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**COHESION AND COHERENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC WRITING**

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Orientadora: Prof.^a Dr.^a Lêda Maria Braga Tomitch.

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*To my family,
With love*

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ABSTRACT

Cohesion and coherence in undergraduate students' academic writing

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The aim of this study was to investigate undergraduate students' perceptions of cohesion and coherence as well as their ability to write cohesive and coherent texts according to the frameworks of Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Charolles (1978). Students at intermediate level from the Letters Course majoring in English answered a questionnaire designed to investigate their knowledge about the subject. Forty-five essays written when the participants attended the 4th, 5th and 6th semesters were analyzed - comparison-contrast, cause-effect, and argumentative essays. All students were able to define cohesion and coherence according to the specialized literature and used cohesion devices properly. However, many of them revealed some difficulty in writing coherent texts. Charolles (1978) assumes that a cohesive and coherent text should meet four meta-rules - *repetition*, *development*, *non-contradiction*, and *relationship*. By using his framework to evaluate coherence, it was evident that almost half of the students violated at least one of those requirements, especially non-contradiction, an aspect that could be explored in writing pedagogy through activities that foster student's reflections. Considering that previous studies pointed to many problems in the written production of Brazilian students in their native language, related to all meta-rules of coherence proposed by Charolles (1978), the results of this research are significantly better: the performance of the students who participated in the present study, writing in ESL, is considerably higher. Even though the results of this research indicate that the teaching of writing has become more efficient to help students in overcoming their difficulties, coherence continues to be a fuzzy concept for ESL students (Lee, 2002).

Key-words: Text. Writing. Cohesion. Coherence.

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RESUMO

Coesão e coerência na escrita
acadêmica de alunos da graduação

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O objetivo deste estudo é investigar a percepção de coesão e coerência de universitários, assim como suas habilidades em redigir textos coesos e coerentes de acordo com os padrões definidos por Halliday e Hasan (1976) e Charolles (1978). Estudantes de nível intermediário do Curso de Letras Inglês responderam a um questionário que visa a investigar seus conhecimentos sobre o tema. Além disso, foram analisadas 45 redações de três tipos - textos comparativos, causa-efeito e argumentativos - por eles escritas durante a 4ª, 5ª e 6ª fase da graduação. De forma geral, os estudantes definiram coesão e coerência em consonância com a literatura especializada e utilizaram as ferramentas de coesão apropriadamente; entretanto, muitos revelaram alguma dificuldade em redigir textos coerentes. Considerando o conceito de Charolles (1978), o qual afirma que textos coesos e coerentes devem respeitar quatro regras - *repetição*, *desenvolvimento*, *não-contradição* e *congruência* -, verificou-se que quase metade dos estudantes violou ao menos um desses requisitos, especialmente a não-contradição, aspecto que poderia ser mais explorado no ensino da escrita por meio de atividades que incentivem a reflexão. Em comparação com estudos anteriores, que apontaram vários problemas relacionados aos quatro requisitos de coerência propostos por Charolles (1978) na escrita de estudantes brasileiros em sua língua nativa, esta pesquisa obteve resultados significativamente melhores: o nível de dificuldade entre os participantes deste estudo, que escreveram em língua estrangeira, inglês, foi consideravelmente menor. Porém, apesar de, atualmente, o ensino da escrita auxiliar de forma mais satisfatória os estudantes, concluiu-se que a coerência ainda é um conceito difícil em ESL (Lee, 2002).

Palavras-chave: Texto. Escrita. Coesão. Coerência.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

L1 – First Language

L2 – Second Language

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

ESL - English as a Second Language

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PRELIMINARIES

Writing has always been a challenge for many students and a topic of extensive research. The intricacy of this activity “involves complex mental processes, besides linguistic and discursive aspects,” and often is a barrier for those who want to develop this ability (Alves & Selau, 2011, p. 134, my translation¹). Indeed, Koch and Elias (2010) recognize that “writing a good text requires knowledge of many kinds, such as linguistic, cognitive, pragmatic, socio-historical and cultural” (p.31, as cited in Alves & Castro, 2012, my translation²). Moreover, this process requires effort, attention, planning, reflection, and organization of thoughts, aspects that are many times underestimated by undergraduate students (Damiani et al., 2011).

Specialized literature has been exposing several problems in the written text of Brazilian students in many contexts (Barbieri, 2009; Cunha & Santos, 2006; Marin & Giovanni, 2007; Santos, 2009; Silva, 2010). Poor writing is detected at various school levels and several students reach undergraduate programs with serious problems in their writing skills (Vêncio & Pachane, 2008). University students also have difficulties in expressing their thoughts and understanding, not being able to convey in their texts the ideas they intended (Damiani et al., 2011). Many undergraduate students, expected to be experienced writers in their first language, do not have sufficient knowledge of textual elements, and their compositions cannot achieve the level required (Alves & Damiani, 2012; Cunha & Santos, 2006; Damiani, 2010; Marin & Giovanni, 2007; Oliveira & Santos, 2005).

Witte and Faigley (1981) observe that in composition textbooks “numerous exercises teach clause and sentence structure in isolation, ignoring the textual, and the situational, considerations for using that structure” (p. 201). In agreement with them, English (1999) believes that grammatical and formal aspects are overestimated instead of the manipulation of content and the ability to make it relevant in the context of a discussion, points which are central to an essay. Damiani et al. (2011), who analyzed compositions written by Brazilian undergraduate

¹ **Original text:** “[...] escrever um texto envolve complexos processos mentais, além dos aspectos linguísticos e discursivos [...]”

² **Original text:** “[...] escrever um bom texto exige conhecimento de natureza variada (linguística, cognitiva, pragmática, sócio-histórico e cultural)”

students, mention another problem: the lack of planning and reviewing during the writing process. They believe that this happens because the educational systems do not encourage students to reflect about what they write. According to them, “the difficulties in the process of teaching and learning writing are widely known,” regardless of the amount of hours devoted to studying language in schools (p. 456, my translation³). They mentioned several authors (Sampaio & Santos, 2002; Cunha & Santos, 2006; Marin & Giovanni, 2007; Ochoa & Aragón, 2007) who also pointed out the difficulties undergraduate students have to express their opinions and ideas coherently to support their reasoning and recognized the need to improve writing abilities in the university context (Damiani et al., 2011).

One of the reasons for the lack of writing ability in educational environments may result from the difficulties that professors have in showing students how to compose texts, the focus of their teaching being on the provision of grammatical rules (Pavão, 2007). It might be that revisions of learner’s compositions are being based on superficial aspects of language and the teaching on the provision of word lists to connect the phrases. It is possible that teachers and students are influenced by a great portion of the advice provided by composition textbooks in general, which stops at sentence boundaries, as detected by Witte and Faigley (1981). These authors observed that “numerous exercises teach clause and sentence structure in isolation, ignoring the textual, and the situational considerations for using that structure” (p. 201). In order to change this reality, Damiani et al. (2011) suggest the inclusion of semantic aspects in the teaching of writing. However, among all the aspects that should be improved in students' written texts, two must receive special attention, according to Bashir (2010): *cohesion* and *coherence*, essential qualities of effective writing. He believes that “emphasis should be laid on coherence and cohesion when teaching writing” and “students’ attention should be drawn to the importance of these elements in making writing comprehensible” (p.98).

Based on the aspects developed throughout this brief introduction, the main objective of this study is to verify undergraduate students' abilities in writing cohesive and coherent texts, the importance

³ **Original text:** “As dificuldades encontradas nos processos de ensino e de aprendizagem da escrita são bastante conhecidas. Apesar de o currículo da educação básica incluir significativa carga horária de ensino de língua materna, parece que tal configuração curricular não tem levado à superação dessas dificuldades”.

they give to cohesion and coherence in the act of composing, and their knowledge about those concepts.

