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**WHAT ROLE DO TASKS PLAY IN AN EFL
ENVIRONMENT? UNFOLDING 9th GRADE LEARNERS'
PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A
CYCLE OF TASKS ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF '*HARRY
POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE*'**

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To my mom, my hero, my
everything!
And to my dad, whose love still
lingers on...

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Great teachers engineer learning experiences that put students in the driver's seat and then get out of the way.

(Ben Johnson, n.d.)

ABSTRACT

WHAT ROLE DO TASKS PLAY IN AN EFL ENVIRONMENT? UNFOLDING 9th GRADE LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A CYCLE OF TASKS ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF '*HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE*'

Joseline Caramelo Afonso

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Co-advisor: Profa. Dra. Marimar da Silva

Taking into consideration that tasks have been playing a central role within the fields of second language acquisition and language pedagogy, this qualitative study aimed at investigating 9th grade students' perceptions regarding the implementation of a cycle of tasks. The tasks were designed under Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation, and their respective teaching procedures, which followed the pedagogical principles of the task-based approach (Ellis, 2003), with the purpose of preparing students to read the first chapter of '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*' (Rowling, 1999). Furthermore, the tasks also took into consideration the themes brought in PCN-LE (1998), the concept of focus on form (Ellis, 2012; Long, 1991), which lies at the core of task-based lessons, Long's (2015) needs analysis concept, and the elements of planning by Foster and Skehan (1996; 1999) and repetition by Bygate (2001). The seventeen teenage EFL learners from *Colégio de Aplicação*, who attended fourteen classes, answered post-task questionnaires at the end of each class and took part in an interview in the end of the task cycle. All data collected was submitted to qualitative analysis. The results showed that, for this group of teenage EFL learners, TBA was perceived as effective in promoting learning opportunities, and that the cycle of tasks was indeed successful in leading them to read the first chapter of '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*'. Moreover, participants' perceptions reflect the teaching principles of TBA as well as the elements, procedures and concepts of the theoretical frameworks used to guide the development and implementation of the cycle of tasks, such as focus on meaning and tasks' resemblance to real world. Results

also showed that (1) Skehan's frameworks are resourceful in balancing the task level of difficulty and the learners' attention between meaning and form; (2) adding games to the cycle of tasks was motivational and important in students' perspective; and (3) planning and repetition should be seen in more dynamic ways than what it is proposed within the frames so as to meet the needs and demands of the complexity of the classroom environment. Finally, this study indicates that designing and implementing a cycle of tasks can promote improvement in teacher understanding of the learning and teaching processes, and contribute to a teacher's education.

Key-words: Task-based approach; teenage EFL learners; cycle of tasks; Brazilian public school; Harry Potter; literary texts.

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RESUMO

QUAL O PAPEL DAS TAREFAS NO CONTEXTO DO ENSINO DE INGLÊS COMO LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA? DESVENDANDO A PERCEPÇÃO DE ALUNOS DO 9º ANO SOBRE A IMPLEMENTAÇÃO DE UM CICLO DE TAREFAS SOBRE O PRIMEIRO CAPÍTULO DE '*HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE*'

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Levando em consideração que tarefas têm ganhado espaço em pesquisas dentro e fora das salas de aula, este estudo qualitativo teve como objetivo investigar as percepções de alunos do 9º ano sobre a implementação de um ciclo de tarefas. As tarefas foram desenvolvidas com base nos esquemas de criação e implementação de tarefas propostos por Skehan (1996, 1998), e seguindo os princípios pedagógicos da abordagem baseada em tarefas (Ellis, 2003), com o objetivo de preparar os alunos para ler o primeiro capítulo de '*Harry Potter e a pedra filosofal*' (Rowling, 1999). Além disso, as tarefas também levaram em consideração os temas trazidos nos PCN-LE (1998), o conceito de foco na forma (Ellis, 2012; Long, 1991), que está no cerne de aulas baseadas em tarefas, o conceito de Need Analysis de Long (2015), e os elementos de planejamento estudados por Foster e Skehan (1996; 1999) e de repetição estudado por Bygate (2001). Os dezessete alunos-participantes do Colégio de Aplicação participaram de quatorze aulas, responderam questionários pós-tarefa no final de cada aula, e participaram de uma entrevista no final do ciclo. Todos os dados coletados foram submetidos à análise qualitativa. Os resultados mostraram que, para este grupo de alunos adolescentes, a abordagem baseada em tarefas foi eficaz na promoção de oportunidades de aprendizagem, e que o ciclo de tarefas foi de fato bem sucedido em levá-los a ler o primeiro capítulo de '*Harry Potter e a pedra filosofal*'. Além disso, as percepções dos alunos refletem os princípios da abordagem baseada em tarefas, bem como os elementos, procedimentos e conceitos teóricos utilizados

no desenvolvimento e implementação do ciclo de tarefas, como o foco no significado e a semelhança das tarefas ao mundo real . Os resultados também mostraram que (1) os dois esquemas desenvolvidos por Skehan são úteis para equilibrar o nível de dificuldade das tarefas e para dividir a atenção dos aprendizes entre significado e forma; (2) adicionar jogos ao ciclo de tarefas foi motivador e importante na perspectiva dos alunos; e (3) planejamento e repetição devem ser vistos de forma mais dinâmica do que o que é proposto dentro dos esquemas, de modo a atender às exigências e complexidades das salas de aula. Finalmente, este estudo indica que o desenvolvimento e implementação de um ciclo de tarefas pode contribuir para a formação do professor.

Palavras-chave: Abordagem baseada em tarefas; aprendizes adolescentes de inglês; ciclo de tarefas; escola pública; Harry Potter; textos literários.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA: Colégio de Aplicação

CLT: Communicative language teaching

EFL: English as a foreign language

HP: Harry Potter

HPSS: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

IS1 - IS17: Interviews with students 1 to 17

LP: Language Pedagogy

NA: Needs analysis

PCN-LE: Parametros Curriculares Nacionais - Línguas
Estrangeiras

PNLD Guide: Programa Nacional do Livro Didático

PPP: Plano Político Pedagógico

QS1 - QS17: Questionnaires from students 1 to 17

R: Researcher

S1 - S17: Students 1 to 17

SC: Santa Catarina

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TBA: Task-based approach

TBLT: Task-based language teaching

TCC: Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso

UFSC: Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

- [...] Text omitted
- ... Trailing intonation
- Italics* Emphasis
- () Transcriptionist doubt
- (()) Comment on voice quality or paralinguistic features
(e.g. laughter, gestures)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In my humble opinion, being an English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher was always related to much more than just providing opportunities for students to use English in the classroom. It always had to do with offering them the chance to practice the language in meaningful ways, allowing them to use what they learned in their lives.

When I began my undergraduate program back in 2007, I had been working as a teacher for five years. During that time, I had been in contact with different ways of teaching EFL, but I had never been instructed as to why I was using those specific methods and approaches. During my studies to get my degree, I not only had the opportunity to understand what I had done so far as a teacher, but I also had the chance to learn new things that could potentially be used in my future classes. One of those things was the task based approach (TBA). This approach, which at first, seemed like one of the most difficult things I had encountered as a student, soon began to become an area of interest. This was due to the fact that TBA could allow me to integrate my beliefs to an approach that focuses on communication and real life situations.

As a teacher, I have come to realize that, for me, there needs to be a bridge between what I learn from theory and what I can learn from practice. Although I agree with Ellis (1997) that the relationship between Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Language Pedagogy (LP) is a problematic and unbalanced one, as a researcher and teacher, I believe that these two areas should be interwoven when conducting research in the public schools context. Research on tasks has been a niche that has addressed both theoretical and pedagogical issues, and this study draws on that notion.

As Mackey (2006) pointed out, “*SLA theory should not dictate what happens in the classroom, but it can provide language teachers with information about classroom possibilities and ideas that they can evaluate for their own adaptation*” (p. 458). In this sense, by conducting research in classrooms, researchers can better understand what permeates the instructional learning setting.

Taking this stance as a starting point, and having in mind that, during my professional life as an EFL teacher, my students

had informally asked me to dispense some advice on reading materials that could improve their language learning, I was interested in finding ways to propose activities that could help learners improve their reading skills in meaningful ways. Thus, taking into account that the use of tasks allows the teacher to be creative in designing activities that relate to the real world, the relationship between TBA and research on literature, reading and the classroom became a significant and a substantial field of my interest².

However, irrespective of the approach a teacher chooses when teaching a foreign language, the selection of teaching materials will be based on his/her beliefs to help a student to acquire the new language; therefore, he/she daily embarks on a decision making process on what to teach, how to teach and when to teach (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). In the Brazilian context, the foreign language teacher should also consider aspects brought in *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais - Línguas Estrangeiras* (PCN-LE)³, published in 1998. These guidelines provide concepts of language, teaching and learning, ways to approach these concepts in pedagogic tasks, and themes to guide the content of the foreign language class.

The Brazilian PCN-LE (1998) does not only propose the themes and topics for the foreign language teaching in schools, but also justify the importance of teaching a foreign language, given that it is a socio-interactional instrument. The foreign language is seen as a way for the individual to engage in social practices through cross-cutting themes in the classroom (PCN-LE, 1998, p.15). Thus, the language is used as a tool to communicate with others, to understand the world, and to

² During my undergraduate course, I had the opportunity to develop a piece of research for my *Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso* (TCC) in which I made use of Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation in order to design tasks that could help learners read the first chapter of '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer Stone*'. This had been my first attempt in trying to make use of the theory to design tasks. However, these tasks were not implemented. Thus, when I entered the Master's Program, I was interested in continuing in this line of research so as to understand the potential of the frameworks within the Brazilian public school context.

³ *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais - Línguas Estrangeiras* (PCN-LE) (National Curricular Parameters - Foreign Languages) are guidelines designed by the Brazilian Federal Government to guide education, and they are divided into subjects. In addition to the public system, private schools may also adopt these guidelines, but it is not mandatory. For this study, only the guidelines that refer to the foreign languages was used.

promote citizenship. According to the PCN-LE, the focus of teaching should be on reading; however, the teaching of other skills (written and oral production, and comprehension) is not discouraged.

Despite PCN-LE's guidelines emphasis on the reading skill, when it comes to teaching materials, reading does not necessarily constitute the core of a teaching unit. As it is pointed out in the *Programa Nacional do Livro Didático* (PNLD Textbook Guide)⁴, published in 2014, the teaching materials must approach language in contextualized, varied and authentic discursive practices, in which the grammatical structures of the language and vocabulary are integrated with the teaching of the four skills. From the guidelines proposed by PNLD Guide (2014), it seems only fitting for TBA to be integrated to the teaching of English in Brazilian public schools, given that the frameworks (Skehan, 1996, 1998) that underlie TBA cater for a balance between form and meaning, and engage learners in the performance of tasks that lead to a bigger purpose. In that sense, TBA also seeks for contextualized learning experiences.

Bearing in mind this scenario, the intricate relationship between the selection of texts, the development of the four linguistic skills, and the need to build a teaching environment to develop students' citizenship, the use of fictional texts in the context of the Task-Based Approach might be the tool to trigger foreign language acquisition and give students the tools to build new forms of knowledge. On the one hand, TBA offers the learners, as Ellis (2003) mentions, the opportunity to (1) work with activities that focus mainly on meaning and communication, (2) engage these learners in tasks that are referred to as "*real-world processes of language use*" (Ellis, 2003, p. 10), and (3) involve the learners in tasks that deal with any of the four linguistic skills. On the other hand, fictional texts are rich and vast materials and, through the use of a cycle of tasks, may offer students the opportunity to learn more about the customs and values of other cultures, and help learners in the acquisition of

⁴ The National Textbook Program (PNLD Guide), from the Brazilian federal government, aims at subsidizing the pedagogical work of teachers by distributing collections of textbooks to students in basic education in public institutions. After evaluation of the works, the Ministry of Education (MEC) publishes the Textbook Guide with reviews of collections considered approved. The guide is sent to schools, choosing among available titles, those that best respond to their Educational Policy Program (PPP). These textbooks are free of charge, and they are used to support the teaching-learning process developed inside the classroom.

new vocabulary and language structures, providing them tools to practice their citizenship more consciously.

As Anderson (2012) points out, “*good readers can combine information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning, they read fluently and strategically in order to accomplish their reading purpose*” (p. 218). Thus, reading is an interactive process which allows the reader to make use of different types of knowledge. In that sense, the inclusion of reading strategies to the cycle of tasks may be profitable, given that reading is a complex cognitive process, and in order for students to be successful, they need to be aware of the strategies that can facilitate reading.

Furthermore, it important to point out that reading is not only a linguistic skill very much used within the curriculum, and in our daily lives. In my point of view, reading is a also a means to find pleasure and entertain oneself. Reading to me is an act of fruition which can allow the students to use their imagination to create the story they are reading, understand and notice how different people, cultures and backgrounds are portrayed, and also make use of the story to learn about language.

Therefore, throughout this study, it is my aim to unfold 9th year learners’ perceptions of the implementation of a cycle of tasks , thus, being able to reflect upon some of the benefits and pitfalls that lie behind TBA. This will be done as way to contribute to the SLA area of research as well as shedding some light on paths for task design for teachers of English as a second language.

1.1. Statement of the purpose

The present qualitative study aims at investigating 9th grade students’ perceptions⁵ regarding the implementation of a cycle of tasks developed under the task-based approach rationale

⁵ According to Silva (2003), perception is defined as “*a physical and intellectual ability used in mental processes to recognize, interpret, and understand events, an intuitive cognition or judgment; a way to express a particular opinion or belief as a result of realizing or noticing things which may not be obvious to others; insight, awareness, discernment, recognition, a set of understandings, interpretations and a way of knowing*” (p. 9).

(Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2003). For this, I designed a cycle of tasks based on Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation, and their respective teaching procedures, which followed the pedagogical principles of the task-based approach (Ellis, 2003). Furthermore, the tasks also took into consideration the themes brought in PCN-LE (1998), the concept of focus on form (Long, 1991; Ellis, 2012), which lies at the core of task-based lessons, Long's (2015) needs analysis concept, and the elements of planning by Foster and Skehan (1996; 1999) and repetition by Bygate (2001). Having that in mind, the central idea of the cycle of tasks was to create tasks that could lead learners to read the first chapter of '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*' (Rowling, 1999) - '*The Boy Who Lived*' - in an easy and pleasant way.

Students' perceptions regarding the cycle implementation were collected through post-task questionnaires and interviews. Then, the analysis of the data was conducted to investigate participants' perception of the cycle of tasks in order to answer the research question proposed for this study: What are the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of a cycle of tasks?

1.2. Significance of the study

First, it is noteworthy to point out the importance of doing research within our own field as a form of continuous professional development. As McKay (2006) states:

For a teacher, a primary reason for doing research is to become more effective teachers. Research contributes to more effective teaching, not by offering definitive answers to pedagogical questions, but rather by providing new insights into the teaching and learning process. (p.1)

It is within that scope that this study is inserted. Furthermore, there are two major reasons for the development of this research. One reason regards the scarcity of studies that have attempted to build an interface between TBA and the teaching of EFL to public school learners to understand this process. And the

second refers to the fact that there are few studies connecting TBA, needs analysis, planning, and repetition within instructional context⁶.

Moreover, designing and implementing a cycle of tasks seems to contribute to broaden horizons into the range of tools used to teach EFL to public school learners in Brazil, and it may also shed some light into the field of teacher education.

1.3. Organization of the thesis

Besides the introduction (Chapter 1), this master thesis consists of five more chapters. Chapter 2 lays the theoretical background for this study. It starts by reviewing important concepts and theoretical background that lie behind the Task Based Approach, and presents Ellis's (2003) principles for TBA. After that, it discusses Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation. Finally, it reviews a few empirical studies in task-based approach, with a focus on Brazilian studies.

Chapter 3 describes the method employed to collect data for the present study. This includes the objectives and research questions, information about the setting where data was collected, the participants and the regulations governing ethical practice. The chapter also brings the criteria for selection of the fictional text, information regarding the elaboration and implementation of tasks, and the procedures that were used for data generation and analysis on learner's perceptions.

Chapter 4 brings the description of the cycle of tasks, composed of fourteen tasks, developed for this study, their rationale and teaching procedures.

Chapter 5 reports and analyzes the results obtained in the present study, and discusses the findings brought in the analysis in the light of existing research and theories on TBA in order to answer the research question proposed. It also builds an interface

⁶ Nonetheless, there are some studies in TBA such as those of Almeida Junior (2011), Caramelo (2014), D'Ely (2006), D'Ely (2011), Farias (2014), Fortkamp, Xhafaj and Finardi (2006), Pereira (2015), Specht (2014), Xavier (2004), and Xhafaj, Muck and Xhafaj (2014).

between this study's results and the theoretical framework used to develop the cycle of tasks.

Finally, in Chapter 6, the conclusion and the main findings of the present study are summarized, and a reflection on the implications of applying such theoretical frame into the pedagogic context of teenage EFL learners is presented. The chapter also depicts some pedagogical implications that arose from the results obtained. The last section points out the limitations of the study and provides some suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Taking into account that tasks have been playing a central role within the fields of second language acquisition (SLA) and language pedagogy, a growing number of professionals in the field have begun to implement tasks as a way to bring about communication and elicit language use from the learners. Therefore, the task-based approach (TBA) “*has become a cornerstone of many educational institutions and ministry of education around the world.*” (Nunan, 2004, p.13)

In order to understand the theoretical groundwork of the present study, whose objective was to unfold 9th grade students’ perceptions regarding the implementation of a cycle of tasks, this chapter is divided into four sections. Section 2.1 brings task definitions and shows the role of task-based approach in language pedagogy. Section 2.2 explains Skehan’s framework (1996) for task analysis and implementation. Next, section 2.3 refers to repetition, another relevant element within task-based approach. And, finally, section 2.4 brings some Brazilian empirical studies in the area of TBA.

2.1. Tasks and the task-based instruction

Task-based instruction⁷ originated within the communicative language teaching (CLT) and second language acquisition (SLA) research. According to Mackey (2006), the CLT focuses on the teaching of all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), in which learner participation is of utmost importance, meaning is paramount, and the main goal is communicative competence (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983, as cited in Brown, 2001). In this context, teachers create, as Mackey (2006) puts it, “*learning situations in which students can engage in purposeful communication*” (p. 456) through the use of communicative activities. These communicative activities were thoroughly discussed among SLA researchers in the 1970s and 1980s (Skehan, 2003). During that time, the terms

⁷ Throughout this thesis, the terms ‘task-based approach’ and ‘task-based instruction’ will be used interchangeably.

‘communicative activity’ and ‘task’ were being used interchangeably, and the task-based approach emerged.

According to Skehan (2003), the term ‘task’ was initially related to the “*necessity and sufficiency of input*” (Krashen, 1985, as cited in Skehan, 2003, p. 1). Later, it was argued that interaction was also crucial (Long, 1983, 1985a, as cited in Skehan, 2003), given it provided feedback for the students, and also promoted “*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 supportive of acquisition*” (Skehan, 2003, p. 2). However, later studies (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Long, Inagaki & Ortega, 1998; Skehan, 1998; Robinson, 2001; and Swain & Lapkin, 2001, as cited in Skehan, 2003) showed that interaction alone was not enough and “*insinuation of a focus on form into interactions*” (Skehan, 2003, p. 2) was vital⁸.

Task-based instruction, therefore, would view “*the learning process as a set of communicative tasks that are directly linked to the curricular goals they serve, the purposes of which extend beyond the practice of language for its own sake*” (Brown, 2001, p. 50). In that sense, TBA sees language as more than just a set of grammar rules. For TBA, language is seen as a way to exchange meaning in order to communicate. According to Prabhu (1987), the objective is to use authentic language throughout the performance of a task. Once this is done, formal aspects of language use may be discussed, and language is learned due to students’ need to perform a task. However, as stated by Ellis (2003), there is no consensus as to what a task is, which makes definitions somewhat problematic.

Some researchers provide broad definitions, such as Long’s (1985, as cited in Ellis, 2003), which include both tasks

⁸ Long (1991) refers to two different ways of viewing the instruction of linguistic items: ‘focus on forms’ and ‘focus on form’. In ‘focus on forms’ - the traditional approach - the primary goal is to help learners master structural features “*by making the linguistic target of each lesson quite explicit*” (Ellis, 2012, p. 272). Here, there is a focus on a linguistic structure detached from its context of use. The term focus on form, on the other hand, as pointed out by Ellis (2012), “*is used to refer to an approach that involves an attempt to induce incidental acquisition through instruction by drawing learners’ attention to linguistic forms while they are communicating*” (p. 272). Therefore, in ‘focus on form’, concept used in the development of this research, “*learners are primarily concerned with trying to understand and produce messages that encode communicative meanings*” (Ellis, 2012, p. 273).

that require the use of language (making a hotel reservation) and the ones that do not (painting a fence). In this sense, “*by ‘tasks’ is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between*” (Long, 1985, as cited in Ellis, 2003, p. 4). On the other hand, more narrow definitions have been provided, and they view tasks as activities which require the use of language, such as that of Nunan (1989, as cited in Ellis, 2003): “*a task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form*” (p. 4).

Furthermore, some researchers (Long, 1985; Richards, Platt & Weber, 1985; Nunan, 1989; and Skehan, 1996a, as cited in Ellis, 2003) elicit that the term ‘task’ refers to activities where meaning is primary. Breen (1989, as cited in Ellis, 2003), however, states that a task can be both an ‘exercise’ or “*a more complex workplan that requires spontaneous communication of meaning*” (p. 4). It is important here to point out that an exercise, in Ellis’ (2003) view, is an activity that focuses primarily on form, whereas a task is an activity that focuses on meaning.

Bygate, Skehan and Swain (2001, as cited in Ellis 2003) have pointed out that a task may also differ according to the purpose it is being used, suggesting that “*somewhat different definitions are needed for pedagogy and research*” (p. 9), and although tasks are, to some extent, variable, there is a need for more a generalized definition. Therefore, in order to overcome this conceptual problem, Skehan (1998) states that:

a task is an activity in which meaning is primary; there is some communication problem to solve; there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome. (p.95)

Following Skehan, Ellis (2003) proposed six criterial features to identify if an activity is a task. For an activity to be

considered a task, it needs to (1) be a workplan⁹, (2) involve a primary focus on meaning, (3) involve real-world processes of language use, (4) involve any of the four language skills, (5) engage cognitive processes, and (6) have a clearly defined communicative outcome. Taking into account these features, Ellis' (2003) proposed the following definition, which served as guide for this piece of research:

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 choose 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)

Taking into consideration the definition of tasks proposed by Ellis, and the fact that TBA sees language as a way to exchange meaning in order to communicate, it is paramount to bring to light the principles that guide task-based instruction.

When it comes to task-based teaching, there is a need to ensure that teachers make informed decisions regarding the design of a task-based lesson. Thus, Ellis (2003) points out that the "*overall purpose of task-based methodology is to create opportunities for language learning and skill development through collaborative knowledge building*" (p. 276). In order to achieve this, he proposes eight different principles that can inform the planning and teaching of task-based lessons:

⁹ According to Ellis (2003), the term workplan acknowledges that even though task designers develop tasks to encourage focus-on-meaning, task performers may have a different perspective of the tasks at hand and, through performance, the tasks developed "*may result in display rather than communicative language use*" (Ellis, 2003, p. 5).

Principle 1 - *ensure an appropriate level of task difficulty.* Adjusting the difficulty of a task can be done through various means, such as incorporating a pre-task phase or performing the task with the students. Furthermore, ensuring that students possess the necessary strategies to engage in task-based interaction will also modify the level of task difficulty.

Principle 2 - *establish clear goals for each task-based lesson.* Engaging students with tasks is not sufficient to ensure the development of their interlanguage¹⁰ system. Therefore, the teacher can make use of some methodological options, such as strategic and online planning, to help students to focus their attention on different aspects of language use.

Principle 3 - *develop an appropriate orientation to performing the task in the students.* There is a need to make students aware of why they are performing any given task. In this respect, Ellis (2003) points out that post-task activities “*may play a crucial role as they demonstrate to the students that tasks have a clear role to play in developing their L2 proficiency and their ability to monitor their own progress*” (p. 277).

Principle 4 - *ensure that students adopt an active role in task-based lessons.* Students need to play an active role in class, and this is one of the major goals of task-based teaching. For TBA, lessons should be student-centered. Thus, in order for learners to be active participants, they need to engage in negotiation of meaning when a problem arises. This can be achieved through group or pair work, which will encourage learners to negotiate meaning. Jacobs (1998, as cited in Ellis, 2003) provides a comprehensive list of potential advantages of pair/group work, such as: possible increase in the quantity of learner speech, variety of speech acts, motivation, enjoyment, independence, social integration and learning; there can be more individualization of instruction; anxiety can be reduced; and students can learn how to work with others. Thus, it might be profitable to include moments within the lesson to attend to group or pair work.

Principle 5 - *encourage students to take risks.* According to Ellis, in order to ‘stretch’ their interlanguage resources as they

¹⁰ The term interlanguage, “*coined by Selinker (1982), refers to (1) the system of L2 knowledge that a learner has built at a single stage of development (‘an interlanguage’), and (2) the interlocking systems that characterize L2 acquisition (‘the interlanguage continuum’)*” (Ellis, 2003, p. 344).

experiment with language, students need to take risks and experiment with the language they are learning. This can be done by creating an appropriated level of challenge in an affective climate that supports risk-taking.

Principle 6 - *ensure that students are primarily focused on meaning when they perform a task.* When learners perform a task, their focus should be primarily on meaning, not in displaying language. That is, language should be seen as a tool, not as an object during task performance. This can only be achieved if learners are motivated to do the task proposed. Thus, motivation may play an important role when selecting or designing a task-based lesson.

Principle 7 - *provide opportunities for focusing on form.* There is a need to attend to form in task-based lessons, and this can be done in the pre-task, during-task and post-task phases. Ellis states that attention to form is possible and beneficial even if students' primary focus is on meaning. However, the challenge within TBA is "*to contrive sufficient focus on form to enable interlanguage development to proceed, without compromising the naturalness of the communication that tasks can generate*" (Skehan, 1998, p. 4). Thus, when designing a task-based lesson, the teacher's challenge is to design situations in which this may be possible.

Principle 8 - *require students to evaluate their performance and progress.* As Skehan points out (1998, as cited in Ellis, 2003), "*students need to be made accountable for how they perform a task and for their overall progress. A task-based lesson needs to engage and help foster students' metacognitive awareness*" (Ellis, 2003, p. 278).

Although these principles serve as a guide for task-based lessons, Ellis (2003) calls attention to the fact that teachers must make their methodological decisions based on their understanding of the context they are inserted in. In that sense, there is a need to take into account students' needs and what might work best for these students. In the next section, Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation are presented and described.

2.2. Task analysis and implementation

Within the task-based approach, the main assumptions are that “*psycholinguistic factors and processing conditions are highly relevant to the second language learning and second language performance*” (Skehan, 1998, p. 93). Taking into consideration the processing conditions that are required for task completion and the demands that the tasks may impose on students (D’Ely & Mota, 2004), there is a need to balance the difficulty that a task may impose on learners¹¹. In that sense, as Skehan (1998) states, tasks of appropriate level of difficulty may be more motivating for students, given that, if there is effort on their part, they will feel that they are being required to respond to a reasonable challenge. Schmidt (1990) argues for the importance of noticing as a means to channel attentional capacity so that input can become intake. Taking into consideration that attentional capacity is limited, students will only be able to cope with the demands upon their attentional resources if the level of task difficulty is appropriate. If this is achieved, “*there is much greater likelihood that noticing will occur, that balanced language performance will result, and that spare attentional capacity can be channeled effectively*” (Skehan, 1998, p. 134).

