the gatherings that has caught your attention? Why? Can you share with me any intervention or dialogue of the gatherings about relationships that has made you reflect on something?

- For those students who have read "Romeo and Juliet" in the DLG: what do you think of Romeo and Juliet? Of the characters, and of their relationship? Do you think that nowadays the people around you are looking for/want this kind of love? How do you talk about this type of relationship with other people? How do your friends talk? How do your classmates talk? What do you think about the people who want those kinds of relationships? Would you like to have such a relationship? Why yes/no?