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A Task as a Test:
Students' Perception of a Task-Based Approach to a Testing Situation

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Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso
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ABSTRACT

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Within the area of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), the Task Based Approach (TBA) proposes a communicative teaching through the use of tasks (Skehan, 2003). At the same time, researchers in the area of SLA agree that the approach used by the teacher in class should be similar to the way the students are going to be tested. Bearing this in mind, it can be assumed that in a classroom in which TBA is the teaching approach, students' assessment should be conducted the same way. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating a test which was used in a TBA classroom to understand why that test could be considered a Task-Test, that is, a test which contained elements of a task according to Ellis' (2003) criteria. In addition, this study aimed at unfolding students' perceptions of this test in terms of it being an appropriate tool for measuring their L2 acquisition. In order to achieve these purposes, the test was analyzed and results show that the test fits into Ellis' criteria for task categorization. Moreover, 17 students answered a questionnaire during their class time after doing the test. Their answers demonstrated that the students were able to identify task elements in the Task-Test and due to that it was considered by them an effective tool for measuring their L2 acquisition.

Key-words: Task Based Approach, Assessment, Task-Test
Number of words: 222

RESUMO

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Dentro da área de Aquisição de Segunda Língua, a abordagem baseada em tarefas propõe um ensino comunicativo através do uso de tarefas (Skehan, 2003). Da mesma forma, pesquisadores e professores da área de Aquisição de Segunda Língua afirmam que a abordagem usada em sala de aula deve ser similar à maneira que os alunos são testados. Levando isso em consideração, é possível concluir que, uma sala de aula a qual faz uso da abordagem baseada em tarefas deve conduzir a testagem dos alunos da mesma forma. Assim, esse trabalho tem como objetivo analisar um teste, o qual foi utilizado em uma sala de aula que faz uso do ensino baseado em tarefas, de forma a investigar porque tal teste pode ser considerado um Teste-Tarefa, ou seja, um teste que contém elementos de uma tarefa levando em consideração os critérios estabelecidos por Ellis (2003). Além disso, a presente pesquisa objetivou investigar a percepção dos alunos sobre esse teste no sentido de saber se o mesmo é ou não uma ferramenta apropriada para medir seu aprendizado em L2. Para atingir tais objetivos, o teste utilizado foi analisado e os resultados demonstraram que o mesmo se encaixa dentro dos critérios para uma tarefa estabelecidos por Ellis (2003). Da mesma forma, 17 alunos foram convidados a responder um questionário em sala de aula após terem feito o teste. As respostas dos questionários demonstraram que os alunos identificaram os elementos de uma tarefa no Teste – Tarefa e, em virtude desses resultados, o Teste-Tarefa foi considerado pelos alunos como uma ferramenta apropriada para medir seu aprendizado em L2.

Palavras-chave: Ensino baseado em tarefas, testagem, Teste-Tarefa
Número de palavras: 263

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GRAPHS

1. Introduction

When language teaching is considered, two important issues (among many others) should be taken into account since they impact possible learning outcomes: the teaching approach the teacher holds during classes and the way the students are going to be tested.

In relation to teaching approaches[1], many studies in the language teaching field state that the two main trends in language teaching are the grammatical and the communicative approach (Maia , Rabello, Cervo, Santos & Pans 2002; Canale & Swain 1980; among others). According to Sanchez (2004),

> Both approaches have been permanently in tension with each other and are representative of a dichotomy that seems to reappear again and again in different ways and formats: written vs. oral language; learning grammar vs. learning how to speak; and formal vs. informal language use (p.40).

Within this context, the Task Based Approach (TBA) is placed as one of the approaches that seeks for communicative characteristics.

If pedagogical issues are considered, the Task Based Approach is mainly characterized by the use of activities which are called tasks. Ellis (2003) defines task as a workplan which involves primary focus on meaning, real-world processes of language use, the four language skills, engaging in cognitive processes that have a defined communicative outcome. Nevertheless, in some classroom settings, there seems to be a gap between the tasks dealt in class and the instruments used as to evaluate students overall performance.

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[1] In the language teaching field, much has been discussed when it comes to the use of the word method to characterize the teacher's methodology. There have been improvements in the area recently and the discussion lies not only on which methodology should be implemented but rather on teaching pedagogical possibilities. Therefore, the chosen word in this study is approach rather than method. (Kumaravadivelu, 1994)

According to the Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais – PCNs (1998) in Brazil, both teaching approaches and testing should be in accordance, so that when students are tested, they are less likely to fail. For that reason, if teachers' approach is based on some principles of the TBA, the assessment of his/her student's communicative performance should also include some TBA principles (Ellis, 2003).

Brindley (2001) explains that there is "a variety of testing and assessment procedures" (p.126) in schools when language acquisition is considered. One of these assessment procedures includes the outcome-based assessment, or the task-based assessment. Ellis points out that "assessment tasks are viewed as devices for eliciting and evaluating communicative performances from learners in the context of language use that is meaning-focused and directed towards some specific goal" (p.279). Within the TBA, most of the studies conducted in the area of Task-based assessment take as their main instrument a task or a set of tasks. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that this study will not use a task or a set of tasks as its main tool. Instead, this research will focus on a test which includes characteristics of a written test but that it is based on Ellis's main elements of a task within it.

Based on the ideas aforementioned, two research questions will guide this study:

RQ 1- What makes a test a task-test?

RQ 2- What are the students' perceptions of a test which is based on task principles, when comparing it to ordinary testing situations that these students might have already faced?

In an attempt to answer these two questions, this study intends to analyze a test used in a language teaching classroom as a way to understand what makes that specific test a task-test. Moreover, taking into consideration the students' answers of a questionnaire, this study aims to unfold how students perceive this task-test in relation

to it being an appropriate tool for measuring acquisition in the context that they are inserted in. For the current purposes, a bibliographical research will be conducted, as a way to characterize Task-Based as an approach to teaching-learning and assessment. In addition, a questionnaire will be applied as an attempt to collect data for the analysis of the students' perceptions about the Task-Test.

1.1. *Significance of the study*

This study seeks to propose an alternative way for testing students' language acquisition. Therefore, the results of this small scale research may shed some light on the research already conducted in the field of Second Language Acquisition. In addition, this study may be relevant to the research in the area of Task-Based Approach due to the fact that it is presenting a new perspective on the use of tasks as tests. Moreover, it may also be useful for students of English as a second language, since it highlights students' perceptions of their own learning and takes their voice into account while evaluating testing situations.

2. Review of Literature

In order to understand the bases of this study concerning task assessment, it is important to clarify what a task is and its pedagogical implications to the second language learning field. In addition, since assessment is an important theoretical concept in this study, it also seems pertinent to describe some relevant aspects that permeate the area. Thus, this section will firstly provide a definition of task, and secondly, define task assessment.

2.1.   *Tasks*

The Task Based Approach (TBA) followed the Communicative Approach. According to Maia, Rabello, Cervo, Santos & Pans (2002), the communicative approach main goal is to develop communicative competence through the teaching of the four language skills (reading/ writing/ speaking/ listening). Following the Communicative Approach, the Task Based Approach brings 'tasks' as its main tool to achieve these main objectives.

Kumaravadivelu (2006) explains that "in spite of the increasing number of publications, a consensus definition of *task* continues to elude the profession" (p.64). Skehan (2003) explains that the term "task" arose in the 80s, period during which much was being discussed about communicative activities. According to the author, the term was firstly related to the need for comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985; as cited in Skehan, 2003) and interaction (Long, 1983, 1985a; as cited in Skehan, 2003). The author points that this view would promote indices "for the negotiation of meaning, such as comprehension checks, clarification requests, and confirmation checks, all regarded by one group of researchers as key indices of interactions in progress which would be suportive of acquisition*"* (p. 2). However, as Skehan shows, later on, many researchers (Dougthy &Varela, 1998; Doughty & Williams, 1998a; Long, Inagaki & Ortega, 1998; Skehan, 1998; Robinson, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2001, as cited in Skehan, 2003) agreed that interaction and comprehensible input, alone, were not enough and a focus on form perspective was vital.

According to Ellis (2003), although there is not a complete agreement as to what constitutes a task, the definitions of the term involve different dimensions, such as, (1)

the scope of a task, (2) the perspective from which a task is viewed, (3) the authenticity of a task, (4) the linguistic skills required to perform a task, (5) the psychological processes involved in task performance, and (6) the outcome of a task.

Concerning the scope of a task, the use of language is one aspect that helps determine the definition of task. Some authors such as Long (1985; as cited in Ellis, 2003) include activities that require or not the use of language when giving examples of tasks. On the other hand, Ellis (2003), following the definitions given by many other authors, such as Richards, Platt & Weber (1985; as cited in Ellis, 2003), Nunan (1989; as cited in Ellis, 2003), and Crookes (1986; as cited in Ellis, 2003), explains that a task must involve language use.

Still within the scope of a task, another aspect discussed is the focus of the learner when performing the task. Ellis explains that some authors such as Long (1985; as cited in Ellis, 2003), Richards, Platt and Weber (1985; as cited in Ellis, 2003) and Skehan (1996a; as cited in Ellis, 2003) consider task an activity in which meaning is primary. Breen (1989; as cited in Ellis, 2003), on the other hand, takes any activity involving language as a task. Still, Widdowson (1998; as cited in Ellis, 2003) proposes that task includes those activities whose focus is on the pragmatic meaning of language use, in opposition to other activities which focus on the systemic meaning of language use. This study will take Widdowson's (1998; as cited in Ellis, 2003) view into consideration.

In relation to the perspective from which a task is viewed, Breen (1989; as cited in Ellis, 2003) points out two different possibilities: the task is viewed from the designer's point of view, thus 'task-as-workplan'; or the task is viewed from the learner's point of view, 'task-as-process'. This study will see task as a workplan, since it will take into

consideration the designer's intention to engage the learner in meaning focused language use.