With that in mind, Skehan (1998) developed a three-way distinction framework for task analysis (Table 1): code complexity, cognitive complexity and communicative stress. Based on Candlin’s (1987) early attempt to characterize task difficulty, Skehan (1996) proposes a scheme that can be more easily related to actual tasks to be developed and implemented. According to Skehan (1996), “*the scheme contrasts formal factors (code complexity) with content (cognitive complexity) and pressure to achieve communication (communicative stress)*” (p. 52); thus, this framework helps to understand better how the level of difficulty takes part in different features in a task.

¹¹ According to Ellis (2003), although the level of difficulty is ultimately determined by the learner performing the task, when proposing the framework for task analysis, Skehan (1998) is interested in manipulating the level of difficulty in regards to elements presented in the tasks and that might affect performance.

Table 1: Skehan's three-way distinction framework for task analysis (Skehan, 1996)

1 Code complexity	Linguistic complexity and variety Vocabulary load and variety Redundancy and density	
2 Cognitive complexity	Cognitive familiarity	Familiarity of topic and its predictability Familiarity of discourse genre Familiarity of task
	Cognitive processing	Information organization Amount of 'computation' Clarity and sufficiency of information given Information type
3 Communicative stress	Time limits and time pressure Speed of presentation Number of participants Lengths of texts used Type of response Opportunities to control interaction	

Code complexity - the first distinctive factor - refers to the language required to perform a task. In that sense, it is related to the syntactic and lexical difficulties, and deals with language factors. It encompasses the following items: linguistic complexity and variety; vocabulary load and variety; and redundancy and density of the language to be used. In this sense, language factors need to be taken into consideration given that the task difficulty might affect learners' performance. In regular/traditional teaching contexts, the measuring of the level of difficulty is normally regulated by structural syllabuses in a developmental sequence, typically from less to more complex. Ideally, this should cater for learners' readiness to learn.

The second factor, cognitive complexity, is related to the thinking required, and is divided into two aspects: cognitive familiarity and cognitive processing. Cognitive familiarity has to do with the learners' "*capacity to access 'packaged' solutions to tasks*" (Skehan, 1998, p. 99), in which learners might rely on knowledge previously acquired. This aspect is subdivided into: familiarity of the topic and its predictability; familiarity of

discourse genre; and familiarity of the task. Through this, the level of task difficulty is reduced and less effort might be put to find specific vocabulary and structure to communicate while performing the task. That is, if a topic, discourse genre or task type is more familiar to the students, it will be easier for them to perform a task. Thus, there will be bigger chances of channeling their attention to other issues, such as form.

Cognitive processing, on the other hand, is related to the learners' need to work out solutions to novel problems, which is connected with the learners' online computation, "*to the amount of transformation or manipulation of information that is necessary for a task to be completed*" (Skehan, 1998, p. 100). The level of difficulty here can be manipulated in task design in four aspects: information organization (the natural way the necessary information is organized, such as in a narrative, which is traditionally organized in a temporal sequence), amount of computation (how much transformation or manipulation of information is needed for task completion), clarity and sufficiency of information given (how clear a piece of information is as compared to how much information needs to be inferred from it), and information type (contrasting types of information, such as concrete-abstract, static-dynamic, contextualized-decontextualized).

Finally, communicative stress, the third factor, is concerned with implications for processing and related to "*the performance conditions under which a task needs to be done*" (Skehan, 1998, p.100). In this sense, a teacher's decisions regarding performance conditions will balance task difficulty. Factors such as time limits and time pressure, speed of presentation, number of participants (individual, pairing or grouping), length of texts used, type of response (written-promoting accuracy, or oral-promoting fluency), and opportunities to control interaction are taken into account within communicative stress. Furthermore, in relation to the length of the texts used, Skehan (1998) points out that when larger quantities of material are presented within a short period of time, the level of difficulty will be higher due to the necessity of speeding up the cognitive process. These factors "*reflect the urgency with which a task needs to be completed, and the perception, on the part of the student, of how much pressure there is to complete the task under difficult conditions*" (Skehan, 1998, p. 100).

By making use of this three-part scheme in the design of tasks, it is possible to ensure task validity, given that certain conditions brought by this scheme relate to real world life and will definitely involve a cognitive component, generating meaning and giving the task substance. Furthermore, the communicative stress captures another dimension of the real-world situations (the way processing factors operate).

In relation to the implementation of tasks, Skehan (1998) draws attention to the necessity of systematizing the implementation of tasks so that it will both meet the definition of tasks and promote interlanguage development. In his study with Foster (Foster & Skehan, 1996), Skehan proposes a framework for implementing tasks (Table 2), which brings the different phases of a task-based lesson: pre, mid and post task activities, each of them with specific goals and typical techniques. Here, Skehan's attempt is "*to propose methods of organizing communicatively oriented instruction which balances a concern for form and a concern for meaning*" (Skehan, 1998, p. 152). According to Foster and Skehan (1996), this framework "*allow[s] principled decisions to be made regarding the attentional focus and pedagogic goals of different activities*" (p. 303). This framework also guided the design of the cycle of tasks in this study.

Within Skehan's framework, each phase is carefully developed prior to task implementation in order to enhance the chances of interlanguage development. The pre task phase is intended to prepare students to carry out the task itself through activities such as brainstorming, highlighting new vocabulary, using pictures, to mention just a few (Skehan, 1998; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). At this stage, both linguistic and cognitive factors come into play (D'Ely & Mota, 2004). There are three major types of pre task activities: *teaching*, *consciousness-raising*, and *planning*.

Pre task activities related to *teaching* are concerned with the introduction of new language to the interlanguage system, and it can happen through deductive or inductive approaches (Skehan, 1998; D'Ely & Mota, 2004). Furthermore, through *teaching* activities, the teacher can activate or mobilize previous knowledge or language, increase the chances of restructuring (by triggering a reorganization of existing structures), and recycle language (such as, reminding learners of vocabulary already seen). By the same token, *consciousness-raising* activities intend

to diminish the cognitive load of the task, specially by inducing the learners “*to recall schematic knowledge that they have that will be relevant to the task they will do*” (Skehan, 1998, p. 140). Here, learners might be invited to brainstorm or discuss ideas and explore texts to find patterns.

Table 2: A framework for task implementation (Foster & Skehan, 1996, p.303)

	Phase	Goal	Typical Techniques
1.	Pre task		
	Linguistic	- Introduce new forms to interlanguage repertoire	- Explicit and implicit teaching - Consciousness-raising
	Cognitive	- Reduce cognitive load - Push learners to express more complex ideas	- Plan linguistically and cognitively - Observe similar tasks - Plan - Observe
2.	Mid task		
	Task choice	- Balance difficulty of task	- Use analytic scheme - Introduce surprise
	Task calibration	- Increase or reduce difficulty	- Provide (visual) support
3.	Post task	- Raise consciousness for a focus on form	- Use public performance - Post task activities

Planning activities are also associated with cognitive processing, and they address the impact that giving students planning time may have upon performance (Skehan, 1998; D’Ely & Mota, 2004). According to Ellis (2003), planning “*involves the students considering the forms they will need to execute the task*

workplan they have been given” (p. 247). Thus, “*the overriding hypothesis is that planning will have positive effects on performance*” (Foster & Skehan, 1996, p. 305). As Fortkamp, Xhafaj and Finardi (2006) pointed out, the use of different planning times and types can be used to reach a particular goal, given that planning time prior to task performance has been found to impact fluency, accuracy and complexity¹² of learners’ output in different ways, given that planning can “*ease the subsequent attentional burden*” during performance (Foster and Skehan, 1999, p. 218). In this sense, through planning, teachers can lead learners to be able to do things with language that they could not before. Thus, teachers can provide “*linguistic forms/strategies for performing the task depending on the amount of guidance the teacher wishes to provide*” (Ellis, 2003, p. 247).

Mid task activities, on the other hand, are related to the “*manner in which a task is done*” (Skehan, 1998, p.142). Furthermore, there is a concern with balancing the difficulty of the task (D’Ely & Mota, 2004). Thus, a task designer should take into account Skehan’s (1996) framework for task analysis in order to adjust task difficulty. In this sense, the key concern within this phase is how learners’ attentional demands can be manipulated through some pedagogical decisions, which might include an element of surprise, time pressure or the use of visual support (D’Ely & Mota, 2004), to mention a few. However, although most decisions are made prior to task implementation (task workplan), the mid task phase allows for teacher or learners to make some online adjustments. That is, there could be differences between the task workplan and its performance, as suggested by Ellis (2003). Skehan (1998) claims learners can exert some control on the task as they can ask for extra time, or to change the topic, for instance. Furthermore, learners might focus on a different goal rather than the one intended by the task designer. In addition, it is important to point out that, “*at this stage, the teacher’s role is to circulate within the class and help learners formulate what they want to say, but not to intrude, and least of all to correct the language which is produced*” (Skehan, 1998, p. 145).

¹² According to Ellis (2003), accuracy refers to “*the extent to which the language produced in performing a task conforms with target language forms*” (p. 338), complexity refers to “*the extent to which the language produced in performing a task is elaborated and varied*”(p. 340), and fluency refers to “*the extent to which the language produced in performing a task manifests pausing, hesitation, or reformulation*” (p. 342).

Post task activities have, as their primary goal, raising learners' consciousness for a focus on form, which lies at the core of TBA¹³. Although a certain task may lead students to focus on structural issues while performing, this does not mean that the task will be grammar oriented. This could be achieved through activities that might promote awareness for an upcoming public performance, or by providing activities for learner's self monitoring. Therefore, the objective here is to alter the attentional balance and engage learners in reflection, which will enhance consolidation of the content learned. As Fortkamp, Xhafaj and Finardi (2006) point out, it is through reflection and consolidation that learners are encouraged to restructure their knowledge, thus promoting interlanguage development. Furthermore, it is in the post task phase that learners can reflect and evaluate their performance and progress. According to Ellis (2003), encouraging students to do so "*may contribute to the development of their metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring and evaluations which are seen as important for language learning*" (p. 259).

Skehan's frameworks guide the design of the cycle of tasks to be presented in this study¹⁴. The reason for choosing this framework relied on the fact that it takes into account the cognitive difficulties of the tasks and the various stages or components a lesson should have when tasks are its main component, providing a clear structure for a lesson, allowing the teacher to be creative with each phase of the task-based lesson. Also, such framework, as Skehan (1996) points out, structures the freedom which learners need to have while performing a task, addresses the issue of attention, and creates a greater chance "*for naturalistic mechanisms and processes to come into play*" (Skehan, 1996, p. 58). The next section provides information regarding repetition, an important element within TBA.

¹³ Although focus on form is brought within the post task phase, it is worthwhile mentioning that this can be present in all phases of the cycle. Skehan's purpose in creating this framework was "*to enable the organization of task-based instruction to minimize its dangers (excessive focus on meaning) while maximizing the chances that its advantages will be realized (accurate and complex form)*" (Foster & Skehan, 1996, p. 317).

¹⁴ For information regarding the cycle of tasks designed, refer to Chapter IV of this thesis.

2.3. Repetition

Repetition is a cognitive process that also lies at the core of TBA and in the development of tasks. Based on Bygate's (2001) study, D'Ely (2006) explains her understanding of repetition:

repetition may be seen as the process through which the learners may exert some control, guidance and regulation over what they know by integrating previous knowledge in a subsequent encounter with the same task, thus, building a path towards the proceduralization of declarative knowledge, which, in turn, may lead to qualitative changes in learners' performance (cf. Bygate, 2001b; Bygate & Samuda, 2005; Ashcraft, 1994). (p.70)

Ellis (2003) states that "*when learners repeat a task their production improves in a number of ways, for example, complexity increases, propositions are expressed more clearly, and they become more fluent*" (p. 258). Through task repetition, learners can retrieve information they have practiced before, allowing them to make a few adjustments in order to maximize communication effectiveness.

This study is specifically concerned with the repetition of the same task with different content (Bygate, 2001). This kind of repetition involves the concept of task familiarity discussed in the previous section. Although there are studies (Plough & Gass, 1993) that show that over-familiarity can be damaging when boredom and repetitiveness are perceived in task repetition, Bygate (1996 as cited in Skehan, 1998) has shown that this can be prevented by inserting an ingredient of novelty. According to Skehan (1998), "*if fresh and additional challenges are found, participants may exploit the greater task familiarity to produce more complex language*" (p. 119). In this sense, the first time the task is performed will serve as a model and, when a familiar task takes place in a subsequent class, it will also encourage the retrieval of information from long-term memory.

In a later study, Bygate (2001) investigated the effects of repeating a task or practicing a type of task to learner's ability to use the foreign language. In his results, he found that the

opportunity to practice a type of task did not seem to assist in the performance of a new task of the same type. In other words, there was no transfer of the positive effects to a new task. However, according to Skehan (1998) task familiarity serves as an accessory to lowering the cognitive load in tasks.

In sum, Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation along with the use of repetition supported the development of the cycle of tasks for a group of 9th grade students. In the next section, a few empirical studies conducted in the Brazilian context are reviewed.

2.4. Empirical studies in task-based approach: focus on Brazilian studies

Given the importance that the task-based approach has gained within SLA studies, it is paramount to review previous studies on this matter in the Brazilian context. Thus, the studies reviewed here were organized into two themes: how tasks are perceived (Almeida Junior, 2011) and the use of the TBA in real classrooms (Fortkamp, Xhafaj & Finardi, 2006; Pereira, 2015; Xavier, 2004; Farias, 2014).

Regarding the first theme, how tasks are perceived, one good example is a study conducted by Almeida Junior (2011), in which he investigated how knowledge about tasks (definition and theoretical/educational implications) helped EFL teachers from the *Programa de Extensão do Curso Extracurricular de Línguas Estrangeiras – Inglês* at *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* to make informed decisions on the content (what) they were going to teach and the procedures (how) they were going to use when planning their classes. According to Almeida Junior, the ten teachers (from the same teaching context, but with different personal experiences) who participated in the study seemed to perceive tasks as activities that focus learners' attention on the pragmatic use of real-world and context-related language through interaction. Thus, tasks were perceived as having potential to make learners use their creativity so that a communicative outcome can be conveyed.

Furthermore, as stated by Almeida Junior, the material used in the participant-teachers classrooms provided only few tasks for learners, and the shift from focus on meaning to focus

on form was abrupt. Due to that, participants seemed to have issues connecting one task to another as they planned and implemented their English classes, given that teachers tend to rely on textbooks. However, participants appeared to profit from their understanding of tasks, allowing them to put into practice the tasks proposed by their textbooks.

Taking into consideration Almeida Junior's findings, it is possible to notice that it is of utmost importance for teachers to be acquainted with the theories that underpin the material used in their EFL classrooms. However, knowledge regarding theory did not seem to be enough for the participant-teachers, given that they still had issues connecting tasks. Thus, there seems to be a need for more practical studies to be conducted so as to provide answers for the teachers to adopt tasks and TBA in their classrooms. Although the framework for task implementation proposed by Skehan (Section 2.2) provides a clear structure for a task-based lesson, as it functions as a guideline for tasks to be designed and thus implemented, it does not offer examples of the tasks that could be developed within each phase.

Regarding the second theme, the use of the TBA in real classrooms, Fortkamp, Xhafaj and Finardi (2006), Pereira (2015) and Xavier (2004) attempted to create and implement cycles of tasks following Skehan's framework (1996, 1998), and Farias (2014) developed a Task-Test so as to unveil its impact on students' language performance. Fortkamp et al conducted a case study on the design and implementation of a task cycle in an intact EFL classroom¹⁵, following Skehan's framework and taking into consideration, when analyzing the data collected, the task-as-workplan (before implementation, the cycle was submitted to the appraisal of experts), the task-in-process (while the tasks were being performed by the learners, observations were made by the teacher-researcher) and the task outcomes (after the cycle was finished, interviews were carried out). The seven learners who participated in the implementation phase of the study were, at the time data was collected, in the first semester of the Letras program, attending the course Inglês I - Expressão Oral e Gramática, and at the elementary level of language proficiency.

The task cycle designed had as main objective to provide learners with opportunities to expand their interlanguage system

¹⁵ The classroom where data collection occurred did not suffer any manipulation to fit any criteria.

through the process of restructuring. In order to attain this objective, their cycle was divided into the three phases (pre, mid and post task phases) proposed by Skehan, having as a target structure the Present Continuous. According to the authors, the qualitative analyses of the data collected showed that the design and implementation of a task cycle following Skehan's framework was successful in that context and may be adapted to other classroom situations. Furthermore, they also mention that analyzing the task cycle in three moments was useful, given that it allowed for the researchers and teacher to reflect on the theory informing the design and implementation of the tasks, and learners' reactions to the cycle. Thus, Fortkamp et al concluded that this type of analysis may be carried out in other classroom situations as well.

Still with a focus on task elaboration and implementation, Pereira (2015) designed and implemented a cycle of tasks to a group of elderly EFL learners from NETI-UFSC¹⁶. In her qualitative study, she investigated the participants' perceptions regarding the implementation of the cycle of tasks designed under Skehan's frameworks for task analysis and implementation, Ellis's (2003) principles for TBA, Long's (1991) focus on form, and Long's (2015) needs analysis concept, and the elements of planning by Foster and Skehan (1996; 1999), and repetition by Bygate (2001). Eight elderly EFL learners who attended the five classes answered perception questionnaires about the classes and took part in an interview in the end of the cycle.

Pereira's cycle of tasks was composed of 10 different tasks to work with the topic of traveling and, at the end of the cycle, students' presented their travel itinerary to the class. According to Pereira, the use of TBA to develop a cycle of tasks for the elderly learners was positive, given that the eight participants seemed to find some of the TBA elements, such as focus on meaning and tasks' resemblance to real world, relevant to their learning. Her results also showed that the use of TBA to develop a cycle of tasks for elderly EFL learners was positive. Furthermore, repetition or task familiarity was regarded as a successful technique in helping elderly EFL learners memorize new content and optimize their communicative skills.

¹⁶ Núcleo de Estudos da Terceira Idade at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina is a department that aims at contributing to the quality of life of the elderly community in the state of Santa Catarina.

In regards to planning, her findings showed that planning used for pedagogical purpose is essential for preparing learners for a task that may require an extra amount of computation, involve anxiety issues, or enhance aspects with which learners have more difficulty, such as their travel itinerary presentation. Overall, from the findings of her study, Pereira was able to conclude that Skehan's frameworks are resourceful in balancing the task level of difficulty and the learners' attention between meaning and form; that planning and repetition can be catalysts for task performance; and that TBA can in fact promote learners' reflection on their perception of themselves as learners and their beliefs about EFL learning. Finally, Pereira points out that developing and implementing a cycle of tasks can ultimately contribute to a teacher's formation.

Xavier (2004), on the other hand, developed a task-based thematic syllabus to teach English to two 5th grade groups from two public school in different cities in Brazil. The aim of the study was to investigate students' learning gains in both reading and listening comprehension. Data was collected through weekly exchanged lesson diaries, audiotaped and videotaped sets of lessons, questionnaires, and achievement tests in two moments of the syllabus implementation so that the results could be compared. In order to unveil the learning gains, two 6th grade groups also took the achievements tests so as to compare the results with the ones achieved by the participants of the study.

According to Xavier, the results of this research show that the participants had learning gains in listening more than in reading. That is, the gains obtained in listening were significant, especially when compared to the 6th grade results obtained. As for the reading skill gains, results could have been better if it were not for the limitations of the didactic material, which did not provide enough text comprehension tasks. Thus, Xavier concludes that the use of a task-based thematic syllabus is valid and capable of being carried out in this context: public, secondary schools.

Still in relation to the second theme, the use of the TBA in real classrooms, Farias (2014) conducted a study in which TBA tenets were applied to the development of tests. According to Farias, researchers in the area of Second Language Acquisition agree that the approach used by the teacher in class should be similar to the way the students are going to be tested. Thus, her study tried to unveil the impact of a Task-Test, that is, a written

test which contained elements of a task according to Ellis' (2003) criteria, on students' language performance in two different groups, with a total of thirty-two participants: group 1, whose classes followed the textbook, and group 2, which was exposed to Task Based lessons. She also tried to understand the relationship of this type of test to the methodological approach used for second language teaching, and if students perceived the Task-Test as an appropriate tool for measuring their L2 acquisition.

Data for the study was obtained through the answers participants provided in the Task-Test, and profile and post-task questionnaires, and this data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitative analyses did not provide statistical significance for both accuracy and complexity measures and only approached significance for the outcome measure. In regards to the qualitative analysis, students' answers to the questionnaires showed that learners were in fact able to identify task elements in the Task-Test and used these characteristics to explain why they considered the test an effective tool for measuring their L2 performance. In this sense, the Task-Test was considered a positive and constructive tool for communicative assessment. Furthermore, in her conclusion, Farias points out that the research results suggest evidence for the importance of reflecting on the methodological choices to be applied in class in terms of instruction and assessment.

Based on the discussion presented above, it is noted how relevant it is to understand the theories that underpin our practices as teachers, and how such theories can inform our decisions regarding what and how to teach so as to trigger learning. In that sense, and taking into consideration the studies here reviewed, it is possible to notice that the use of the task-based approach and Skehan's frameworks for task analysis and implementation might be profitable and positive when creating lessons for real classrooms.

2.5. Summary of the chapter

As a way to fulfill the purpose of the *Review of the Literature*, which was to provide an overview of the theoretical background that supports this study, this chapter brought the definitions of tasks and the task-based instruction. Then, taking into consideration their importance to the present research, the

frameworks for task analysis and implementation were presented. Next, information regarding the use of task repetition was provided. Finally, a few empirical studies concerning the use of tasks and the task-based approach in Brazilian contexts were reviewed. In sum, Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation along with the pedagogical principles of TBA (Ellis, 2003), and the use of focus on form (Long, 1991), planning (Foster and Skehan, 1996), and repetition (Bygate, 2001) assisted in the development of the cycle of tasks for 9th grade students. The next chapter in this thesis provides information regarding the method used for data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This qualitative study aimed at investigating 9th grade students' perceptions regarding the implementation of a cycle of tasks. Thus, a cycle of tasks was designed taking into consideration Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation, and with the purpose of leading students to read the first chapter of '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*'¹⁷ (Rowling, 1999) - '*The Boy Who Lived*' - in an easy and pleasant way¹⁸.

In order to achieve the main objective of the study, the present chapter describes and justifies the method which was used to collect and analyze data as well as the participants, the setting, and the instruments. The chapter is organized into eight sections. Section 3.1 provides explanation on what qualitative research is. Section 3.2 introduces the objectives and the research question. Section 3.3 introduces the setting where the study was carried out, the participants and the regulations governing ethical practices. Section 3.4 describes the criteria for selection of the fictional text. Section 3.5 portrays the general design of the study. Section 3.6 refers to the pilot study. Section 3.7 provides information about the elaboration and implementation of tasks. And, finally, section 3.8 presents the procedures that were used for data generation and analysis of learner's perceptions.

3.1. The method: qualitative research

According to Dörnyei (2007), qualitative research in the field of applied linguistics has had an increasing visibility and acceptance since the 90s. This is related to the growing interest in investigating social, situational and cultural factors of language acquisition and use, which makes this method ideal for providing insights into such contextual conditions and influences. Furthermore, qualitative research is interested in providing descriptive data, rather than making use of statical procedures (Mackey & Gass, 2005); thus, the emphasis is on perceiving the intent and meaning of human acts in their natural settings (Alves-

¹⁷ Henceforth, HPSS.

¹⁸ The complete description of the cycle of tasks developed is presented in Chapter IV of this thesis, along with its teaching procedures.

Mazzotti, 2004 as cited in Tomitch & Tumolo, 2011).

Given that this study aims at understanding a given problem from the perspective of the local context it involves, a qualitative approach seemed to be the most suitable method to carry out this piece of research. Moreover, all core features of a qualitative inquiry (Dörnyei, 2007) are present in this study:

(1) *Emergent research design*: no aspect of the research design is in every respect prefigured; therefore, this study is open and flexible to possible new details during the process of investigation.

(2) *The nature of qualitative data*: this study works with a wide range of data including questionnaires, video recorded classes and audio recorded interviews, and the most relevant were transformed into a textual form during data processing.

(3) *The characteristics of the research setting*: there was the concern not to manipulate the situation under study; in this case, the classroom where data was collected did not suffer any manipulation to fit any criteria.

(4) *Insider meaning*: the explicit goal of this research was to explore the participants' views of the situation being studied, giving this researcher their subjective opinions, experiences and feelings in relation to the lessons they attended.

(5) *Small sample size*: taking into consideration that this kind of method is very laborious, small samples of participants were adopted, and data collection happened in only one classroom setting.

(6) *Interpretive analysis*: the data analysis for this study relied on my subjective interpretation; therefore, since I am, as the researcher, "*the main 'measurement device' in the study*" (Haverkamp, 2005 as cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38), my own values and beliefs also become an integral part of the inquiry.

3.2. Objectives and research question

The present study's objective was the implementation of a cycle of tasks based on Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation with the purpose of aiding public school students from the 9th year in the reading of the first chapter of '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*' (Rowling, 1999). Thus, these frameworks were transposed to practice in order to understand its impact on young Brazilian public school

learners' EFL learning through their own perspectives. In order to accomplish these objectives, the following research question guided the present study: What are the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of a cycle of tasks?

3.3. The research setting, the participants and the ethics committee

Taking into consideration the objectives and research question presented in the previous section, this section introduces the institution in which the data was collected in order to contextualize the setting where the present study was carried out, as well as the participants and the regulations that govern research ethical practices.

3.3.1. Colégio de Aplicação

Colégio de Aplicação (CA) from *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* (UFSC), founded in 1961, is a public institution integrated to *Centro de Ciências da Educação*¹⁹, and it is located at the university campus - Trindade, Florianópolis (SC). This school is run by the university, and it works as an experimental base aimed at the development of teaching experiences and supervised training - student teaching - for undergraduate courses, according to the requirements of the Law 9.394²⁰, from December 20, 1996, and specific resolutions postulated by *Conselho Nacional de Educação*²¹.

Colégio de Aplicação is an educational facility that offers primary, middle and secondary school. Until the 90s, the students who attended CA were the children of people who worked for the university, such as faculty and staff. However, after the Resolution nº 013/CEPE/92, it was established that there would be three groups per grade with 25 students each, and the admission of students would occur through a raffle open to the community.

In relation to the foreign language classes, CA offers its students four options to choose from: English, Spanish, German and French. Each language is allotted three classes of fifty

¹⁹ Center for the Educational Sciences.

²⁰ Lei de Diretrizes e Bases.

²¹ National Board of Education.

minutes each per week, and these language classes are offered since the 6th year of middle school.

Regarding the specific objectives related to the teaching of English, the *Projeto Político Pedagógico* (PPP)²², whose regulations are being implemented in the school, presents as main concerns for middle school: (1) to provide the opportunity for recognition of the structures of the English language through listening; (2) to stimulate repetition and understanding of structures of the English language through oral practice; (3) to create opportunities to read and understand short written texts in the English language; and (4) to foster the use of structures acquired through the practice of writing.

When it comes to the books selected for the English language classes, CA takes into consideration the collections presented in *Programa Nacional do Livro Didático* (PNLD Guide)²³. Therefore, the books selected for the middle school are part of the collection ‘*Alive!*’ (Menezes, Braga & Franco, 2012), approved by PNLD Textbook Guide in 2014.

According to PNLD Textbook Guide (2014), the collection chosen distinguishes itself through the balancing of comprehension activities and written production. The collection also includes a set of texts from different spheres with current issues, which allows the teacher to promote discussions in class, and use these texts in order to deepen students’ critical skills. Furthermore, it tries to encompass different artistic expressions as a form of aesthetic enjoyment and expansion of cultural horizons, offering teachers the opportunity to lead their students to the understanding of other ways of reading the world. As for the linguistic elements, they are linked to the genres brought in each thematic unit.

²² Educational Policy Project.