1.2 COHESION AND COHERENCE IN WRITING

The notion of cohesion and coherence, essential properties of a text according to Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), has undergone to alterations. At first, both concepts were very connected, but within the changes in the definition of text nowadays, they are considered different notions (Koch, 2009). Aluisio *et al.* (2008) recognize that there is a current consensus about the separate qualities of coherence and cohesion. However, Koch (2004) believes that they are not radically independent.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) consider cohesion a semantic relation between two textual elements in which one depends on the other for its interpretation. These authors refer to cohesion as “relations of meaning that exist within the text” (p. 16). And Koch (2009) mentions that it is related to the semantic resources by means of which one sentence and one word are connected to the previous ones. Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) explain that cohesion “concerns the ways in which the components of the surface text, the actual words we see or hear, are mutually connected within a linear sequence” (p. 3).

Words that connect sentences and establish textual relations that build the texture of the text, a unity of superior level in comparison to a phrase, contribute to cohesion (Koch, 1989). On the other hand, the inappropriate use of such elements, defined as cohesive devices, may cause problems for readers' understanding. Moreover, texts with fewer linguistic elements of cohesion that specify how the sentences should be conceptually related run the risk of being more difficult to comprehend (Aluisio *et al.*, 2008).

While cohesion refers to the material text, coherence is related to the ideas beyond the words and phrases and “concerns the ways in which the components of the textual world, i.e. the configuration of concepts and relations which underlie the surface text, are mutually accessible and relevant”, according to Beaugrande and Dressler (1981, p. 4). In their view, “the notion of coherence refers to the ways the ideas of the text are related.” (p. 3).

Koch (2004) explains that coherence is a semantic phenomenon linked to the macrostructure of the text and is related to the possibility of interpretation when the reader interacts with the text. She adds that

coherence is built by means of cognitive processes that operate in the reader's mind, provoked by the text and its context. This is in agreement with many other authors who consider coherence a mental entity internal to the reader (Fávero, 2010; Gernsbacher & Givon, 1995; Lee, 2002). In order to establish coherence, the previous knowledge and the shared knowledge among the interlocutors are essential to determine the balance between what should be explicit and implicit in the text. According to Koch (2004), "false assumptions regarding shared knowledge might lead to misunderstandings and prevent the reader from building coherence" (p. 45, my translation⁴).

The complexity of the coherence phenomenon is not fully understood for it is often considered an abstract and fuzzy concept (Connor, 1990; Robert & Kreuz, 1993) difficult to teach and learn, according to Lee (2002). He recognized that "coherence continues to be a difficult concept for ESL students", and observed that, in the classroom, ESL/EFL⁵ teachers usually refer to coherence in abstract terms without explaining and teaching it, they just mention to students that their texts lack unity and the ideas are disorganized (Lee, 2002, p. 153). Consequently, many students do not know how to write coherently, leading Chiu (2004), who investigated the writing abilities of ESL students, to conclude that coherence is "one of the most difficult areas in writing pedagogy," thus its concept "should not be neglected in the writing curriculum" (p. 155).

Regarding the relation between cohesion and coherence, Koch (2009) mentions that cohesion is not a necessary nor sufficient condition of coherence, which is not in the text but is built through interaction between readers and texts. Based on Meurer (2003), Winfield (2010) states that "cohesion is not all there is to text coherence or to the construction of meaning from the perspective of reading or writing", although she believes that "it may be of assistance in some very specific cases [...] and above all it may be of great assistance to the L2 reader." (p. 137). Koch (2009) agrees that cohesion usually facilitates

⁴ **Original Text:** "Pressuposições falsas de conhecimento partilhado podem levar ao processamento inadequado do texto por parte do interlocutor, acarretando mal-entendidos e abortando a possibilidade de construção da coerência".

⁵ In this study, the terms ESL/EFL will be used interchangeably.

comprehension, but she recognizes that “the absence of cohesive elements is not an obstacle to build coherence” (p. 46, my translation⁶).

The problems students have in writing cohesive and coherent texts in their native language, including in undergraduate Language Programs, as Canonice (1999) reports, confirm their lack of knowledge about textual elements (Alves & Damiani, 2012). Among EFL students, the lack of cohesion is also a problem that cannot be ignored, according to Dastjerdi and Samian (2011). The authors investigated essays written by ESL students who had been exposed to intensive teaching of English for six years and concluded that most of them did not know how to use cohesive devices properly. They observed that, in most cases, learners are familiar with different types of cohesive devices but do not know how to use them properly (Dastjerdi & Samian, 2011). Regarding coherence, Ahmed (2010) recognizes that “producing a coherent piece of writing is an enormous challenge, especially in one’s second language” (p.211).

Considering the difficulties teachers and students have in dealing with written text, especially regarding cohesion and coherence in both first and second language, it is important to give attention to essential aspects of writing towards improvements, especially among language students.

1.3 THE STUDY

Acknowledging the essential role that cohesion and coherence play in written text and the difficulties teachers and students have in teaching and learning those aspects, both in Portuguese as a native language and English as a foreign language, the purpose of this research is to investigate among academic students majoring in English, learners' views on these concepts, their awareness about the importance of these, as well as their ability to use cohesion devices properly and to write coherent texts according to the frameworks of Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Charolles (1978), respectively. The research questions that are aimed to help in this investigation are:

⁶ **Original Text:** “Muitos autores passaram a reivindicar que a coerência se constrói por meio de processos cognitivos operantes na mente dos usuários, desencadeados pelo texto e seu contexto, razão pela qual a ausência de elementos coesivos não é, necessariamente, um obstáculo para essa construção”.

- 1) What do students from the seventh semester majoring in English understand about the concepts of cohesion and coherence?
- 2) Do students from the fourth, fifth and sixth semesters of the English Course use cohesive devices satisfactorily, and do they write coherent texts?
- 3) What are the students' major difficulties in writing regarding cohesion and coherence?
- 4) Being aware or unaware about the concepts of cohesion and coherence from the specialized literature influenced students to write cohesive and coherence texts?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This piece of research might present a practical way to evaluate cohesion and coherence by making use of frameworks already developed but that do not seem to be largely explored, especially regarding coherence. According to Charolles (1978), a text should meet four rules to achieve coherence - non-contradiction, continuity, congruency and progression – and learning each of those requirements might help students to write coherent texts.

By accessing undergraduate students' written texts and acknowledging their views on cohesion and coherence, teachers might realize learners' major difficulties and verify the need to reinforce certain aspects of writing in their classes. In addition, they can also reflect on developing effective teaching strategies that will help students to understand essential aspects in the written text to improve their writing skills. The students might also benefit from this research because it can help them to recognize the obstacles to develop writing abilities that are common for many and improve their texts by reflecting on important aspects of cohesion and coherence explained in the frameworks that they may not be familiar with.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter begins with a brief definition of the writing activity explaining what is involved in this process. In sequence, it contemplates researcher's attempts to describe the writing process using different models to represent the cognitive abilities involved in this activity and, after justifying the importance of Flower and Hayes (1976) writing model, their theory is described in details as well as its importance in the field. Following this introductory part, the concept of text is presented, cohesion is defined, mainly according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), as well as the types of cohesive devices, and the notion of coherence is discussed along with the requirements that a text should meet to achieve coherence, according to Charolles (1976).

2.1 MODELS OF WRITING

Writing is compared to a problem-solving situation whose resolution requires complex cognitive activities and abilities, which makes it difficult to identify, study, and integrate into a complex system the diverse mental mechanisms that take place during this process (Alamargot & Chanquoy, 2001). Indeed, writing involves not only translating ideas into text, but also creating content and tailoring the way this is presented to the reader. The writer needs to encode the thought to be exposed in the text and express it in a convincing way, according to Galbraith (2009). He adds that writing places high demands on the limited capacity of working memory⁷ because it “involves a complex interaction between a wide range of different processes” (p.7). Consequently, the writing activity requires from the writers the development of strategies to manage the process.