Regarding the authenticity of a task, Ellis (2003) points out that a task can be situationally authentic (when the task can be performed in the real world, e.g. borrowing a library book) or one which seeks to achieve interactional authenticity (when the learners use of real-world interaction while trying to complete the task but not necessarily this task would be performed in the real world, e.g. telling a story based on a series of pictures). This study will take into consideration both views of task related to authenticity.

Concerning the language skills required to perform a task, Ellis, who claims for a more general definition in this matter, explains the four skills should be considered when defining tasks. This study will also take all the linguistic skills in its task definition.

The cognitive processes involving a task also contribute to define it. Prabhu (1987; as cited in Ellis, 2003) explains that tasks should ideally involve learners' reasoning. Ellis points out that tasks "clearly involve cognitive processes such as selecting, reasoning, classifying, sequencing information, and transforming information from one form of representation to another" (p.7).

Finally, in relation to the outcomes of a task, Ellis states that "the idea of a definited outcome is an essential feature of a task" (p.8). The author explains that although the outcome is not the real purpose of a task, it helps the learner to use language in ways that will promote language learning.

Based on the different dimensions presented above, it is possible to observe that there are different approaches to define what a task is. Taking into consideration Ellis' summary of a task's features, this work will see task as an activity which involves

primary focus on meaning, real-world processes of language use, focuses on one or more of the four language skills, engages learners in cognitive processes that have a defined communicative outcome.

In addition, another characteristic which will permeate this study is the focus on form approach. D'Ely (2009) explains that focus-on-form (Long, 1991; as cited in D'Ely, 2009) refers to a pedagogical intervention, and a distinction has been made to its counterpart labeled focus-on-forms. While the former means that learners' attention is tuned to formal aspects of language within a meaningful context, the latter implies 'instruction per se', where there is a focus on a linguistic structure detached from its context of use.

Ellis (2003) explains that a focused- on - form task has two aims: "one is to stimulate communicative language use and the other is to target the use of a particular, predetermined target feature" (p.16). Skehan, (1998; as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006) when talking about tasks, explains the importance of an equilibrium in which "the central feature is a balance between form and meaning, and an alternation of attention between them" (p.65). Therefore, the idea of focus on form can be one of the main characteristics in a task since it provides learners the opportunity to focus on form in the context of meaning. Hence, this study will take it into consideration in its task definition.

2.2.   *Task- Based Assessment*

When thinking about the development of assessment in the language acquisition field, it is possible to affirm that many changes have happened throughout time. Brindley (2001) explains that since the need for better professionals and SLA speakers

has been increasing in the latest years, "educational institutions have introduced a variety of testing and assessment procedures in order to make decisions on selection, certification and achievement" (p.126). One of these assessment procedures includes the outcome-based assessment, or the task-based assessment.

In order to better understand the benefits and the features which compose the task-based assessment, it is important to compare it to the other language testing situations. According to Ellis (2003), there are three main types of testing in the SLA context: (1) the psychometric tradition, (2) the integrative language test, and (3) the communicative language tests.

The first one would include questions of the closed type, such as multiple choice, for example, and its scores would be analyzed breaking language into levels (e.g. phonology, lexis, grammar, etc). The second one takes these same principles into account, but it introduces the idea that the scores should be analyzed using a holistic view of language. Ellis (2003) states that both psychometric testing and integrative language testing can be classified as system-referenced tests, since their "aim is to provide information about language proficiency in a general sense without reference to any particular use or situation" (p.283).

The third one, the communicative testing, takes into consideration three primary aspects: (a) it involves performance, (b) it is authentic, (c) it is scored on real-life outcomes. This type of testing seeks to provide information about the ability to use the language in specific contexts. Task-Based Assessment is included in the third type.

According to Ellis, "assessment tasks are viewed as devices for eliciting and evaluating communicative performances from learners in the context of language use that is meaning-focused and directed towards some specific goal" (p.279). Brindley (1994) points out some advantages of using a 'task-centered assessment' when testing

SLA. The pointed advantages are: (1) both teacher and learner focus on language as a tool for communication; (2) it has a favorable *washback effect*[2]; (3) because of it, assessment can be better integrated into the learning process; (4) it provides a useful diagnostic feedback to learners and teachers about learners' progress and achievement; and (5) it enables the results to be reported in an intelligible way to non-specialists.

It is important to mention, however, that most of studies conducted in relation to task-assessment take a separate task or a set of different tasks as their main tool to measure performance and evaluate learners. Nevertheless, this study will focus on a test which brings characteristics of a written test but that contains task elements within it. Therefore, the test which will be analyzed in this study is not a separate task. Rather, it is a written test which includes Ellis's (2003) main features of a task; that is, the questions have their focus on meaning, instead of on grammatical features; real-world processes of language use appear; focus on one or more of the four language skills; and they engage in cognitive processes that have a defined communicative outcome. Also, some of the questions in the test will include the focus-on-form rationale.

Finally, before starting the next section, it is important to signal that, due to the scarcity of studies regarding the use of tasks for assessment purposes; it was not possible to review empirical classroom studies in the area of task.

3. Method

In order to pursue the main objectives of the present study which are to (1) analyze a test used in a language teaching classroom as a way to understand what makes that specific test a task, (2) perceive the impact that the use of that specific test might have

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[2] "Washback" refers to the influence of language testing on teaching and learning

had according to their own perspective, some methodological choices were made. This section will provide details on the participants, the instruments used for data collection, criteria for data analysis and the data collection procedures.

3.1.   *Participants*

Students enrolled in the fifth level of the Extra-Curricular Program offered by UFSC in the second semester of 2011 were invited to participate in the study. The sample consisted of 17 participants (see appendix A). Their ages vary from 19 to 49 years old but most of them are around 20. The majority is part of a variety of undergraduate programs at UFSC. Also, three participants are graduated, one is a doctor student, another is a master student and another is a professor at this university. They all have had experiences with English before in regular or language schools and the majority has been studying at Extra Curricular Language Course for 2 years or so. Only two students were in their first semester at Extra when data was collected. All students declared to be studying English due to professional and/or personal needs.

3.2.   *Instruments*

The materials used in the study consisted of a language test (see appendix B) and of a self-report questionnaire (see appendix C). The purposes of these instruments are (1) to present the Task-Test to the students and (2) to unfold students' perceptions about the Task-Test. The following section will briefly present them.

3.2.1. Test

The test which was applied in this study was based on the three first units that were studied during the English classes that the participants were attending at Extra Curricular, in the second semester of 2011. The test was designed by this researcher since I was also the teacher responsible for the group's classes. The test was made in written format and it contained five open questions based on a movie scene the students had watched previously. The scene was taken from the film "*Singing in the Rain*" (1952) and, in it, a famous silent movie actor meets a theater actress and they talk about their own perspectives concerning acting.

Although the test contained the traditional format of a written test, it was based on the main features of a task according to Ellis (2003). That is, the questions had their focus on meaning, instead of on grammatical features; real-world processes of language use appeared; the questions focused on one or more of the four language skills; and to answer it, the students engaged in cognitive processes that had a defined communicative outcome. In this study, the test will be referred to as Task-Test.

3.2.2. Questionnaire

Concerning the questionnaire, it consisted of four open questions and one closed question. According to Woodrow (2010), *"Questionnaires rely upon self-report, that is, the data come from the respondent's own account of their experiences or views."* (p. 305). Since one of the objectives of the study is to investigate students' perception of the Task-Test used to evaluate them, a self report questionnaire was considered to better fit for the research purposes.

Also, it is important to mention that, although the students enrolled in the fifth semester of the Extra-curricular course at UFSC are usually considered intermediate and therefore able to write and read in the second language (English), the questionnaire was applied in their source language (Portuguese) so that difficulties in expressing their opinions because of the target language use would not be an obstacle. That way, their focus on understanding the questions from the questionnaire was directed towards meaning and not to comprehending specific words or ideas in another language.

The objective of the first question – *Escolha uma das alternativas abaixo que melhor expressam a sua opinião em relação ao teste que você acabou de fazer e a outros testes que você já fez dentro do contexto de aprendizado de língua estrangeira* – was to check whether the students were used to that type of testing or not and if they were able to perceive the Task-Test as different from what they were used to or not. Since this was a closed question, the alternatives given were *(a) O mesmo tipo de teste que estou acostumado; (b) Um pouco diferente do que estou acostumado; (c) Muito diferente do que estou acostumado*. The reason why this question was closed was that it was necessary to concentrate the students' attention into those specific alternatives, since, probably, if the question were open, the students could bring other characteristics about different types of testing that wouldn't be relevant to the study.

The second question – *Explique a sua escolha na primeira questão. Ao comparar o teste que você acabou de fazer com outros testes que você já fez dentro do contexto de aprendizado de língua estrangeira, quais características explicam a sua escolha?* – tried to see if the students could perceive differences in one type of test and the other.

The third question – *Comparando o teste que você acabou de fazer com outros testes que você já fez dentro do contexto de aprendizado de língua estrangeira, qual você considera o mais apropriado para medir seu aprendizado. Por quê?* – attempted

to investigate whether the students could see the importance of the task characteristics when evaluation is taking place.

The fourth question – *Comente sobre a relação entre o teste que você acabou de fazer e os tipos de atividades realizados em aula* – tried to see if the students could identify the familiarity of the test proposed in this research with the activities developed during classes.

And finally, the fifth question - *Caso você queira dizer algo mais sobre essa experiência, utilize esse espaço* – aimed at revealing other issues that students might want to express and that were not covered by the questions previously asked.

3.3.   *Procedures for data collection*

The study was conducted during the regular class time. In a previous class, the researcher asked the participants to sign a consent form (see appendix D) so that their data could be used. On the day of the test, the researcher explained to the students that they could choose not to participate in the study, but that their contributions would be extremely relevant to the study area and that their responses would be used for academic purposes only. In addition, the researcher reminded the students that they should answer the questionnaire according to their own opinion, since their answers would not influence the relationship they had with the course or the teacher – all this set of information was stated in the introduction of the questionnaire.