²³ The National Textbook Program (PNLD Guide), from the Brazilian federal government, aims at subsidizing the pedagogical work of teachers by distributing collections of textbooks to students in basic education in public institutions. After evaluation of the works, the Ministry of Education (MEC) publishes the Textbook Guide with reviews of collections considered approved. The guide is sent to schools, which choose among available titles, those that best respond to their Educational Policy Program (PPP). These textbooks are free of charge, and they are used to support the teaching-learning process developed inside the classroom.

3.3.2. The 9th year group: their material, teacher and the practicum interns

The classroom chosen to carry out this study was the 9th year of middle school. This decision was made by considering three different aspects. First, the objectives for this school stage presented in the PPP, in which it is noticeable the concern for teaching the four linguistic skills of English as a foreign language (EFL); second, the thematic units proposed within the book chosen by CA to be used at this stage; and third, the teacher in charge of the group comes from the same research background as I do, and she has been making use of the task-based approach in some of her classes.

In relation to the book, *'Alive! 9'* (Menezes, Braga & Franco, 2012), it is divided into four parts and eight units:

- Part 1 - Art on the screen: Unit 1 - Movies, Unit 2 - Television;
- Part 2 - Art on paper: Unit 3 - Theater, Unit 4 - Literature and Comics;
- Part 3 - The art of music and technology: Unit 5 - Music, Unit 6 - Technoworld;
- Part 4 - Art and life: Unit 7 - Dance, Unit 8 - Painting, architecture and sculpture.

Although a book was adopted for the group, the teacher in charge, Anna²⁴, only uses the material as a guide to orient her classes. Anna makes use of the themes brought in each unit and creates classes under the TBA rationale. These classes include various activities, such as discussions and the development of projects that relate to each thematic unit. For instance, prior to the beginning of data collection and during the observation phase, students had just finished working with movies, and they were going to start working with comics, which are included in Unit 4 of the book. Throughout her classes, Anna gave students the opportunity to discuss how comics are created and the different comics available in the market and, at the end of the unit, she asked students to transform an edited version of the fairy tale *'Hansel and Gretel'* into a comic.

Anna is thirty years old and has been working as a teacher since 2006. She holds a master's degree in the area of

²⁴ The real name of the participant teacher was replaced by a pseudonym in this study.

Second Language Acquisition, and now she is a doctoral candidate in the same area. Although Anna has been teaching English for nine years, being a teacher at a public school is a recent experience for her.

Given that this research focuses largely on the reading skill, Anna was asked to answer a questionnaire²⁵ in order to unveil her views on reading, to learn more about the kinds of texts she had been using in her EFL classes, the ways she approached those texts in class and her students' reactions to them, as well as how she perceived students' motivation in relation to EFL learning.

According to Anna, reading is a way to empower her students to act upon the discourse they are put against everyday. Thus, she tries to present different text genres to them, and to share with students some knowledge about reading strategies. The texts she selects are written by various authors from different cultures and nationalities, and the criteria for selection is based on the theme of the unit and on the final goal of the cycle of tasks she has in mind. Anna also informs in the questionnaire that she tries to include literary texts in her classes, such as short stories and poems.

In relation to students' motivation, she believes that most of them seem eager to learn English so as to better understand the different genres and texts they are exposed to and that somehow interest them. However, when it comes to the reading activities she proposes in class, she points out that it varies. In her opinion, some students are more interested than others, and this interest is mostly related to the topic selected, and not to the fact that it is a reading assignment.

Throughout the observation phase and data collection, Anna's role was very important. This is due to the fact that Anna and I shared ideas during task planning and implementation, and this collaborative work was very important for both of us to grow as researchers and EFL teachers. Although all tasks were designed by this researcher and under the supervision of my advisor and co-advisor, Anna's input on the cycle of tasks was paramount. Furthermore, it is important to mention that during data collection, Anna's 9th year group received two student-teachers who were in the observation segment of their practicum.

²⁵ This questionnaire was given to Anna prior to the beginning of data collection, and can be found in Appendix F, and her answers in Appendix G.

Both Theodor and Christina²⁶ were of great aid throughout the implementation of the cycle. Along with Anna, they helped students during their task performances and provided a joyful environment for the development of this study.

3.3.3. The students from the 9th year

The 9th year EFL classroom is composed of seventeen students²⁷ and their ages range from 13 to 15 years old. Prior to the beginning of data collection, students were invited to answer a questionnaire²⁸ to unveil their reading habits, inside and outside the classroom, and their familiarity with some of the fictional texts that are available in the English language. This questionnaire was given to them on May 11th, and only fifteen students answered it, given that the absentee students were traveling for a few weeks.

According to the students, most of them have been learning English for 4 or 5 years. However, none of them have had any experience studying English outside school. They also pointed out that they have never traveled abroad. Moreover, prior to data collection, most students had never read anything in the English language apart from the activities proposed by their teacher in their EFL classroom.

In relation to their reading habits, most students seem to enjoy reading. In the questionnaires, they mention romance, fiction, adventure, comic books and two students cited Harry Potter books. They also inform in their answers that reading is part of their lives, and most read every day. Their selection of

²⁶ The real names of the student-teachers were replaced by pseudonyms in this study.

²⁷ The class is in fact composed of eighteen students; however, one of them was reluctant to participate in the classes and answer the questionnaires during data collection. This student had some personal issues in relation to his colleagues and the classes in the curriculum. These personal issues were not shared with me in detail, and during the implementation of the tasks, the student's parents were asked to come to the school to better understand this student's issues. Having that in mind, and taking into consideration that all answers provided in his questionnaires were vague or nonexistent, I have excluded his data from this study.

Also, one of the students (S 12) who participated in the study has a hearing disability and makes use of a hearing aid. This, however, did not compromise the development of the study, and careful attention was paid to this student in order to ascertain that she was understanding the class and what was being said.

²⁸ Refer to Appendix H for the complete questionnaire, and students' answers can be found in Appendix I.

reading materials ranges from books, magazines and newspapers to comic books. Therefore, although they have the habit of reading, it does not happen in the English language.

3.3.4. Regulations governing research ethical practices

In accordance to the resolution 466/2012-CNS/CONEP which postulates the respect to human dignity and special protection to participants of scientific research involving human beings, this piece of research was submitted to the system CEP/Conep under the responsibility of the entitled researcher Dr. Raquel Carolina Souza Ferraz D'Ely and her assistant Joseline Caramelo Afonso. After evaluation, the research project that developed this study was approved with the serial number 965.961.

In order to fulfill the requirements proposed by the UFSC ethical committee, this project was registered in 'Plataforma Brasil' (www.saude.gov.br/plataformabrasil) and the following documents were sent enclosed: a detailed version of the project translated into Portuguese, a concession agreement (a document which was signed by UFSC allowing the entitled researcher and her assistant to conduct research under the name of this institution), a confidentiality clause, a consent letter signed by the school principal of *Colégio de Aplicação*, and two consent letters designed for the participants of this research.²⁹

According to the resolution 466/2012-CNS/CONEP, in order to invite participants for a scientific research, the consent letters must present the rationale, aims and procedures that will be used in the research; possible discomforts and risks arising from participation in the research; the assistance that the participants are entitled to have, and guarantee of full freedom and secrecy. All these criteria were taken into consideration before designing the Informed Consent Letters, whose clauses can be checked in detail in Appendices D and E.

3.4. Criteria for selection of the fictional text

The students' interest in some themes play an important role in the learning process, making them more open to profit the most from the tasks proposed in the classroom. Therefore,

²⁹ The concession agreement, the confidentiality clause, the consent letter signed by the school principal of *Colégio de Aplicação*, and the two consent letters can be found in Appendices A to E.

choosing a fictional text that would interest, motivate and, potentially, lead to learning was of utmost importance. With that in mind, two needs analysis (NA) questionnaires were designed. As pointed out by Long (2015, p. 88), a NA is the first step that should be taken in the design of a course. According to the author, “a NA will identify which goals and communicative language needs are present in particular groups of students and thereby make the appropriate program design and delivery possible” (p. 89). Thus, designing these NA questionnaires was paramount in bringing to the foreground students interests, their motivation in relation to their EFL classes, their reading habits and familiarity with texts written in the target language, and to validate the text chosen for this research.

Thus, the first questionnaire (Appendix H) was designed to unveil the students’ reading habits, inside and outside the classroom, and their familiarity with some of the fictional texts that are available in the English language. The second questionnaire (Appendix F) was created to find out more about the kinds of texts the teacher had been using in her EFL classes, the ways she approached those texts in class, and the students’ reactions to them.³⁰

In the NA questionnaire, students were given a list of books written in the target language, and were asked to rank those books in order of familiarity, and which of them they would like to read in their EFL classes. Furthermore, they were also asked what other books in the English language they would like to read. Their answers varied from ‘*Romeo and Juliet*’ and ‘*Sherlock Holmes*’, to contemporary best-sellers such as ‘*Divergent*’ and ‘*The Fault in Our Stars*’³¹. Given that their answers were diverse, and in order to work with a text that would motivate and interest them, lists of best sellers³² were researched, and taking into consideration the age group and the fact that the students might have different levels of proficiency in English, the fictional text chosen was the book ‘*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s*

³⁰ Refer to Appendices G and I for the answers provided in the Needs Analysis questionnaires.

³¹ ‘*Romeo and Juliet*’ (1597) was written by William Shakespeare, and ‘*Sherlock Holmes*’ (1887) is a fictional character created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. As for ‘*Divergent*’ (2011) and ‘*The Fault in Our Stars*’ (2012), they were written by Veronica Roth and John Green, respectively.

³² The New York Times was the main source of data.

Stone' (1999) by J.K. Rowling. For this study, the tasks focused only on the first chapter of the book entitled '*The Boy Who Lived*' (Appendix J)³³.

The reason for choosing this book relied on some important facts. First, the collection was on the list of The New York Times best sellers - Children's Series - for 304 weeks³⁴. Also, it is a worldwide known series of books which provides movies, audiobooks and various illustrations that could be used inside the classroom, helping this researcher with the development of tasks that could potentially help students in the learning process. Furthermore, based on answers in the NA questionnaire, fifty percent of the students are very familiar with the collection, making it more likely to be a topic students would be interested in working with.

3.4.1. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Harry Potter is a series of books written by the British author J.K. Rowling. The seven books in the series chronicle the adventures of Harry Potter - a wizard - and his friends, Ronald Weasley and Hermione Granger. The main plot revolves around Harry's quest to defeat the Dark wizard who killed his parents, Lord Voldemort, whose aims are to conquer the wizarding world, subjugate non-magical people, and destroy all those who stand in his way.

The first book of the series, '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*', describes how Harry discovers he is a wizard, makes close friends and a few enemies at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and prevents Lord Voldemort from regaining power. The back cover of the book gives a brief description of the story:

Harry Potter has never played a sport while flying on a broomstick. He's never worn a cloak of invisibility, befriended a giant, or helped hatch a dragon. All Harry knows is a miserable life with the Dursleys, his horrible aunt and uncle, and their abominal

³³ Appendix J brings the first chapter of '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*' (1999) by J.K. Rowling.

³⁴ According to the list of best sellers from February 16th, 2014: <http://www.nytimes.com/best-sellers-books/2014-02-16/series-books/list.html>. This research was done prior to data collection and to the design of the cycle of tasks.

son, Dudley. Harry's room is a tiny closet at the foot of the stair, and he hasn't had a birthday party in eleven years. But all that is about to change when a mysterious letter arrives by owl messenger: a letter with an invitation to a wonderful place he never dreamed existed. There he finds not only friends, aerial sports, and magic around every corner, but great destiny that's been waiting for him ... if Harry can survive the encounter. (Rowling, 1999, back cover)

In the first chapter of the book, entitled '*The Boy who lived*' - which will be the focus of the present study -, the readers are introduced to the Dursleys and learn the peculiar happenings surrounding the arrival of Harry Potter to their doorstep. At this point, Harry is only a baby whose parents had been killed. He is brought to the Dursleys' house by two wizards - Professors Albus Dumbledore and Minerva McGonagall - and a half-giant - Rubeus Hagrid -, who briefly discuss the recent events in the wizarding world and Harry's future.

As aforementioned, PCN-LE (1998) proposes the use of cross-cutting themes to provide the students with means to critically understand the world and the environment that surrounds them. Bearing this in mind, the first chapter of the book HPSS gives the opportunity to work within the classroom with one of the themes proposed by the PCN-LE: respecting and dealing with differences.

3.5. General research design

In order to fulfill the objective of this qualitative research, this study was carried out in three phases. In the first phase, which happened from April 15th to May 27th, this researcher observed the 9th year EFL classes conducted by Anna so that students could be familiarized with her (Dörnyei, 2007), allowing for the creation of a more comfortable environment. In the first day of the observation, Anna created an activity in which students would learn more about the researcher. This activity included questions in relation to profession, studies, likes and dislikes, and what kinds of activities this researcher enjoyed. Furthermore, during the observation phase, students were given a consent letter, which provided general information about the research, to be signed by their parents allowing them to participate in the study.

Finally, on May 11th, students answered the needs analysis questionnaire, and they were informed on the importance of participating in research.

During data collection (Phase 2), which happened from June 8th to August 17th, students participated in the cycle of tasks designed for this study, which was implemented by this researcher. The students had their EFL class in two separate days, two of them on Mondays from 04:20pm to 5:50pm, the last classes of the day, and the other on Wednesdays from 03:10pm to 04:00pm, which happened before their break. In the final moments of each class, students answered a post-task questionnaire in order to unveil their perceptions in relation to the tasks performed. Here, it is important to highlight some issues involving data collection, and which altered some of the decisions made in regards to some of the tasks and the length of data collection. On June 1st, staff from UFSC started a strike. With that, both university restaurant and library have been closed³⁵. This affected students from the undergraduate and graduate courses in the university, as well as students at CA. Given the situation, on June 29th, students from CA started a strike. This happened due to the fact that students from middle and secondary school spend most of the day at CA, and they depend on the university restaurant and library to continue their studies. Thus, classes from June 29th to July 6th were cancelled. After meetings held within the school with the principal and teachers, classes resumed on July 7th. Also, students were on vacation from July 18th until August 2nd, which interrupted the implementation of the tasks. Therefore, the cycle of tasks suffered some changes to take into account the vacation period, and my data collection had to be extended so that all tasks could be performed; hence, a total of fourteen classes were given.

Throughout Phases 1 and 2, the tasks implemented in the study were designed³⁶. The laborious work to create the tasks took into consideration the findings of my pilot study, which are further described in the next subsection, the classes given by Anna prior to the beginning of data collection, and the answers brought by the students in the NA questionnaires.

Once classes had finished, from September 21st to

³⁵ During the writing of this section, the strike was still active.

³⁶ The rationale behind task design is described in Chapter IV of this thesis.

September 30th, twelve³⁷ students from the group met individually with the researcher for interviews (Phase 3). The purpose of conducting interviews was to ascertain some of the answers given in the post-task questionnaires, and have a more complete view of students' perceptions regarding the cycle of tasks. Furthermore, it is paramount to mention that the reason for conducting the interview sessions a month after classes were finished relied on the fact that students had to travel to Minas Gerais with the school as part of their studies, and they would not be available for interviews during that period. Once students had returned, this researcher contacted them and scheduled a time in which each student would be available to talk about the tasks and their perceptions regarding the cycle. Table 3 illustrates the phases, dates and instruments.

Table 3: General Research Design

Phases	Dates	Instruments
Phase 1	April 15th to May 27th	- Class Observation
	April 15th	- Consent Letters - Activity to learn more about the researcher
	May 11th	- Needs Analysis Questionnaire
Phase 2	June 08th to August 17th	- Performance of the Cycle of Tasks - Post-task Questionnaires
	June 29th until July 6th	Classes were cancelled due to a student strike at CA.
	July 18th until August 2nd	School Vacation
Phase 1 and 2	April 15th to August 16th	Task cycle design
Phase 3	September 21st to 30th	- Interviews

³⁷ From the seventeen students in the group, only twelve managed to find time within their schedules to meet with this researcher. However, these twelve interviews are a representative sample of students' perspectives on the cycle of tasks.

3.6. Pilot study

Prior to the actual investigation, a pilot study had taken place during the second semester of 2013. The main goal of the pilot study was to implement part of a cycle of tasks developed for my *Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso* (TCC) entitled “*Beyond Disciplinary Boundaries: proposing a cycle of tasks on Harry Potter and the Sorcerer Stone*”, defended in February of 2014. The reason for doing so relied on the fact that the tasks developed for my TCC had as a starting point the text to be used for this study, and also on the fact that it took into consideration Skehan’s (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation, and these tasks were going to be included in this piece of research.

The objective of the pilot study was to investigate teacher’ and learners’ perceptions of the use of the TBA through a fictional text in a beginner EFL classroom from the *Extracurricular Course* offered by *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina*. The three tasks used in the pilot focused on two of the three phases of a task-based lesson proposed by Skehan (1996): the pre and the mid task phases.

Although the pilot study focused on a different population than the one proposed for this research, the intention in implementing the tasks was to ascertain whether the tasks needed further refinement or restructuring for data collection. After the pilot study took place, it was possible (1) to refine the tasks which presented a high level of difficulty, and (2) to insert new tasks that could lower the cognitive load of the task itself, and create the most profitable learning conditions so as to prepare students for reading the chapter. Thus, two tasks were added to the pre task phase, and the book chapter was divided into six parts in order to reduce students’ exposure to high levels of linguistic complexity. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that experimental studies in the field of Applied Linguistics are seen as systematic experiences and piloting their instruments and data collection procedures are ideal for the success of the study (Bailer, Tomitch & D’Ely, 2011, p. 143).

3.7. Elaboration and implementation of the tasks

Taking into consideration that this study proposed to design and implement a cycle of tasks to foster the learning of EFL, the rationale that was used for the elaboration of the tasks

include Ellis' (2003) definition of tasks, Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation, and the planning and implementation followed the pedagogical principles of the TBA (Ellis, 2003). Furthermore, the concept of focus on form (Long, 1991; Ellis, 2012), which lies at the core of task-based lessons, was also taken into consideration.³⁸ These tenets helped to guide the elaboration of tasks, whose purpose was to provide a fruitful learning environment to trigger learners' EFL skills through the reading of a fictional text.

In order to achieve the main objectives of this research, the tasks developed were implemented in a 9th year EFL classes at *Colégio de Aplicação* during a period of eight weeks. In order to have a clear picture of how these tasks functioned as tools for triggering students' EFL learning, all fourteen classes were recorded in video³⁹, and students were interviewed individually after the implementation of the cycle of tasks. Later, the most relevant pieces of information were transcribed. These recordings and interviews helped to unveil how participant-students reacted to the proposed tasks, and were used as means of data triangulation. Furthermore, Facebook and WhatsApp groups were created as a means of being in touch with the students outside the classroom and during vacation time, which interrupted the implementation of the cycle of tasks.

3.8. Data collection and analysis on learners' perceptions

In order to unveil learners' perceptions regarding task implementation in their EFL classes, the participant-students answered post-task questionnaires, and they were also interviewed. The reason for selecting these two data collection instruments relied on the following reasons. First, according to Mackey and Gass (2005), “[q]uestionnaires allow researchers to gather information that learners are able to report about themselves, such as their beliefs and motivations about learning

³⁸ The elaboration of the cycle of the tasks and its pedagogical procedures are thoroughly detailed in Chapter IV of this thesis.

³⁹ All fourteen classes were recorded in video to guarantee a better cover of data collection. However, the videos were not transcribed because this action was not at the scope of this Master study. For the purposes of this study, the videos were only watched by this researcher as a way to clarify any information that emerged from the analysis of the other data: post-task questionnaires and interviews.

or their reactions to learning and classroom instruction and activities” (p. 93). Therefore, post-task questionnaires better fit the purpose of the study and could reveal students’ perceptions in relation to the cycle of tasks.

Interviews, on the other hand, were used in order to certify and better elucidate what students had answered in the post-task questionnaires. For this study, semistructured interviews were conducted. In that sense, this researcher made use of a list of questions that served as a guide; thus allowing more freedom to digress and probe for more information from the students. These data collection tools and procedures for analysis are described in the next subsections.

3.8.1. Post-task questionnaires

Learners’ opinions are of utmost importance; however, as a way to avoid vague answers and information that might not bring to light their opinions, there was a need to create questions that would allow students to answer with as much information as possible. Therefore, the fourteen post-task questionnaires changed from one class to another, as they tried to specifically encompass the tasks that students had performed in each class. For that purpose, the post-task questionnaires were applied in the last moments of each class given. The objective was to understand how students felt about the tasks they performed on that day, and how motivated they felt during and after their performance.

Although the questionnaires varied in relation to their content, a pattern can be established in relation to them. All questionnaires contained open-ended and closed-ended questions. The first question in each questionnaire was related to what students had learned in each class, and students were given two to four options to choose from. For the second question, students had to select whether the class of the day had been easy, moderate or difficult, and justify their answer. In the third question, students had to evaluate their own performance during the class, and they were given three options to choose from (excellent, good or low) and justify their choices. As for the next questions in each questionnaire, they wanted to unveil if students had had difficulties during task performance, and explain what had complicated or facilitated their performance in any given task. The number of questions in relation to students’ performance was dependent on how many tasks students had participated in that day.

Throughout the reading of chapter one from HPSS, students were also asked which elements or tasks from previous classes had helped them during task performance or during the reading. Finally, the last question offered the students a space to make any further comments that they wished to make in relation to the class or the tasks they had performed.

All post-task questionnaires could be answered either in Portuguese or in English, given that I did not want the language to impose a burden on students and prevent them from sharing their impressions. Thus, students answered all questions in Portuguese, and English was rarely used. All post-task questionnaires and students' answers can be found in Appendices K and L.

3.8.2. Interviews

In order to ascertain some of the answers given in the post-task questionnaires, interview sessions were conducted so as to have a more complete view of students' perceptions regarding the cycle of tasks. Thus, from September 21st to September 30th, twelve students met individually with this researcher for interviews that happened at *Colégio de Aplicação* during mornings. Through the Facebook group, students were sent a timetable (Table 4) which showed this researcher's availability in six different days at seven different times for students to choose from.

Given that they had the purpose of deepening the understanding of how students felt during the performance of the tasks, the interview sessions, which lasted from twenty to thirty minutes and were conducted in Portuguese, had as basis all questionnaires that were answered throughout implementation. Although the ideal scenario would be to start the interviews immediately after classes ended, this could not be done due to the fact that students had a study trip scheduled. Hence, as suggested by Anna, the interviews were scheduled and done after students returned from Minas Gerais.

Table 4: Timetable sent to the students.

	MON. 21/09	TUE. 22/09	WED. 23/09	THUR. 24/09	MON. 28/09	WED. 30/09
(08:00 - 08:30)	S7		S15			
(08:35 - 09:05)		S6	S14			
(09:10 - 09:40)					S3	
(09:45 - 10:15)	S10					
(10:20 - 10:50)	S13				S5	S9
(10:55 - 11:25)	S8				S2	
(11:30 - 12:00)	S4					

Taking into consideration that a month had passed since the end of this researcher's classes, a power point presentation was created (Appendix M) to show students the cycle of tasks they had participated in and refresh their memories on what had been done. Furthermore, the following guiding questions were created in order to learn more about students' opinions: what kinds of difficulties they had faced, what the positive and negatives aspects of each task were, which task they liked most or least, what they had learned from the tasks, if the teachers' and colleagues' aid made a difference in their task performance, and in what ways the tasks performed helped in the reading of the chapter. Thus, these interview sessions have helped this researcher in understanding students' perceptions of the classes given.

3.8.3. Transcription of the data

The transcription of the data was done once data collection had finished. The interviews were not fully transcribed, but only the most relevant pieces of information for this research. Thus,

the parts in which this researcher explained the cycle of tasks to the students were omitted. Furthermore, conversation that deviates from the interview topic was also excluded. Taking that into consideration, the selected excerpts were transcribed by means of ordinary written English conventions, such as punctuation signals.

3.8.4. Data analysis procedures

In order to unveil students' perceptions of the cycle of tasks they participated in as active learners, the post-task questionnaires and interviews were submitted to language based analysis (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 243). For that, the information from these different sources was tabulated, so that similarities and differences could be detected among participant-students' perceptions of the cycle of tasks. Thus, students' answers for the post-task questionnaires were organized into tables⁴⁰ to facilitate visualization of the data collected, and the interviews were transcribed, as aforementioned. Once all data was available for analysis, the central questions discussed within the questionnaire and interviews, such as the difficulties faced, what had complicated or facilitated task performance and what they had learned from the classes, were used to organize the next chapter, in which the results are displayed and discussed.

Thus, data analysis for this study followed a qualitative perspective, defined by D'Ely & Gil (2005) as "*an interpretative, naturalistic, subjective and reflective approach to data analysis and interpretation*" (p. 26). With that in mind, the answers obtained in the post-task questionnaires and interviews were interpreted and analyzed comparatively to what was expected from the tasks, and they were also analyzed comparatively to each other, so as to have a better understanding of students' perception regarding the implementation of the cycle of tasks.

Furthermore, the words 'image', 'help', 'teacher', 'colleague', 'difficult', 'easy' and any of their synonyms were researched throughout the data collected in order to bring to light students' perceptions regarding what had facilitated their performance. This was done due to the fact that this information is paramount in understanding the successes and setbacks of the tasks designed for this study.

⁴⁰ For students' answers to the post-task questionnaires, refer to Appendix L.

3.9. Summary of the chapter

This chapter provided the objectives and research question that guided this study, as well as the methods and procedures used to collect and interpret data. Also, it situated the reader into the thesis by describing the research setting and the participants. The following chapter presents the cycle of tasks designed for this research and their pedagogical procedures.

CHAPTER IV

THE CYCLE OF TASKS AND TEACHING PROCEDURES

Taking into consideration that the present qualitative study aimed at investigating 9th grade students' perceptions regarding the implementation of a cycle of tasks, this chapter aims at presenting the tasks designed under Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation, and their respective teaching procedures, which followed the pedagogical principles of the task-based approach (Ellis, 2003). Furthermore, the tasks also took into consideration the themes brought in PCN-LE (1998), the concept of focus on form (Long, 1991; Ellis, 2012), which lies at the core of task-based lessons, Long's (2015) needs analysis concept, and the elements of planning by Foster and Skehan (1996; 1999) and repetition by Bygate (2001).

Having that in mind, the central idea of the cycle of tasks was to create tasks that could lead learners to read the first chapter of *'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone'* (Rowling, 1999) - *'The Boy Who Lived'* - in an easy and pleasant way. In order to achieve the main objective of the cycle of tasks, this chapter presents the tasks developed, their rationale and teaching procedures. The chapter is organized into four sections, which are further subdivided. Section 4.1 brings general details on the cycle of tasks. Section 4.2 provides information about the pre task phase. Section 4.3 refers to the mid task phase of the cycle in which the first chapter of HPSS was read. And finally, section 4.4 brings the post task phase.

4.1. The cycle of tasks

In order to create a cycle of tasks that could aid students in the reading of the first chapter of HPSS, the tasks developed (Table 5) had as a starting point the organization of narratives (a comic and a fairy tale comic) to the description of characters to the meanings explicit/implicit in the different text genres approached in the study. Furthermore, different reading strategies were taught implicitly and used to facilitate learners' text comprehension and critical interpretation of text messages. Finally, a specific task, with focus on form, was designed to make learners aware of how language works to carry meanings.

Table 5: The cycle of tasks created for the study.

The cycle of Tasks				
Pre task phase	Narratives are everywhere		Task 1	Calvin and Hobbes
	Comics to fairy tales and books		Task 2	Little Red Riding Hood
	The Harry Potter world		Task 3	Brainstorming
			Task 4	Character Description
			Task 5	Introducing the book
Mid task phase	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone			
	Task 6	Chapter One - Event I - Part I	Task 10	Chapter One - Event I - Part IV
	Task 7	Chapter One - Event I - Part II	Task 11	Chapter One - Event II - Part V
	Task 8	Return to Class Game	Task 12	Chapter One - Event II - Part VI
	Task 9	Chapter One - Event I - Part III		
Post task phase	Task 13	Narratives and Focus on Form	Task 14	Harry Potter and The Data Collection Game

The reason for using comics relied on the fact that Anna was working with comics prior to the beginning of data collection and during the observation phase. With that in mind, this researcher's intention was to create a bridge between comics and literature in a seamless way. Thus, the cycle of tasks, which is composed of fourteen different tasks, was designed and divided into the phases proposed by Skehan (1996): pre task, mid task and post task phases. However, it is important to point out that although each phase of the cycle is well defined, each task within the cycle served as a pre task for the task that followed.