Over the last thirty years, researchers have tried to analyze, explain, and represent the process of writing through different writing models, hoping that a clear understanding of how various cognitive

⁷ Working memory, according to Bailer (2011, p.1), is a theoretical construct that “refers to the integrated system that temporarily stores and manipulates information during the performance of a cognitive task”. Hayes, Kelly and Smith (2013) defined it as a “multicomponent, limited-capacity workspace capable of monitoring and transforming information while executing complex cognitive tasks” (p.176). They also explain that “a crucial function of the working memory system is distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information while maintaining task goals, often in the face of competing or distracting information” (p.176).

abilities interact during this process would help to find the appropriate instructions for learners to develop fluency in writing a text (Becker, 2006). According to Alamargot and Chanquoy (2001), the models delimit, surround, and “define processes, knowledge and modes of processing necessary for the production of a text,” allowing “researchers to focus on some dimensions of the writing task” that belong to a complex system (p. 3). The authors add that writing models

propose a relatively precise and analytic definition of the writing activity, both concerning the process architecture (in terms of the arrangement of operations of these processes in models as well as in terms of definitions of sub-processes of operations that compose the processes) and functioning (in terms of processes, management rules, control, and activation in Working Memory) (p. 3).

Although there are many writing models described in the literature, this study will focus on the cognitive process theory of writing developed by Hayes and Flower (1981) which describes the writing process in one’s native language (L1), because it has been “widely regarded as the most powerful in cognitive writing and supported by a number of studies” (e.g., Alamargot & Chanquoy 2001; Braaksma *et al.*, 2004; Chanquoy & Alamargot, 2002; Graham & Harris 2000), as mentioned by Chien (2008, p. 45). He assures that subsequent models of writing were similar and predominantly based upon the idea of this model which is “often used as a criterion in exploring L2 writing” (p.45), which is within the scope of this research.

According to Chien (2008), Hayes and Flower’s model helped to “throw light on different sub-skills of the actual strategies that writers might have to put them into practice collectively” and to “change views about the teaching of composition” (p. 47), opening possibilities for improvements. Besides showing the need for writers to “self-regulate and monitor the intricate cognitive processes”, the model points out the advantages writers can have by being conscious of the strategies they use and this can help them to differentiate the ones “that are proper or not for particular writing situations” and thus monitor their writing (Chien, 2008, p.47). The next section will describe Hayes and Flower’s model of writing which has achieved broad acceptance.

2.1.1 Flower and Hayes' cognitive writing model

The composing process is seen, traditionally, as a series of decisions and choices in which one's purpose in writing, one's sense of relation of speaker, subject and audience, and language (syntactic and lexical choices) participate in guiding these decisions writers make as they write (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Throughout the 1980's, researchers examined how these forces guide the act of writing and interact. As a result, an outstanding model was developed by Flower and Hayes (1981) to explain the key steps and patterns that occur throughout this activity establishing "interdisciplinary links among composition studies, cognitive science and psychology" (Chien, 2008, p. 47). Their cognitive processes theory rests on four key points: 1) the process of writing is a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate during the act of composing; 2) these processes have a hierarchical, highly embedded organization in which any given process can be embedded within any other; 3) the act of composing is a goal-directed thinking process, guided by the writer's own growing network of goals; 4) writers create their own goals in two ways: by generating both high-level goals and supporting sub-goals which embody the writers developing sense of purpose, and then, at times, by changing major goals or even establishing entirely new ones based on what has been learned in the act of writing (Hayes & Flower, 1981, p.366).

Flower and Hayes (1981) delineated the organization of writing processes, dividing their model into three units: the *task environment*, the *writer's long-term memory*, and the *writing process* (p.369). See figure 1:

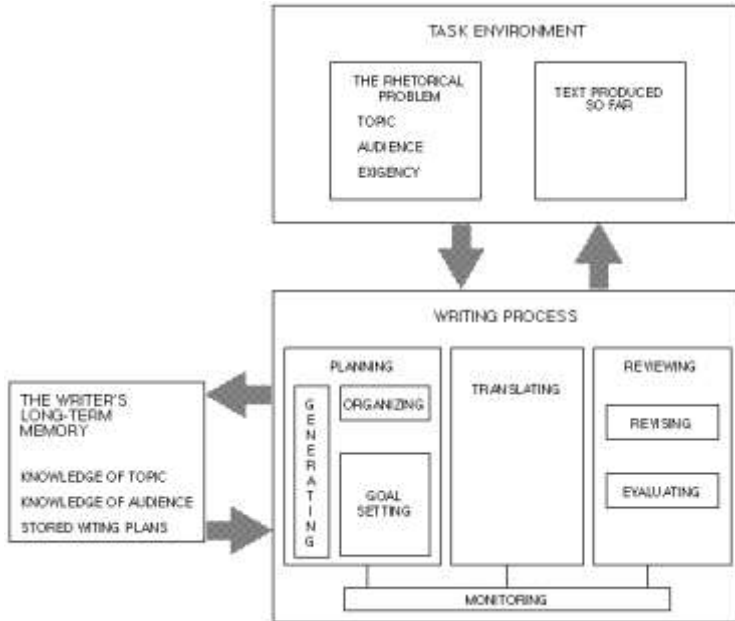


Figure 1: The Cognitive Process Model of the Composing Process (Flower & Hayes, 1981)

The first unit, the *task environment*, includes what is outside of the writer and influences his performance – the rhetorical problem, or assignment, describing the theme to be written about, its audience, motivational factors derived from the writing situation, the text being written, writer’s goals, other details which prompt the student to write, and the development of the text itself.

During the act of composing, which, according to the first key point of the cognitive process theory, is considered a set of distinctive thinking processes organized by the writers, initially a rhetorical problem⁸ is presented to the writer, which includes his own goals, the rhetorical situation and the audience which prompts him/her to write (Flower & Hayes, 1981). The writer makes his own representation of the problem and tries to solve it by writing something. Good writers are able

⁸ Rhetorical problems might be choosing “which subject to write about and why, who is the reader and which is his relation with him, which genre is suitable for this situation, how to select and organize the information according to this genre and which register to use (formal or informal)” (Alvarado, 2003, p.1). (*my translation*)

to cope with many demands satisfactorily such as the rhetorical situation, the audience, and their own goals in writing. However, if the writer's representation of the rhetorical problem is inaccurate or underdeveloped, he is unlikely to solve it entirely or "attend to the missing aspects of the problem" (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 369).

As composing proceeds, titles, topic sentences, and simple words constrain the content to be written and limit "the choices of what can come next" (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 371). Writers must consolidate new ideas with earlier statements to be coherent and make decisions regarding what they want to cover in each part of the text. The growing text demands time and attention from the writer and it competes with two other forces which could direct the writing process - the writer's knowledge stored in his long-term memory and his plans for dealing with the rhetorical problem. There is a constant conflict between what the writer knows about a topic and what he might want to say to the reader, or between a graceful phrase that completes a sentence and the more awkward point he actually wanted to make, according to Flower and Hayes (1981, p.371). They recognize that it is a difficult task for writers to "juggle and integrate the multiple constraints of their knowledge, their plans, and their text into the production of each new sentence" (p. 371).

The second unit of the model, the *writer's long-term memory*, exists in the mind of the writer and also includes outside resources such as books. This memory stores knowledge related to the topic (domain knowledge), to the audience (pragmatic knowledge) and to specific texts (knowledge of writing plans and problem representations). In order to access their long-term memory to solve a problem, writers need cues to access and retrieve a network of useful knowledge. Since this type of memory has "its own internal organization of information," according to Flower and Hayes (1981), "the writer needs to reorganize or adapt that information to fit the demands of the rhetorical problem" and "meet the different needs of a reader" (p. 371). However, if the writer only uses information retrieved from his long-term memory, he/she will probably fail to reorganize that knowledge in a way that fulfills the different demands of readers.

The third and last unit, the *writing process*, which is divided into *planning*, *translating* and *reviewing*, operates through a *monitor* function that allows and controls access to these three activities, regulating the recursion of their application and access to the writer's long-term memory (Alamargot & Chanquoy, 2001, p. 5). According to Hayes and Flower (1981), during the act of composing, writers "monitor

their current process and progress” by means of this control process (p. 374). The authors add that the monitor, functioning as a “writing strategist” and guided both “by the writer’s goals and by individual writing habits or styles,” determines how long each process should last before switching to another one (p. 374). Some people plan a whole discourse in detail before writing while others prefer to translate their ideas into words gradually. Hayes and Flower (1981) explain that the amount of time the “writer will continue generating ideas before attempting to write prose” is determined by the monitor and children are not fluent possibly because their monitor is not well developed to control their processes pausing one and changing to another in a proper time (p. 374).