After the explanations were over, the students watched a movie scene, taken from the movie *Singing in the Rain* (1952). Then, the researcher asked some oral comprehension questions to guarantee that the input was understood. Since the students confirmed to understand the scene, the researcher distributed the test. It is relevant to

mention that the students were not able to watch the scene while answering the Task-Test. Therefore, the test used in this research can be considered a 'there and then' Task-Test, that is, a task that is characterized by the lack of contextual support. Therefore, it requires learners to retrieve the events previously stored and integrate them with new information and, thus, it is considered a complex task (Robinson, 1995).

The students answered the test which contained five questions. Some students finished the test before the others. After someone was finished, he/she received the questionnaire from the researcher and filled them out without a time limit. When they were finished answering the questionnaire, they were allowed to go home. The researcher was present the whole time while the students answered the questionnaires and the test.

3.4.   *Pilot study*

During the first semester of 2011, a pilot study was conducted with a fifth level group in Extracurricular at UFSC. The purpose of the pilot was to perceive students' reactions and appraisal about the test and the questionnaires so that both instruments could be refined so as to bring *construct validity* (Dornyei, 2007) to the study.

In the group, there were a total of ten students. The pilot was conducted during regular class time. The students were first asked to sign a consent form allowing the researcher to use their data for academic purposes. After signing the form, the students watched a movie scene. The scene was taken from the film *"Singing in the Rain"* (1952). After the scene was over, the researcher asked some questions about it, so as to guarantee students' understanding of the given input. Since the students confirmed their understanding, the researcher distributed the Task-Test. The Task-Test was based on the

book the students were using in the course. The students answered the test without a time limit. As soon as a student was finished, the researcher gave him/her the questionnaire (see appendix E), which was also answered without time constrains.

After analyzing the answers given by the students during the pilot, some considerations were made for the actual research. Concerning the first question - *Escolha uma das alternativas abaixo que melhor expressam a sua opinião em relação ao teste que você acabou de fazer e outros testes que você já fez dentro do contexto de aprendizado de língua estrangeira* - from the 10 students who answered the questionnaire, five students selected letter 'b' – *um pouco diferente do que estou acostumado* - and five chose letter 'c' – *muito diferente do que estou acostumado*. The results showed that the students were not used to the Task-Test, since none of them selected letter 'a' – *o mesmo tipo de teste que estou acostumado*. Due to this finding, the first question was kept for the research without any modifications.

Concerning the second question - *Explique a sua escolha na primeira questão. Ao comparar o teste que você acabou de fazer com outros testes que você já fez dentro do contexto de aprendizado de língua estrangeira, quais características desse teste explicam a sua escolha?* – all students gave answers that showed they could identify differences between the Task-Test and other types of tests. For instance, seven students mentioned the presence of a context in the Task-Test "*a integração do um assunto de um filme assistido no inicio da prova com o conteúdo da prova*" (student A). Moreover, four students mentioned the focus on meaning that the Task-Test had in opposition to focus on grammatical rules "*O teste que acabei de fazer não é nada comum. Na maioria das vezes é cobrado normas e questões de completar e até mesmo de assinalar. Isso faz com que todos os alunos 'decorem' e engasguem na hora de se expressar e conversar em inglês. Eu acredito que é escrevendo e falando sobre coisas do dia a dia que se*

aprende de verdade"(student B). Since the given answers demonstrated that the students were able to understand the question and provide valid responses, the second question was maintained the same way for the actual research.

In relation to the third question – *Comparando o teste que você acabou de fazer com outros testes que você já fez dentro do contexto de aprendizado de língua estrangeira, qual você considera o mais apropriado para medir seu aprendizado. Por quê?* – seven students considered the Task-Test as a more appropriate tool to measure their language acquisition while three students considered both the Task-Test and other types of tests valid for measuring acquisition. Again, the given answers showed that the students had understood the question and were able to provide relevant data for the research. Therefore, question three was kept the same way in the actual research.

In relation to the fourth question – *Caso você queira dizer algo mais sobre essa experiência, utilize esse espaço* – four students decided to use the given space to make comments. Two students talked about their impressions and feelings toward the classes and the improvements in their language proficiency. The other two students talked about the test and the importance of testing new assessment methodologies. All the given answers were considered valid to the research, so the fourth question was also kept the way it was.

Therefore, as stated above, the pilot study showed that the questions in the questionnaire could be maintained the way they were designed since they all provided construct validity to the research. However, a fifth question was added to the questionnaire in order to have a more encompassing understanding of students' perception of the language process as a whole. The added question was *"Ao comparar o tipo de teste que você acabou de fazer com as atividades realizadas em sala de aula nesse semestre, à quais conclusões você chega?"*.

Based on the information mentioned above, it is possible to say that the pilot proved to be an important tool and step in the process of making and refining methodological choices prior to the actual data collection phase for the TCC. In addition, it was a unique opportunity for the researcher to learn about conducting research by doing research.

4. Results and Discussion

The first objective of this research was to analyze a test used in a language teaching classroom as a way to understand what makes that specific test a Task-Test. Even though this research did not use a task or a set of tasks as its main instrument, as it normally happens in research that is based on TBA, Ellis's (2003) criteria to define a task were taken into consideration. That is so because the test used in this study, although it makes use of a traditional written test format, is based on Ellis's definition of a Task, and therefore, it is called a Task-Test.

According to Ellis,

> "A task is a workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires, them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to use particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills, and also various cognitive processes (p.16)".

The first principle taken into account during the development of the Task-Test was the one considered by Ellis (2003) as the key criterion, "the need for a primary focus on meaning" (p.16).

In order to achieve the use of this condition, a movie scene was chosen with the purpose of offering the students a context for them to base their answers on. The scene was taken from the movie *Singing in the Rain* (1952). In it, the main character, who was called Don and worked as a silent movie actor, is being chased by some of his fans while going to a party. As an attempt to run away from those fans, he jumps into a girl's car as she passes by. This girl is called Kathy and she works as a theater actress. At first, Kathy does not recognize Don, but after asking a police man for help, she realizes he is a famous movie actor. So, in order to redeem herself, she offers him a ride to his house, which he accepts. As they drive to his house, Don flirts with Kathy. She does not like that and decides to tell him her opinion about silent movie actors. According to Kathy, silent movie actors are not real actors since they do not speak, only make a "dumb show", using her own words. At the same time she says that, they arrive at Don's house. Don gets mad at Kathy and he leaves the car.

The reason why the scene was chosen is due to the fact that it relates to the topics that were seen by the students during the English classes on the second semester of 2011. During the first three units, the students who participated in the study had classes that talked about three different themes: (1) relationships, (2) professions and (3) favors. In the scene, the three topics were being contemplated, since it involves a relationship between the main characters, one makes the other a favor and the main topic discussed by them was related to their profession. Based on that, the scene was selected as a way to offer the students a familiar context about which they would write in the Task-Test. Therefore, the questions designed were all related to the scene. They were also interrelated in the attempt to make learners focus on pragmatic meaning, since the ultimate purpose was to answer the question instead of focusing on a linguistic item.

However, although the students were not required to *focus on forms*, the task was designed so as to stimulate the students to use the linguistic items they had learned in class. This aspect relates to the *focus on form* criterion established by Long (1991) and coined by Ellis (2003) when defining a task. According to Ellis, a focused on form task has the aim "to stimulate communicative language use and to target the use of a particular, predetermined target feature" (p.16). Xavier (2001) explains that explicit teaching "may contribute indirectly to acquisition since it facilitates recognition, understanding and language production" (p.21-22).

Taking the ideas aforementioned into consideration, the first question - *Based on the scene from the film "Singing in the Rain", that you have just watched, explain what an actor is according to Kathy Seldon's opinion* - offered the students the possibility to focus on the use of 'relative clauses', which was an item discussed in the first unit they worked on. The students were expected to continue the sentence "*an actor is a person*" using the relative pronoun 'who' and conjugating the following verbs correctly. However, it is important to highlight that the primary focus of the question was on meaning, so the students did not necessarily had to use the grammatical item to answer the question. In fact, in order to answer this question, the students would have to have understood the given input and then give an answer to the question that would make sense.

In relation to the second question – *Do you agree with her? What is acting for you?* – the students were expected to make use of the grammatical item coined in the second unit which was 'gerund phrases'. Therefore, the students were stimulated to answer the second part of the question using the following "for me, acting is…". However, following the same ideas of the first question, they were not obliged to use the mentioned grammatical item, since they could answer the question in other ways.

Concerning the third question - *Compare acting with your own profession. Which profession is more interesting? has better working hours? requires more effort? is better paid? Answer the questions above and explain why you think that way* – the students were encouraged to use 'comparatives' to answer the question (item discussed in unit 2). However, again, they were supposed to maintain their primary focus on pragmatic meaning, since the answer could be given using other structures and also because they were supposed to explain their choices, instead of only using the 'comparatives' correctly.

In relation to the fourth question - *As the movie continues, Don falls in love with Kathy. He wants to talk to her but he cannot find her. Imagine you are Kathy's best friend and Don asks you to give her some messages. Rewrite the sentences below, using indirect requests, as if Don were asking you to give them to Kathy* – the students were supposed to rewrite the sentences using the grammatical item 'indirect requests' and also using 'modals', 'if clauses' and 'gerunds' to start the request. All these grammatical items were seen by the students in unit three. Although the question refers to a specific grammatical item in the rubrics, there was more than one way to rewrite the sentences, depending on the students' choices. Therefore, the focus still was on pragmatic meaning, since there was no right answer, only appropriate or inappropriate ones.

Finally, in the fifth question, the students were introduced to a small text which they should read and interpret. After that, they had two questions to answer: *a) Debbie Reynolds (Kathy) was really upset after Kelly's criticism. What was it about? Does it bother you when a person criticizes your work? b) Name other things that you can't stand at your work.* In both 'a' and 'b', the students were expected to use 'it clauses' and 'when clauses', topics coined in unit 1. Equally to the other questions, the students

were not obliged to use any grammatical form, since the answer could be given in many different ways.