Furthermore, the cycle of tasks is described as a workplan⁴¹, given that tasks only come to life once they are performed. Thus, although this researcher's voice can be perceived throughout the rationale behind task elaboration, all tasks in the cycle are described in this chapter as procedures in a workplan as opposed to the how they were performed in the classroom⁴². The next subsection provides details on the pre task phase of the cycle.

4.2. The pre task phase

The pre task phase aims at reducing the cognitive load of the main task and preparing the students for the reading of the chapter. Therefore, students are engaged in activities that allow them to recall schematic knowledge they hold and use, and that will be of value to the performance of the main task. Here, new language is also going to be introduced to the students' interlanguage system, as mentioned before (Section 2.2.). In that sense, the idea is to push the learners "*to try out new forms of language which they do not yet control effectively, but which are worth experimenting with*" (Skehan, 1998, p. 139). To achieve this purpose, five tasks were designed: Calvin and Hobbes, Little Red Riding Hood, and The Harry Potter world (brainstorming, character description and introducing the book).

The tasks within this phase can be classified as teaching and consciousness raising activities, according to Skehan (1998, p. 139). Teaching activities (Calvin and Hobbes, and Little Red Riding Hood) are concerned with restructuring the knowledge students already possess in order to accommodate the new input they are receiving. In that sense, their function is to trigger the reorganization of existing foreign language structures. Therefore,

⁴¹ According to Breen (1989, as cited in Fortkamp, Xhafaj and Finardi, 2006), tasks should be analyzed in the phases: task as a workplan, task in process and task outcome. Task as a workplan refers to the input that learners will receive and the instructions related to the outcome learners are supposed to achieve. Task as a process, on the other hand, relates to the actual implementation of the plan. Thus, the activity predicted by the workplan may or may not correspond to the activity that arises from the task-as-process (Ellis, 2000). Finally, task outcome is interested in bringing to light the achievements generated and what was learned during tasks performance. Given that this chapter aims at presenting the tasks designed and the teaching procedures, this distinction is paramount.

⁴² It is worthwhile to point out that during the implementation phase, the cycle of tasks suffered only minor changes, and these were related to uncontrolled factors/variables such as time restraints, class excitement or level of difficulty.

students are inductively exposed to new elements of language during task performance. Consciousness raising activities (brainstorming, character description and introducing the book), on the other hand, not only try to reduce the cognitive complexity of the main task, but they are also used “*to clarify ideas that will need to be expressed, either by retrieving relevant information into the foreground, or by drawing learners into composing themselves and thinking through task demands*” (Skehan, 1998, p. 138). Thus, the purpose is to provide students with relevant language input while also raising awareness to language structures and elements of the task before it is done. The next subsection provides the tasks developed for the pre task phase and their teaching procedures in details.

4.2.1. Narratives are everywhere

Narratives are everywhere, and we have been in contact with them ever since we came to being. We are surrounded by stories being told to us, to telling stories to those around us, may those narratives be about our daily lives, a book we are reading to a child, a movie being watched, or a collection of images that tell a story, narratives are part of who we are as humans. As Michael Toolan (2001) points out in the preface of his book *‘Narrative: a critical linguistic introduction’*:

Everything we do, from making the bed to making breakfast to taking a shower [...], can be seen, cast, and recounted as a narrative - a narrative with a middle and end, characters, setting, drama (difficulties resolved), suspense, enigma, ‘human interest’, and a moral. [...] From such narratives, major and minor, we learn more about ourselves and the world around us. Making, apprehending, and then not forgetting a narrative is making-sense of things which may also help make sense of other things. (p. viii)

With this in mind and taking into consideration that the main objective of the cycle of tasks is to help students in the reading of the first chapter of HPSS, it is paramount to introduce the topic of narratives and allow students to establish a more concrete understanding of what narratives are. In order to do so, a *‘Calvin and Hobbes’* comic strip (Appendix Z) by Bill Watterson

(1988) was selected in order to exemplify the construction of a narrative. Table 6⁴³ provides an overview of the first task in the cycle.

Table 6: Task 1 description, objectives and steps.

Task 1	
Title:	Calvin and Hobbes
Description:	Introduce the topic of narratives, and work with narrative elements and sequencing through the use of a text genre students are familiar with: comics.
Objectives:	To make students aware of the narrative sequence and elements by organizing an edited ‘ <i>Calvin and Hobbes</i> ’ comic strip in order to create a logic sequence of events.
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - after a discussion in relation to characters and context, in pairs, students receive an envelope containing the edited ‘<i>Calvin and Hobbes</i>’ comic strip, which was divided into six parts; - students are oriented to organize the comic strip so that it makes sense; - students are given three minutes to complete the task; - correction is done as a group activity in which students are invited to share their rationale behind the comic strip organization.

For the purpose of the class, the ‘*Calvin and Hobbes*’ comic strip was divided into six parts (Appendix AA), each part was cut and placed out of order, and all dialogue balloons were removed with the exception of onomatopoeias, which were maintained. The reason for that relied on the fact that it is my understanding that the dialogues do not affect the composition of the images when creating a sequence of events; therefore, I removed anything that might interfere with their understanding of what a narrative is, focusing only on the images created by Watterson. Also, it is my belief that students are in constant contact with comic strips, given that they are frequently used in books and teaching materials; therefore, making use of such

⁴³ Throughout the chapter, tables containing task description, objectives and class procedures are provided with the intention of facilitating the presentation of the cycle of tasks in this thesis, and to offer the reader a brief overview of each task before reading the procedures and explanations at length.

familiar narrative genre will allow the students to profit the most from the discussion at hand. Furthermore, it is paramount to point out that the teacher in charge had been working with comic strips and comics books prior to the beginning of my data collection, and I had been observing her classes since the beginning of the unit; thus, I am sure that by bringing a comic strip to introduce narratives will make the transition between the classes given by their teacher and my classes more seamless.

Thus, the objective of Task 1 is to make students aware of the narrative sequence and elements. For that purpose, students are asked to organize the edited Calvin and Hobbes comic strip (Appendix AA) in order to create a logic sequence of events. Sequencing is a useful tool to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between events (Bohlke, 2012, p. 98). Given that most narratives are constructed around a series of events, this is an important strategy for students to learn while reading a text and to understand the development of a story. However, before students perform Task 1 during class, they first engage in discussions which try to bring forth the recognition of characters, the description of context and characters involved in the story, and the construction of a narrative and the plot.

Given that a definition for narrative has already been provided, it is likewise important to bring definitions that are relevant for the rationale behind the development of the tasks. According to Dibell (1988):

Plot is built of significant events in a given story — significant because they have important consequences. Taking a shower isn't necessarily plot, or braiding one's hair, or opening a door. Let's call them incidents. They happen, but they don't lead to anything much. No important consequences. [...] But if the character is Rapunzel, and the hair is what's going to let the prince climb to her window, braiding her hair is a crucial action. (p. 5)

Therefore, the plot of a narrative is comprised of a series of *“things characters do, feel, think, or say, that make a difference to what comes afterward”* (Dibell, 1988, p. 6). Such characters are the people represented in a narrative work. They *“are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the*

persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it - the dialogue - and from what they do - the action" (Abrams, 1999, p. 32-33). Much like in a narrative words create the context in which the story takes place, allowing the reader to envision the story before him/her, words will also make the people in the narrative come to life. As Toolan (2001) points out, "[a] *variety of descriptions of some posited individual, together with descriptions [...] of that individual's actions and reaction, suffice to lead most readers to conceive a person whom these references and insights are just glimpses*" (p. 80). Consequently, making students aware of these elements that compose a narrative helps them in recognizing the narratives they are going to encounter throughout the cycle of tasks as well as other narrative texts they might be in contact with in other segments of their lives.

In order to bring forth the items discussed so far, I have created a presentation (Appendix BB) to facilitate the discussion about the Calvin and Hobbes comic strip. The class has been divided into two parts (recognizing the narrative elements and organizing the narrative sequence), and it should be done as a group activity so as to engage the whole class in the discovering process. Thus, in the next paragraphs, the procedures for this class are described at length along with how Task 1 is connected to such procedures.

To begin the first class, the teacher opens the presentation afore mentioned, and shows students slide 1, which contains images related to the comic book genre. Then, she asks students where they see those images. They are expected to say that the images can be found in comics and, from there, she can go to the comic strip selected for this task. Next, an image of Calvin and Susie (slide 3) is projected and she asks students if they know the comic strip. Once their familiarity or unfamiliarity with Calvin and Hobbes is established, she starts asking questions about the characters in the image (slide 4): *'And who are they? Do you know their names?'* It is anticipated that some students might know Calvin; however, Susie might be unknown to most of them. Thus, the characters are presented to the class through a projection (slide 5). At this moment, it is also relevant to discuss character description, given that characters are one of the most important items within a narrative. Therefore, the teacher asks the students if they can describe the characters. Given that the images are not very full of details, the possibilities for discussion are in relation to hair and skin color, the clothes characters are wearing and, possibly, their height. It is expected some knowledge in

relation to describing people. However, if students offer information in their native language, their English equivalents should be written down on the board.

Once the discussion in relation to characters is finished, the teacher moves on to the setting. That is, she asks students to look at the image (slide 7) and answer where Calvin and Susie are, and describe what the context refers to. Students might respond to these questions by pointing out that the characters are outside, maybe in a park, that it is a cold day during winter, and that there is snow. Here, if students also give answers in their native language, their equivalents in the target language need to be provided.

After establishing who the characters are and the setting they are inserted in, the teacher proceeds to the story. To do so, she shows students a projection of the edited version of the aforementioned '*Calvin and Hobbes*' comic strip (slide 8), which was divided into six parts and placed out of order, and she asks them to look at the comic strip and pay attention to the sequence. Next, the teacher poses the following question: '*Does the sequence make sense?*'. Students are expected to say 'no' and, then, the teacher should ask them why it does not make sense. Every answer provided by the students is discussed and written down.

With the fact that the story is not sequenced properly in mind, the teacher asks students to sit in pairs and gives each pair an envelop containing Task 1: the comic strip which was cut into six parts, and only the first image was numbered. Through a projection (slide 9), she explains what she wishes them to do by asking them to organize the comic so that it makes sense, and she poses the following question: '*In your opinion, what is the logic sequence?*'. The intention with such task is to first introduce to the students the sequence of events that create the story.

Students should be given approximately three minutes to discuss what the correct sequence is. Once they are finished, teacher and students discuss all the possibilities provided. So as to give learners the opportunity to discuss narrative sequencing and elements, the correction of the task is done by asking the class why they have placed the images in such specific disposition. If the students answer in their native language, the English equivalent is written down on the board. The intention here is to briefly discuss the plot of the story; therefore, it is expected that students might point out that Calvin threw a snowball on Susie's head and, as a revenge, she made an enormous snowball and put

Calvin in it. Here, the fact that students might not be able to express their thoughts in the target language is taken into consideration; however, at this point, the teacher should be more concerned with their understanding than their production in the English language. It is this researcher's belief that some vocabulary might be familiar to the students, but whenever they encounter a linguistic issue, the teacher should be there to support them and facilitate their performance.

Once the images are numbered, and to try to engage students in more discussion about the content of the comic strip, they are asked if the facial expressions and onomatopoeias are important and why (slide 10). The intention with such question is to stress that since comics are created with images and words, facial expressions and onomatopoeias help to build the story. Therefore, these elements aid in showing characters' feelings and give extra information about how the story is evolving.

To finish the task, the teacher shows students that, like every story, comic strips have a beginning, a middle and an end (slide 11), and characters, setting, sequence of actions and plot are all paramount for the creation of a story. The teacher also needs to point out to the students that, for the comic strip to make sense, a specific sequence is necessary to make the story logic and clear (slide 12). Thus, through this first class and the performance of Task 1, students had an initial contact with the narrative genre and the elements present in it. The next task tries to connect comic books and fairy tales, thereby giving the class another opportunity to work with narratives before they start reading the first chapter of HPSS.

4.2.2. Comics to fairy tales and books

Through Task 1, students had a first contact with the elements present in a narrative and the sequencing of a story. In this next segment, students are given a more challenging chance to work with narratives before they read the chapter of HPSS. Thus, having in mind the fact that there are time constraints in relation to data collection, and taking into consideration that the transition from comics to fairy tales and books needs to be as seamless as possible, I decide to work with an adapted comic based on the fairy tale '*Little Red Riding Hood*', popularized in the 19th century by the Grimm Brothers. This comic (Appendix CC) was created by Gigi D.G., and published in the book '*Fairy Tale Comics*' (2013) edited by Chris Duffy. The reason for

choosing this comic relied on the fact that it might be a great tool to discuss with students some of the changes a comic would have to go through in order to become a story in which visual aids are not available, and everything has to be described and done via words. Also, it is important to point out that the original '*Little Red Riding Hood*' comic was modified (Appendix DD) in order to make it less daunting for the students. Hence, I removed some of the images, and adapted some dialogue balloons and narrative boxes from the original comic. With that in mind, the main goal of this segment is to have students perform Task 2 (Table 7) based on '*Little Red Riding Hood*'.

In order to accomplish the goal of the segment, the main objectives of Task 2 (Appendices FF and GG) are to give students another opportunity to work with the narrative sequence and elements, and deal with linguistic structures by placing narrator sentences and dialogues which were removed from the comic in the correct spaces. Although this task is similar to Task 1, this time, students are working under time pressure and dealing with linguistic features of the comic genre. To that end, Task 2 was divided into three parts. In the first part, students need to recognize the genre of the text they receive, the characters and the context. For the second part, students have to organize the comic frames so as to create a logic sequence of events. Once they finish, students move on to the last part, in which they are asked to complete the story by placing the removed narrator sentences and dialogues in the correct spaces. In the following paragraphs, the class procedures for the performance of Task 2 is described.

To begin this segment, the teacher tells students that they are going to continue with their topic: comics. She also asks them to guess which comic they are going to work with (Slide 1 from the presentation in Appendix EE), and tells them that it is based on a fairy tale. Next, she shows them the first image from the comic (Slide 2), which has the title, and asks students if they know this fairy tale and what would be its name in Portuguese. Once this brief introduction is done, the teacher asks students to sit in pairs and tells them they are going to play a game. Then, she shows them slide 3, which has the game instructions. In this game, students are performing Task 2, which was divided into three parts. The purpose is for students to work again with narrative elements and sequencing. However, during this task, they are also working with the written content of the comic, and performing the task under time pressure. Therefore, students have a limited amount of time to do each part of the task. The intention

is to challenge the students by giving them a motivating element: win the game.

Table 7: Task 2 description, objectives and steps.

Task 2	
Title:	Little Red Riding Hood
Description:	Further discuss narratives through a game, and work once more with narrative elements and sequencing through the use of a fairy tale which was transformed into comics. This task will be done in three parts and students will be working under time pressure. Also, students will be encouraged to discuss how a comic can become a story in a book.
Objectives:	To give students a more challenging opportunity to work with narratives by answering questions about narrative elements, and organizing the edited comic of ' <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> ' in order to create a logic sequence of events. In addition, to deal with linguistic features by placing narrator sentences and dialogues which were removed from the comic in the correct spaces.
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in pairs, students receive an envelope containing the instructions for Part I of the task and four images of '<i>Little Red Riding Hood</i>'; - students have three minutes to look at the images and answer three questions about the genre of the text, and the characters and context of the story; - students are then given a second envelope containing instructions for Part II, and the rest of the images from the '<i>Little Red Riding Hood</i>' comic; - students have five minutes to organize all the images of the comic strip so that it makes sense; - finally, students receive a third envelope containing the instructions for Part III, and the narrator sentences and dialogues which were removed from the comic; - students are oriented to read each sentence carefully, and place them in the correct spaces, and they have fifteen minutes to complete the task; - correction is done as a group activity after each part is finished; - points are given to the pair or pairs who finish first each of the parts; - wins the game who has more points; - at last, discuss the changes the comic would have to go through in order for it to become a story in a book.

Thus, in order to begin the game, the teacher gives each pair an envelope containing the three parts of the adapted '*Little Red Riding Hood*' comic, and the instructions for Part I (Appendix GG) of Task 2. Here, students have to look at the parts of the comic and answer three questions: (A) *what the genre of the text is*, (B) *who the characters are*, and (C) *where the characters are*.⁴⁴ They have three minutes to finish. The first pair to finish Part I correctly wins. The correction of the activity should happen as a group work; thus, the teacher asks students what they have responded in all questions and writes the correct ones on the board.

Next, she asks students if they are ready for the second part, and she gives them a sheet of A3 paper, an envelope containing the instructions for Part II (Appendix GG) of Task 2 and the other ten parts of the comic, which brings the comic to a total of thirteen frames. Here, students have to organize the images from the comic to create a logic sequence of events. For the purpose of the task, the comic was divided in thirteen parts, and the first and the last part were numbered. Students have five minutes to organize the comic. The first pair to finish Part II correctly wins. Once time is up, correction can be done as a group activity. In order to do so, the comic has been printed in bigger images so that students can be actively in charge of the correction. Thus, one by one, the pairs tape the images to the board in order to reproduce what they have done. As they tape all the images, the teacher asks students to explain why they have placed the images in such specific disposition. Students are also allowed to move any of the images that they believe were placed in the incorrect order. By correcting Part II as a group, the teacher is giving students another opportunity to discuss narrative sequencing, bringing forth once more the idea that narratives have a beginning, a middle and an end, and a specific order is important so that the story is logic and clear.

So as to give them the chance to discuss the language present in the comic, the teacher asks students what is happening in each frame. Students should be encouraged to try using English. However, if the use of English becomes a barrier and they are not sure how to produce what they want in the target language, the translations should be supplied and written down on the board. The intention of having this discussion is to allow

⁴⁴ The expected answers are: (A) *comic/fairy tale*; (B) *Little Red Riding Hood, Grandma, Wolf and Lumberjack*; and (C) *Forest and (Grandma's) house*.

students to be familiarized with the story before they perform the last part of the task.

To finish Task 2, students perform Part III (Appendix GG) of the task. Each pair receives an envelope containing the instructions and nine sentences which were removed from the adapted version of the comic: ‘*Seeing Red Riding Hood pass by, he said...*’, ‘*My grandma’s sick, so I’m bringing her some lunch to make her feel better.*’, ‘*So where does your grandma live, kiddo?*’, ‘*The better to hear your angelic voice with, sugar!*’, ‘*The better to see your adorable face with, sweetie!*’, ‘*The better to **eat you with**⁴⁵, my dear!*’, ‘*She hit the wolf’s belly, and Grandma came flying out!*’, ‘*Grandma! You’re okay!*’, and ‘*Little Red Riding Hood and her grandma had a nice picnic, and the wolf never bothered them again.*’ These sentences were cut into parts, and they are either narrator blocks or speech balloons. Students have fifteen minutes to insert the sentences in the correct spaces. They should be oriented to pay attention to the images and other sentences in the comic to complete the story properly. The first pair to finish Part III wins. To correct, the sentences have been printed in a bigger font and, as students provide their answers, the sentences are taped to the images which are already on the board due to the correction of Part II. In order for students to profit the most from the task, the teacher also asks them why they placed the sentences in such a disposition, and she enquires them about what helped them do the task. Here, students are expected to say that the images and the text which was already on the comic gave them clues to complete the task. And thus, the game is finished. The pair or pairs who won in most parts wins the game.

Through this segment and the performance of Task 2, students had one more contact with the narrative genre and the elements present in it. They also had a first contact with linguistic features of a story, and had the chance to discuss what elements in the narrative helped to complete the comic. Hence, to finish the segment and create a bridge between comics and books, the teacher asks students what needs to be done to the comic so that it becomes a story in which visual aids are not available, and everything has to be described and done via words. Here, it is expected that students might say that there is a need to describe characters and context, that verbs of action show what the images are trying express, to mention a few. To continue, the teacher also shows them a book in which the original fairy tale can be found:

⁴⁵ Bold in original.

'*Grimm's Fairy Tales*' (2003). By giving students an opportunity to discuss the differences between a comic and a book, they were given a little input on what they are about to see in the book chosen for the study. In the next segment, we enter the Harry Potter world, and the three tasks designed to introduce the book to the students are described.

4.2.3. The Harry Potter world

Through the previous tasks, students were introduced to the narrative genre. They saw how comics tell a story, how fairy tales can be transformed into comics, and how a comic can become a text with no visual aids. Many examples were given in order to introduce narratives and give students the opportunity to be familiarized with them in the broader sense. This was all done so as to link the classes that were given by Anna prior to the beginning of data collection, and with the purpose of introducing the main focus of this study: reading the first chapter of '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*' through the use of the task-based approach.

The three tasks created for this segment (Brainstorming, Character Description and Introducing the Book) are concerned with introducing the first book in the Harry Potter collection and dealing with the language which is about to appear in the text. The first task, Brainstorming (Task 3) was divided into three parts. At first, students are engaged in a discussion about the Harry Potter world. Once this discussion is done, students need to make use of the information and language present in the discussion through a memory game and a guess who game. As for the second task, Character Description (Task 4), students are dealing with the descriptions of characters that appear in the first chapter of HPSS. Finally, Task 5 (Introducing the Book) brings a brief discussion on reading and reading strategies. Thus, these tasks and discussions were all created with the intention of facilitating the reading process and creating an attractive and motivating environment to promote the love for reading. The next subsections describe at length the tasks developed and their pedagogical procedures.

4.2.3.1 Brainstorming

Taking into consideration that students have already been in contact with narratives, now the book chosen for this study is

introduced and students perform Task 3 (Table 8). In order to do so, I have created a presentation (Appendix HH) which contains fourteen questions about the Harry Potter world. For each question posed, there is an expected answer; however, there is a possibility that not all students might know the answer, given that only fifty percent of the students are very familiar with the book collection. Having that in mind, the objective in posing these questions is to create an environment for discussion, motivating each and every student to participate to the best of their abilities. In case the answers given are not correct or nonexistent, the correct information should be provided, and students should be asked their thoughts on the subject.

Table 8: Task 3 description, objectives and steps.

Task 3	
Title:	Brainstorming Harry Potter World
Description:	To introduce and discuss aspects surrounding the Harry Potter world before students have to read the book chapter. In order to do so, this task was divided into three parts: introduction questions through a presentation, a memory game with vocabulary discussed during the presentation and a 'guess who' game making use of the characters from the book.
Objectives:	To give students the opportunity to discuss vocabulary concerning the book through games, and provide students with linguistic input before they start reading the first chapter of ' <i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i> ' (Rowling, 1999).
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - through a presentation created for this task, students are engaged in a discussion about the Harry Potter world; - students are asked a total of fourteen question in order to cover some of the most general aspects of the book; - once the introduction is done, students are engaged in solving the memory game in trios; - later, still in trios, give students the last game from the task, in which they have to answer twelve different questions concerning some of the characters' physical attributes; - the trio to finish each game first wins.

To begin, the teacher shows students a picture of the author of the book, J.K. Rowling, and asks them if they know who she is (Slide 2). Next, she asks if they know what she has written (Slide 4), and where J.K. Rowling is from (Slide 6). Just as a curiosity, the teacher can also ask students if they know when she had the idea to create Harry Potter (Slide 8).⁴⁶ If students offer answers in Portuguese, their equivalents in the target language are written on the board.

To continue, the teacher asks students what they know about Harry Potter (HP)⁴⁷. Here, students should be oriented to provide information about all they can think of in relation to HP, such as characters, objects, places, general knowledge, and vocabulary related to it, through a brainstorming. Thus, the teacher writes down on the board the words and information students provide that have a connection with what they know from the story. Some of the words that are expected to come from this task are: *Harry Potter, witch, wizard, Dumbledore, Professor McGonagall, owl, wand, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Ron, Hermione, Hagrid, Voldemort (You-know-who), cloak, glasses, scar, bolt of lightning*, to mention a few. If students provide words in their native language, the teacher writes them down in the target language and draws their attention to them. Also, it is possible that students might refer to characters by using the names chosen for the Brazilian Portuguese translation; thus, students should be provided with the names used in the English version.

Through this brainstorming, part of the vocabulary they are going to use in the following tasks is presented. Then, the teacher orients students to provide characteristics that they remember from Harry Potter. This information is also written down on the board so as to help them with the next tasks. By doing so, students are given the opportunity to deal with vocabulary related to physical description in order to make the next task in this segment a little less challenging. The teacher also orients students to provide physical description for other six characters who are present in the first chapter of the book chosen for this study.

In order to give further input before other tasks are performed, the relationship between some of the characters that

⁴⁶ The expected answer are, respectively: (1) *She is Mrs. J.K. Rowling, and she is a writer*; (2) *She wrote the Harry Potter books*; (3) *She is from England, and Harry Potter is from England too*; and (4) *In 1990, when she was going to London by train*.

⁴⁷ Slide 10 from the presentation in Appendix HH.

appear in the first chapter of HPSS needs to be briefly discussed. For that purpose, the teacher asks students who Harry Potter lives with (Slide 12). The expected answer is that Harry Potter lives with the Dursleys. Even if students do not know how to answer the previous question, they should be oriented to think about what they have seen in movies or what they heard about HP in order to motivate them to participate as much as possible. Next, the teacher asks students if they know who the Dursleys are (Slide 14). Once students have given all the possibilities they can think of, the teacher shows them Harry's genealogical tree. Then, students are asked to describe the Dursley family and, finally, if they know where the Dursleys live (Slide 17). It is possible that students might not know the answer; thus, the teacher should tell them that just like Rowling and Harry, they live in England, more specifically at number 4, Privet Drive.

To end our introduction, students are asked where Harry Potter studies (Slide 19), who works at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry (Slide 21), and what the characters jobs at Hogwarts are (Slide 23)⁴⁸. In relation to the second question, if some of the students are familiarized with the HP book, they might offer more names of people who work at Hogwarts. All names are written down on the board; however, students should be informed that, for now, the most crucial ones are McGonagall, Dumbledore and Hagrid. Furthermore, the teacher might have to signal to students the meaning of some words which are related to the jobs the three characters perform at Hogwarts, in case the answers given by the students do not reflect what can be found in the book. Thus, through this discussion, students were introduced to the characters and know a little about who they are, which, ultimately, may help them in tasks to come.

So as to finalize this discussion, ensure that students have learned some of the vocabulary, and create a playful moment in class, students are playing a memory game (Appendix II) with some of the vocabulary worked with throughout the introduction. In this memory game, students sit in trios, and they have to match the images to their respective names. In order to select the trios, and taking into consideration that students usually take a long time to define who they want to work with, Anna suggested that

⁴⁸ The expected answers are, respectively: (1) *Harry Potter studies at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry*; (2) *Minerva McGonagall, Albus Dumbledore and Rubeus Hagrid*; and (3) *McGonagall is a transfiguration professor and she can turn into a cat, Albus Dumbledore is the headmaster of Hogwarts, and Rubeus Hagrid is the keeper of keys and grounds at Hogwarts*.

we create the trios. For that, the images of six different characters being used in the discussion previously described were printed out (a total of eighteen images) and put in a bag. Before the Memory Game can begin, students remove one piece of paper from the bag and they have to find people in the class who have the same character as they do. The vocabulary used for the game was: *Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall, Rubeus Hagrid, Vernon Dursley, Petunia Dursley, Dudley Dursley, Voldemort (You-Know-Who), Hermione Granger, Ron Weasley, owl, scar, Hogwarts (School / Castle), wand, bolt of lightning, cloak, glasses, wizard, and witch*. The first trio to finish the game first wins. And, taking into consideration that it might be profitable for the students to have this vocabulary with them when they are reading the book chapter, I have designed a vocabulary index (Appendix JJ) which includes all of the words from the memory game. This vocabulary index should be given to students once they finish playing the memory game.