In the *planning* process, Flower and Hayes (1981) explain that “writers form an internal representation of the knowledge that will be used in writing” which is “likely to be more abstract than the writer’s prose representation will eventually be” (p. 372). This knowledge might be represented in a variety of symbolic systems – visual, perceptual codes, or whole ideas transformed into a single word. The process of planning, or building this representation, according to Flower and Hayes (1981), involves three sub-processes: *generating ideas*, *organizing*, and *goal setting*.

Considering Flower and Hayes’ model of writing, Alamargot and Chanquoy (2001) explain that the planning process establishes “a writing plan from domain knowledge retrieved from Long Term Memory, and information extracted from the task environment” (p. 5). They add that “this plan guides text writing by defining the main goal and the sub-goals” and “can also be retrieved from Long Term Memory, if it has been stored among the writer’s knowledge” (p.5). Otherwise, the plan has to be built through the sub-processes of generating, organizing, and goal setting (Alamargot & Chanquoy, 2001).

The first sub-process of planning, *generating ideas*, “includes retrieving relevant information from long-term memory,” which might be already well organized or in the form of fragmented thoughts, according to Flower and Hayes (1981, p. 372). The authors explain that if such information is not well adapted to the rhetorical task demands, the process of *organizing* will help the writer to give a meaningful structure to his ideas.

Organizing, the second sub-process, “allows the writer to identify categories, to search for subordinate and superordinate ideas, which include or subsume the current topic,” in a way that organizes ideas in a writing plan, according to Flower and Hayes (1981, p. 372). They add

that it also “attends to more strictly textual decisions about the presentation and ordering of the text”, helping writers to “identify first or last topics, important ideas, and presentation patterns” (p.372). However, organizing involves more than just ordering points. The authors emphasize that “all rhetorical decisions and plans for reaching the audience affect the process of organizing ideas at all levels, because it is often guided by major goals established during the sub-process of *goal setting*” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 372).

During the third sub-process of planning, *goal setting*, Flower and Hayes (1981) explain that writers establish goals, procedural and substantive, often simultaneously, to guide the process of organizing ideas, identifying topics and presentation patterns. The writer chooses a topic to introduce a paragraph, for example, and reflects on relations between different points s/he wants to make and ideas to suggest for the reader. Flower and Hayes (1981) assure that not only in the pre-writing stage but throughout the whole act of composing, goals are created and refined by the writer, “developed and revised by the same processes that generate and organize ideas” (p. 373). They add that goals generate ideas that lead to new and “more complex goals which can then integrate content and purpose” (p. 373). Flower and Hayes (1981) conclude their considerations about planning, mentioning that writers' definition of their rhetorical problems and setting goals are an important part of the creativity in writing, accounting for outstanding differences between good and poor writers.

Following the first process of planning, the second process, *translating*, is the act of “putting ideas into visible language”, and it “requires the writer to juggle all the special demands of written” language, from generic and formal “through syntactic and lexical ones down to the motor tasks of forming letters”, according to Flower and Hayes (1981, p. 373). During the previous process of planning, the information generated is represented in such symbols as imagery, sensations, or key words, and the writer needs to organize them into linear pieces of written language. By this time, the ideas originating in the writer’s mind will be organized in a network of relationships and translated into written words following syntactic and lexical demands of formal writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

Alamargot and Chanquoy (2001) explain that the translation process “runs under the control of the writing plan and translates domain knowledge in language” (p.5). They add that translation retrieves from long term memory “complementary knowledge allowing to develop each part of the writing plan before translating the retrieved propositions

in correct sentences” through lexical and grammatical processing (p.5). For inexperienced writers, observes Flower and Hayes (1981), the process of translation might “overwhelm the limited capacity of short-memory,” interfering with more global processes of planning what a person wants to express (p.373). This can result in two situations: the constraints of written language are ignored by the writer, producing errors, or the planning will be local and poor. Both situations lead to frustration.

The third and last process, *reviewing*, is an essential skill for successful writing. This process “evaluates the appropriateness between the written text and the linguistic, semantic and pragmatic particularities of the writing goal” (Alamargot & Chanquoy, 2001, p.5). Reviewing depends on the sub-processes of *evaluating*, which refers to appraisal of the written text, and *revising*, the actual changes applied in the text. Both, along with *generating*, can “interrupt any other process and occur at any time” during writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 374). Reviewing might occur consciously when writers decide to read their text as a starting point to further translate or with the intention of evaluating and revising the text. This usually originates new cycles of planning and translating. The process of reviewing might also start unconsciously, as a consequence of text evaluation or when the writer evaluates his own planning through a revision of unwritten thoughts (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

Having identified in their writing model “three major processes - plan, translate, and review - and a number of sub-processes available to the writer,” Hayes and Flower (1981) describe the writing process as flexible, observing that “people do not march through these processes in a simple 1, 2, 3 order” (p. 375). According to them, the fact that writers spend time planning over and over at all levels during composition, for example, shows that “the process of writing is not a sequence of stages but a set of optional actions” (p. 375). Reviewing, for instance, is not a unique stage but a thinking process that can occur at any time a writer wants to evaluate or revise his text, and it constantly originates new planning (Hayes & Flower, 1981, p. 376).

Explaining how the writing processes are orchestrated, Hayes and Flower (1981) assure that they are “hierarchically organized, with component processes embedded within other components” (p. 375), the second key point of their cognitive process theory. The act of composing, as a large hierarchical and working system, contains smaller systems – generating ideas, organization, and so on – which include others. A particular process may occur at any time and be embedded

within another one or “even within another instance of itself,” although writers usually “embed individual processes as needed” to accomplish the task required (Hayes & Flower, 1981, p. 375). Writing processes are compared to tools writers use to compose, which are used according to their needs and that might require the application of other tools. For example, generating ideas might evoke evaluation, which may require development of new ideas. A sentence that was written and reviewed might induce the writer to compose a new sentence, involving the processes of planning, translating and reviewing. During writing, different processes take place at any time and embed other ones.

In the third key point of their cognitive process theory, Hayes and Flowers (1981) assure that “writers create a hierarchical network of goals and these, in turn, guide the writing,” a goal-directed thinking process (p. 377). Although writing can be an unstructured and exploratory process, it is a purposeful act, at the same time. This happens because writers rapidly forget their local working goals once they have been satisfied and due to the nature of such goals, which fall into two different categories - *process* and *content* goals. Process goals are the “instructions people give themselves about how to carry out the process of writing” (e.g., Let me write the conclusion; I’ll improve the first paragraph later), while content goals “specify all things the writer wants to say or to do to an audience” (Hayes & Flower, 1981, p. 377). Certain goals might specify both content and process, such as in the following example: “I want to open this paragraph with a statement about homosexuality”.

Considering content goals, Flower and Hayes (1981) explain that they “grow into an increasingly elaborate network of goals and sub-goals as the writer composes” and, since this network is hierarchical, “new goals operate as a functional part of the more inclusive goals above them” (p.377). According to the authors, these networks have three important features. Firstly, “they are created as people compose, throughout the entire process with ongoing exploration and the growing text”, instead of resulting from pre-writing (p. 378). Secondly, “the goal-directed thinking that produces these networks takes many forms”; it often “involves describing one’s starting point,” in which the writer imagines, for instance, what the audience would want to read; or “laying out a plan for reaching a goal,” that is planning how sentences will be written, in a complex or simplistic manner, for example; or “evaluating one’s success” after reading what was written, setting implicit goals such as being direct, appealing, ironic and so on (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 378). The authors add that while writers attempt to consolidate their

knowledge, this search for insight in the writing process “leads to new, more adequate goals, which in turn guide further writing” and provide “the logic that moves the composing process forward” (p. 379).

Flower and Hayes (1981) explain that the writer's own set of self-made goals, which guide composing and move the writing process forward, “can be inclusive and exploratory or narrow, sensitive to the audience or chained to the topic, based on rhetorical savvy⁹ or focused on producing correct prose” (p. 379). These goals, plans, and criteria for evaluation of discourse mediate “those forces which guide composing, such as the rhetorical situation, one's knowledge, the genre, etc” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p.379).