Concerning another criterion established by Ellis (2003) as a way to define task, based on the explanation given above, it is possible to perceive that the Task-Test required two different skills from the participants: writing, since they had to write all their answers in order to finish the test; reading, since they were exposed to a movie scene that contained subtitles and which they had to understand in order to answer the questions. In addition, the Task-Test included a small paragraph which had also to be understood in order to complete question five. Ellis explains that a task "can involve any of the four language skills" (p.10), but that this criterion does not differentiate it from other types of activities.

In relation to the need for an outcome, the Task-Test was designed so as to focus students' attention to answer the question. Ellis points out that "the stated outcome of a task serves as the means for determining when participants have completed a task" (p.10). Therefore, by answering the questions appropriately, the students would have completed the Task-Test outcome.

Concerning the relation to real-world process of language use, Ellis states that the task can be an activity that requires learners to engage in situations such as the ones found in the real world (e.g. completing a form). However, he also explains that "the processes of language use that result from performing a task, for example, asking and answering questions or dealing with misunderstandings, will reflect those that occur in real-world communication" (p.10). Therefore, the Task-Test, which requires students to answer questions about specific themes that are related to the real-world (professions and relationships, meeting someone new, giving opinions, etc) follows the criterion given by Ellis (2003). Also, it is important to take into consideration that the classroom

environment is part of the real world context. Therefore, pedagogic activities proposed in the classroom can be considered authentic since within a foreign language context, the classroom environment is the only real context students can use the foreign language to commmunicate.

Related to the aspect of engaging learners to cognitive processes during the task, the Task-Test requires learners to employ these processes since for answering the questions, the participants went through reasoning, evaluating information, selecting information, decision making processes, among others.

Finally, in relation to the Task-Test being a workplan, it is possible to affirm that it is one since it was designed as a plan with the objective of engaging the learners in meaning-focused language.

Therefore, based on the ideas aforementioned, it is possible to conclude that the Task-Test is more than an average test and that the whole test constitutes a task, as it fulfills Ellis (2003) sets of criteria. That means that the Task-Test is a workplan that focus students' attention to pragmatic meaning but that also encourages them to focus on form; it involves participants in real-world processes of language use and cognitive processes that have a defined communicative outcome; and it involves some of the linguistic skills.

Taking into consideration that the Task-Test follows Ellis' criteria for defining a task, it is possible to affirm that the Task-Test is different from other types of testing, since they may (or may not) share some of the characteristics with the Task-Test (e.g. being a workplan, having an outcome, being related to real-world, engaging students in cognitive processes and requiring one or more of the linguistic skills), but they normally have their focus on linguistic competence, instead of pragmatic meaning.

The second purpose of this study was to unfold students' perception about the Task-Test in relation to it being a more appropriate tool for measuring L2 acquisition in the context that they are inserted in. As explained in the method section of this research, in order to accomplish this second purpose, the students answered to a questionnaire about the Task-Test. The analysis of the questionnaires is given below.

Related to the first question, which aimed at checking whether the students were used to that type of testing or not, as well as, perceiving if they were able to see the Task-Test as different from what they are used to, the answers varied. From the 17 students that answered the questionnaires, 8 students chose letter 'b' – *um pouco diferente do que estou acostumado* -; and 9 students chose letter 'c' – *muito diferente do que estou acostumado.*

Graph 1. Representation of the number of times each answer appeared in students' responses for the first question. The items on the left correspond to the chosen answers.
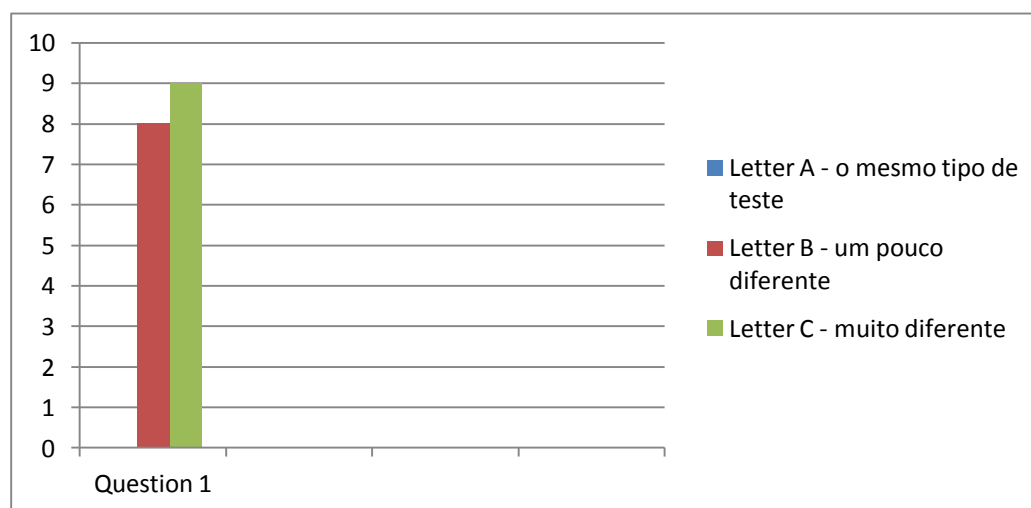
The results derived from the first question show that the students were not used to the task-test assessment, since none of them chose letter 'a' – o mesmo tipo de teste que estou acostumado – as their answer. Moreover, the responses given in questions 1, demonstrate that the students were able to identify the task-test as being different from

other types of testing. Finally, the fact that the letters chosen were well distributed among the students shows coherence in terms of what the students were used to.

Concerning the second question, students should explain their choice in question 1, bringing some characteristics to validate it. Regarding the features that could differentiate the Task-Test from other types of tests, the most cited ones were:

- Questions related to a movie scene

- Questions related to personal opinion

- No use of 'focus on forms' questions

- Questions related to real-world communication

- Questions focused on pragmatic meaning

- Use of writing skills

- Use of 'focus on form' questions

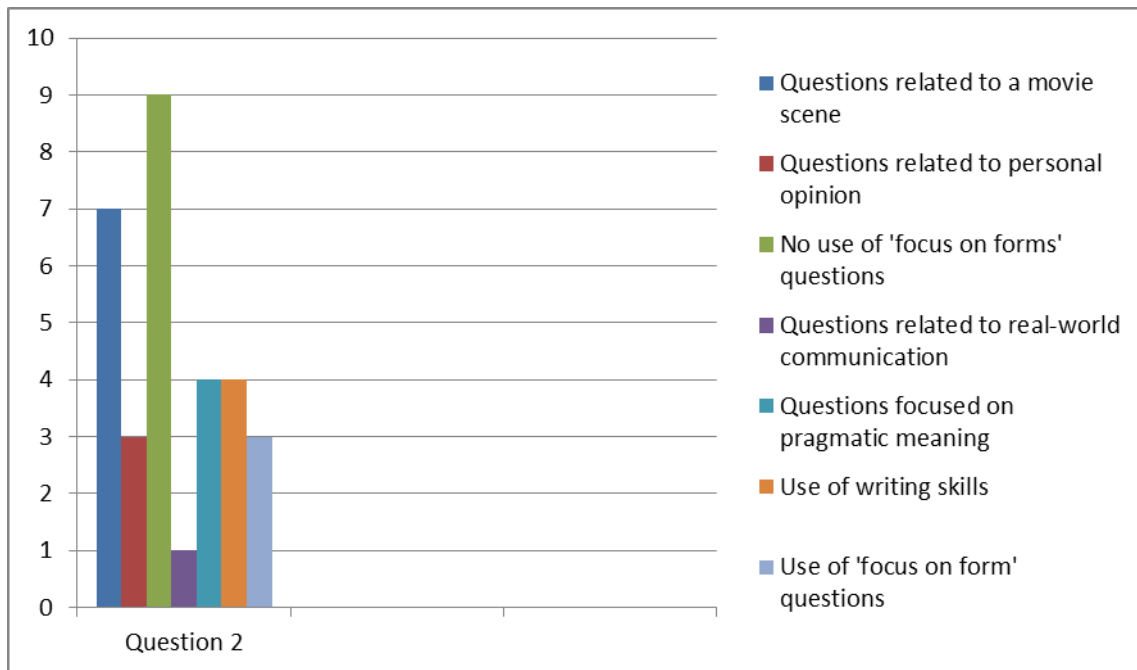Graph 2. Representation of the number of times each factor appeared in students' responses for the second question. The items on the left correspond to the aspects that emerged from the students' answers listed before.

In analyzing the factors which appeared in this part of the questionnaire, it is possible to notice that the students were able to perceive the difference between the Task-Test and other types of testing they have already made since they could indentify many features described by Ellis (2003) as task characteristics. Although the students did not use the vocabulary proposed by Ellis, the questionnaires revealed that they could notice that the Task-Test made use of 'focus on form' questions to assess grammar, instead of 'focus on forms' ones; focused on pragmatic meaning instead of on grammatical features or semantic meaning; was related to real-world process of language use; made use of different linguistic skills to assess their knowledge. These aspects will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

In relation to the dichotomy 'focus on form' x 'focus on forms'(Long, 1991), many students realized that the Task-Test made use of the first. D'Ely (2009) explains that focus-on-forms tasks are related to 'instruction per se', where there is a focus on a linguistic structure detached from its context of use. Although students did not use the

term "focus on forms" in their questionnaires, it is clear that they could identify its characteristics. Student 2, for example, when comparing the Task-Test to other types of test she/he had already done, she/he says "*os outros testes que fiz eram mais objetivos, tinham questões de assinalar e respostas curtas. E, esse test que foi feito é mais dinâmico e não é óbvio*". Xavier (2001) mentions the following features as characterizing "grammar exercises", which would be examples of "focus on forms" activities: routine exercises, pattern drills, activities that have language mastery as purpose, activities that practice and reinforce the correct rule application, sentence-based activities. Student 3 also points out the same characteristics, explaining that he/she has always done tests that made use of multiple choices questions, completing the blanks and matching the columns and the Task-Test was different "*os testes que eu fiz de lingua estrangeira sempre foram com questões de múltipla escolha, completar frases, relacionar colunas; raramente haviam questões para escrever e muito menos contextualizadas como as do teste de hoje*".