Thus, in order to end Task 3, students are playing one last game of *Guess Who* (Appendix KK). In this game, students are going to work with vocabulary related to physical descriptions of characters from the book chapter. Still in their trios, students receive the *Guess Who* game sheet and they have ten minutes to answer the twelve questions: (1) *who has green eyes*; (2) *who is thin*; (3) *who has black hair*; (4) *who is tall*; (5) *who has a mustache*; (6) *who is large*; (7) *who has blue eyes*; (8) *who is short*; (9) *who has a scar*; (10) *who is blond*; (11) *who has a beard*; and (12) *who has gray hair*.⁴⁹ They should be oriented to answer as quickly as they can. The first group to finish wins the game. The correction should be done as a group activity in which they provide the answers they have given to all of the questions. As a result of Task 3, students have discussed aspects of the Harry Potter book concerning the author, characters, context and physical description. In doing so, students were given the opportunity to start reflecting and relating to the book in the target language. Through this task, there was also an attempt to make the next task in this subsection a little less challenging. In

⁴⁹ The expected answers are: (1) *Harry Potter*; (2) *Harry Potter, Petunia Dursley and Albus Dumbledore*; (3) *Harry Potter, Minerva McGonagall and Rubeus Hagrid*; (4) *Albus Dumbledore and Rubeus Hagrid*; (5) *Vernon Dursley, Albus Dumbledore and Rubeus Hagrid*; (6) *Vernon Dursley, Dudley Dursley and Rubeus Hagrid*; (7) *Albus Dumbledore*; (8) *Harry Potter and Dudley Dursley*; (9) *Harry Potter*; (10) *Petunia Dursley and Dudley Dursley*; (11) *Albus Dumbledore and Rubeus Hagrid*; and (12) *Albus Dumbledore and Vernon Dursley*.

the next subsection, Task 4 is described.

4.2.3.2 Character description

Taking into consideration what has been done so far, students are now going to make use of some of the vocabulary discussed in Task 3. In order to do so, I have created a text exploration task (Task 4)⁵⁰ in which students are faced with a more detailed description of the characters dealt with in the previous task. The purpose here is for students to begin familiarizing themselves with the language they are going to encounter in the book chapter. Table 9 provides an overview of Task 4.

Table 9: Task 4 description, objectives and steps.

Task 4	
Title:	Character Description
Description :	Further discuss physical description through a text exploration task in which students have to match the images of seven characters to their correct description.
Objectives:	To give students a more challenging opportunity to work with physical description.
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in pairs, students will receive a copy of Task 4; - they will be oriented to read each character description carefully and match them to one of the images provided; - they will have ten to fifteen minutes to complete the task; - correction will be done as a group activity in which all students offer their insights on why they have selected a specific characteristic to each characters; - a presentation will be used to show students the correct answers.

The book '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*' (Rowling, 1999) offers detailed descriptions of the main characters throughout the chapters. The descriptions of nine different characters (in the order they appear in the activity: Vernon Dursley, Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, Petunia

⁵⁰ Refer to Appendix LL.

Dursley, Professor Albus Dumbledore, Professor Minerva McGonagall, Ronald Weasley, Rubeus Hagrid and Dudley Dursley) were copied, and modified to fit the purpose of the activity. In that sense, everything that was described using the past was transported to the simple present, giving students the opportunity to see how this verb tense helps when giving physical description. However, the teacher should not mention any of the grammatical structures to the students. The goal here is to facilitate the activity by bringing forth language that they might have encountered in previous English classes in connection to the vocabulary discussed in Task 3.

The purpose of this task is to read the nine different descriptions, and match seven of them to the images provided. To begin, students are asked to sit in pairs, and they are given a copy of Task 4. Then, students should be oriented to read each characteristic carefully and, if necessary, refer to the material used in previous classes to help them finish the task. Furthermore, it is important to signal to the students that there is no need to understand all of the words. Here, they should be oriented to read the sentences and focus on information which is already familiar to them. Thus, students can learn from early on that it is not paramount to understand every word, but just the main ones to get an idea of what is being said. Through this action, students are given a glimpse of one of the strategies they could and should make use of while reading the book chapter: scanning. When scanning, students are searching a text to find specific information or key words, such as names, dates, statistics, or descriptions (Bohlke, 2012, p.68). Consequently, while scanning the text, students are focused on information that they have already seen in previous tasks or English classes to find information that relates to physical descriptions.

Thus, in order for students to complete the task, they are given ten to fifteen minutes to read and match the images to the descriptions. Once they finish, students and teacher correct Task 4. For that purpose, a power point presentation (Appendix MM) was created in order to facilitate the correction and discussion of the task. Although there is a correct and expected answer to each description, the teacher does not simply provide answers. The idea is to change the teacher's role from a knowledge provider to a knowledge mediator by giving the student opportunities to display what they were able to do during the task on their own. Thus, with the purpose of correcting the activity, the teacher needs to engage learners in providing and discussing each of the

answers based on the language clues given in the task. Thus, during correction, the teacher asks students about the vocabulary they could understand that is connected to the characters in the images.

Given that the activity had seven images and nine descriptions, the teacher should also use this moment of correction to ask students who the characters being described in the two descriptions that were not used are: *Hermione Granger* and *Ron Weasley*. In the next subsection, Task 5 is described.

4.2.3.3. Introducing the book

Through the previous tasks, students had the opportunity to deal with the narrative genre, and familiarize themselves with vocabulary and characters that will appear in the first chapter of HPSS. Therefore, in order to begin the tasks which deal with the book chapter, it is paramount to discuss aspects related to the topic of the unit: literature. With that in mind, students and teacher are going to discuss, through a presentation (Appendix NN), reading, types of reading we are in contact with every day and, finally, the strategies that students can make use of while reading the book chapter. The purpose of Task 5 (Table 10) is to provide students with tools that can potentially facilitate the reading tasks, and create a motivating environment for discussion.

Table 10: Task 5 description, objectives and steps.

Task 5	
Title:	Introducing the book
Description:	Discuss reading, types of reading we are in contact with everyday, and strategies to read texts in English.
Objectives:	Provide students with strategies that they can make use of while performing the reading tasks
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - through a presentation, students are engaged in a discussion about reading; - students are asked a total of three questions in order to cover the aspects brought in the description of this task; - finally discuss strategies that they can make use of while reading the first chapter of HPSS.

To begin, and taking into consideration that students have informed in their NA questionnaire that they read regularly, the teacher asks students two questions in relation to reading (Slide 1): *‘do you read a lot?’* and *‘what kinds of things do you read?’*. Students are expected to mention the things they like to read most, such as books, magazines, comics and fan fictions, to mention a few. The answers provided are written down on the board, and they are used to connect to the next slide in the presentation. Thus, the teacher shows them that they read all the time (Slide 2), given that they do not read books only. In their daily routines, they read magazines, WhatsApp messages, Facebook status, notes, school books, and so on. The teacher should also take this time to mention that although they have been reading everything in Portuguese, reading in English can also be fun and easy, but they have to be strategic.

Next, the teacher asks students how they can make reading in English fun and easy (Slide 3). Taking into consideration that during previous tasks teacher and students had already discussed that reading could be facilitated if students first focused their attention on the general idea of the text/paragraph/sentence, and on vocabulary they were familiar with, students are expected to present these ideas to teacher when she asks them the aforementioned question. These or any other answers they provide should be written down on the board.

To finalize this discussion, the teacher gives students some extra information that can potentially help them in the tasks that follow. Thus, she shows them slide 4 and asks them to remember the following: (1) *always look for words which are familiar to you*; (2) *you don't have to understand all the words to understand the idea of the text*; (3) *always read the exercises and questions before you start reading*; (4) *try to get the general idea and ask me, Anna, Theodor or Christina for help*; (5) *do not worry, together we will build a road to make reading in English fun and enjoyable*; and (6) *use your imagination, and create the world you are reading*. It is this researcher's belief that by providing students with these pieces of information, they can begin to feel more comfortable with the reading tasks they will perform, and students are expected to make use of this information whenever they are reading something in English, inside or outside the classroom. Following the three tasks in this subsection, students will have received input to work with the next tasks in the cycle, whose main purpose is to read the first chapter of the book HPSS. The next section provides information on the mid task phase of

the cycle of tasks.

4.3. The mid task phase: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Mid task activities are related to how a task is to be performed. The key question here is how learners' attentional demands can be manipulated through some pedagogical decisions (D'Ely & Mota, 2004). To achieve such objective, there might be an inclusion of an element of surprise and/or provision of visual support. Once again, the role of the teacher may become one of 'aid', by helping the students in the performance of the tasks, but avoiding correction of possible learners' errors during task performance.

Having that in mind, the tasks in this phase try to account for the syntactic and lexical difficulties students might be faced with (Skehan, 1998). Also, they need to take into consideration the process that learners undergo in drawing upon knowledge on memory resources (cognitive familiarity), and the learners' on line computation, where they will actually undergo intellectual engagement (cognitive processing). With that in mind, the tasks need to take into account the problems and difficulties that students might encounter while performing the tasks; thus, there is a need for balancing. This can be achieved through reducing or increasing the levels of difficulty within each task.

In order to minimize mentioned difficulties, this phase is composed of seven different tasks to lead learners to read the first chapter of HPSS. Thus, given that the text is long, and it contains a lot of unfamiliar vocabulary, the first chapter - '*The boy who lived*' - was divided into two events. In the first event, which was further divided into four parts, readers are introduced to the Dursleys and learn the peculiar happenings surrounding Harry Potter's arrival to their doorstep. The second event (further divided into two parts), on the other hand, shows the reader what is happening outside the Dursleys' house and the moment Harry arrives at Privet Drive. By dividing the chapter in different parts that gradually become more extensive, the load of information that learners are exposed to is reduced, and the tasks will try to allow learners to draw upon already known information while reading each part of the chapter. The seven tasks in this subsection were designed to facilitate the reading of the chapter, and they are described next.

4.3.1. The boy who lived: Event I, Part I

Once the discussion about reading and reading strategies is done, the tasks based on the book chapter selected for this study are going to be performed. In the first task (Task 6) within this phase, students are asked to read Part I from the chapter, answer the proposed activities, and discuss information present in the text. Table 11 provides a brief overview of Task 6.

Table 11: Task 6 description, objectives and steps.

Task 6	
Title:	The boy who lived: Event I, Part I
Description:	Read part I from the chapter and answer the proposed activities.
Objectives:	Help students while reading part I of the chapter and provide them with reading strategies to facilitate task performance.
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - through a presentation, students predict what they are going to see in the text; - next, students perform the four activities proposed; - in the first, students scan the text to find information about the characters and where they are; - in the second, students match pieces of information to the paragraphs they are inserted in; - in the third, students answer questions that related to specify events or information about part I; - in the final activity, students are asked questions that related to the structure of the narrative.

In order to begin working with Part I, I have created a presentation (Appendix OO) to facilitate the development of the class. To start, the teacher shows students slide 2 and asks them two questions: ‘*what can you guess from the image and the title?*’ and ‘*what do you think it is going to happen in this chapter?*’. Students’ answers should be written down on the board. If students provide information in their native language, the teacher writes its English equivalent and draw their attention to it. By asking students to predict what they think is going to happen in the chapter, the teacher is

providing them with an important strategy in reading. Predicting allows the reader to connect new information to what s/he already knows by activating her/his background knowledge (Bohlke, 2012, p.38). Thus, making the new information easier to understand and remember.

Next, students receive a copy of Task 6 (Appendix PP), which contains Part I of the chapter and four activities that relate to the text. In the first activity, students have to make use of the reading strategy scanning in order to answer two questions: (a) *which characters appear in Part I?*; and (b) *where are they?*. Through this strategy, students will be searching the text for specific information (names and places). Thus, students should be oriented once more that they do not have to read every word in the text, and they should be focused on proper nouns and vocabulary that refers to where the characters are and their names. With that in mind, students have five minutes to scan the text and find the answers to the questions. The expected answers are, respectively: (a) *Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, Dudley, and the Potters (Mrs. Potter)*; and (b) *At home (Privet Drive)*. Once students have finished, they discuss their answers and possible misunderstandings with the teacher.

In activity 2, students read information retrieved from the text, and match those pieces of information to the paragraphs they refer to: *descrição da família Dursley*; *descrição da terça-feira em que a história começa*; *endereço da família Dursley*; *explicação de como os Dursleys se mudaram para a Privet Drive*; and *mais detalhes sobre os Dursleys, principalmente o segredo que eles escondem*. This activity was done in Portuguese so that students do not retrieve information based on guessing, but based on what they could understand from scanning the text. Also, an extra piece of information was included as a distractor. Students have ten minutes to finish and, during the correction, students should be encouraged to provide their answers and how they found the information in the text. The expected order is: 2, 4, 1, *distractor*, and 3.

For the next activity (number 3), students have to answer eight questions that relate to specific information from the text. Students are oriented to write the answers in Portuguese; however, the teacher should also give them the possibility of answering them in English if they wish. The questions are: (a) *Onde mora a família Dursley?*; (b) *Descreva*

as características físicas de Petunia Dursley e Vernon Dursley.; (c) *Qual é a função do Sr. Dursley na firma Grunnings? E o que ela produz?*; (d) *Qual é o parentesco entre a Sra. Dursley e a família Potter?*; (e) *O que a família Dursley pensa sobre a relação deles com os Potters?*; (f) *Como estava o tempo na terça-feira em que a história começa?*; (g) *Você estranharia uma coruja grande voando numa zona residencial durante o dia? Por quê?*; and (h) *Você sabe qual é a função das corujas em Harry Potter?*⁵¹. Students have from fifteen to twenty minutes to go through the text and answer the questions. For the correction, students should be invited to share their answers, and mention any difficulties or questions they might have had in relation to activity 3 or the text.

The last activity (number 4) deals with the construction of the text, given that they have already discussed how stories are created in previous tasks. Thus, students are asked to answer three questions: (a) *A Part I de 'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone' tem começo, meio e fim?*; (b) *O que foi dito nesta primeira parte e para que serve?*; and (c) *O que você acha que vai acontecer em seguida na história?*⁵². By posing these questions, students are invited to think about the narrative elements and how the text is structured. In order to correct this activity, students and teacher engage in a discussion about the possible answers for each of the questions. Furthermore, their predictions for what happens next can give them ideas of what might appear in Part II of the chapter, and possibly facilitate the reading of the next part.

4.3.2. The boy who lived: Event I, Part II

Through Task 6, students were introduced to the Dursleys and learned that something is about to happen in the next part of the HPSS chapter. Hence, in order to begin the Part II, students receive a copy of Task 7 (Appendix QQ),

⁵¹ The expected answers are: (a) *Number 4, Privet Drive.*; (b) *Petunia is thin, blond, and has nearly twice the usual amount of neck. Vernon is a big, beefy man, and has a mustache.*; (c) *He is the director, and the firm makes drills.*; (d) *Mrs. Dursley is Mrs. Potter sister.*; (e) *They do not like or talk to them.*; (f) *It was a grey Tuesday.*; (g) *students' opinions;* and (h) *They are used to deliver mail.*

⁵² The expected answers are: (a) *No.*; (b) *In the first part, the Dursleys are presented, and it gives the reader the first indication of a problem to be solved.*; and (c) *students' predictions.*

which contains the text and two activities that relate to it. In the first activity, students are matching actions taken from the text to their respective paragraphs. As for activity 2, students are working with the structure of the narrative once again. Table 12 provides an overview of Task 7.

Table 12: Task 7 description, objectives and steps.

Task 7	
Title:	The boy who lived: Event I, Part II
Description:	Read part II from the chapter and answers the proposed activities.
Objectives:	Help students while reading part II of the chapter and provide them with reading strategies to facilitate task performance.
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - first, students are invited to read part II and do activity 1, in which they match actions to the paragraphs they are inserted in; - next, students scan the text in order to find out if their predictions were correct; - finally, students are asked questions that related to the structure of the narrative.

To begin, the teacher asks students to read activity 1 carefully. Here, students have to match characters' actions to the paragraphs they are inserted in. The seven actions are: *Na esquina da sua rua, o Sr. Dursley percebeu um gato lendo um letreiro, mas custou a acreditar no que viu.; Sr. Dursley pensou que usar capa era coisa de jovem, mas percebeu que pessoas mais velhas que ele estavam usando capas verde-esmeralda, e concluiu que deveria ser algum tipo de publicidade.; Vernon estava de bom humor durante o almoço e decidiu ir à padaria para comprar uma rosquinha e esticar as pernas.; Ao sair de casa para o trabalho, o Sr. Dursley se despediu de sua mulher com uma beijoca, mas não conseguiu beijar seu filho porque ele estava tendo um ataque de raiva.; No escritório, Vernon Dursley sentou-se de costas para a janela e não viu as corujas voando em plena luz do dia.; Parado no trânsito, o Sr. Dursley percebeu pessoas usando roupas estranhas, mas pensou que era alguma nova moda.; and As pessoas na rua se surpreenderam com as corujas*

voando sobre suas cabeças, mas o Sr. Dursley teve um dia normal. Ele gritou com algumas pessoas e fez telefonemas importantes. Once again, the actions were written in Portuguese so that students could not retrieve information based only on guessing. Thus, they have to scan the text to find information which is familiar to them. During the performance of the task, the teacher should circle around the room and check if students need any help. They have fifteen minutes to finish and, during the correction⁵³, students should be encouraged to provide their answers and how they found the information in the text. However, before correction can begin, and given that students have now read Part II of the chapter, the teacher asks them if their predictions about the text were correct (Slide 2). Once we have discussed their predictions, correction of activity 1 begins. The expected order is: 2, 3, 4, 1, 4, 3 and 4.

Next, the teacher asks students to do activity 2. Here, they are dealing once more with the narrative structure. Thus, students are asked to answer three questions: (a) *A Part II de 'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone' tem começo, meio e fim?*; (b) *O que foi dito nesta segunda parte e como essas informações ajudam o leitor na tarefa de ler?*; and (c) *O que você acha que vai acontecer ao Sr. Dursley no caminho da padaria?*⁵⁴. In order to correct this activity, students and teacher engage in a discussion about the possible answers for each of the questions. Furthermore, their predictions for what

⁵³ A presentation was created to facilitate the correction, and it can be found in Appendix RR.

⁵⁴ The expected answers are: (a) *No.*; (b) *The second part describes Mr. Dursley's morning and the peculiar things happening in the city that morning. This part helped the reader in imagining how these peculiar things are going to affect the Dursleys, and potentially make the reader more interested in what is going to happen next.*; and (c) *students' predictions.*

happens next can give them ideas of what might appear in Part III of the chapter, and possibly facilitate the reading.⁵⁵

4.3.3. Return to class game

Given that students were on vacation for two weeks, it is important to bring to class a task in which students can recall what they have read so far from the first chapter of HPSS. In order to do so, Task 8 (Table 13) was designed in order to allow students to review some of the events from Parts I and II, and to work with narrative sequence through a game. This game was divided into two segments, and students have a limited amount of time to finish each of them. Thus, the intention is to challenge the students to complete the segments by giving them a motivating element: winning the game.

Taking into consideration that Task 8 is to be performed in the first meeting after vacation, the teacher begins the class by providing the students with a curiosity about Harry Potter (Slide 1)⁵⁶. Thus, she asks students if they knew that, on July 31st, it was Harry's and J.K. Rowling's birthdays. Next, the teacher welcomes students back (Slide 2) and she informs them that they are playing a game together.

To begin the game, the teacher asks students to sit in pairs, and she reads the instructions with them. These instructions should be projected (Slide 3) in order to facilitate the development of the class; however, students should also receive a hard copy of them (Appendix TT). Thus, in segment I, students have to look at the images and write the part of the book and the paragraph that relate to each image. They have seven minutes to complete it, and they can make use of the material they have received in previous classes to complete the assignment. Once they finish, they have to raise their

⁵⁵ It is important to point out that this was the last task students performed before they went on vacation. Thus, in order to maintain contact with the students, and keep the HPSS story in their minds, students were given a homework (Slide 5) to do during vacation. In this assignment, students had to do a collage or a drawing that illustrated what they had read so far. They had to use their imagination and include information about what happened and sentences, phrases or words that make reference to the text. In order to give them enough time to produce, students had until the end of their vacation to send me their productions. All productions were shown to the group once classes restarted.

⁵⁶ Presentation created for Task 8 can be found in Appendix SS.

hands and everybody stops. If the group who raised their hands is correct, they win. If they are wrong, every group has two more minutes to finish the segment. The expected answers are: (1) *Part II, Paragraph 2*; (2) *Part II, Paragraph 4*; (3) *Part II, Paragraph 4*; (4) *Part I, Paragraph 3*; (5) *Part I, Paragraph 4*; (6) *Part I, Paragraph 3*; (7) *Part I, Paragraph 2*; and (8) *Part I, Paragraph 1*.

Table 13: Task 8 description, objectives and steps.

Task 8	
Title:	Return to Class Game
Description:	Revise Parts I and II from first chapter of ‘ <i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone</i> ’ through a game in order to recall events and information that will be paramount while reading the next part of the chapter. Furthermore, they will also be working with narrative sequencing. This task will be done in two segments and students will be working under time pressure.
Objectives:	To give students the opportunity to revise what they have read so far through a game. In the first segment of the game, students have to look at images and connect them to the parts of the chapter they have read and the paragraphs within each part. For the second segment, students will have to organize sentences and images in order to create a logic sequence of events.
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in pairs, students receive a copy of Task 8, which contains the game instructions and the activities proposed for the two segments; - to begin, students perform Segment I; - they have seven minutes to identify the part of the text and the paragraph each image refers to; - next, students perform Segment II, and they have ten minutes to organize sentences from the text to create a logic sequence of events; - for each sentence, an image was created or selected to facilitate students’ understanding of each sentence; - the pair or pairs that correctly answer both segments win the game.

As for segment II, students have to read the sentences and organize them in the correct order of events. For each of

these sentences, an image was selected or created in order to facilitate students understanding, given that, for this segment, they have to use only their memory. Thus, the teacher tells students that they have ten minutes to finish the assignment. The sentences they have to organize in a logic sequence of events are: (a) *When he left home, Mr. Dursley saw a cat reading a map.*; (b) *When he was driving to work, Vernon saw many people wearing cloaks. He hated people dressed in strange clothes.*; (c) *After seeing the cat, Vernon drove to work thinking about drills.*; (d) *At Grunnings, Mr. Dursley did not see the owls flying outside.*; (e) *Vernon Dursley arrived at Grunnings.*; (f) *Vernon made important phone calls and screamed at people.*; (g) *Before going to work, Vernon kissed Petunia, but did not kiss Dudley because his son was having a tantrum.*; and (h) *At lunch, Vernon decided to go to the bakery and buy a bun.* Once they finish, they have to raise their hands and everybody stops. If the group who raised their hands is correct, they win. If they are wrong, every group has two more minutes to finish the segment. The expected order is: (a) 2; (b) 4; (c) 3; (d) 6; (e) 5; (f) 7; (g) 1; and (h) 8.

Thus, through this game, students had the opportunity to revise Parts I and II from ‘*The boy who lived*’, work with narrative sequencing again, and are now able to continue reading the next part of the chapter.

4.3.4. The boy who lived: Event I, Part III

Through the previous task, students had the opportunity to review some of the events that happened in Parts I and II. Now, students are reading the next part the chapter by performing Task 9 (Appendix UU). Here, students are reading part III and doing two activities that relate to it. For the first activity, students have to write what the main ideas of each paragraph are. As for activity 2, students are working with the structure of the narrative again. Table 14 provides a brief overview of Task 9.

In order to begin the task, the teacher asks students what they think is going to happen next in the story (Slide 4)⁵⁷ and refer to some of the predictions (Slide 5) they had made for Part III in their last class before vacation: “*Ele vai se deparar com pessoas usando roupas estranhas.*” (S 2); “*Ele*

⁵⁷ The presentation created for Task 9 can be found in Appendix VV.

vai ver mais coisas estranhas/anormais.” (S 13); *“Acho que ele encontrará alguém.”* (S 10); *“Ele cai e fica imaginando que está enlouquecendo.”* (S 11); *“Ele vai comprar rosquinhas e ter um ótimo dia.”* (S 3); *“Ele irá encontrar alguém conhecido.”* (S 4); and *“Ele vai continuar vendo coisas estranhas.”* (S 12). Then, the teacher asks them which of these options are possible. Once students give their opinions, she shows them four images that relate to Part III (Slide 6). Next, students are asked to describe what they see in the images and how these images can relate to the text. Once this discussion is finished, the teacher gives students a copy of Task 9 and asks them to read the text and do the first activity.

Table 14: Task 9 description, objectives and steps.

Task 9	
Title:	Chapter One - Event I - Part III
Description:	Read part III from the chapter and answer the proposed activities.
Objectives:	Help students while reading part III of the chapter and revisit the reading strategies that could potentially facilitate task performance.
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - first, students are invited to read part II and do activity 1, in which they have to write the main ideas for each paragraph; - next, students discuss if their predictions about the text were correct; - finally, students are asked questions that related to the structure of the narrative.

In activity 1, students have to read the text and write sentences that summarize the main ideas of each paragraph. These sentences should be written down in Portuguese to avoid copying information. The purpose is to see if students understood the paragraphs; thus, it is important to make them think about what they are reading, and performing the activity in Portuguese might ensure that possible misunderstandings are dealt with before we move to another activity or task. In order to exemplify what students have to do, the main ideas for the first paragraph are already provided in the activity: *(1) O sr. Dursley irritou-se mais uma vez ao passar por um grupo*

de pessoas vestidas com capas e roupas estranhas, e pode ouvir o que elas falavam ao passar por elas. Once students finish their summaries, correction begins. This correction should be done by asking students what they were able to write for each paragraph, and discussing what they have summarized with the group. Here are the summaries they have created in class for the other seven paragraphs: (2) *O Sr. Dursley ouviu pessoas falando sobre o Harry, parou de andar e olhou para as pessoas, mas decidiu não falar nada;* (3) *Ele volta para o escritório e está preocupado por ter ouvido o nome do Harry, mas decide não comentar nada com a esposa naquele momento;* (4) *Ele estava tão preocupado que não consegue se concentrar no trabalho direito e, ao sair do trabalho, esbarra em alguém;* (5) *O senhor está feliz porque “Você-sabe-quem” foi derrotado;* (6) *O senhor abraça o Sr. Dursley. Vernon fica confuso e acha que está imaginando coisas;* (7) *Vernon vê o gato novamente ao chegar em casa;* and (8) *Ele tenta espantar o gato, mas não consegue. Ao entrar em casa, Vernon decide não falar nada do que aconteceu para a esposa.*

Once correction is done, the teacher asks students if their predictions about the text were correct. Next, she asks students to do activity 2. Here, they are dealing with the narrative structure again. Thus, students have to answer three questions: (a) *A Part III de ‘Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone’ tem começo, meio e fim?;* (b) *O que foi dito nesta terceira parte e como essas informações ajudam o leitor na tarefa de ler?;* and (c) *O que você acha que vai acontecer agora que o senhor Dursley chegou em casa?* The expected answers are: (a) *No.;* (b) *The third part describes the unusual events in Mr. Dursley’s day and how preoccupied he is with what he heard from strangers. This part helps the reader to understand that these unusual events are already affecting Vernon’s life, and might give the reader a notion that these weird events are going to continue happening.;* and (c) students’ predictions. In order to correct this activity, students and teacher are engaged in a discussion about the possible answers for each of the questions. Furthermore, their predictions for what happens next can give them ideas of what might appear next in the chapter, and possibly facilitate the reading of Part IV.