The third feature of the network of goals that guide the writing process is that they are not only created hierarchically, but as writers compose, they continually return to their higher-level goals that “give direction and coherence to their next move” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 379). Poor writers usually search for ready-made goals and “frequently depend on very abstract, undeveloped top-level goals, and very low-level goals, such as finishing a sentence or correctly spelling a word”, according to Flower and Hayes (1981, p. 379).

The common belief that not only the writer's goals control the writing process but also his/her own knowledge of the topic or the text itself is not overlooked by Flower and Hayes (1981). They agree that these three forces struggle for influence – “each wants to govern the choices and decisions made next” - and compete for the writer's attention, influencing the choices he/she makes and even changing his initial plan (p.380). According to them, there are two reasons why this competition of forces occurs and influences the writer to be driven by the text and abandon his initial plans, despite the nature of the writing process as a goal-driven process. The first reason is that new knowledge and features of the text can interrupt the composition through the process of generating and evaluating at any time, allowing a “collaboration among goals, knowledge, and text” that “often culminates in a revision of previous goals” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 380). The establishment and persistence to maintain initial goals have a functional significance because writers frequently refer back to their initially established goals and behave consistently with them as well as evaluate the text according to the criteria specified in their goals. A second

⁹ **Savvy** = practical understanding or knowledge of something. In: Savvy [Def. 2]. (n.d.). In Merriam Webster Online, Retrieved December 5, 2011, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/savvy>.

reason for the competition of goals, knowledge of the topic and text take place influencing writers to allow knowledge and text to guide the writing process instead of their initial plans is that some writers recognize the value of free exploration and “have a repertory of flexible process goals which let them use writing for discovery”, according to Flower and Hayes (1981, p.381). They observed that these sophisticated writers are constantly “writing it out” and saying to themselves, as they write, “I’ll edit it later”, while poor writers are usually obsessed with perfecting the current text” (p.381).

Summarizing the third key-point of their theory, which focuses on the role of the writer’s own goals, Flower and Hayes (1981) consider the possibility of writing as a goal-directed thinking process being adapted to the task of fostering insight and developing new knowledge. They believe that the combination of purposefulness and openness of the writing process is based on the following principle, which creates the fourth key point of their theory: “in the act of writing, people regenerate or recreate their own goals in the light of what they learn” (p. 381).

In the fourth and last key point of their writing model, Flower and Hayes (1981) propose that writers create their own goals in two ways: “by generating goals and supporting sub-goals which embody a purpose; and, at times, by changing or regenerating their own top-level goals in light of what they have learned by writing” (p. 381). During writing, knowledge develops and the schema grows and changes while writers are doing research and inferences. Many common writing goals are already stored in memory, especially in experienced writers.

According to Flower and Hayes (1981), two creative processes take place in the act of composing. The authors mention that “writers develop an elaborate network of working sub-goals” which “give concrete meaning and direction to their more abstract top-level goals” (p. 381) and they might regenerate or change the goals that had been directing their writing and planning by replacing or revising major goals in light of what they learned through writing. Flower and Hayes (1981) explain that writers organize these two basic processes – creating and regenerating goals -- in three different patterns of goals: *Explore and Consolidate*, *State and Develop*, and *Write and Regenerate*.

In the first pattern of goal, *Explore and Consolidate*, writers frequently work “under a high-level goal or plan to explore” – think the topic over, jot ideas down or start writing - which might be subordinate to a very specific goal, such as “what to say in order to convince a school director to hire me as a teacher”? (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p.382). Under this goal, “the writer might explore his/her own

knowledge” and, subsequently, he/she goes back to his/her top-level goal and “reviews the information he/she has generated” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 382). Describing the end of this process, Flower and Hayes (1981) explain that the writer consolidates this information, producing a more complex idea “by drawing inferences and creating new concepts” (p.382).

Flower and Hayes (1981) observe that poor writers are often adept at the exploration part, but good writers usually return to their higher-level goal “to review and consolidate what has just been learned through exploring” (p.382). They explain that “in the act of consolidating, the writers set up a new goal which replaces the goal of explore and directs the subsequent episode in composing” (p 382). The process of setting, developing sub-goals, and regenerating those goals is a creative process in which it is possible to learn. The writer uses a goal to generate ideas, consolidating them to be used in order to revise or regenerate new and more complex goals.

In the second pattern, *State and Develop*, the writer starts with a “general high-level goal which he then proceeds to develop or flesh out with sub-goals,” according to Flower and Hayes (1981, p. 384). The authors add that “as his goals become more fully specified, they form a bridge from his initial intentions to actual text” (p. 384). The third and last pattern, *Write and Regenerate*, is analogous to the *Explore and Consolidate*, but instead of planning, the writer produces prose – as he/she attempts to compose sentences, his/her plans are represented in language and “subjected to the acid test of prose” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 385).

This section described the cognitive writing model proposed by Flower and Hayes (1981), who consider writing to be a set of distinctive thinking processes that writers arrange, having a hierarchical organization in which “any given process can be embedded within any other” (p. 366). Their model, widely accepted in the specialized literature, also portrays the act of composing as a “goal-directed thinking process, guided by the writer's own growing network of goals” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 366), created when the writer generates both high-level goals and supporting sub-goals, and also when s/he modifies major goals or establishes new ones based on what has been learned during writing. The next sections of this chapter will discuss text, defining it and will also elaborate on two important aspects which are the focus of this study: cohesion and coherence.

2.2 TEXT, COHESION AND COHERENCE

2.2.1 Definition of Text

Halliday and Hasan (1976) define a text as “a unit of language in use. It is not a grammatical unit, like a clause or a sentence; and it is not defined by its size” (p. 1). They concluded that “a text is best regarded as a semantic unit: a unit not of form but of meaning” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 2). Tomitch (2012) complemented this view by explaining that “texts have to do with language in use, that is, language that fulfills a communicative role in human interaction, which is used in social contexts [...]” (p.45). Moreover, they “communicate a message to the reader,” functioning “as a unity with respect to its environment” (Tomitch, 2012, p. 45).

According to Koch and Travaglia (1989), who follow Halliday and Hasan (1976), "what makes a linguistic sequence a text instead of an aleatory pile of words" has been termed texture or textuality - they see both as referring to the same concept (p.26). Although their definition does not contradict the literature, Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) see the two concepts as related but having independent features since textuality is a property characteristic of all texts, whereas texture is a property characteristic of individual texts.

Daltoé (2010) explains that text is defined by Charolles (1978) as the union between logical-semantic and pragmatic aspects, which refers to cohesion (micro level) and coherence (macro level), respectively. According to him, in Charolle’s framework both instances are guided by a set of rules anchored in a linguistic base while the receptor and the situation are in second plan. Daltoé (2010) understands that the priority is given to a linguistic domain needed to produce a text and the participants as well as social factors are subjected to the establishment of rules. However, he noticed that the meta-rules are not sufficient to deal with language in all situations and, although Charolles tried to support a text analysis that goes from practice to theory, his discussions about text are limited to the linguistic system and his methodology influenced teachers to interfere in student’s written productions in a prescriptive way (Daltoé, 2010). On the other hand, Pereira (2014) believes that Charolles (1997) tried to investigate the problem of coherence instead of building a list or rules to be followed and the four requirements a text must fulfill to be coherent were proposed as a result of such analysis. Val (1991) thinks that the establishment of meta-rules helped to clarify the vague concept of coherence, which became more

feasible and, according to Souza (1999), such rules require the consideration of pragmatic parameters that refer to participants in the act of textual communication.