In relation to the focus on pragmatic meaning in the Task-Test, some students mentioned that the Task-Test was based on a movie scene "*nunca fiz um teste de ingles que fosse passado antes um video ou algo do tipo para que os alunos se inserissem no context da prova*" (student 5), involved the expression of their personal opinion "*o teste apresentava questões mais amplas e remete ao aluno relacionar questões analisadas no filme com situações pessoais, isso facilita o aluno a se expressar*" (student 7), and that context and grammar were connected "*o teste foi um pouco diferente nas questões discursivas porque elas possibilitaram uma resposta mais ampla à respeito da gramática e de expressão, não ficando apenas preso à resposta gramatical correta da pergunta. Assim pode-se responder uma pergunta com a gramática requerida de um modo muito mais livre*" (student 17). The fact that the students were able to identify a

context (the movie scene) as well as relate to it (personal opinion) and also realize that the main focus of the test was on expressing ideas about that context, shows that they could see that the Task-Test had pragmatic meaning as its primary focus. Ellis (2003) points out that the key criterion for a task is "the need for a primary focus on meaning" (p.16).

Finally, related to the presence of "real-world process of language use" and the "use of different linguistic skills" in the Task-Test, the results from the questionnaires also show that the students were able to point these characteristics in the Task-Test. For instance "*é uma avaliação mais próxima da realidade e nos permite perceber melhor nossos avanços e deficiências*" (student 12) shows that this student realizes the relation between the questions in the Task-Test and the communication processes that happen in the everyday life. Also, the answers from student 2 "*o teste te força a escrever mais e expresser suas opiniões*" and student 5 "*as questões necessitavam de uma redação mais rebuscada para serem respondidas*", show that some students were aware of the need for different knowledge on the language in order to answer the test.

The third question asked the students which test they considered more appropriate to measure their acquisition within the SL learning process. They were also expected to explain their choice. In relation to the first part of the question, 15 students answered that the Task-Test is more appropriate to measure their acquisition while 2 students answered that both the Task-Test and other types of testing can be considered good choices to measure acquisition.

Graph 3. Representation of the number of times each answer appeared in students' responses for the first part of the third question. The items on the left correspond to the students' answers.
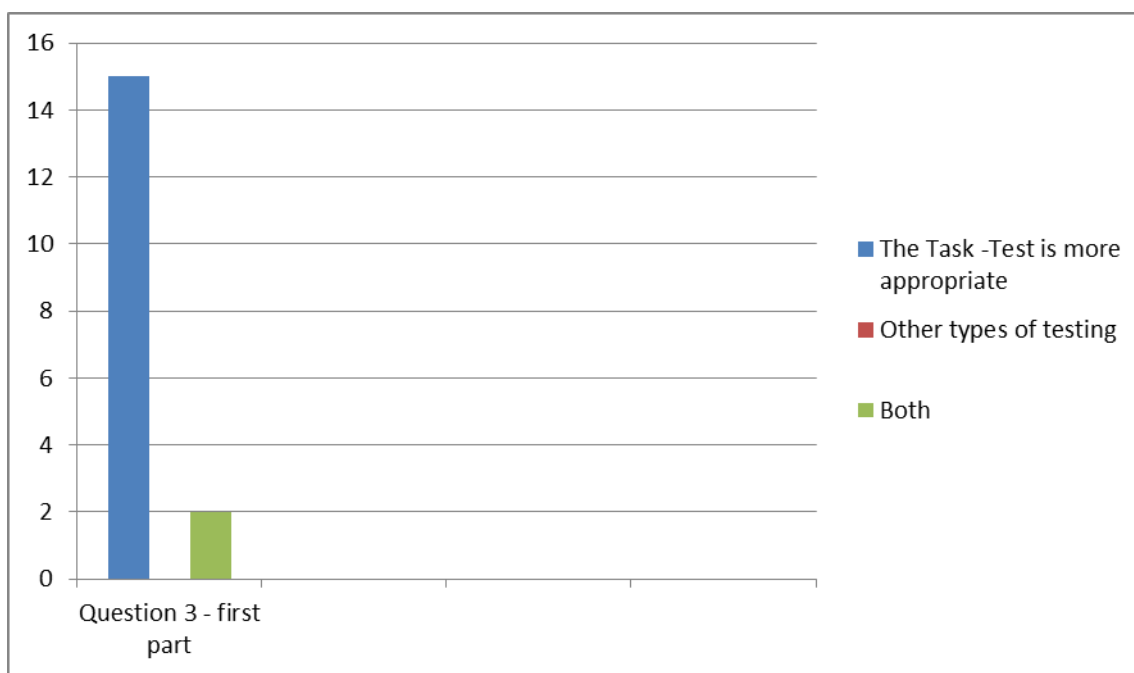
The results collected in the first part of question 3 show that the majority of students considered the Task-Test a more appropriate tool for measuring their acquisition while 2 students considered that both the Task-Test and the other types of testing would be a suitable instrument for assessment. Among the reasons that emerged for the choices made, the most cited ones can be summarized as follows:

- It requires production and comprehension skills
- It makes use of 'focus on form' questions
- It presents a context
- It relates to personal issues
- It relates to real-world communication

- It should include closed questions

Graph 4. Representation of the number of times each topic appeared in students' responses for the second part of the third question. The items on the left correspond to the aspects that emerged from the students' answers listed before.
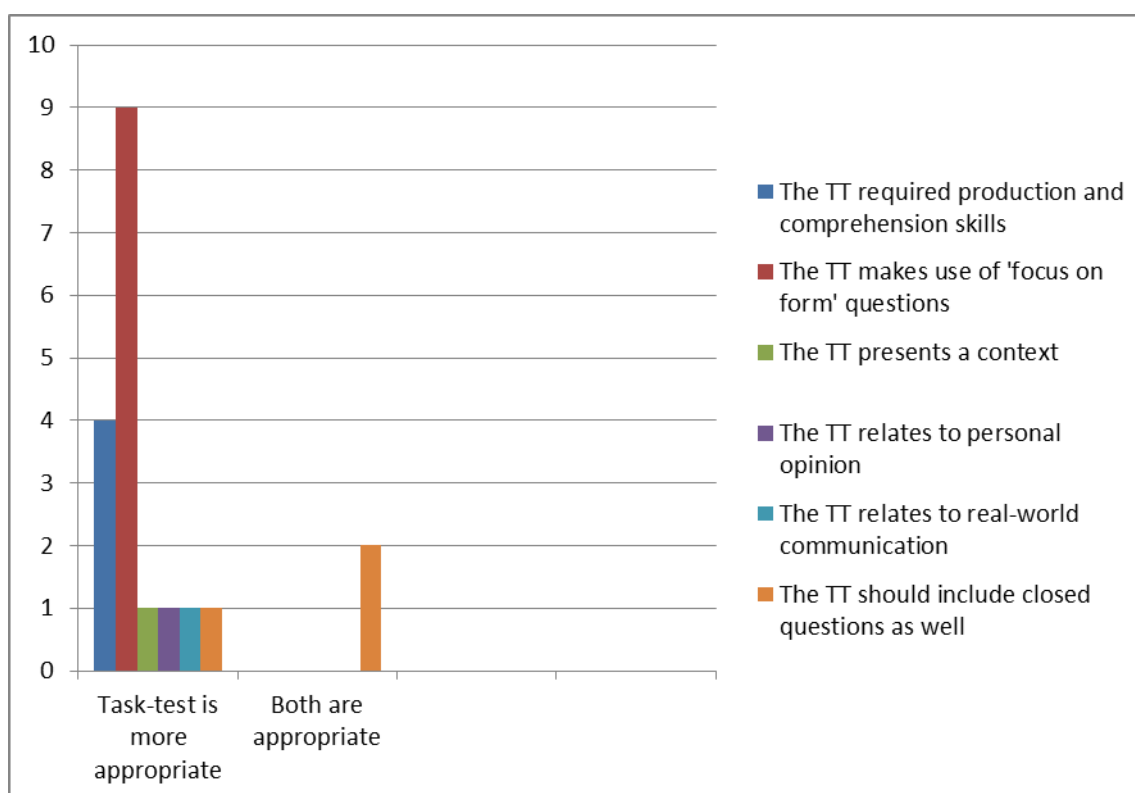
As it is possible to observe, the results for question 3 are similar to those found in the previous one, since it seems like the students were able to indentify some of Ellis' (2003) features to define a task. Moreover, in this question, not only the students indentified the task features, but also considered them reasons for claiming that the Task-Test is a more appropriate tool for measuring their acquisition. For instance, in student 1's answer "*considero que o mais apropriado é esse em que a escrita e tudo mais sai naturalmente; em que temos de nos preocupar em melhor nos expressar ao*

invés de decorar terminologias" as well as in student 3's answer *"prefiro testes como esse feito agora pois permitem realmente avaliar o aprendizado, fugindo das decorebas e das colas"*, it is possible to see that the students recognize the importance of 'focus on form' (Long, 1991) questions, in which the student is required to use a grammatical aspect but maintaining his/her focus on pragmatic meaning. Likewise, student 13's answer *"penso que o teste de hoje exigiu mais amplamente os conhecimentos envolvendo entendimento do contexto e da escrita"* and student 6's answer *"este, porque engloba um número maior de habilidades a serem avaliadas. Você é avaliado levando em consideração seu writing and listening, não só o primeiro como normalmente ocorre"*, shows that some students could recognize the importance of assessing different linguistic skills in a task. In relation to the other topics, student 6's answer exemplifies the recognition of context in the Task-Test *"este tipo de teste mostra-se interessante porque exige que o aluno entenda todo o contexto no qual é desenvolvido o diálogo em inglês"*; student 12's answer exemplifies the importance of relating the test to real-world process of language use *"este, pois como disse antes, as questões são discursivas e de opinião, estão mais próximas da nossa realidade, do que iremos de fato usar no dia a dia"*.