4.3.5. The boy who lived: Event I, Part IV

Through Task 9, students learned that the unusual events continued happening, and this began to worry Mr. Dursley the moment he heard some people talking about the Potters and their son. Now, students are reading Part IV of the chapter and performing two activities that relate to the text (Task 10)⁵⁸. In Part IV, the reader learns how Mrs Dursley's day went, and that some of the unusual events that were worrying Mr. Dursley were also noticed by every one in the country. Table 15 provides a brief overview of the task

Table 15: Task 10 description, objectives and steps.

Task 10	
Title:	Chapter One - Event I - Part IV
Description:	Read part IV from the chapter and answer the proposed activities. The text was divided into two segments. The first will be done at home, and the second will be done in class.
Objectives:	Help students while reading part IV of the chapter and revisit the reading strategies that could potentially facilitate task performance.
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - first, students see images that relates to Part IV in order to read the first segment of the text and do the activity at home; - in class, we correct what they have done at home and discuss possible difficulties students might have had during the reading or activity; - next, we start the second segment of the text and do the proposed activity; - during correction, students are asked to provide their answers and possible difficulties are discussed.

Given that the text is long and that there are time constraints in relation to data collection, Part IV was divided into two segments, one to be done as homework, and the other to be done in class. In the first segment, students have to read the text and answer four questions that relate to specific

⁵⁸ Task 10 can be found in Appendix WW.

information from the text. To start, the teacher shows students a few images (Slide 3)⁵⁹ that relate to what they are going to read at home and in the following class. It is expected that, while reading, students can make connections between what they are reading and what they see in the images. Thus, students should be engaged in a discussion about what they see in each image. Next, students need to be oriented to read and do the proposed activity at home. Thus, the teacher should explain to students that they have to write the answers for the activity in Portuguese; however, she can also give them the possibility of answering them in English if they wish. The questions are: (a) *Como foi o dia da senhora Dursley?*; (b) *O que Dudley aprendeu?*; (c) *O que o Sr. Dursley descobriu ao assistir o jornal da noite na televisão?*; and (d) *Por que o Sr. Dursley fica preocupado ao ouvir sobre os acontecimentos pelo país? Como tais acontecimentos afetam a vida dos Dursleys?*⁶⁰.

The correction of this activity should be done in class, and students should be invited to share their answers, and mention any difficulties or questions they might have had in relation to activity 1 or the text. Once correction is finished, the teacher gives students the next segment of the text. Here, students have to read the continuation of the text and, again, answer questions that either relate to specific information or to the narrative structure. The questions proposed are (a) *Como Petunia se sentiu quando o marido mencionou sua irmã?*; (b) *O que o Sr. e a Sra. Dursley acham sobre o nome Harry?*; (c) *Como o Sr. Dursley estava se sentindo ao se deitar para dormir?*; (d) *Esta parte de 'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone' tem começo, meio e fim? E quando pensamos nas partes I a IV juntas, têm começo, meio e fim?*; and (e) *O que você acha que vai acontecer do lado de fora da casa dos Dursleys?*⁶¹.

⁵⁹ The presentation created for Task 10 can be found in Appendix XX.

⁶⁰ Their expected answers are: (a) *She had a nice, normal day*; (b) *He learned a new word: "won't"*; (c) *He learned that owls were flying in broad daylight, and shooting stars could be seen all over the country*; and (d) *Vernon was worried because he believed that these events could be connected to the Potters and "their people"*.

⁶¹ The expected answers are: (a) *She was angry when her sister's name was mentioned*; (b) *They think it is a nasty, common name*; (c) *When he went to bed, Mr. Dursley was very worried*; (d) *Part IV does not have a beginning, a middle and an end; however, Parts I to IV have*; and (e) students' predictions.

During correction, students should be invited to contribute with their answers, and the answers need to be written down on the board. The teacher should also use this moment of correction to check if students have had any problems during the reading or with the activity.

Thus, through the reading of Event I, students had the opportunity to find out more about the Dursleys and their lives, and they learned about the unusual events happening around England, where the story takes place. Students also began to understand that these events somehow affect Mr. and Mrs Dursley. In the next tasks, students are going to read Event II, in which Harry Potter finally arrives at Privet Drive with two wizards and a half-giant.

4.3.6. The boy who lived: Event II, Part V

Given the development of the class, and my personal understanding that the use of images helped students while reading Parts III and IV of the HPSS chapter, I have decided to include more images that could facilitate the reading tasks. Also, I have put in bold the most important parts of each paragraph in order to call students attention to those pieces of information while they read the text. Furthermore, in order to give students the opportunity to listen to the story, I have decided to read the paragraphs of Event II aloud with the students. Thus, I am going to try to motivate students to participate in the reading as well. It is my belief that reading aloud creates the atmosphere of the story. Telling a story has to do with intonation, emotion, and pauses. You need to bring life to the text and, since it is literature, I wanted them to feel as if they were inside the story, learning all they can about the characters and their stories. During my pilot study, I had a really nice experience with reading the story to the students, and some of them seemed to be very much engaged in the reading. Thus, I want to bring this to the 9th year group and see how this evolves in the classroom. Table 16 provides an overview of Task 11.

Table 16: Task 11 description, objectives and steps.

Task 11	
Title:	Chapter One - Event II - Part V
Description :	Read part V from the chapter and answer the proposed questions
Objectives:	Help students while reading part V of the chapter and revisit the reading strategies that could potentially facilitate task performance.
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - together, we read part V of the text and discuss the questions proposed; - images are used in order to facilitate the reading; - and through the discussion of the questions, possible misunderstandings and doubts can be dealt with before we move to another task.

In order to facilitate the development of the class and students' understanding of the text, I created a presentation (Appendix YY). Each slide contains images, paragraphs from the text, and questions students need to answer. First, students and teacher look at the images and discuss them. Next, they read the question and the paragraph. In a first moment, the teacher begins the reading and, later, she asks students to participate if they wish, always motivating them to try their best.

Thus, to begin the class, the teacher gives students a copy of Task 11 (Appendix ZZ), which contains the text and thirteen questions that refer to it. The questions proposed are: (a) *Enquanto os Dursleys dormiam, o que o gato estava fazendo?*; (b) *O que aconteceu na rua que fez o gato se movimentar?*; (c) *Qual foi a primeira coisa que Dumbledore fez assim que chegou na rua dos Dursleys?*; (d) *Quem Dumbledore encontrou na rua dos Dursleys?*; (e) *Por que a Professora McGonagall estava preocupada com as celebrações dos bruxos e bruxas?*; (f) *Por que os bruxos e bruxas estavam celebrando?*; (g) *O que Dumbledore oferece a Minerva?*; (h) *Que nome Dumbledore estava tentando fazer a Professora Minerva dizer?*; (i) *O que aconteceu com os Potters?*; (j) *Como Harry sobreviveu?*; (k) *Por que Dumbledore e Minerva estavam na rua dos Dursleys?*; (l) *Por que a Professora McGonagall estava preocupada em deixar o*

Harry com os Dursleys?; and (m) *De que forma o Harry vai chegar na Privet Drive?*⁶². The answers for each question should be discussed with the class along with the events that we have just read about in the paragraph(s).

Once students and teacher finish discussing all questions and Part V of the text, the teacher asks students to look at the last sentence in the text (Slide 15). In this sentence, Professor McGonagall says “*what was that?*”. Hence, the teacher asks students what they think happened next and what McGonagall listened to. This gives students, once again, the opportunity to think about what they are going to see in the last part of the chapter. This prediction might be of help to the students when they are reading Part VI, which is presented in the next section.

4.3.7. The boy who lived: Event II, Part VI

Students finished Part V with a cliffhanger, and now it is time to learn what happens at Privet Drive in the end of the chapter. Thus, students are reading Part VI and answering the proposed questions. Given the development of the previous classes, this part of the chapter was divided into two segments, which are going to be discussed in two separate classes. For Part VI⁶³, images are also being used, students are asked to help me with the reading if they wish, and teacher and students discuss what is happening in each paragraph. However, fragments in bold to call students’ attention was only used in the first segment of the text. In the second segment, structures such as present and past, which are paramount for a narrative, were highlighted. These highlighted structures are explained and discussed in Task 13, which is part of the post task phase. Table 17 provides an overview of Task 12.

⁶² The expected answers are: (a) *The cat was sitting like a statue.*; (b) *A man appeared on the corner of the street.*; (c) *He used the Put-Outer to turn off the street lights.*; (d) *Professor McGonagall.*; (e) *Because even the Muggles had noticed that something was happening.*; (f) *Because Voldemort disappeared.*; (g) *A lemon drop.*; (h) *Voldemort.*; (i) *The Potters have died.*; (j) *No one knows.*; (k) *To bring Harry to the Dursleys.*; (l) *Because they are very different from the wizards and witches.*; and (m) *Harry arrives at Privet Drive with Hagrid.*

⁶³ A presentation was also created in order to discuss this part of the chapter, and it can be found in Appendix AAA.

Table 17: Task 12 description, objectives and steps.

Task 12	
Title:	Chapter One - Event II - Part VI
Description:	Read part VI from the chapter and answer the proposed questions
Objectives:	Help students while reading part VI of the chapter and revisit the reading strategies that could potentially facilitate task performance.
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - together, we read part VI of the text and discuss the questions proposed; - images are used in order to facilitate the reading; - and, through the discussion of the questions, possible misunderstandings and doubts can be dealt with before we move to another phase.

To begin, the teacher gives students a copy of the first part of Task 12 (Appendix BBB), which contains the text and five questions that relate to it. The questions proposed are: (a) *O que será que a Professora Minerva ouviu? O que aconteceu?*; (b) *Onde Hagrid conseguiu a moto?*; (c) *Por que Harry Potter tem uma cicatriz na testa?*; (d) *Quem colocou Harry na frente da porta dos Dursleys?*; and (e) *O que foi deixado com o Harry?*⁶⁴. The answers for each question should be discussed with the class along with the events that they have just read about in the paragraph(s).

To end the book chapter, students read the last segment of Part VI and answer two questions about it. To begin, the teacher gives students the continuation of Task 12 (Appendix CCC) and, together, they discuss the events in each paragraph. The two questions proposed are: (a) *O que Dumbledore, Minerva e Hagrid fizeram depois que deixaram o Harry na casa dos tios?*; and (b) *O que aconteceu ao final do capítulo?*⁶⁵.

⁶⁴ The expected answers are: (a) *She heard a noise, and it was a flying motorcycle.*; (b) *Hagrid borrowed the motorcycle from Sirius Black.*; (c) *Because it was where Voldemort's spell hit him.*; (d) *Professor Dumbledore.*; and (e) *A letter.*

⁶⁵ The expected answers are: (a) *They left to join the celebrations.*; and (b) *Harry waited outside the Dursleys' house, holding a letter, not knowing how famous he was, and how difficult the next years would be while living with his Muggle family.*

Once correction is finished, students and teacher begin the next phase in the cycle of tasks. It is important to highlight that, throughout the reading tasks, although every question proposed had an expected answer, these answers served only as a guide. In class, the intention is to build answers with the students by asking them their opinions and thoughts about what they have read. The idea is to motivate students during the discovery process, allowing them to share whatever they believe was crucial for them in the text during the reading. The next section describes the post task phase and the two tasks developed.

4.4. The post task phase

The activities in the post task, as aforementioned, will lead students to focus on structural issues of the language (focus on form). In that sense, the tasks in this phase have two aims: to alter attentional balance, and to encourage reflection and consolidation (Skehan, 1998). In terms of attentional balance, an option would be to use post task activities in which form is more important. In that sense, the task would *“lead the students to allocate slightly more attention to form during the task”* (Skehan, 1998, p. 148). When it comes to reflection and consolidation, the issue is to encourage learners to restructure; therefore, they would *“use the task and its performance to help in the process of noticing the gap, and developing language to handle the shortcomings in the underlying interlanguage system”* (Skehan, 1998, p. 149). Thus, the relationship between form and meaning, and pattern identification are more likely to be integrated into the students’ growing interlanguage system.

In order to attain these notions, the tasks developed for this phase aim at: (1) discussing the theme brought on by the first chapter of HPSS - differences; (2) drawing students’ attention to form by giving them the opportunity to discuss important elements within narratives - dialogues, narration and verb tenses; and (3) revisiting information from the first chapter of HPSS through a game. The next subsections describe the two tasks in this phase.

4.4.1. Narratives and focus on form

As aforementioned, the themes brought in PCN-LE provide the students with means to critically understand the world and the environment that surround them. Bearing this in mind, the first chapter of the book HPSS gives the opportunity to work within the classroom with one of these themes: respecting and dealing with differences. Furthermore, taking into consideration that students have now worked with narratives in different text genres, it is important to bring to light some important structures that are crucial within narratives, such as dialogues, narration and the use of different verb tenses to build a story. Table 18 provides a brief overview of Task 13.

Table 18: Task 13 description, objectives and steps.

Task 13	
Title:	Narratives and Focus on Form
Description:	Discuss the theme brought on by the first chapter of HPSS (differences) and draw students attention to form by giving the students the opportunity to discuss important elements within narratives (dialogues, narration and verb tenses).
Objectives:	Provide students with the opportunity to discuss how differences are dealt within our society and allocate students' attention to important structures present in narratives.
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - through a presentation created for this task, students will be engaged in a discussion about differences; - students will be asked five questions in relation to differences; - next, students will be asked questions that relate to structures which are used in narratives to allocate the attention to how dialogues are created, who narrates the first chapter of '<i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i>' and the use of present and past within the chapter.

Thus, a presentation (Appendix DDD) was created and, to begin this discussion, the teacher tells students that '*Harry*

Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone is the story of a different boy (Slide 1). Then, she asks student two questions: 'why is he different?' and 'who is he different from?'. In relation to the first question, students are expected to say that Harry Potter is different because he is a wizard. As for the second question, students are expected to say that he is different from his family and even from them (students and teachers), given that no one in the class is a witch or wizard.

Next, the teacher asks students what kinds of differences are present in their society and asks them to give examples (Slide 2). Here, it is expected a variety of cultural differences, such as gender, ethnic, religious, political, sexual orientation and social class, to mention a few. Students might also include differences in relation to their personal taste and their physical appearance. The answers for all questions should be written down on the board. If students provide answers in Portuguese, their English equivalents are written down on the board, and the teacher draws their attention to them.

Once students have provided information on the differences present in their society, the teacher asks them how they can deal with said differences (Slide 3). Bringing this kind of discussion to class is paramount to inform students that being different and having opinions that diverge from the mass is acceptable. The media shows on a regular basis the struggles people from different cultures and backgrounds go through because they are different, and students should be oriented that although every one is different, respect is of utmost importance. Thus, it is this researcher's belief that through this discussion, students can start to reflect on how differences affect their lives, and how they have been treating people who are not like them. This reflection and self-evaluation is essential to become a critical and respectful citizen in society.

After this discussion is finished, the teacher moves on to the structural aspects of narratives. In order to do so, the teacher first asks students what the topic of the unit was (Slide 4). Once it is established that they have been dealing with Literature, the teacher tells students that in narratives, there are some structures that are very important, and they are present in all kinds of narratives, such as comics and literature (Slide 6). So as to show them these structures, five questions are asked. The idea is to bring the cycle of tasks to a full circle

and discuss what students have learned throughout the cycle; thus, the questions try to bring forth aspects from the comic genre and the book chapter they have read.

In question one, students are asked how dialogues are represented in comics. Here, students are expected to say that speech balloons are used to represent dialogues in comics. Then, the teacher asks how dialogues are represented in books such as HPSS. Here, students are expected to say that dialogues are shown between quotation marks, or even through the use of dashes. Next, the teacher moves on to narration and asks students who tells the story in HPSS (Slide 7). Here, although the term used to describe the narrator of HPSS was not discussed, it is important to try to encourage students to participate by asking them if one of the characters is narrating or if the narrator is not an active participant in the story.

Once we have established that the narrator is omnipresent, and that this narration is done in the third person, the teacher moves on to the next question. Thus, students are asked if anything changes in the text when we have dialogues and narration (Slide 8). Students are expected to say 'yes'; however, in case they are not certain, the teacher shows them a fragment from Part VI of the chapter and shows students the structures which were underlined or are in bold. Here, the teacher asks them what kinds of words are underlined. Students are expected to say that the underlined words are verbs or actions. Next, the teacher signals that these verbs are in the past and they refer to the narration. The words in bold, however, are part of the dialogues and in the present tense.

In order to create a discussion on the use of different tenses, the teacher asks students why it is important to use present and past in narratives. Although students might not know the answer, it is important to encourage students to provide any information they can think of. Once they have shared their opinions, the teacher elicits that the use of present in dialogues brings the reader closer to the characters, allowing them to be part of the story and bringing dynamics to the texts. Thus, through the dialogues, students can become listeners of what the characters are saying and, although the story being told has already happened, the use of dialogues gives the reader the sensation that the story is happening at the time the story is being read.

4.4.2. Harry Potter and the data collection game

Now that students have read the first chapter of HPSS, and discussed information that relates to the structure of a narrative and differences, students have an opportunity to revise the chapter by playing Harry Potter and the Data Collection Game (Task 14)⁶⁶. This game (Table 19), which was created with the purpose of bringing a ludic moment to class, is composed of twenty-two questions. Unfortunately, given the time constraints in relation to data collection, this game was not played with the students from the 9th year. However, it would be an excellent task to finish the Literature unit.

Table 19: Task 14 description, objectives and steps.

Task 14	
Title:	Harry Potter and the Data Collection Game
Description:	Revisit the first chapter of ' <i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i> ' through a game.
Objectives:	To create a ludic moment in class by playing a game and provide students with the opportunity to revisit information present in the chapter ' <i>The boy who lived</i> '.
Class Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in trios, students will read with the teacher the game rules; - once they have selected a captain to report the group answers, the game will begin; - depending on the question, each group will have from 30 seconds to two minutes to answer it, and the points for each question will also vary; - wins the group(s) who have more points.

To begin, the teacher asks the students to sit in trios, and she tells them that they are going to play a game about the chapter '*The boy who lived*'. Next, students and teacher read the nine game rules (Slide 2), which were written in English and should be discussed with the students in order to avoid misunderstanding. The rules are: (1) *Decide the Captain of the*

⁶⁶ Refer to Appendix EEE.

Team! S/He will be the ONLY one to answer the question; (2) The participants of the group HAVE to discuss the answer, before the Captain reports it; (3) You have different types of questions: image sequencing, multiple choice, vocabulary, true or false, and open questions about information from the book; (4) Each group will have 30 seconds to 2 minutes (depending on the question) to answer, if the group doesn't answer it, the question will go to another group; (5) The question that was passed by a group can be answered by the next group; (6) Each set of questions has a different point; questions that were passed to another group will have the same points; (7) The groups can use the activities as base; (8) When the other group is answering, the rest of the class has to be in silence; and (9) Groups that don't respect or follow the rules will lose 1 point.

Once the rules have been explained, and students have no questions about them, the game can begin. Harry Potter and the Data Collection Game is composed of twenty-two different questions (Table 20), and there are five types of questions: multiple choice, true or false, vocabulary, image sequencing, and open-ended questions about information from the book. For each type of question, students have a limited amount of time to answer, and the points received also vary. For the multiple choice and vocabulary questions, students have thirty seconds to answer, and the trio receives one point. In true or false questions, students have two minutes to read each sentence and decide on the answers. If the answers are correct, three points are given to the trio. For the image sequencing questions, trios have one minute to answer, and they receive two points in case their answers are correct. As for the open ended question, students have sixty seconds to answer, and one point is awarded to the trio who answers correctly. Furthermore, the last question in the game, which was classified as open-ended, students have extra time to answer it, given that it is based on the first four minutes of the movie *'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone'* (2001), directed by Chris Columbus. Here, students have ninety seconds to answer the question, and the correct answer gives the trio five points.

Table 20: Game description - types of questions, question number, time and points.

Types of Question	Question Number	Time	Points
Multiple Choice	1, 5 and 10.	30 seconds	1 point
True or False	2, 6, 9, 14, 17 and 20.	2 minutes	3 points
Vocabulary	3, 11, 13 and 15.	30 seconds	1 point
Image Sequencing	4, 8 and 12.	60 seconds	2 points
Open-ended	7, 16, 18, 19 and 21.	60 seconds	1 point
	22.	90 seconds	5 points

Although all questions in the game were written in the foreign language, students are given the opportunity to answer them in Portuguese or English. If students' answers are given in their native language, the teacher provides them the equivalents in the English. The questions designed can be seen in Table 21 along with their answers, the points awarded for each correct answer, and the time students have to answer them.

This is a long game, and it takes approximately two classes to finish. The reason for that relied on a few decisions. In an ideal scenario, the game would take about thirty minutes to finish, if none of the groups were given the chance to pass the question to another group. However, given that this is a real classroom, it is important to account for any possible problems, such as group excitement, misunderstandings or questions being passed to other groups; thus, including the initial explanations and discussions about how the game works, the four minutes from the movie played, and answering all questions, the game would take about one hour to an hour and fifteen minutes to end. Hence, I would have done this game after Task 13 was finished, and I would need an extra class to end it. Therefore, the game was not used during data collection.

Table 21: Answers for the Harry Potter and The Data Collection game.

Question	Answer	Points	Time
1. “This character is small and skinny for his age ...” - This is the description for:	Harry Potter.	1	30s
2. True or False.	T, F, F.	3	2m
3. What is the word used to refer to non-magical people?	Muggles.	1	30s
4. Organize the images.	1, 3, 2.	2	60s
5. Which characters do not appear in the first chapter of Harry Potter?	Hermione and Ron.	1	30s
6. True or False.	T, F, T.	3	2m
7. How is Vernon Dursley described?	He was a big, beefy man ...	1	60s
8. Organize the images.	3, 1, 2.	2	60s
9. True or False.	T, F, T.	3	2m
10. On the news, some strange things that happened were:	Owls flying, shooting stars.	1	30s
11. At home, what word did Dudley learn?	Won't.	1	30s
12. Organize the images.	3, 2, 1.	2	60s
13. What is the name of the object Dumbledore uses to turn off the lights?	Put-outer.	1	30s
14. True or False.	F, F, T.	3	2m
15. What was Dumbledore eating?	Lemon drops.	1	30s
16. What happened to Voldemort?	He disappeared.	1	60s

Table 21: Answers for the Harry Potter and The Data Collection game.

	Question	Answer	Points	Time
17.	True or False.	F, F, F.	3	2m
18.	What happened to Harry's parents?	They died.	1	60s
19.	Where did Hagrid get the motorcycle?	He borrowed it.	1	60s
20.	True or False.	T, F, T.	3	2m
21.	How many times did Dumbledore click the put-outer before he left?	Twelve.	1	60s
22.	Which parts of the chapter are not in the movie segment?	Parts I to IV.	5	90s
TOTAL:			41	25m

4.5. Summary of the chapter

This chapter provided a description of the cycle of tasks created for this study. All tasks were designed under Skehan's (1996) frameworks for task analysis and implementation, and their respective teaching procedures followed the pedagogical principles of the task-based approach (Ellis, 2003). Furthermore, it is important to point out that, due to practical reasons, and for the sake of presenting the tasks designed, the cycle of tasks described in this thesis worked as a workplan. In other words, given that schools and classrooms are dynamic contexts, during the implementation phase, the tasks designed to constitute the cycle/workplan had to be adjusted due to uncontrolled factors/variables such as time restraints, class excitement or level of difficulty. In view of that, from the fourteen tasks designed, only thirteen were performed in the class. However, with the exception of one task not being performed, there were not many differences considering what was planned and what was actually implemented. This goes in

line with Foster (2009) who argues that depending on the nature of the task, learners' performance can be predictable, thus, there is the chance that task-as-a-workplan and task-as-process do coincide (Foster, 2009, p. 252). The next chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the data obtained through the post-task questionnaires and interviews in order to unveil students' perceptions of the impact of a cycle of tasks to their EFL learning.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The present study aimed at investigating 9th grade students' perceptions regarding the implementation of a cycle of tasks. In order to do so, a cycle of tasks was designed and implemented taking into consideration Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation, and following the pedagogical principles of the task-based approach (Ellis, 2003; Long, 2015). Throughout the cycle, students performed thirteen different tasks so as to lead them to read the first chapter of '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*' (Rowling, 1999) - '*The Boy Who Lived*' - in an easy and pleasant way.

As aforementioned, the tasks presented in the previous chapter were described as a workplan, given that tasks only come to life once they are performed.⁶⁷ In that sense, the tasks designed were a plan in the mind of the teacher (Ellis, 2003, p 34) and, during the classes, their development and performance suffered a few changes due to time restraints, class excitement or level of difficulty. Table 22 provides a brief description of the classes given and which tasks were performed. Thus, with the purpose of unveiling students' perceptions regarding the cycle of tasks, they were invited to answer post-task questionnaires⁶⁸ at the end of each class and, after classes had ended, twelve students⁶⁹ from the group were interviewed⁷⁰ in order to obtain some more information on issues that were mentioned in the post-task questionnaires.

With that in mind, this chapter presents the qualitative analysis of the data and, thus, discusses them in the light of the theoretical issues developed in the Review of Literature chapter. This was done so as to answer the research question proposed in this study: What are students' perceptions regarding the

⁶⁷ For distinctions between task as workplan and task as process, refer to Chapter 4, section 4.1 of this thesis.

⁶⁸ Students' answers for the post-task questionnaires can be found in Appendix L.

⁶⁹ As aforementioned, in the method chapter, from the seventeen students in the group, only twelve managed to find time within their schedules to meet with this researcher. However, these twelve interviews are a representative sample of students' perspectives on the cycle of tasks.

⁷⁰ The transcriptions for the interviews can be found in Appendices N to Y.

implementation of a cycle of tasks?

Table 22: Description of the classes given - date, class number and tasks used.

Date	Class N°	Tasks Used
June 08th	1	Task 1 and Task 2 (Part I)
June 10th	2	Task 2 (Part II)
June 15th	3	Task 2 (Part III) and Task 3 (Only the first half was done.)
June 17th	4	Task 3 (continued)
June 22nd	5	Task 3: Memory Game and Guess Who Game
June 24th	6	Task 4 (Correction was not finalized.)
June 29th - July 06th	Classes were cancelled due to a student strike at CA.	
July 08th	7	Task 4 (Correction continued) and Task 5
July 13th	8	Task 6
July 15th	9	Task 7
July 18th - August 2nd	School Vacation	
August 03rd	10	Task 8 and Task 9 (Part of Task 9 and Task 10 were given as homework.)
August 05th	11	Task 9 and Task 10: Correction (Continuation of Task 10 was given as homework.)
August 10th	12	Homework correction and Task 11 (Up to question j.)
August 12th	13	Task 11 (continued) and Task 12 (Up to question r.)
August 17th	14	Task 12 (continued) and Task 13 / End of data collection party

Supported by the lesson plans described in chapter 4 of this thesis, data from the post-task questionnaires and interviews were

analyzed and organized under three umbrella categories: perceptions of students' performance, students' perceptions of the tasks themselves, and students' perceptions of their learning.

As a way to organize the discussion of the findings of this qualitative analysis, this chapter is organized into four sections. Section 5.1 discusses the perceptions of student's performance. Section 5.2 brings students' perceptions of the tasks themselves. And, finally, section 5.3 provides students' perceptions of their learning.⁷¹ Furthermore, section 5.4 brings a summary of the findings in an attempt to answer the research question proposed for the present study.

5.1. Perceptions of students' performance

One of the principles of TBA is to require students to evaluate their own performance and progress (Ellis, 2003), as seen in the Review of Literature. In order to do so, the post-task questionnaires and interviews tried to unveil students' perceptions regarding this matter. In the case of this study, the post-task questionnaires were used not only as a way of triggering students' reflection on their learning experience, but also as research tools to unveil these students' perceptions. Through the analysis of the answers given in these questionnaires and interviews, it was possible to categorize students' answers into two major themes: what facilitated their performance and the difficulties they faced within the cycle of tasks.