Koch and Travaglia (2011) assure that coherence is the basis of textuality, because coherent linguistic sequences might be considered texts even without cohesion. However, cohesive sequences do not constitute texts if they are not coherent. Charolles (1987a, as cited in Koch & Travaglia, 2011) agrees that coherence is responsible for texture, stating that a “text is a sequence of phrases which establishes relation within each other” and coherence makes this possible (p. 32, my translation¹⁰). Although he does not make a clear distinction between cohesion and coherence, the author admits that cohesion facilitates comprehension as well as helps writers and readers to build coherence, and cohesive elements inappropriately used might be responsible for incoherence, usually in local levels, because the reader might have difficulties understanding the message (Souza, 1999, p.78). Charolles (1987a, as cited in Koch & Travaglia, 2011) believes that every text is coherent to some extent, depending on the reader’s capacity of making sense of it. Certain readers might imagine situations in which passages of the text which seem to be incoherent for others make sense, because he was able to build coherence and others were not. Marcuschi (2012), in agreement with Charolles (1997), also believes that any text can be coherent if the reader adapts it to the situation taking into account author’s intentions, objectives, sociocultural rules, audience...(p.76). According to Koch and Travaglia (2011), coherence is not related only to the text or with the readers but to the process in which text and reader interact. They add that coherence depends on the interaction between text, writer, and reader. The reader’s capacity to establish coherence depends on his interpretation of the text, which is influenced by his knowledge of the world and the situation in which the text was written, as well as his acquaintance with linguistic elements, vocabulary, and theme. However, if the writer violates at high levels the use of cohesive elements that help structure the text, the reader might not be able to establish coherence at all (Koch & Travaglia, 2011).

Even though learners should be acquainted with all the standards of textuality in order to write well, cohesion and coherence have received significant attention in research, especially because many students have difficulties in this regard.

¹⁰ **Original text:** “Um texto é uma seqüência de frases com relações entre si”.

2.2.2 Cohesion and Coherence

Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) define text as a “communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality” (p. 3) - *intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, intertextuality, cohesion* and *coherence*. While intentionality concerns the author’s efforts in producing a discourse which enables him to satisfy the goals he has in mind in a certain communicative situation which guides the composition, such as convincing, warning, and so on, acceptability is related to the reader’s expectation that the text will be useful and provide knowledge, leading him to cooperate with the writer’s goals. Informativity has to do with “the extent to which the occurrences of the presented text are expected vs. unexpected or known vs. unknown” (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981, p.8), which may define the interest of the reader towards the text, that should bring new information to increase his knowledge mixed with information he is capable to recognize. Situationality, for Al-Massri (2013), “concerns the factors which make a text relevant to a situation of occurrence” (p. 106) and intertextuality, for Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), “concerns the factors which make the utilization of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts” (p.10). According to them, “if any of these standards is not considered to have been satisfied, the text will not be communicative. Hence, non-communicative texts are treated as non-texts” (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981, p. 3).

Cohesion and *coherence* are considered by Favero (2010) as two important aspects and different phenomena. Cohesion is manifested at the microtextual level while coherence mostly in the macrotextual, or global level, as a result of cognitive processes that operate when readers interact with the text. Regarding this theme, Ahmed (2010) states that “many researchers agree that cohesion, on the macro level is related to linking ideas, whereas on the micro level it is concerned with connecting sentences and phrases”(p.212).

Blanpain (2006) defines cohesion as a surface phenomenon, and it “concerns the grammatical and lexical features that create ties between sentences” (p. 25). Moraes (1984) refers to cohesion as a visible part of the textual component in the linguistic system to create texture expressed through grammar and vocabulary. Koch (1999) states that cohesion establishes connections between the elements in the surface text, achieved through the use of linking words, or cohesive ties, that give unity to a text.

Halliday and Hasan (1980) define cohesion as “the set of semantic resources for linking a sentence with what has gone before” (p. 10). According to them, cohesive devices link the parts to the whole and create the unity of language in the linguistic system. The realization of cohesion is made through a tie, or a link, that connects two related items, state Halliday and Hasan (1980). The authors also define cohesion as a “term to refer to a single instance of cohesion” and “a term for one occurrence of a pair of cohesively related items” (Halliday & Hasan, 1980, p. 3). In order to explain the concepts of tie, they use the following sentences:

Wash and core *six cooking apples*. Put *them* into a fireproof dish.
 Wash and core *six cooking apples*. Put the *apples* into a fireproof dish.

In the first example, *them* and *six apples* refer to the same element. The relation between them constitutes a tie. The second example contains two ties: the relation of *the* to *six cooking apples*, and the repetition of the word *apples*, which have a cohesive effect (Halliday & Hasan, 1980, p. 4).

Halliday and Hasan (1980) list three categories of cohesive ties, or linking words: *grammatical*, *lexical* and *conjunction*. The first category, grammatical, comprises *reference*, *substitution*, and *ellipsis*.

Reference is described by Halliday and Hasan (1980) as the “relation between an element of the text and something else by reference to which it is interpreted in the given instance” (p.308). Reference involves *endophoric* relations, which can be *anaphoric* or *cataphoric*. Both occur within the text, but the former presuppose an item that appears in the preceding text and the latter occurs when this item appears in the subsequent text. Moraes (1984) adds that reference comprises *personal*, *demonstrative*, and *comparative* relations. Personal reference includes personal pronouns and their possessive forms considered inherently cohesive only in the third persons – *he*, *him*, *his*, *they*, *their*, *them*, *theirs*, *it*, *its* – even though the first and second person might be cohesive in quoted speech. Demonstrative reference is related to location, and it is on the scale of proximity including the definite article *the* and demonstrative pronouns – *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, *here*, *there*, *now*, *then*. Comparative reference is defined as indirect reference by means of identity or similarity and consists of adjectives or adverbs referring backward or forward to an item of the text, using words such as *same*, *equal*, *similar*, *more*, *better*, etc (Halliday & Hasan, 1980).

Regarding *substitution*, the second kind of grammatical cohesion, Moraes (1984) mentions that this grammatical cohesion is “mostly an anaphoric relation” (p. 13) in which a substitute word is used in place of the repetition of a particular item. Substitution is nominal when it comprises relations between nouns being realized by *one*, *ones*, and *same*; verbal if a verb is substituted by *do*; and clausal in the case of entire clauses being realized by *so* and *not*.

The third kind of grammatical cohesion, the *ellipsis*, occurs when a presupposed item is not stated. In nominal ellipsis a noun is omitted; verbal ellipsis occurs when a verbal group is left unstated; and the clausal type of ellipsis involves omission “that is external to the verb itself affecting other elements in the structure of the clause” (Halliday & Hasan, 1980, p. 197), the modal or the propositional element, according to Moraes (1984).

Lexical cohesion, the second category of cohesive ties, involves the selection of a lexical item that is related to one occurring previously and is broken down into *reiteration* and *collocation*. In the former, “the reiterated item refers back to another lexical item having the same referent”, according to Moraes (1984, p. 14). Cohesive lexical reiteration can be established through repetition of the same word, of a synonym, of a near synonym, or of a general word. Halliday and Hasan (1976) define reiteration as “a form of lexical cohesion which involves the repetition of a lexical item, at one end of the scale; the use of a general word to refer back to a lexical item, at the other end of the scale; and a number of things in between the use of a synonym, near-synonym, or superordinate”. Collocation is described by Halliday and Hasan (1980) as “the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur” (p. 284) in adjacent sentences. Moraes (1984) adds that lexical items sharing similar contexts and lexical environment might form a cohesive chain when they occur across sentence boundaries. Antonyms, complementaries, and words from ordered series are examples of co-occurrence of the collocational type.

The third and last category of cohesive ties, *conjunction*, according to Halliday and Hasan, (1976), is concerned with “an abstract relation between one proposition and another” (p.13) and it is defined as “a specification of the way in which what is to follow is systematically connected to what has gone before” (p. 227). The authors add that conjunctions have the “function of relating to each other linguistic elements that occur in succession but are not related by other, structural means” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 227). Conjunctions are classified into four types: *additive*, *adversative*, *causal*, and *temporal*. Moraes

(1984) typified each one by the words *and*, *yet*, *so*, and *then*, respectively. He mentions other cohesive items that are not related to these four types but also have a cohesive force in unifying the parts of the text. Among them are the words *well*, *now*, *of course*, *after all*, and others.

Coherence, on the other hand, according to Blanpain (2006), “refers to the underlying logical relations which make the text a unified whole rather than a sequence of unconnected sentences” (p.25), and it “plays a major role in the way that ideas make sense together” (Winfield, 2010, p. 2).