The fourth question concerns the relation between the Task-Test and the activities which had been developed in class so far. For this question, among all the participants, 14 students considered the Task-Test coherent and related to the activities developed in class while 1 student considered it incoherent to the classroom activities. The main reasons given were:

- Both use focus on form activity
- It involves the topics studied

- The use of listening activities in class relates to the listening comprehension of the movie scene

- Both relate to real-world communication

- Both relate to personal issues

- The classroom activities are developed in group while the Task-Test is individual.

Graph 5. Representation of the number of times each topic appeared in students' responses for the fourth question. The items on the left correspond to the aspects that emerged from the students' answers listed before.
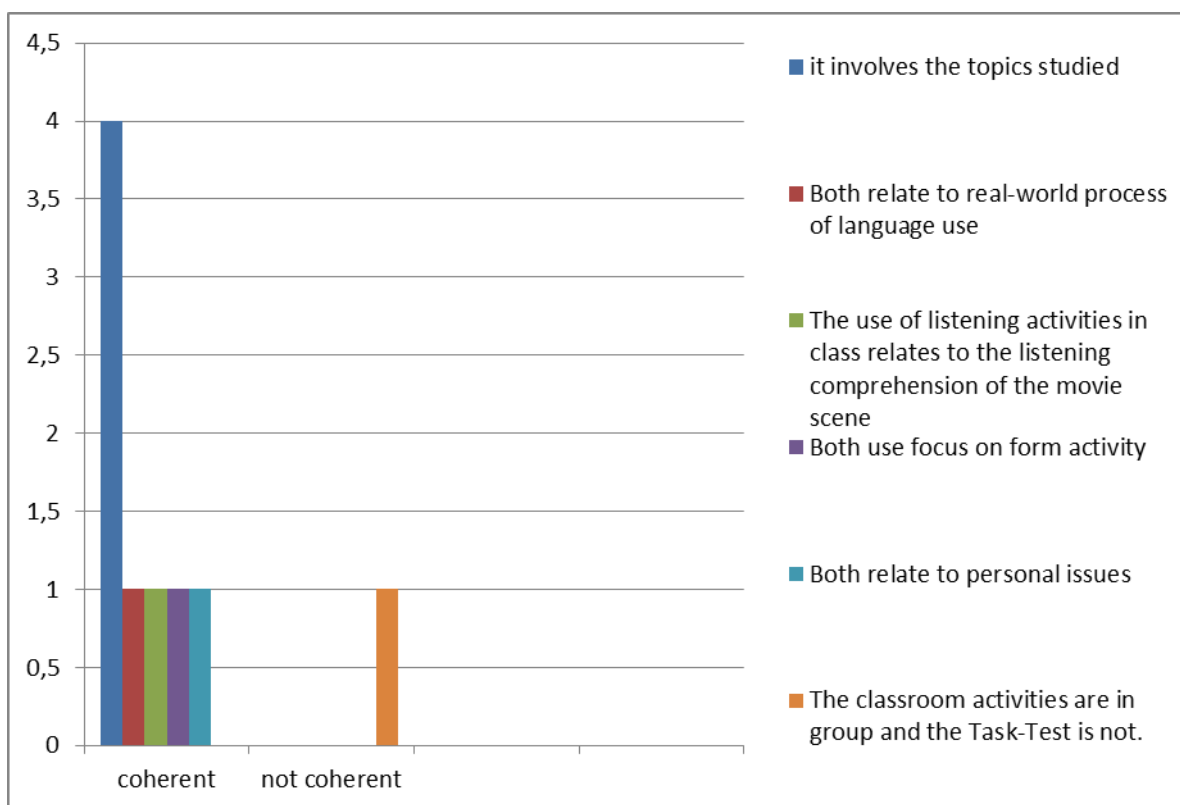
For this question, most of students, who considered the Task-Test coherent to the activities developed in class, did not explain why they had the given opinion. Some examples: "*que as atividades se assemelham as atividades em sala*" (student 5), "*o teste*

é compatível com o formato das aulas que temos", *"o teste está bem alinhado as atividades repassadas em aula"*(student 15). Some students explained their choice by pointing some characteristics that were present both in the Task-Test and in the activities developed in class, for instance *"essas atividades nos remetem a situações reais do dia a dia e isso facilita o aprendizado"*(student 7), *"O teste é coerente com as aulas. Tivemos várias atividades em que era necessário expressar nossa opinião e também aprendemos a gramática"* (student 3), *"seguem a mesma linha. Durante as aulas, Priscila procura sempre aplicar as regras e definições dentro de um contexto, o que torna os conceitos teóricos mais facilmente assimiláveis. Não é aquele tipo de aula na qual nós decoramos a regra mas depois não sabemos onde usar"* (student 12), *"fomos treinados e ensinados para realizar este tipo de teste"* (student 14).

These results unveil not only that most students were able to recognize the relation between the Task-Test and the activities developed in class, but also, that the majority of students could see the importance of having this type of coherence and relation between teaching and testing, so that, they are prepared for what they are being assessed for.

The last question allowed students to bring up new aspects about the Task- Test which they had not mentioned in previous questions. In this question, 8 students used the space provided in the questionnaire and the following aspects were mentioned:

- Compliments on the Task-Test

- Focus on grammar x focus on meaning

- Students' preparation for the Task-Test

- Challenges of the Task-Test specially regarding the listening skill

Graph 6. Representation of the number of times each topic appeared in students' responses for the fifth question. The items on the left correspond to the aspects that emerged from the students' answers listed before.
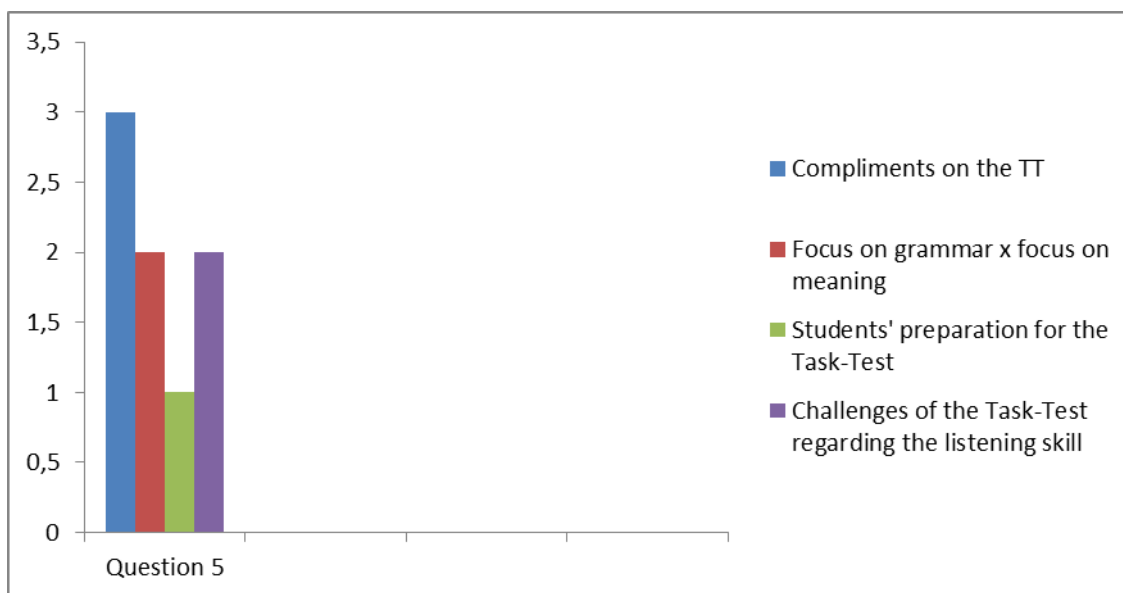
In relation to the first aspect, three students used the space to praise the Task-Test. Student 14, for example, mentioned that she liked the test very much: "*Gostei muito deste teste. Valeu a experiência!*". Likewise, student 16 stated her opinion about the Task-Test, explaining that, for her, the Task-Test is coherent to her objectives as an English student: "*tendo em vista que o objetivo de fazer um curso de inglês é estar preparado para situações adversas de conversa e escrita em língua inglesa, o teste subjetivo se aplica. Muito bem!*".

Concerning the second aspect, two students mentioned that the Task-Test offered the student more freedom to write and express opinions, in opposition to other tests that focus on the use of grammar without a context. For instance, student 15 said "*gostei da ideia de fazer um teste menos maçante e que realmente analisa a habilidade de argumentação do aluno, comparando este a aqueles teste puramente gramaticais*".

Similarly, student 17 emphasized the focus on meaning by saying *"achei que o aluno sente-se mais tranqüilo para realizar esse tipo de prova não ficando preocupado em ter que decorar todas as minúcias gramaticais que podem cair em uma prova normal. Como foi dito, o aluno tem mais liberdade para realizar essa prova"*.

Moreover in question 5, student 11 mentioned that it is important to prepare the students before assessing them using this type of test. According to her *"esse tipo de teste é válido, mas é preciso preparar os alunos para realizá-lo. Focar mais as atividades nesse formato"*. It is important to mention that, for this student, the activities in class were different from the Task-Test because in class she normally worked in group, while the test was individual.

Finally, in relation to the last aspect mentioned in this question, two students talked about their difficulty to answer the Task-Test due to the use of a movie scene. Student 8, for example, explained that he would prefer to have the opportunity to watch the scene more than once before answering the Task-Test, *"considero uma forma muito interessante de avaliação, mas poderia repetir alguns trechos"*. Although the students had the opportunity to watch the movie scene with subtitles besides the fact that after watching the scene, some oral comprehension questions were asked in order to make sure the students had understood the input, for this student, it was necessary to watch one more time the movie scene. Student 9 states that he did not know exactly what he was supposed to pay attention to when he watched the scene. Therefore, he felt like he did not pay attention to every detail *"achei legal o uso do trecho do filme, porém, por não saber o que isso exigiria de mim, não prestei atenção em todos os detalhes"*.