In regards to what facilitated students' performance, five different facilitators were extensively commented on by the students in the post task questionnaires and interviews: topic familiarity, visual support, textual highlighting techniques, group work and the role of the teacher(s).

During the design of the cycle of tasks, there was a concern with bringing to class topics which were familiar to the participants. In order to do so, students answered a Needs Analysis questionnaire (applied prior to the development of the tasks) which helped in the selection of the fictional text used in this study: *'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone'* (Rowling, 1999). Furthermore, during the observation phase, it came to my attention that comics and fairy tales could be used to introduce

⁷¹ Although the teaching approach used in this whole study was TBA, the participants did not know that and neither it was informed to them in any moment; therefore their perceptions emerged from their own reasoning of the processes they engaged in throughout this study.

narratives, given that Anna had been working with these two topics prior to the data collection phase. Thus, I selected a ‘*Calvin and Hobbes*’ comic strip (Waterson, 1988) and a comic based on the fairy tale ‘*Little Red Riding Hood*’ (Duffy, 2013).

The decision of using these three different texts was also made taking into consideration Skehan’s (1996, 1998) framework for task analysis. As previously mentioned (Section 2.2), the more familiar a topic or a discourse genre, the easier the task will be performed, and thus, the greater the chances to channel attention (Schmidt, 1990) to other issues, such as the elements of a narrative. Furthermore, the framework, itself, assumes that our attentional resources are limited; therefore, it is important to build up room for learners to profit the most from any learning episode. For instance, in Task 1 (Calvin and Hobbes) and Task 2 (Little Red Riding Hood), students’ prior knowledge of the theme allowed them to incorporate new information to their repertoire, such as narrative sequencing and elements, which were in fact the objectives of those two tasks in the cycle: “*Eu achei o conteúdo fácil de se compreender e é um tema que me interessa, por isso, fica mais fácil a compreensão.*” (QS10 - class 1), “*Já conhecia as histórias e já sabia como é um conto de fadas.*” (QS17 - class 1), “*Eu já conhecia a história e algumas expressões e os personagens me ajudaram.*” (QS9 - class 1) and “*O conhecimento sobre histórias em quadrinhos.*” (QS13 - class 2).

According to students answers, being familiar with the topic diminished the level of difficulty of the classes. Thus, the fact that the framework for task analysis (Skehan, 1996, p. 52) caters for cognitive complexity (Section 2.2) was noticed by the students and perceived as positive for their learning. In other words, the familiarity with the topic and the discourse genre lowered the level of difficulty within the tasks, and students were able to perform better. Furthermore, to the students who were already familiar with Harry Potter, this seemed to affect their performance in a positive way as well: “*Discutimos sobre algo que eu já conhecia.*” (QS17 - class 4), “*Já sei sobre Harry Potter e acho incrível aprender mais.*” (QS7 - class 5), “*O conhecimento que eu já tinha sobre Harry Potter.*” (QS2 - class 8) and “*Consegui aprender/saber mais sobre os personagens e cidade onde eles viviam.*” (QS12 - class 4). This indicates that the NA questionnaire and class observations were, in fact, essential conditions to the development of the cycle of tasks proposed for this study, as it allowed this researcher to prepare meaningful tasks related to the groups’ reality and their specific needs (Long,

2015).

Although only fifty per cent of the students were acquainted with the Harry Potter books, through Task 3 (Brainstorming) and Task 4 (Character Description), students had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the characters and a little of their story before they began to read the book chapter. For instance, during Task 3, students brainstormed ideas concerning the book through a presentation. Once this was done, they had to play a Memory Game based on the information discussed. According to student 2, who had marked in her NA questionnaire her unfamiliarity with the Harry Potter collection, she was able to perform better because of the discussion proposed before she played the memory game: “[A aula foi] fácil. Pois eu já conhecia um pouco sobre Harry Potter” (QS2 - class 5).

Other students perceived Task 3 as beneficial to their learning:

Além de conhecer mais características da saga Harry Potter, aprendi novas palavras. (QS8 - class 4)

Que quando eu via essas descrições que a gente já tinha trabalhado, eu já sabia “ah, é esse aqui, essa imagem. (IS13 - line 26)

Eu achei bem legal o jogo da memória, porque ele me ajudou bastante. Porque antes você tinha passado os slides falando quem eram os personagens e tal. E assim, eu só assisti o filme, então foi bem legal para aprender, porque eu sempre confundia os personagens e agora eu não confundo mais. Aí o jogo da memória me ajudou. (IS3 - line 8)

O que facilitou foi que antes da gente entrar no texto, a gente conheceu um pouco mais dos personagens, então muitas palavras ficavam se repetindo e também usavam descrição física, daí já foi bem mais fácil. [...] É que no começo eu não gostava muito do tema Harry Potter, mas depois a gente começou a trabalhar o texto, as primeiras partes eu tive mais dificuldade, mas o resto foi bem mais tranquilo. (IS14 - line 14)

According to them, the brainstorming also facilitated the two activities proposed (memory game and guess who game), as well as the performance of Task 4, in which students had to match the characters to their physical descriptions. This can be perceived in Student 8's own words:

Nessa ((talking about Task 4)), o que facilitou, é que você já tinha explicado bastante, e também o fato de que eu ao longo do que tu foi explicando nas outras aulas, eu fui conhecendo mais a história, até porque antes de tu explicar, eu nunca tinha nem visto o filme, nem lido o livro, então a explicação das outras aulas ajudou bastante também. (line 12)

Once again this goes in line with what Skehan (1998) proposes in his framework for task analysis, in which he claims that familiarity with the theme of the tasks is one of the key elements to reduce the level of task difficulty. From these testimonies, it is possible to say that the theme, which initially was not familiar to some students, became familiar, decreasing the level of difficulty of the class and the tasks that followed. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that task difficulty is ultimately determined by the learner, being, therefore, difficult for the teacher to predict and control. Nevertheless, catering for promoting learners familiarity with the theme and the tasks themselves is a way of tackling this matter.

Another facilitator mentioned by the participants was the use of visual support, a typical technique in the mid task phase. As proposed by Skehan (1996, 1998) in his framework for task implementation (Section 2.2), this technique is also used to adjust the level of task difficulty. In this sense, visual support was added in the mid task phase so as to facilitate the reading of the chapter. Through the analysis of the post-task questionnaires, I observed that there were fifty-five occurrences of images being described as facilitators for task performance. These occurrences led me to ask students, during the interviews, how the images impacted their performance. According to the students, the images facilitated their understanding of the text and, in most cases, students wished that images could have been used since the first part of the chapter:

As imagens são bem importantes, porque já dá para ti ter uma noção do texto. [...] eu acho que as imagens foram fundamentais. (IS4 - line 58)

Eu acho que sim. 90 por cento. Ainda mais quando você conhece a história, você olha para a imagem e fala 'ah, é daquela parte!', 'depois daquilo, antes daquilo'. (IS15 - line 64)

Às vezes a gente não entende uma palavrinha e a imagem faz entender. (IS14 - line 36)

Ah, sempre ajudam... [...] Porque tu consegue lembrar do que acontecia quando tu tava lendo, daí ajudava lembrar, 'ahh, é aquela parte que ele fala que vai sair para comprar a rosquinha'. (IS10 - lines 82-84)

Sempre que você tem imagem, algo visual, melhora. (IS7 - line 46)

Porque assim, quando a gente não entende muito a palavra ou a frase, a imagem sempre ajuda para a gente saber... a gente esta com dúvida nessa palavra, mas a gente sabe mais ou menos o que quer dizer, só que não sabemos especificamente o que é, então a gente olhando para a imagem, já dá para saber até pela fisionomia da pessoa que está na foto e tudo mais, então ajuda bastante. (IS8 - line 34)

By providing visual support, the amount of material that students needed to keep in mind while reading the chapter of HPSS was diminished. Furthermore, the images selected or created for the tasks were always related to the content being worked with. Taking into consideration that the reading proposed was a literary text, in which the language is more demanding and sophisticated than that present in textbooks, the use of images was paramount in order to minimize the difficulties of the tasks. In that sense, from students' perceptions regarding the use of visual aid, it is possible to say that the framework for task implementation proposed by Skehan (1996, 1998) has potential to

promote a positive environment for learning, given that it brings in its core techniques that diminish task demands.

The other facilitator mentioned by the students was the use of highlighting techniques, and this is related to the idea of noticing, which is central to the framework for task analysis. As mentioned elsewhere (Section 2.2), Schmidt (1990) argues for the importance of noticing as a means to change attentional resources so that input can become intake. That is, it is paramount to provide students with the opportunity to focus their attention, and to aid them in perceiving important aspects in the tasks they are performing. In that sense, as the reading of the parts of the chapter became more detailed and extensive, there was a concern with bringing to students' attention the most important parts of the text and to focus on form (Long, 1991). That is, in the attempt to make sense of a message, there was also room for the learners to focus on language issues. Thus, by using bold or italics, students' focus was in understanding the message within each paragraph of the chapter through the highlighted segments, as is can be seen in Task 11 and 12⁷², and this was perceived by the students:

Ajuda porque chama mais atenção, né? E aí a gente vai... vamos supor, é a parte que chama mais atenção, então a pessoa vai sempre ter a curiosidade de olhar aquilo primeiro, e então já ajuda, porque a gente sabe que vai ser a parte central, e dá mais interesse. Acho que ajuda. (IS8 - line 40)

Ajudou porque já estava em negrito as partes que eu precisava saber. Daí o que era importante já dava para ver onde que estava, daí eu 'ah, é nisso aqui que eu tenho que prestar atenção'. (IS13 - line 104)

As palavras em negrito me ajudaram muito. (QS3 - class 12)

Li as partes em negrito que me ajudaram a compreender todo o texto. (QS9 - class 12)

Acho que é para chamar bastante atenção.

⁷² Refer to Appendices ZZ, BBB and CCC, and section 4.2.6 and 4.6.7 for information regarding these tasks.

[...] Para as respostas, as partes mais importantes. E também podia ter alguma coisa bem a ver com a história, e às vezes nem era para responder, mas sim para saber o que esta acontecendo na história. (IS14 - lines 52-58)

Through the analysis of the post-task questionnaires and interviews, and taking into consideration the students' statements previously presented, it is possible to say that the use of bold to signal important parts of the text was perceived by the students as positive to their understanding of the text. Furthermore, it highlights the fact that Task 11 and 12 were successful in creating a link between meaning and language structure issues of the language, and providing students with the opportunity to notice, thus facilitating their task performance.

The next facilitator, group work, that students perceived as beneficial during task performance, is directly related to the fourth principle of TBA (Ellis, 2003): *to ensure that students adopt an active role in task-based lessons*. As seen in the Review of Literature, for this active role to occur, students need to engage in negotiation of meaning when a problem arises. In this sense, interaction (Long, 1983, 1985) is a crucial trigger for acquisition to occur. Throughout the cycle of tasks, students were constantly asked to sit in pairs or trios in order to perform the tasks proposed. This was done having in mind Jacobs' (1998, as cited in Ellis, 2003) comprehensive list of potential advantages to pair/group work (Section 2.1), and the fact that TBA's main concern is to create opportunities for language learning through collaborative work (Ellis, 2003), as previously mentioned (Section 2.1).

According to the answers provided in the post-task questionnaires and interviews, students profited from pair/group work. By doing activities together, students were sharing information with each other and learning as well:

Eu acho que eu prefiro fazer junto [com os colegas], porque, pelo fato de eu ter dificuldade, com outra pessoa que saiba mais ou saiba medianamente, ajuda bastante, porque daí eu já vou saber o que fazer e é melhor do que fazer sozinha, porque daí eu vou ter que toda hora ficar pedindo ajuda dos professores, e tem várias pessoas também que podem

precisar. (IS8 - line 60)

Ah, sim, porque sempre tem diferença entre um e outro. Alguns tem mais conhecimento que os outros e tal. E aí, eu acho que a gente acaba buscando ajuda do professor ou do colega que a gente acha que vai saber. (IS15 - line 32)

Porque tem coisas que a gente não sabe, tem coisas que eles não sabem. Daí a gente ensina eles e eles ensinam a gente. (IS3 - line 26)

[P]orque a gente trocava experiências, e quando alguém não sabia, o outro sabia e ajudava. (IS6 - line 144)

Thus, through these statements, it is possible to see how beneficial group work can be for students' development and performance, given that they found in their colleagues the necessary support to achieve the demands of the tasks, negotiate meaning and solve possible doubts. In the questionnaires, there were seventy-six occurrences in which help was classified as something positive in relation to task performance. However, these occurrences also refer to the aid provided by the teachers, which leads us to the last facilitator mentioned extensively by the students: the role of the teacher(s).

During the implementation phase, there was a constant concern with monitoring students performance and ensuring that they were working well together, specially in this context. Students' age ranged from 13 to 15 years old and, according to Legutke (2012), at this age, "*the classroom becomes a focal point where the creativity is unleashed by puberty and adolescence can inspire learning, but where also the ambiguities and the turbulence of the phase can render learning quite difficult or even problematic*" (p.112). And this was in fact the case of this group. For instance, whenever students were asked to sit in pairs or trios, they usually took a really long time to organize themselves if they were left to their own devices. Furthermore, depending on the events of the day, class excitement also prevented students from maximizing their use of the performance time. In this sense, monitoring students was paramount, and this was done taking into consideration what Van Den Branden (2012) posits as the role of the teacher in task-based language teaching (TBLT).

According to him, in TBLT, the teacher should: (1) motivate students to invest intensive mental energy in task performance; (2) efficiently organize the task-based activity by giving clear instructions and preparing students for the task, guiding the formation of groups and providing all necessary material; and (3) intentionally support the students while they are performing the task (Van Den Branden, 2012, p. 136). Through the analysis of the answers provided in the post-task questionnaires and interviews, students' perceptions regarding the role of the teacher suggest that this was achieved in this study.

For instance, students perceived and extensively commented on the aid provided by the teachers. During task performance, students were oriented to call me, Anna, Theodor or Christina⁷³ in case they had doubts in relation to the tasks themselves or vocabulary. Most times, vocabulary was the issue, and the teachers would explain the word through synonyms, mimicry or even translation, in case the other strategies had failed to explain learners' doubts. According to the students, help not only facilitated task performance, but also motivated them during the class:

Faz, bastante. Uma coisa é aprender sozinha, sem ter alguém que realmente saiba para me ajudar. E outra coisa é ter dois ou quatro professores junto comigo para me explicar como que é. (IS8 - line 56)

Quem não entendia, procurava sempre pedir ajuda. Tipo, não ficava com dúvida. [...] Pô, [a ajuda] facilitou, porque no primeiro trimestre eu acho que nem participava da aula. (IS10 - lines 106 and 126)

Pois a Joey nos auxilia em tudo, então fica muito mais fácil com a ajuda dela. (QS6 - class 1)

Pois sempre que temos dúvidas, os estagiários, a Joey e a Anna nos ajudam. (QS3 - class 5)

⁷³ As aforementioned (Section 3.3.2), Anna's 9th year group received two student-teachers (Theodor and Christina) who were in the observation segment of their practicum. Thus, during task implementation, I could count on Anna and the two novice teachers to help monitor students' performance in the task cycle.

Eu acho que você é uma ótima professora de inglês, porque você me ajudou bastante com os textos, e eu comecei a ler textos tão bem por causa de ti. (IS3 - line 68)

Teve umas coisas que eu tive dificuldade, e que eu não consegui entender direito. Daí com a explicação dos professores com mais experiência, eu já consegui entender mais, porque daí eles me explicaram direitinho.”(IS13 - line 130)

As student 8 previously pointed out, the help of two or four teachers made all the difference. However, this is a special context. Although I was the one teaching, I could count on three more teachers to help me during task performance. In a regular context, on the other hand, where only one teacher has to deal with the doubts of the group, it is my belief that pairing students or putting them in groups can help in learners' performance. Furthermore, as aforementioned in this section, pair/group work is proposed within the eight principles of TBA (Ellis, 2003), and this was perceived by the students in this study as beneficial to their learning. Therefore, this strategy can and should be integrated to task-based lessons. As for the questions that students cannot solve within their pairs and groups, another strategy is for the teacher to ask students to raise their hands when in doubt. Thus, the problem can be dealt with the whole group, so that all students can benefit from the interaction. This also goes in line with the fourth principle of TBA, to ensure that students are adopting an active role in task-based lessons (Ellis, 2003).

Although students did not know what TBA was, their perceptions regarding topic familiarity, visual support, textual highlighting techniques, group work and the role of the teacher(s) seem to reflect TBA tenets and concepts, suggesting that Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks and Ellis's (2003) task definition and eight task principles, key aspects that the frameworks highlight, are perceived as meaningful by the students; thus possibly being catalysts of students' learning, functioning to build a fruitful context for L2 acquisition.

The second theme very evident in participants perceptions of their own performance was the difficulties faced within the cycle of tasks. Overall, throughout the post-task questionnaires, students mentioned the difficulties they had encountered while

performing the proposed tasks. Skehan (1996, 1998), in his frameworks for task analysis and implementation, proposes the balance of difficulty of the tasks, and this aspect was carefully taken into consideration during task design, as aforementioned in this section. However, students still found some aspects of the task to be quite demanding. Most of the difficulties mentioned were related to vocabulary. That is, the language being used in the classes and texts, at times, was difficult and interfered in task performance.

This difficulty can partially be attributed to the main text chosen for this study, the first chapter of *'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone'* (Rowling, 1999). Although the frameworks proposed by Skehan (1996, 1998) cater for diminishing task difficulty, we still need to take into account that the level of difficulty will ultimately be determined by the learner (Ellis, 2003), as mentioned in the Review of Literature. In that sense, even if the teacher caters for this aspect by building room for students to get familiar with the theme and the tasks, which are issues that seem to diminish the level of task difficulty (as already discussed elsewhere in this session), there is still room for students to find the tasks proposed demanding.

Although topic familiarity, visual support, textual highlighting techniques, group work and the role of the teacher(s) were perceived by the students as facilitators to their performances, the language used in the text was still a barrier for most of them. According to the participants, the vocabulary sometimes prevented them from understating a sentence or a paragraph:

O texto era muito grande, palavras diferentes. (QS16 - class 9)

Pois as palavras eram muito difíceis. (QS5 - class 10)

Tinham muitas palavras desconhecidas e não consegui usar direito as estratégias de leitura. (QS13 - class 10)

A maioria das palavras que não conheço me dificultou a entender o parágrafo. (QS12 - class 11)

Não entendi várias palavras. (QS4 - class 13)

From these statements and through the analysis of the post-task questionnaires and interviews, it is clear that, in the case of this study, the biggest demand for the students was to read the first chapter of HPSS, which was the ultimate objective of the cycle of tasks. Given that this is a literary text, the vocabulary used is very sophisticated and highly demanding. Furthermore, although the length of the text was carefully considered, taking into account the role it plays within communicative stress (Skehan, 19986) (Section 2.2), it still could not account for the demands that the text chosen imposed on the students. Thus, it is my belief that this sort of difficulty could not be solved only by the tasks proposed and the way they were structured. Here, there is a need to take a more reflective and critical stance in regards to the use of literary texts in EFL classrooms, at least in Brazil, in which EFL proficiency level of students vary significantly.

Although these types of texts may be part of real-world experiences, which constitutes one of the major tenets of TBA (Ellis, 2003), their use might extrapolate what students are able to understand given their level of proficiency in the target language. Thus, when making use of literature in the classroom, the teacher should have in mind that vocabulary will, inevitably, be an issue to be dealt with, even if the task-based lesson designed catered for the possible difficulties, which was the case of this study.

5.2. Students' perceptions of the tasks themselves

The analysis of the answers provided in the post-task questionnaires and interviews unveiled some issues of interest to this researcher. Considering the frameworks (Skehan, 1996, 1998) under which the cycle of tasks had been developed, I was interested in understanding students' perceptions of the cycle of tasks *per se*. Through data triangulation, it was possible to categorize students' perception regarding this matter into four themes: the use of English, task sequencing, motivation and task repetition.

The first important theme that was commented on an interview was the use of English during classes. Although there was no specific question in the post-task questionnaires or interviews that dealt with the language being used by the teacher, student 4 believes that communicating with students in the target language is profitable:

Desde o início das aulas, como eu entrei esse ano, é um pouco diferente a aula

daqui e do meu colégio antigo, e uma coisa que eu percebi que ajuda bastante é vocês no decorrer da aula falarem em inglês. Porque mesmo que a gente não entenda as palavras, vocês falando, vocês fazem gestos que a gente conhece, né, e consegue compreender. Não sei como, mas é muito incrível isso, porque dá para compreender bem, e eu acho isso é muito importante mesmo. E vocês também sempre dão atenção, sempre quando a gente precisa vocês ajudam e ficam perguntando ‘sabe o significado disso’, e a gente tem que tentar fazer um esforço para entender, e o que a gente não entende vocês falam. Acho que é isso! (IS4 - line 82)

According to Ellis (2003), the use of the target language during class will increase the cognitive load demanded from the learners to understand the idea being transmitted. By providing input, students are being exposed to the language they are learning. The claim within TBA is that through comprehensible input⁷⁴ (Ellis, 2003; Pica, 2005; Gass and Mackey, 2006), interaction and negotiation of meaning, acquisition is more likely to occur (Ellis, 2003). As mentioned in the previous section in this chapter, students had numerous opportunities to interact with teachers and colleagues, and to engage in negotiation of meaning throughout the cycle of tasks proposed for this study. Although students’ mother tongue, Portuguese, was being used in class as well, most student-teacher interaction started in English and, only as a last strategy, Portuguese was used to solve comprehension problems.

In addition to English, the use of gestures and teacher-talk during interaction with learners was also perceived by student 4. As she points out in her statement, she does not know how it occurs, but she was able to understand what was being said during class and she believes that this is very important. However, it is worthwhile to mention that Anna, the teacher in charge, also used English in most of her interactions with students; so, this was not a novelty for them. Thus, through the students’ voice, using English in the classroom was perceived as

⁷⁴ Comprehensible input, according to Pica (2005), refers to input that is understandable in its meaning, but slightly beyond the learner’s current level of development.

positive.

Along with input, there is also a need to encourage students to take risks, as proposed by Ellis' (2003) principles of TBA (Section 2.1), and this can be done through task sequencing. According to Van Den Branden (2012) "*task sequencing is a matter of creating a coherent scale of increasingly complex approximations to the real-world target tasks*" (p. 134-135). Through the analysis of the post-task questionnaires and interviews, task sequencing was perceived by the students. Although not all students noticed or said it explicitly, in the post-task questionnaires, that the tasks were all related and guided them to read the chapter in an easy and pleasant way, they noticed they could actually do that in the end of the cycle. This can be verified in the students' own words in the interview:

Como eu tinha dito antes, a Chapeuzinho Vermelho e o Calvin ajudaram na hora de ler Harry Potter, porque se um parágrafo não faz sentido, eu tenho que encaixar com outra informação. Eu pegava a mesma técnica de leitura que eu vi no primeiro para fazer a última atividade. Então tem uma ligação entre todas as tarefas sim. (IS9 - line 44)

Foi um avanço de uma tarefa para a outra, como se a gente estivesse obtendo mais conhecimento, porque de acordo... tipo, a gente começou com essa tirinha ((shows Calvin)), que não tem nenhuma fala, e não é tipo tudo descrito. Daí depois a gente já foi avançando, já foi no quadrinho com as falas, depois a gente já começou a ler o livro. (IS13 - line 143)

During the interviews, students were asked if they could perceive a connection between the tasks within the cycle. This question seemed relevant to this researcher given that the tasks in the cycle tried to discuss, through different text genres, how a narrative is constructed, what elements are present in narratives in general, and to give students various opportunities to practice strategies that could facilitate reading. When designing the cycle of tasks, there was a concern with diminishing the level of difficulty within the tasks following Skehan's (1996, 1998) framework for task analysis. In that sense, this researcher took

into consideration that text length plays a part within communicative stress (Section 2.2); thus, if larger quantities of material had been used in a short period of time, the level of difficulty could have been higher due to the necessity of speeding up the cognitive process. In this researcher's view, there was a gradual increase in the length of the texts being used; that is, the first chapter of *'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone'* (Rowling, 1999) was divided into several parts so as to give students the opportunity to consolidate the reading strategies and diminish the demands of reading a complete chapter, as proposed by Skehan (1996, 1998). This was perceived by the students as well:

Eu acho que existe, porque desde o começo você já começou a explicar para a gente como era a leitura e você foi ensinando a gente a ler, desde os quadrinhos até a leitura do livro, então eu acho que isso é um comparativo, para a gente saber desde o início, desde os quadrinhos até um livro. [...] Acho que foi gradativo, aumentando o nível de dificuldade. (IS8 - line 50)

Eu acho que apareceu mais texto, tipo, da primeira até a última [tarefa]. Foi gradativo. (IS4 - line 76)

Despite the fact that students still found the vocabulary present in the text to be quite demanding, as stated in the previous section, during the interviews, they could perceive that text length and difficulty increased gradually from the first comics brought in Tasks 1 and 2 to the HPSS chapter, which was this researcher's intention when designing the cycle of tasks for this study, and this was perceived by students as positive to their learning.

Along with the length of the texts, there was also a concern to create a seamless bridge between the tasks being performed in order to prepare the students for the next tasks in the cycle. As Van Den Branden (2012) states, students should be confronted with new input and output demands in their learning trajectories, and this was done by designing a cycle of tasks which followed Skehan's (1996, 1998) framework for task implementation and also took into consideration the principles advocated by TBA (Ellis, 2003). With that in mind, and analyzing the data obtained through the interviews, task sequencing was in fact observable. In my interview with student 7, it was possible to notice that she saw

an immediate connection between all tasks in the cycle. When asked about Task 1 in the beginning of our interview, she said:

Eu achei a atividade bem legal porque essa atividade antecedeu a atividade do Harry Potter, que era o nosso tema principal, e eu achei bom porque tudo que a gente viu, nós discutimos depois nas aulas. Foi tipo uma introdução do que a gente ia fazer.
(line 2)

In her view, what she saw in the beginning of the cycle (the pre task phase) was in fact an introduction to what they had to do during the mid task phase. Student 15 seemed to reach the same conclusion, given that, in her interview, she made connections between different tasks in the cycle:

Ah, eu acho que segue uma linha de.. tipo, aquela do Calvin, eu acho que ela tem ligação com aquela das frases ((making reference to Task 8)). [...] E a de começo, meio e fim... eu acho que dá uma ideia igual a da Chapeuzinho. E o texto da Chapeuzinho também, porque, tipo... me lembra os textos, porque a gente tem que entender o vocabulário para poder entender e unir a história. (lines 118-120)

From her statement, and having in mind what was proposed for Task 1 (Calvin and Hobbes) and Task 8 (Return to Class Game), there is in fact an intentional connection between these two tasks. As aforementioned in this section, Task 1 dealt with narrative sequencing. In the same way, Task 8 also tried to bring narrative sequencing, but through information they had learned from reading Part I and Part II of the first chapter of HPSS.

The interesting part of doing research is to see the theories that underlie the study embedded in students' discourse. The testimonies regarding task sequencing provided so far show the effectiveness and importance of the frameworks that guided this study (Skehan, 1996, 1998). This can also be verified in Student 10's words in the interview:

R: Você consegue ver alguma relação entre essas duas atividades ((making reference to

Tasks 1 and 2)) e o que a gente fez do [...] Harry Potter?

S10: Isso aí foi bom para ajudar a gente a não ficar tão confuso, né?

R: Em que sentido?

S10: Porque se a gente fosse direto para o Harry Potter, acho que a gente ia se atrapalhar um pouco.

R: Por quê? Se atrapalhar em que sentido?

S10: Porque a gente teve que organizar e criar diálogos algumas vezes, e aí eu acho que a gente podia se atrapalhar.

R: Por que o texto era muito complexo, o do Harry Potter?