According to Lee (2002), among many attempts to define coherence, traditionally known as “the relationships that link the ideas in a text to create meaning for the readers” (p. 135), there are basically two divergent sources to interpret this concept: linguistic, and non-linguistic. From a linguistic perspective, coherence is internal to the text and

it lies beyond the surface structure of texts often characterized by cohesion and information structure and can be conceived in terms of the underlying relations that hold between assertions and how these assertions contribute to the overall discourse topic (Lee, 2002, p. 137).

From a non-linguistic perspective, coherence is internal to the reader. It is established in the interaction between the text and the reader’s knowledge, according to a cognitive theory of discourse, or it is “based on the reader’s understanding of the writer’s intentions, the context of writing, and the relationship between the writer and the readers” (Lee, 2002, p. 138), according to interactional theories of discourse. However, in both perspectives, “the writer, the text, and the readers all interact in the construction of coherence” (Lee, 2002, p. 138).

Cohesion and coherence interact for the creation of logical relations in a text. Kuo (1995, as cited in Ramasawmy, 2004) claims that “cohesive ties in a sentence play a central role in the thematic development of a text” and “recognizes the importance of cohesion in the interpretation and communicative purpose of a text in making semantic relations logical” (p. 22). Koch and Travaglia (2011), claiming that different types of texts present distinct cohesive elements and levels of cohesion, believe that cohesion contributes to coherence while Ramasawmy (2004) thinks that “cohesion should be seen as a servant to coherence rather than its master” (p.24).

Even though there is an important relationship between these two elements and the appropriate use of cohesive devices contributes to textual coherence, “providing the links that underlie a text, making connections more evident and increasing readability [...] cohesion does not guarantee coherence,” according to Winfield (2010, p. 22, 3). Koch and Travaglia (1990) believe that there are other elements, even external to the text, also responsible for producing coherence, especially pragmatic factors. Koch (1999) observes that text comprehension depends not only on interaction and context of situation but also obeys pragmatic rules of interpretation taking into account the interlocutor’s values, norms, communicative intention, beliefs, desires, and preferences (p. 74).

2.2.3 Coherence Requirements

The linguist Charolles (1989) assumes that utterers also play a role in coherence: the discourse producers must provide necessary and relevant indications to help receptors establish coherence (Souza, 1999, p.79). He developed a framework to evaluate textual coherence, which was used by Val (1987), in her dissertation, to analyze the textuality of compositions. According to him, a coherent text should meet four requirements - *repetition*, *development*, *non-contradiction*, and *relationship*.

The first requirement, *repetition*, also known as *continuity*, is related to the repetition of elements throughout the discourse. The presence of constant elements is necessary because it gives unity to the text and “a sequence in which each phrase refers to a different subject is not considered a text” (Val, 1991, p. 21, my translation¹¹). The *continuity* in coherence is manifested through the repetition of ideas and concepts, while in cohesion it is expressed by the repetition of words, the use of definite articles or demonstrative pronouns referring to entities already mentioned, as well as in anaphoric pronouns, ellipsis, and other mechanisms (Val, 1991).

The second requirement mentioned by Charolles (1978, as cited in Val, 1991) for a text to be considered coherent is *development*, or *progression*, related to the renewal of semantic load. The fulfillment of this requirement is necessary because in a text, new information should

¹¹ **Original text:** “uma sequência que trate a cada passo de um assunto diferente certamente não será aceita como texto”.

be added to the repeated concepts that are mentioned. Regarding coherence, this requirement can be noted in the adding of new ideas to ones mentioned earlier, while in cohesion certain words are used to introduce new concepts that are added to others already mentioned, such as *in respect to, regarding the, etc.*

The third requirement, *non-contradiction*, is “responsible for internal consistency of the propositions” and it should be present within the text and in the relation between the text and the world (Costa & Rauen, 2009, p.66). In other words, the writer should be consistent throughout the text. He cannot make a statement and contradict it in the same discourse. The text should also be compatible with the world that it represents.

The last requirement to consider a text coherent is the *relationship*, also called *congruity* or *articulation*, “which deals with articulation of facts expressed in a propositional way in the text” (Costa & Rauen, 2010, p.66). According to Charolles (1978), two facts are congruent if one is the cause, condition, or consequence in relation to the other (as cited in Val, 1991, p.27, my translation¹²). Val (1991) explains that *articulation* refers to “the way facts and concepts presented in the text link together, how they are organized, what role they play in relation to each other, and their importance in relation to one another” (p. 27, my translation¹³). According to her, “evaluating the articulation of ideas in a text means verifying if they are related and what kind of relation is established among them, besides continuity, progression, and non-contradiction” (p. 27, my translation¹⁴). She examines two aspects that contribute to establishing coherence in a text: the presence and the pertinence of the relations between the facts and concepts presented.

Considering the important role coherence plays in a text and the difficulties professors and students have in teaching and learning such aspect in writing, many scholars, including Val (1991), have researched this topic in order to find better ways of handling those difficulties in the classroom setting. Based on Charolles’ (1978) meta-rules, she examined

¹² **Original text:** “Dois fatos serão congruentes quando um for uma causa, condição ou consequência pertinente do outro”.

¹³ **Original text:** “[...] a maneira como os fatos e conceitos apresentados no texto se encadeiam, como se organizam, que papéis exercem uns com relação aos outros, que valores assumem uns em relação aos outros”.

¹⁴ **Original text:** “Avaliar a articulação das ideias [...] significa verificar se elas têm a ver umas com as outras e que tipo específico de relação se estabelece entre elas (além das relações de continuidade, progressão e não-contradição, já cobertas pelas outras condições de coerência)”.

coherence, among other standards of textuality, in texts composed by candidates applying for admission to the university. She investigated a hundred essays written by students who had just finished high schools as a requirement to enroll in the undergraduate program of Letters Course. They were asked to write an argumentative essay in which they would need to discuss a certain problem showing their abilities to expose ideas and build arguments.

The results of Val's (1991) study point to the logical-semantic-cognitive structure as the major problem in the compositions. The more relevant mistakes were connected to informativity, non-contradiction and articulation, which are coherence requirements. The level of cohesion was satisfactory and the texts were well organized in terms of grammar and structure, containing introduction, development and conclusion, which means that students followed the pattern required for argumentative texts. However, the ideas exposed in the texts were not informative enough nor convincing since they were repetitive or based on common sense, and important concepts presented were not discussed, violating the meta-rule of progression (Val, 1991).

The findings of Val (1991) indicate that 14% of the essays had a satisfactorily level of coherence, 62% a medium level and 24% of the texts had serious problems related to coherence. Regarding cohesion, 25% of students did not present problems while 10% did. In relation to informativity, the aspect students had more difficulty to deal with, 73% of essays did not achieve the level expected while only 11% did. In respect to structure and grammar, few students had problems in this regard: only 7% of their essays were unsatisfactory in relation to structure and 15% in relation to grammar.

Since students had good performances in relation to structure and formal aspects but negative results regarding content, Val (1991) concluded that "their training might have taken space from originality" leading them to follow recipes that help them writing acceptable texts and avoid taking risks to prevent failure in the exam. She thinks that the instructions received in schools, which focused on grammar and text structure, did not encourage students to create discourses which deviate the common sense and that prevented them from exposing new ideas. Consequently, 45% of the texts are very similar, containing stereotypes, commonplace ideas, as well as clichés. Moreover, students did not explain certain facts nor discussed specific situations critically, they just reproduced other people's viewpoints in their texts without having enough knowledge about the subjects discussed.

The problems related to coherence affected continuity, progression and non-contradiction in around 30% of the essays while more than half of the texts had problems with congruity (56%). Most of those essays had serious problems of textuality: they contradicted what was truth in the real world, related facts and concepts which were not compatible, or they did not bring new knowledge to the reader. In sum, although those texts fulfill the requirements of continuity, progression and follow grammatical rules, they were not well written, because student's discourses were inefficient to convince the reader. However, differently from regular writing tasks that students receive in classes, in which they have facilities such as materials to research, and plenty of time to reflect and write, a test has a time limited that pressures students as well as surprising themes that they need to write about without being prepared. All these factors pose some difficulties in writing and might inhibit reasoning, as Val (1991) observed.