Based on the comments given in the last question, some considerations can be made. First of all, it is important to take into consideration that learner's approach to testing situation is idiosyncratic in nature. In addition, although some of the issues that

were brought by the students in this last question might seem to glimpse negative aspects concerning the Task-Test and the way it was operationalized, it must be taken into consideration that, the very same students have previously stated that the testing situation was a worthwhile one. Finally, it is possible to say that, although some reflection on how to present the listening task can be made based on some students' comments, it is also important to take into consideration that, when facing testing situations, it is expected that students feel nervous or anxious in relation to their performance and, therefore, might have used the questionnaire as a way to justify poor performance.

Taking into consideration the second objective of this research, which was to unfold students' perception on the task-test in relation to it being an appropriate tool for measuring acquisition in the context that they are inserted in, it is possible to conclude that the students were able to indentify task elements in the Task-Test, according to Ellis (2003) criteria for a task. Although the students did not make use of Ellis' terminologies for explaining what a task is, the questionnaires results showed that they could point some important characteristics of tasks in the test. Moreover, the questionnaires also showed that the students considered the Task-Test an appropriate tool for measuring their acquisition.

5. Conclusion

This section presents the main findings of the study. First, I will present a summary of the results along with a brief discussion. Then, the pedagogical implications of the research results will be presented. Finally, I will talk about the limitations of the study and give suggestions for further research.

5.1.   *Summary of the Results*

This research had two main objectives. Firstly, it aimed at investigating whether the test used in a EFL classroom could be considered a task-test, in other words, a test that contains task elements in it, taking into consideration Ellis' (2003) task criteria. The results showed that the test used in this research conforms to Ellis' criteria for defining task and, therefore, can be considered a Task-Test.

According to Ellis, a task has to have focus on pragmatic meaning. The analysis of the test used in this research showed that it focus on pragmatic meaning since it is based on a movie scene in order to offer the students a context to write about. Taking this context into consideration, all the questions developed in the Task-Test were interconnected and related to topic exposed in the scene. At the same time, the questions put together the scene context and the content studied in class. Therefore, the students were expected to focus on the pragmatic meaning of each question in order to answer them instead of focusing on grammatical forms in order to do it. It is important to mention, however, that the students were stimulated to use language communicatively but also to use particular features studied in class. Nevertheless, it is necessary to clarify that the students were not obliged to use those features since their answers could be

given in many different ways on condition that it made sense in relation to the context involved.

Other two aspects brought by Ellis (2003) are the possibility to use one or more of the language skills in a task and the need for an outcome. Taking these into consideration, it is possible to say that the Task-Test made use of writing and reading, using two of the four linguistic skills. In addition, based on the results, it was possible to see that each question in the Task-Test had an outcome that, combined, resulted in a broader outcome, which was the answering of the Task-Test appropriately.

Concerning another criterion established by Ellis, which is the relation of the task to real-world process of language use, the results showed that the Task-Test contained questions that were related to real-world situations, such as, professions and relationships, meeting someone new, giving opinions, etc. Also, taking into consideration that the classroom environment is itself a real-world context, the Task-Test can also be considered authentic since the students were involved in an activity normally proposed in a classroom: taking a test.

Finally, the other two criteria established by Ellis when defining a task are: the need for engaging learners into cognitive processes during the task and the task being a workplan. In relation to the first one, the results showed that the Task-Test requires learners to employ cognitive processes such as reasoning, evaluating information, selecting information, decision making processes, among others. In relation to the second, it is possible to affirm that the Task-Test is a workplan since it was designed as a plan to engage learners in producing meaning-focused language.

In relation to the second purpose of this research, which was to unfold how students perceive the Task-Test in relation to it being an appropriate tool for measuring their acquisition, the results showed that, according to the students' voice, the Task-Test

can be considered a more appropriate tool for acquisition measurement in their L2 learning context.

The questionnaires showed that the students could perceive the difference between the Task-Test and other types of testing. In their answers, the students mentioned the use of different linguistic skills in the Task-Test, the *focus on form* characteristic, the presence of a context and the relation of the Task-Test to real life, all task characteristics according to Ellis (2003). In the questionnaires, these aspects were used by the students as reasons to explain why they considered the Task-Test more appropriate. Therefore, it was possible to conclude that, not only the students could identify the task elements in the Task-Test, but they also considered them reasons to affirm the Task-Test was a better option for their context in assessment terms.

5.2. *Pedagogical Implications*

Research in Task Based Approach (TBA) has largely contributed to the Second Language Acquisition area by providing teachers the possibility to improve their teaching approach as a way to teach language with a communicative focus. Moreover, research in assessment has also contributed to the teaching environment since it is an important part of the acquisition process.

Therefore, taking into consideration that this research puts together the area of TBA and assessment, it contributes to the classroom environment. That is because it proposes a new way of testing students that is coherent with the approach used in classroom whose focus relies on pragmatic meaning and also contains the other set of criteria established by Ellis (2003).

In addition, it is significant to mention the importance of having teachers who are aware of what lies behind the Task Based Approach to task analysis and implementation. Therefore, the results of this study may have an impact on teachers who might be willing to design testing instruments in accordance to their teaching practices, therefore, making informed decisions.

5.3. *Limitations of the Study and suggestions for further research*

Among many factors, three limitations need to be acknowledged and addressed regarding the present research. The first refers to the fact that the researcher was also the teacher responsible for the participants' classes. Although this study also functioned as an opportunity for a teacher to systematize and reflect upon her own practice, the fact I was, at the same time, the researcher and teacher could have influenced participants' answers since they could be preoccupied with damaging the relationship they had with the teacher or the course. Even though, they were alerted that their participation would not have any influence in their grade or relationship with the teacher and/or the course, this could have been ignored by the students while answering the questionnaires.

Moreover I also believe it would be interesting to conduct a similar research with other students of different levels of proficiency, especially beginners, as a way to investigate different data and compare the results with the ones achieved in this research.

Finally, another limitation of this study regards the Task-Test itself since it doesn't deal with speaking skills. As the Task-Test analysis showed above, the writing, reading and listening skills are addressed by the test taker but not the speaking skill.

Therefore, it could be interesting for further research to investigate whether similar results would be found having speaking skills tested.

In addition to the suggestions mentioned above, it could also be valid for further research to triangulate data, that is, to use an array of other instruments to corroborate the results obtained by the questionnaire. That could be done by describing some of the classes that the students had or by conducting some interviews to have a better understanding of the given answers. In addition, other Brazilian contexts should be analyzed in order to elaborate different frameworks based on different types of classrooms. All these aspects certainly signal further avenues for research on assessment and TBA.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Participants Profile Information

Student	Age	Studies	Profession	Time studying English	Contexts in which has studied English	Time studying English at Extra Curricular	Reasons for studying English	Experience abroad
Student 1	25	Business Program at UFSC	-	2 years	Language schools	2 years	Academic and professional needs	-
Student 2	19	Architecture Program at UFSC	-	3 years	Regular and language schools	1 year	For travelling and professional needs	-
Student 3	20	Sanitary and Environmental Engineering Program at UFSC	-	Around 6 years	Regular and language schools	Since August 2011	Personal and professional needs	-
Student 4	20	Food Engineering at UFSC	Student	10 years	Regular and language schools	2 and half years	For travelling and studies	-
Student 5	22	Social Service at UFSC	-	Almost 5 years	Regular and language schools	2 years	It is an important language spoken around the world	-
Student 6	20	Journalism Program at UFSC		8 years	Regular and language schools	1 year	Personal and professional needs	-
Student 7	21	Mechanical Engineering Program at UFSC	Works at the Empresa Junior de Produção Mecânica	4 years and a half	Regular and language schools	Since August 2011	Professional needs.	Yes. Leisure trip.
Student 8	24	Graduated in Food Engineering Program at UFSC	Master Student at the Food Engineering Program at UFSC	Many years	Regular and language schools	1 and a half years	Professional and Personal needs	-

Student 9	20	Law Program at UFSC	Intern in a Law Office	Almost 9 years	Regular and language school	2 and half years	Personal and professional needs	-
Student 10	20	Nutrition program at UFSC	-	8 years	Regular and language schools			
Student 11	30	Graduated in Library Science at UFSC. Master in Information Science also at UFSC	Librarian at UFSC	Almost 3 years	Regular and language schools	2 years and a half	Professional and interactional needs	-
Student 12	19	Journalism program at UFSC	Internship	9 years	Regular school and language schools	1 year	-	-
Student 13	49	Graduated in Sanitary and Environmental Engineering	Professor at UFSC	1 year and 10 months	Regular and language schools	2 years	Professional needs and interest	-
Student 14	28	Doctor program in Neuroscience	Doctor students with a scholarship	The whole life	Regular and language schools	1 and a half years	Professional needs	-
Student 15	19	Electrical Engineering Program at UFSC	-	Almost 2 years	Regular and language schools	1 year	Interactional and professional needs	-
Student 16	20	Mechanical Engineering Program at UFSC	Student with a scholarship	1 and a half years	Language schools	1 and a half years	Go abroad	-
Student 17	18	Civil Engineering Program at UFSC	Student	12 years	Regular and Language schools	1 year	Professional and personal needs	-

Appendix B

Task-Test

Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina – UFSC   Curso Extracurricular - Inglês nível 5
Teacher: Priscila Fabiane Farias
Student`s name:

<u>Midterm exam</u>

1- **Based on the scene from the film "Singing in the Rain", that you have just watched, explain what an actor is according to Kathy Seldon's opinion.**

An actor is a person ……………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………………………………………….

2- **Do you agree with her? What is acting for you?**

………..……

……

……

3- **Compare acting with your own profession. Which profession…**

a) **Is more interesting?**   b) **Has better working hours?**

c) **Requires more effort?**   d) **Is better paid?**

Answer the questions above and explain why you think that way.

……

……

……

……

……

……………………………………………………………………………………………….…………………

4- As the movie continues, Don falls in love with Kathy. He wants to talk to her but he cannot find her. Imagine you are Kathy's best friend and Don asks you to give her some messages. Rewrite the sentences below, using indirect requests, as if Don were asking you to give them to Kathy.