S10: Talvez não por ser mais complexo, mas por nunca ter feito uma atividade parecida. Então, como a gente fez atividade parecidas, foi tranquilo. (lines 15-29)

According to him, the five tasks designed for the pre task phase of the cycle (Calvin and Hobbes, Little Red Riding Hood, Brainstorming, Character description and Introducing the book) guaranteed a better performance during the mid task phase. Thus, the implementation of a framework that caters for balancing task complexity and attempts to prepare students for what they have to perform is perceived by the students as positive. In other words, the purpose of the pre task phase was achieved in this study, taking into consideration that this phase aimed at preparing students to carry out the tasks within the mid task phase. Along these lines, it is possible to say that most students perceived that the tasks were not disconnected, rather, their outcomes were building into a more general purpose in the end, to read the first chapter of '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*'.

The third important theme regarding students' perceptions of the tasks themselves is motivation. According to Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) "*motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it*" (p. 614). Given that the participants of this study were all teenagers, there was a great concern with designing stimulating tasks that could promote language learning and sustain students' interest.

Language learning is hard work, as it requires a lot of effort to understand, adapt and use the target language. Thus, maintaining students' motivation during the learning process

requires a lot of effort as well, specially in the case of young learners. As stated by Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (2006), “*games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work*” (p. 2) throughout their learning process. In that sense, games were included within the cycle of tasks having in mind that they could be excellent tools to engage learners in language use, and taking into consideration participants’ age.

Through the analysis of the post-task questionnaires and interviews, the use of games within the cycle of tasks received a positive feedback from the participants, and they were perceived by the students as their favorite tasks in the cycle. According to students’ answers, most of them preferred activities that were ludic and involved some kind of competition, such as the Memory Game done with vocabulary related to the Harry Potter world (part of Task 3) and Task 8, which was done right after students returned from vacation, and intended to review Parts I and II of the HPSS chapter.

Student 4, for instance, mentioned that, although she really liked the Memory Game (line 94), she also liked the ones that dealt with sequencing: Task 1 (Calvin and Hobbes) and 2 (Little Red Riding Hood). These two tasks, along with Task 3 and Task 8 aforementioned, all fall into the same category: games. This leads us to another benefit of using games in class perceived by students. According to student 7, who has a competitive nature, games were a good way to learn while also having fun: “*As minhas favoritas foram as que tiveram competição... [...] Os jogos induziram a gente a pensar bastante e ter raciocínio rápido, além de ser um jogo que a gente está aprendendo. A gente se divertiu com isso, riu bastante.*” (line 86).

Competitiveness was also something mentioned by student 15. Even though she said it was a joke, I believe that the competition might have motivated her to perform the task to the best of her abilities: “*Foi essa ((pointing to Task 8)), porque eu ganhei. Não, tô brincando. Mas essa, porque tinha onomatopéias, frases, imagens e a gente tinha que voltar no texto para ler e lembrar o que foi estudado ou os outros textos que a gente já tinha lido antes... e ver o vocabulário de novo.*” (line 136).

Student 10 also liked the Memory Game, as most students. However, he seemed surprised with the fact that he won the game twice: “*Eu ganhei duas vezes. Eu ganhei!*” (line 118). This student was usually very quiet during classes and was not as participative as one hoped, but seeing the excitement behind his statement showed this researcher that even the quiet ones were

taking advantage of the classes and were happy with their task performance. This could only be observed once I sat down to discuss the cycle of tasks with him.

Although games were a success according to students' perception, it is important to highlight that the framework for task implementation proposed by Skehan (1996, 1998) does not bring anything in relation to games. What the framework does offer is a space for tasks to be varied, and this highlights the role of the teacher in proposing tasks that might favor different learning styles. In this sense, the decision of using games in the cycle of tasks relied on the age range of the students. Thus, thinking of ludic tasks was important and seen as a motivational aspect in the eyes of the participants of this study. Furthermore, this maximizes the role of the teacher who is responsible for designing the tasks, and proposing activities that seem to best suit his/her students.

The last important theme that was commented on was task repetition. Given that repetition is a cognitive process that lies at the core of TBA, and that permeated the cycle of tasks developed, during the interviews, I tried to verify how students perceived task repetition. For instance, during the mid task phase, various opportunities for task repetition were provided. In the tasks that dealt with the first chapter of '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*' (Rowling, 1999), students were performing tasks that were similar in nature but with different content, as proposed by Bygate (2001). Thus, the intention with task repetition was give learners the chance to retrieve information they had practiced before so as to make a few adjustments in order to maximize communication effectiveness (Bygate, 2001). In this sense, students would retrieve what they had used in the previous tasks in order to perform the next task.

However, students' views on task repetition did not quite meet what is proposed in TBA. According to them, repetition was equated to something monotonous and repetitive at times:

Era repetitivo. Eram várias partes, e eu acho que podia ter menos. [...] Como um todo. Eram muitos textos sobre o Harry Potter. Acho que poderiam ser textos menores e de outros assuntos também, do cotidiano. (IS4 - lines 100-102)

A partir dessas partes ((mentioning Tasks 9 to 11)), eu já estava cansada e já estava achando repetitivo. (IS7 - line 52)

Você e a professora Anna ajudavam bastante, né, mas muitas perguntas eram como se fossem iguais, como essa de ter meio tem começo, meio e fim, e tal. Às vezes parece que ficou meio repetitivo, mas eu acho isso super importante para poder aprender, então por um lado foi bom, e por outro foi razoável. (IS8 - line 42)

Although student 8 found relevance in task repetition by stating that it is important when learning something, the use of similar tasks throughout the mid task phase of the cycle seemed to be a negative point in students' perceptions. Tasks which are similar can be beneficial when they also include new elements or challenge students' performance, such as Task 1 (Calvin and Hobbes) and 2 (Little Red Riding Hood). Although both tasks had similar objectives, in Task 2, students not only had to deal with narrative sequencing and elements, but they also had to work under time pressure and deal with linguistic features of the comics genre. In the case of the tasks, repetition was profitable because it included more challenges to the students in relation to narrative elements and sequencing, as well as win the game proposed for Task 2.

As for the tasks that dealt with the chapter of HPSS, task repetition seemed to be perceived by the students as something tiring to their learning. As pointed out in the Review of Literature, Bygate (2001) states that repetition has to be implemented with an ingredient of novelty, given that over-familiarity can be damaging when boredom and repetitiveness are perceived in task repetition. A way to avoid this would be to include fresh and additional challenges to the tasks proposed (Skehan, 1998). However, in the case of this study, proposing varied movements to the reading of the chapter proved to be very difficult indeed. In this sense, it might be a great challenge to incorporate repetition without running the risk of being repetitive, specially when it comes to reading activities and the use of reading strategies, which was the case of this study.

Also, it is important to mention that repetition was not implemented solely in the post task phase, as it is suggested by Skehan's framework (1996, 1998). Repetition was present throughout the cycle of tasks, either in instances where similar

tasks were implemented, such as Task 9 and 10⁷⁵, or in instances where the themes repeated with a glimpse of novelty, such as Task 1 and 2. Nonetheless, it would seem that, within the frameworks proposed by Skehan (1996, 1998), and as it is suggested by Bygate (2001), it is indeed important to always treat repetition with the ingredient of novelty in order to promote students' engagement in the tasks proposed. And this proved to be a challenge for this researcher, specially considering the participants of this study.

5.3. Students' perceptions of their learning

One of the principles of TBA (Ellis, 2003) is to require students to evaluate their performance and progress, as seen in the Review of the Literature. According to Skehan (1998, as cited in Ellis, 2003) "*students need to be made accountable for how they perform a task and for their overall progress. A task-based lesson needs to engage and help foster students' metacognitive awareness*" (p. 278). In that sense, it was paramount to unveil what students' perceptions regarding their own learning were. The analysis of students' answers in the questionnaires and interviews showed that their learning extrapolated language boundaries, and what was learned can be used for real life purposes. This result goes in line with Pereira's study (2015) whose participants also perceived learning in a more encompassing fashion, having learnt issues such as dealing with computers, finding information in sites, to mention but a few.

During the interviews, students were asked if they could use what they have learned in our classes in other segments of their lives, most students gave the same response: the reading strategies. According to them, the strategies taught throughout the cycle provided them with opportunities to understand texts they encountered in class and outside the classroom. This can be corroborated by the students' own words:

Eu aprendi que antes temos que ler as palavras que entendemos, e muitas vezes as palavras que não entendemos não são tão importantes assim. (QS3 - class 7)

Aprendi a dar menos atenção para todas as

⁷⁵ Tasks 9 and 10 dealt with the reading of parts III and IV of the first chapter of HPSS.

palavras e focar nas mais importantes.
(QS10 - class 7)

Eu peguei as partes que entendia para compreender a ideia geral. (QS2 - class 8)

Porque não entendi algumas palavras, mas entendi o parágrafo entendendo aquelas palavras que eu já sabia. (Q11 - class 10)

Principalmente aquela tática, né, de entender só algumas palavras para compreender a frase, isso acho que me ajudou bastante, e para eu me esforçar e ler cada palavra, porque se a gente só passar o olho assim, as vezes passa uma palavra que a gente conhece e nem percebe. (IS4 - line 84)

Aquele negócio que você fez no início... para ajudar na leitura... [...] As estratégias de leitura. Eu levaria isso. Elas ajudam bastante. (IS7 - lines 72-74)

Na leitura de um informação ou um cartaz ou qualquer outra coisa em inglês, e que eu não vou entender tudo, mas eu posso entender algumas partes e isso já me ajuda para entender o todo. A ideia geral. (IS8 - line 66)

Todo lugar agora tem uma placa alguma em inglês ou alguma coisa, e eu vejo assim e tento lembrar o que eu aprendi na aula. Tipo uma placa falando de alguma praia em inglês, daí fica mais fácil. (IS10 - line 132)

Tratar de leitura me ajudou muito, não só pelo livro, mas agora para a vida toda. Que não precisa saber todas as palavras para entender o texto. Nem só um texto, mas uma música, um cartaz... às vezes uma palavrinha ou o que está desenhado ajudam. (IS14 - line 20)

As estratégias. [...] nas músicas que eu escuto ou algo assim eu fico pensando

nelas. (IS9 - lines 14-16)

Assim, não foi a que eu mais gostei, mas a que eu mais aprendi, a que tu passou sobre, ah, tem que ter palavras significativas. (IS10 - line 114).

Eu acho que agora, quando eu bato o olho em um texto, eu procuro uma palavra que eu conheça. Daí você vai atrás de palavras que você sabe e ficava mais fácil... nem sempre é assim, mas na aula ajuda. (IS15 - line 26)

Through these statements, it is possible to see that the reading strategies, which were an integral part in the development of the cycle of tasks, were in fact connected to the real world, and students could use their knowledge in this matter in their life experiences. In this sense, the thirteen tasks proposed and implemented in this study succeeded in leading most students to read the first chapter of *'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone'* (Rowling, 1999) - *'The Boy Who Lived'* - in an easy and pleasant way. Student 8, in her interview, explained why the strategies were so important for the reading of the chapter:

O método de leitura que tu foi ensinando desde o começo, como a gente podia ler. Se você pulasse todas essas partes e já fosse direto para a leitura, eu não teria nenhuma noção de como começar a ler, mas então foi como um começo, foi uma ajuda de como começar a ler e entender. (line 62).

According to her, if there was no instruction regarding the use of reading strategies, she would not have been able to perform the tasks in the middle task phase. Although reading strategies were mentioned throughout the cycle, Task 5 (Introducing the book) brought a discussion on how to facilitate reading, given that this is an activity that we do on a daily basis. Thus, this discussion helped students the most while reading each part of the *"The boy who lived"*, given that they had explicit instruction on how to facilitate reading by being strategic. One student even mentioned my exact sentence in the questionnaire: *"Você não precisa entender todas as palavras para entender o texto"* (QS6 -

Class 13).

In the case of this study, learning reading strategies even motivated a student to read a manga (Japanese comic) written in English that she had in her house:

As aulas em geral foram legais, eu adorei as aulas. Eu até me animei para ler um mangá que eu tenho lá em casa que é inglês... [...] Eu ainda não terminei, mas eu estou entendendo bastante. [...] [As aulas me] animaram para voltar a ler, porque tu me ensinou. Porque eu já tinha aprendido um pouquinho mais, daí eu fiquei “acho que eu vou conseguir ler... sozinha. (IS13 - lines 122-126).

Furthermore, this connection to the real world is directly related to the concept of tasks themselves (Section 2.1), in which “*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*” (Ellis, 2003, p 16). As I mentioned to the students in Task 5 (Introducing the book), we read all the time in our daily routines. We read books, magazines, notes, messages, Facebook statuses, school textbooks, signs, to mention a few. Thus, reading is an unescapable activity that we do every single day.

The intention was to create tasks that could have real value to the students outside the classroom and, according to the testimony from student 13 presented previously, this was achieved, given that she felt motivated to read something different in English and on her own. The other testimonies presented earlier also verify that what they were exposed to in class during the cycle of tasks could be used in other segments of their lives, making them understand that reading strategies can and should be used outside the classroom as well.

In the post-task questionnaires, students also mentioned that, in addition to Task 5, other tasks helped them in the reading of the first chapter of HPSS. According to them, playing the games proposed (Task 2 and 8), working with comics (Task 1 and 2) and learning more about the characters in the book (Task 3 and 4) facilitated the reading of “*The boy who lived*”:

As atividades sobre os personagens e o jogo da memória. (QS3 - Class 9)

A tarefa que conhecemos os personagens.

(QS5 - Class 9)

As dos quadrinhos. (QS11 - Class 10)

Os jogos. (QS11 - Class 11)

O estudo dos personagens. (QS3 - Class 12)

Descrição dos personagens. (QS9 - Class 12)

As primeiras aulas. (QS10 - Class 13)

Some students went beyond that, and said that all tasks helped them during the reading, especially by the end of the cycle. There were twenty-seven occurrences in which students mention that the cycle itself was a reading facilitator:

Todas, cada uma tinha uma coisa diferente que ajudou. (QS9 - Class 11)

O aprendizado completo. (QS6 - Class 12)

Todos que você ensinou. (QS8 - Class 12)

Saber sobre os capítulos, personagens e situação. Todas. (QS7 - Class 13)

Todas as aulas. (QS11 - Class 13)

Todas as tarefas facilitaram!! (QS14 - Class 14)

Ah, a gente aprendeu muita coisa nova, a gente aprendeu estratégias para compreender melhor os textos... Ah, eu acho que tudo isso! Acho que a gente prestar mais atenção nas imagens, parar para compreender... acho que tudo isso ajuda a compreender o texto. As imagens, os negritos e ter estudado vocabulário antes. (IS15 - line 126)

From these statements and the ones previously presented, it is possible to say that the cycle of tasks was indeed successful in leading students to read the chapter of HPSS. In his framework

for task implementation, Skehan (1996, 1998) systematizes the implementation of tasks in a way that it not only meets the definition of tasks, but also promotes interlanguage development. In that sense, a cycle of tasks is designed taking into consideration that the pre task phase is intended to prepare students for the tasks in the mid task phase, and this was achieved in this study. According to the students, what they saw prior to the mid task phase, that is, the reading of the chapter, allowed them to perform better in the subsequent tasks, and facilitated the reading of '*The boy who lived*'.

Furthermore, the concept of strategic planning (Foster & Skehan, 1996, 1999), central to the framework used in this study, permeates the cycle of tasks designed. Although planning, in the TBLT research, is associated with giving students time to prepare and develop strategies to improve their performance, in the case of this study, all tasks within the cycle served the purpose of planning. That is, through the performance of the tasks in the cycle, students were preparing themselves to read the chapter, and this was not only noticed by the students, but it was also perceived as positive to their learning, given that it prepared them for the mid task phase.

5.4. Summary of the findings

The objective of the present study was to unfold the perceptions of 9th grade students on the implementation of a cycle of tasks developed under the task-based approach rationale (Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2003). This cycle of tasks was done so as to lead students to read the first chapter of '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*' (Rowling, 1999) - '*The Boy Who Lived*' - in an easy and pleasant way. The theoretical framework used to develop the cycle of tasks included Skehan's frameworks for task analysis (1998) and implementation (1996), Ellis's (2003) TBA's principles, Long's focus on form concept (1991) and needs analysis proposal (2015), and the elements of planning by Foster and Skehan (1996, 1999), and repetition by Bygate (2001).

The seventeen student-participants were teenagers, and had different levels of proficiency. Moreover, prior to data collection, most students had never read anything in the English language apart from the activities proposed by their teacher in their EFL classroom. Throughout the fourteen classes they attended, learners answered post-task questionnaires in order to unveil their perceptions of the tasks they were performing. After the

implementation of the cycle of tasks, interviews were conducted so as to have a more complete view of students' perceptions regarding the cycle of tasks. Finally, the data collected was submitted to a qualitative interpretive analysis to answer the research question proposed for this study: What are the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of a cycle of tasks?

Through the analysis and discussion presented in the previous sections, it is possible to say that, in the learners' eyes, TBA was perceived as an effective approach to promote learning opportunities for this group of teenage EFL learners. Furthermore, participants' perceptions reflect the teaching principles of TBA as well as the elements, procedures and concepts of the theoretical frameworks used to guide the development and implementation of the cycle of tasks. Although they did not know how the cycle functioned, what TBA was, and that there was in fact a connection between the tasks in the cycle, they liked the classes and what the framework offered them, which suggests that, in the participants' perception, the implementation of a cycle of tasks under the task-based approach rationale on their learning was positive.

It is also important to highlight that all modifications within the cycle were possible due to this researcher's preparation prior to the beginning of data collection. Although the tasks were described as a workplan, designing the cycle of tasks and classroom procedures ensured that the classes would be guided, and the option to have guided classes proved to be very powerful once this researcher had to deviate from the plan to accommodate the task to classroom demands. If there were no planning involved prior to data collection, this deviation would not have been possible.

Furthermore, the positive feedback show how relevant it is to conceive tasks that are sequenced and reach a greater goal, in this case, to lead students to read the first chapter of *'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone'* (Rowling, 1999). The findings also showed a clear change in participants' perceptions of the level of difficulty of the class, reinforcing the idea that such interference has been positive to these learners, given that after classes had finished, many of them reported that they were able to apply what they had learned to their real world experiences. In this sense, it was paramount to give students the opportunity to reflect on and/or verbalize about what was done and learned in class, which is proposed by the TBA methodological tenets, seeing as this develops students' metacognition.

Though some participants may have had difficulties during the performance of the cycle of tasks, they all overcame their obstacles and reached task completion. Thus, it is possible to say that all the theories and frameworks that underlie the design and implementation of the cycle of tasks proposed for this study build room for a learning context which seems to be fruitful, motivational and, at the same time, challenging for these students. Moreover, the fact that there were not marked differences between what was planned (tasks as workplan) and what was actually implemented (task as process) may signal that there is room for generalization, that is, that these tasks might be applied to other group of learners. Moreover, due to the fact that some of my findings resemble Pereira's (2015) study, it is also possible to say that the frame has potential to trigger learners' acquisition, despite the fact that the tasks designed by Pereira targeted a group of elderly EFL learners.

The next chapter presents the conclusions of the present study, its limitations, as well as some pedagogical implications, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER VI

FINAL REMARKS

This chapter aims at drawing some conclusions from the findings of the present study, as well as providing some pedagogical implications and possibilities for further research. It is divided into three sections. The first one, Section 6.1, presents the main findings obtained from the data analysis. Section 6.2 sets a discussion on some pedagogical implications of this thesis and, at last, section 6.3 brings the limitations of this study and proposes suggestions for further research.

6.1. Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative research was to investigate 9th grade students' perceptions regarding the implementation of a cycle of tasks. In order to do so, a cycle of tasks was designed and implemented taking into consideration Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation, and following the pedagogical principles of the task-based approach (Ellis, 2003; Long, 2015). Throughout the cycle, students performed thirteen different tasks so as to lead them to read the first chapter of *'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone'* (Rowling, 1999) - *'The Boy Who Lived'* - in an easy and pleasant way.

As I have stated before, the interesting part of doing research is to see the theories that underlie the study embedded in students' discourse. Based on the answers provided in the post-task questionnaires and interviews, it was possible to observe that, even though participants did not know what TBA was, their perceptions regarding the cycle of tasks reflect TBA tenets and concepts. This fact contributes to validate both the findings and the theoretical frameworks that underlie this study.

In students' eyes, the cycle of tasks was indeed successful in leading them to read the first chapter of *'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone'* (Rowling, 1999). Furthermore, their testimonies also verify that what they were exposed to in class during the cycle of tasks could be used in other segments of their lives, making them understand that reading strategies can and should be used outside the classroom as well.

Besides that, this study also showed that topic familiarity, visual support, textual highlighting techniques and group work were performance facilitators in students' perceptions, and they in

fact helped in diminishing the level of difficulty of the tasks. And even though learners still found the vocabulary present in the HPSS chapter to be quite demanding, they perceived that text length and difficulty increased gradually from the first class to the last one given, which was this researcher's intention when designing the cycle of tasks for this study. Thus, this was also perceived by students as positive to their learning.

In regards to repetition, although Skehan (1996, 1998) suggests that this should be done as a post task phase, in the case of this study, repetition was present throughout the cycle of tasks, either in instances where similar tasks were implemented or in instances where the themes repeated with a glimpse of novelty. Thus, results show that repetition can then be treated in a broader sense. That is, here, repetition was done so as to prepare the students to read the first chapter of HPSS, which was the main goal of the cycle. Nonetheless, it would seem that, within the frameworks proposed by Skehan (1996, 1998), and as it is suggested by Bygate (2001), it is indeed important to always treat repetition with the ingredient of novelty in order to promote students' engagement in the tasks proposed.

Furthermore, the concept of strategic planning (Foster & Skehan, 1996, 1999), although associated with giving students time to prepare and develop strategies to improve their performance in the TBLT research, in the case of this study, all tasks within the cycle served the purpose of planning. That is, through the performance of the tasks in the cycle, students were preparing themselves to read the chapter. Thus, planning and repetition should be seen in more dynamic ways than what it is proposed within the frames so as to fit the demands of the complexity of the classroom environment.

Ludic activities also received positive feedback from the students. Skehan's (1996, 1998) framework for task implementation offers a space for tasks to be varied, and this highlights the role of the teacher in proposing tasks that might favor different learning styles. This was done by adding games to the cycle of tasks considering students' ages, and according to them, ludic tasks were important and seen as a motivational.

To conclude, the findings of this research indicate that Skehan's (1996, 1998) frameworks for task analysis and implementation, Ellis's (2003) task concept and TBA's principles, the themes brought in PCN-LE (1998), the concept of focus on form (Long, 1991; Ellis, 2012), Long's (2015) needs analysis concept, and the elements of planning by Foster and Skehan

(1996; 1999) and repetition by Bygate (2001) can be used together to create meaningful cycles of tasks. Furthermore, through this study, it was possible to see that broader and deeper learning opportunities are triggered when meaning and form are balanced.

6.2. Pedagogical implications

Through this study, I was able to confirm that, in fact, there needs to be a bridge between what I learn from theory and what I can learn from practice. While research on the Task Based Approach has largely contributed to the Second Language Acquisition area by providing teachers the possibility to improve their teaching skills, there has been few studies that have attempted to build an interface between TBA and the teaching of EFL to public school learners to understand this process. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of studies that deal with TBA, needs analysis, planning, and repetition within instructional context. In this sense, developing a cycle of tasks under the TBA rationale and its theoretical framework is an attempt to bring to practice what theory has so beautifully offered. Thus, designing and implementing such cycle allows for the consolidation of theory into practice, and promotes improvement in teacher understanding of the learning and teaching processes.

Furthermore, embarking on this process of developing a cycle of tasks has allowed me to grow as professional and understand better the theories that underlie my study, especially when such theory goes in line with my own beliefs of teaching and learning. When I first began developing tasks, it was quite difficult for me to grasp some of the concepts within the framework and translate them into classroom practice. The framework is complex, it requires time, a lot of reflection and creativity from the part of the teacher, and this is not an easy task at all. However, having the opportunity to design them enlightened my path towards an understanding of the frame. Thus, the knowledge necessary in the design of tasks brings implications for the field of teacher education and for those who intend to work with tasks in their classrooms.

As I said in the epigraph, “*great teachers engineer learning experiences that put students in the driver’s seat and then get out of the way*” (Ben Johnson, n.d.), and this is what TBA tenets and concepts have to offer: a way for teacher to

develop classes which are student-centered, and in which students are in control of their learning experiences through negotiation of meaning. Thus, it is my belief that teacher educators should consider including the development of cycles of tasks in teacher education programs to enrich teacher's knowledge in initial education.

However, one must keep in mind that designing and sequencing tasks is a challenging enterprise, considering that a myriad of factors come into play, such as: theoretical knowledge about TBA, its tenets and concepts; knowledge about the students; and knowledge of different activities that could be used as a guide for creating new tasks (to mention but a few). In addition, attempting to balance all TBA elements in a cycle of tasks demands from the teacher (and the learners) a lot of time, effort and work. Nonetheless, the investment made brought benefits for both teacher/researcher and learners.

Moreover, designing and implementing this cycle of tasks contributed to broaden my horizons into the range of tools used to teach EFL to public school learners in Brazil. In this sense, teachers should be given opportunities to get in touch with their creative side and everything they have seen so far in terms of materials in order to create tasks that suit the purpose of their classes. Having in mind that the frameworks (Skehan, 1996, 1999) used in this study are dynamic systems, one must also keep in mind that all their elements should account for groups' needs, classroom settings and educational contexts.

Last, considering the findings of this master's thesis, the current EFL teacher working conditions in public schools and EFL teacher education policies/programs in Brazil, more research on TBA and the theoretical frameworks used in this research should be conducted to offer insights to guide educational policies in Brazil.

6.3. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

As this study was innovative in the sense of combining existing theories on TBA, literature, reading and the classroom to develop tasks hierarchically and sequentially interwoven in a cycle of tasks and implement them to a single group of teenage EFL learners in Brazil, the results should be treated with caution. Thus, I bring some limitations of the study and present

suggestions for future researchers interested in replicating it.

First, this study was conducted with a single group; hence, its results cannot be generalized. Thus, it would be important that this study be replicated with other groups of teenage EFL learners in the context of public schools. However, this should be done with caution. One must keep in mind that all the materials used in the development of the cycle of tasks were selected through a Needs Analysis questionnaire; thus, it can be used in any other classroom setting as long as a NA is also implemented to verify students interest in the topics.

In terms of the NA questionnaire, although it was essential to the development of the cycle of tasks proposed for this study, as it allowed this researcher to prepare meaningful tasks related to the groups' reality and their specific needs, Long (2015) also points out that this type of questionnaire should be administered throughout implementation. Thus, further research on the use of NA questionnaires during the implementation phase might be profitable, seeing as it can inform if the tasks need further refinement so as to lead students/teachers to a more timely and effective learning/teaching.

As mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, there is a need to take a more reflective and critical stance in regards to the use of literary texts in EFL classrooms, at least in Brazil, in which EFL proficiency level of students vary significantly. Although these types of texts may be part of real-world experiences, which constitutes one of the major tenets of TBA (Ellis, 2003), their use might extrapolate what students are able to understand given their level of proficiency in the target language. Thus, I believe that further research on the use of literature in the EFL public school classrooms can shed some light on how to make those texts more malleable to be dealt with in this specific context.

Unfortunately, this study cannot bring claims about learners' acquisition, because it was out of the scope of this study to control and test whether new vocabulary was actually learnt, and reading strategies were actually implemented. However, through the learners' voice this was said to have happened. Nevertheless, it is important that future studies control for the acquisition of structural issues so that claims about acquisition (in this narrower sense) can be made.

Last, but not least, the present study combined elements from a theoretical framework based on TBA rationale in order to develop a cycle of tasks implemented in a group of teenage EFL learners from public schools so as to see how these students

would perceive it. Further research could develop other cycle of tasks for other population in other Brazilian contexts.

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APPENDICES

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