Example: Kathy, I need to talk to you.

Indirect request: Could you tell Kathy that I need to talk to her?

1- Kathy, I am thinking a lot about you……………………………………………………………………………..
………

2- Kathy, don't run away from me…………………………………………………………………………………..
………

3- Kathy, why are you mad at me?…...
………

Debbie Reynolds (Kathy) was not a dancer at the time she played a role in the movie "Singing in the Rain" — her background was as a gymnast. Gene Kelly (Don) apparently insulted her for her lack of dance experience, upsetting her. Kelly later admitted that he had not been kind to Reynolds and was surprised that she was still willing to talk to him afterwards. Years later, she was quoted as saying that performing in this film and surviving childbirth were the two most difficult experiences of her life.

(Excerpt extracted and adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singin%27_in_the_Rain)

5- Based on the excerpt above, answer the following questions:

a) Debbie Reynolds (Kathy) was really upset after Kelly's criticism. What was it about? Does it bother you when a person criticizes your work?

……
……
……….

b) Name other things that you can't stand at your work.

……
……
………..

Appendix C

Material used for Data Collection

Questionário para pesquisa TCC

Acadêmica: Priscila Fabiane Farias   Orientadora: Raquel D'Ely

Prezado aluno, eu gostaria de convidá-lo a responder o questionário abaixo, como forma de contribuir com a minha pesquisa de TCC. No caso de você concordar em participar, é importante salientar que sua identidade não será mencionada. Além disso, caso você queira ser informado dos resultados dessa pesquisa, por favor, escreva seu email abaixo, ao final da página. Obrigada, desde já, por dedicar seu tempo e dividir suas experiências e opiniões!

> **Responda as perguntas abaixo, de acordo com sua opinião. Você pode utilizar o espaço atrás da folha, e você também pode adicionar quantas folhas mais você necessitar. Obrigada!**

1- Escolha uma das alternativas abaixo que melhor expressam a sua opinião em relação ao teste que você acabou de fazer e a outros testes que você já fez dentro do contexto de aprendizado de língua estrangeira.

   a) O mesmo tipo de teste que estou acostumado.
   b) Um pouco diferente do que estou acostumado.
   c) Muito diferente do que estou acostumado.

2- Explique a sua escolha na primeira questão. Ao comparar o teste que você acabou de fazer com outros testes que você já fez dentro do contexto de aprendizado de língua estrangeira, quais características desse teste explicam a sua escolha?
....
....
....
....

3- Comparando o teste que você acabou de fazer com outros testes que você já fez dentro do contexto de aprendizado de língua estrangeira, qual você considera o mais apropriado para medir seu aprendizado. Por quê?
....
....
....
....

4- Ao comparar o tipo de teste que você acabou de fazer com as atividades realizadas em sala de aula até esse semestre, à quais conclusões você chega?
....
....
....
....

5- Caso você queira dizer algo mais sobre essa experiência, utilize esse espaço.

....
....
....
....

Appendix D

Consent Form signed by the participants of this research

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

Você está sendo convidado a participar de uma pesquisa sobre aquisição de segunda língua. Você foi selecionado porque você é um aluno de Inglês como Língua Estrangeira e está matriculado no Curso Extra Curricular. Este estudo está sendo conduzido por Priscila Fabiane Farias, aluna do programa de Letras/Bacharelado Inglês na Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, e orientado pela professora doutora Raquel Carolina Souza Ferraz D'Ely.

Objetivo da Pesquisa:
O objetivo deste estudo é investigar questões de testagem e aprendizagem de língua estrangeira.

Procedimentos:
Você será solicitado a desempenhar as seguintes tarefas: (1) um teste de língua estrangeira correspondente ao teste escrito previamente acordado com sua turma no extra curricular, (2) responder a um questionário sobre sua opinião em relação ao teste. Os procedimentos serão realizados em aula, aplicados pela própria pesquisadora.

Não há nenhum risco em participar da pesquisa. Pelo contrário as atividades desenvolvidas por você durante essa pesquisa irão contribuir para enriquecer sua aprendizagem.

Confidencialidade:
Ao final da pesquisa, os resultados do estudo serão tornados públicos, e compartilhados com o contexto e participantes da pesquisa. Contudo, a sua identidade será totalmente preservada e não será incluída nenhuma informação que possa identificá-lo(a). Somente os pesquisadores terão acesso aos dados coletados.

Sua decisão de permitir ou não o uso dos dados para a nossa pesquisa, não afetará sua relação com o curso, turma ou professor. Em caso de dúvidas ou sugestões, o contato com a pesquisadora pode ser feito através do seguinte e-mail: priscilafabianefarias@yahoo.com.br

Assinando o consentimento pós-informação, você estará consentindo com o uso dos dados coletados para a pesquisa. Lembre-se que você pode desistir de participar em qualquer ocasião. Muito obrigada,

<div style="text-align:center">

Priscila Fabiane Farias   Raquel Carolina Souza Ferraz D'Ely

Pesquisadora   Orientadora

</div>

Consentimento Pós-Informação

Eu, _____ (nome completo), fui esclarecido sobre a pesquisa em testagem e aquisição de segunda língua e concordo que meus dados sejam utilizados para a realização da mesma.

Florianópolis, _____ de setembro de 2011.

Assinatura: _____ RG: _____

Appendix E

Material for data collection during the pilot

Questionário para pesquisa TCC
Priscila Fabiane Farias
Orientadora: Raquel D'Ely

Prezado aluno, eu gostaria de convidá-lo a responder o questionário abaixo, como forma de contribuir com a minha pesquisa de TCC. No caso de você concordar em participar, é importante salientar que sua identidade não será mencionada. Além disso, caso você queira ser informado dos resultados dessa pesquisa, por favor, escreva seu email abaixo, ao final da página.
Obrigada, desde já, por dedicar seu tempo e dividir suas experiências e opiniões.

Questionário

Responda as perguntas abaixo, de acordo com sua opinião. Você pode utilizar o espaço atrás da folha, e você também pode adicionar quantas folhas mais você necessitar. Obrigada!

1- Escolha uma das alternativas abaixo que melhor expressam a sua opinião em relação ao teste que você acabou de fazer e a outros testes que você já fez dentro do contexto de aprendizado de língua estrangeira.

    d) O mesmo tipo de teste que estou acostumado.

    e) Um pouco diferente do que estou acostumado.

    f) Muito diferente do que estou acostumado.

2- Explique a sua escolha na primeira questão. Ao comparar o teste que você acabou de fazer com outros testes que você já fez dentro do contexto de aprendizado de língua estrangeira, quais características desse teste explicam a sua escolha?

3- Comparando o teste que você acabou de fazer com outros testes que você já fez dentro do contexto de aprendizado de língua estrangeira, qual você considera o mais apropriado para medir seu aprendizado. Por quê?

Caso você queira dizer algo mais sobre essa experiência, utilize esse espaço.

Appendix F

Summary of the Responded Questionnaires for the Pilot

Student	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
Student A	Letra 'b'	Integração de filme com o conteúdo da prova.	Tal integração é positiva.	-
Student B	Letra 'c'	Em outros testes é cobrado gramática através de questões de assinalar.	Esse teste da a chance ao aluno de colocar teorias estudadas em prática através da escrita.	Eu morei no exterior e aprendi a falar inglês 'errado'. Agora, com as aulas, estou aprimorando meu inglês.
Student C	Letra 'b'	Exibição de um trecho de um filme relacionado ao que foi aprendido.	Esse teste é mais apropriado pois pôde avaliar não só meu conhecimento mas revisar o que foi estudado.	-
Student D	Letra 'b'	Esse teste valoriza mais a escrita e a compreensão de um contexto através da leitura, do contato visual e auditivo.	Ambas as metodologias são apropriadas partindo de diferentes pontos. Talvez esse teste seja mais abrangente em relação a escrita.	-
Student E	Letra 'b'	Este teste usou a cena de um filme para contextualizar as questões.	Esse teste é mais apropriado pois contextualiza as questões. Entretanto, é preciso ter cuidado para não prejudicar o desempenho do aluno.	-
Student F	Letra 'c'	Os outros testes têm questões mais simples, diretas e até fáceis demais. Neste teste me senti desafiado em usar tudo aquilo que foi ensinado.	Não acredito que haja um método melhor do que o que foi usado. O teste pede o que foi ensinado com criatividade e força o aluno a usar tudo que aprendeu desde o começo do curso.	O teste foi maravilhoso, criativo e desafiador. A utilização do vídeo como ponto de partida nos deu mais motivação e deixou o aluno mais relaxado para poder compreender o que é esperado dele.

Student G	Letra 'b'	Os outros testes são mais direcionados a compreensão do conteúdo. O uso de imagens e sons nesse teste agrega uma maior interpretação da língua.	Ambos conseguem avaliar as capacidades do aprendiz. A diferença está no tipo de avaliação, um focado na escrita e outro na interpretação.	Testar novas metodologias de ensino é uma empreitada muito valiosa pois pode quebrar o paradigma pedagógico e possibilitar enxergar novos horizontes e formas de aprendizado.
Student H	Letra 'c'	A primeira diferença é cena de um filme e não de um texto. A cena ajudou a entender a situação.	Considero esse teste mais apropriado.	-
Student I	Letra 'c'	A utilização da história de um filme é uma importante forma de mostrar ao aluno o uso da língua em seu contexto real.	Este me parece uma forma de avaliar o que o aluno realmente incorporou da língua.	Para mim está sendo uma experiência importante porque percebi que posso estudar inglês enquanto leio livros e assisto filmes.
Student J	Letra 'c'	Estou acostumada com testes de gramática. Este teve perguntas abrangentes no qual necessitamos não apenas o que foi estudado mas também vocabulário adquirido até hoje.	Este teste faz a gente pensar no contexto todo. Temos que fazer uma frase completa e não apenas completar espaços. A prova assim é mais cansativa porém mais apropriada.	-

Appendix G

Responded Quesntionnaires