In this study, I will follow the same paths of Val (1991) to analyze coherence in the compositions of undergraduate students from the Letters Course, adapting the framework proposed by Charolles (1978), which will be further developed in the Method chapter.

2.2.4 Frameworks to analyze cohesion and coherence

Considering that cohesion helps to establish coherence when cohesive devices are properly adopted in a text, Charolles assures that (1978, as cited in Canale, 2013, p.10) "the role of cohesive devices is to serve such meta-rules of coherence". According to Bezerra (1998), Charolles does not separate what is surface and what is logical-semantic because he believes that making distinction between cohesion and coherence is not useful to evaluate a text; the concept of coherence includes all these instances, and also cohesion. Charolles (1978) judges textual coherence by means of four meta-rules in which the notion of cohesion is inserted. For him, a coherent and cohesive text meets these rules. He gathered both concepts toward an objective classification and built a framework which makes explicit the implicit system of coherence rules applied in the composition and interpretation of texts. Bezerra (1998) believes that this facilitates the analysis of texts, preventing the artificial division of aspects related to textual evaluation.

In this study, cohesion, that "concerns the ways in which the components of the surface text, the actual words we see or hear, are mutually connected within a linear sequence", and coherence, which

“refers to the ways the ideas of the text are related”, will be considered separately (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981, p.3). Charolles' (1978) framework was adopted to evaluate coherence while Halliday and Hasan's (1976) classification of cohesive ties constituted the basis for checking students' abilities with cohesion. The analysis of Charolles' meta-rules helps to identify important aspects needed to achieve coherence and the framework of Halliday and Hasan facilitates the identification of cohesive devices to determine if their use was appropriate.

This chapter offered an overview of writing models followed by definitions of text, cohesion and coherence, according to different authors, and ended exposing the coherence meta-rules proposed by Charolles (1978) as well as the frameworks applied to analyze student's written productions. The next chapter reports on the method applied to carry out this research.

3. METHOD

This chapter describes the participants in this study and the collection of data as well as the instruments used to gather that information. The procedures for reaching the participants are outlined, followed by an explanation of the data analysis of each student's perception of a well-written text concerning cohesion and coherence. Finally, the frameworks used to analyze cohesion and coherence in students' essays as well as the steps taken to carry out such analysis are explained. At the end of the chapter, an account is given on how students' perception of cohesion and coherence and their performances in writing were related.

The objective of this research is to investigate, among academic students majoring in English, learners' views on the concepts of cohesion and coherence, their awareness about the importance of these, as well as their ability to use cohesion devices properly and to write coherent texts. The nature of this study is qualitative, since students' essays were analyzed by the researcher and her advisor, according to the frameworks of Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Charolles (1978), and student's view on cohesion and coherence were also investigated by both.

The research questions aimed to help in this investigation are:

- 1) What do students from the seventh semester majoring in English understand about the concepts of cohesion and coherence?
- 2) Do students from the fourth, fifth and sixth semesters of the English Course use cohesive devices satisfactorily, and do they write coherent texts?
- 3) What are the students' major difficulties in writing regarding cohesion and coherence?
- 4) Being aware or unaware about the concepts of cohesion and coherence from the specialized literature influenced students to write cohesive and coherence texts?

3.1 INFORMED CONSENT FORM

An informed Consent Form (see appendix A) was written in the participant's L1 (Portuguese), containing some information about the research, the context of the study, the researcher, and the Professor

involved in this investigation. After they learned about the study and voluntarily agreed to participate, they were required to sign the form and received the questionnaire with instructions to be fulfilled.

3.2 PARTICIPANTS

The selected participants in this study were 19 undergraduate students from the 7th semester, 15 women and 4 men, ages ranging from twenty to thirty-five, majoring in English at UFSC who allowed the use of their 45 compositions written during the period they attended the writing courses LLE 7494, LLE 7495, and LLE 7496, which correspond to the 4th, 5th and 6th semesters of the Letters Course, to be investigated.

3.3 INSTRUMENTS

3.3.1 Questionnaire

Prior to the beginning of this study, in order to investigate students' knowledge about the topics of interest in this research, the 19 participants answered the following questionnaire aiming at knowing their views about what a well written text is, what they mean by cohesion and coherence, their relation with the written process and the importance they give to these aspects in writing:

- 1) Quais as características de um texto bem escrito?
- 2) (a) O que você entende por coesão? (b) Exemplifique. (c) Você acha que a coesão contribui para um texto acadêmico ser bem escrito? (d) Caso positivo, de que forma?
- 3) O que você entende por coerência textual? (b) O que você, como escritor, faz para deixar seu texto coerente? (c) Você acha que a coerência contribui para um texto acadêmico ser bem escrito? (d) Caso positivo, de que forma?
- 4) Durante o curso de letras, nas disciplinas de produção textual, você estudou sobre: (a) coesão? (b) coerência? Se sim, como esses estudos contribuíram para o desenvolvimento de sua escrita?

Since the purpose of this questionnaire was not to evaluate students' writing skills in English but to obtain data to understand their views on writing in general and on cohesion and coherence, it was written and answered in Portuguese, their first language. Student's answers were evaluated, by the researcher and her advisor, to check if students' views on cohesion and coherence followed the definitions from the specialized literature given by Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), Koch and Travaglia (2011), Blanpain (2006), Meurer (2003), besides Charolles (1978) and Halliday and Hasan (1976).

Although it cannot be affirmed that students did not have access to Charolles's (1978) framework, it is very likely that this was the case, since it is not part of any of the programs (see Appendices C) of the academic writing courses investigated.

3.3.2 Essays

The essays analyzed were 9 cause-effect, 17 comparison-contrast, and 19 argumentative texts written, respectively, in 2009/2, 2010/1, 2010/2, and 2012/1, during the period the participants attended the writing courses LLE 7494, LLE 7495, and LLE 7496, which correspond to the 4th, 5th and 6th semesters of the Letters Course. When the students were attending the 7th semester and answered the questionnaire investigating their knowledge on cohesion and coherence, they signed an informed consent form allowing the collection of their essays written in the previous semesters (4th, 5th and 6th) giving permission to analyze the final version of their written productions in this research. In general, during these writing courses, the professor taught students to develop critical thinking: they were required to read and practice critical writing in English at various levels of complexity, mainly advanced, in different contexts, including professional and academic. The procedures of the teacher who conducted these writing courses were not investigated, but more details about the courses can be found in appendices C.

According to the program, in the course LLE 7494 - Comprehension and Written Production in English IV (see appendix C1) -, students were supposed to learn how to support a specific view point and produce argumentative texts, as well as essays of two other types - cause-effect and comparison-contrast. They also received instructions on how to write different parts of the text (introduction, development, conclusive paragraphs, topic phrases) and learned about cohesive ties,

transition words as well as nominal and verbal agreement. Writing strategies such as planning, organizing, building outline, writing drafts, reviewing, peer-review, rewrite and preparing final version were also taught and practiced during this course and students used them before writing the final version of their texts, just as they did in the following writing courses also. They also learned reading strategies including recognizing main ideas and details of texts, building inferences, summarizing and react critically towards texts contents.

In the course LLE 7495 - Comprehension and Written Production in English V (see appendix C2) - , students needed to produce arguments to support a thesis statement using evidences of different nature and they learned transitional phrases and words (conjunctions, connectors, etc). Besides writing outlines to hand in before the last version of their essays, students were supposed to review and rewrite their texts. In this course program, the production of argumentative, cause-effect and comparison-contrast essays was included.

The objective of the course LLE 7496 - Comprehension and Written Production in English VI (see appendix C3) - was improving student's abilities to read and write academic texts in advanced level in order to develop their capacity of writing through analysis, interpretation, evaluation and support of critical thinking. Students were supposed to learn how to use quoted citation avoiding plagiarism, summarize texts in order to write abstracts, and they were also instructed about cohesion, coherence, intertextuality and informativity. Regarding the essays collected for analysis, the students had plenty of time to research about the subjects related to their theme and write the essays at home.

3.4 PROCEDURES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

3.4.1 Students' perceptions of a well-written text, cohesion, and coherence

In order to detect students' understanding about the features of a well-written text, and of cohesion and coherence, their answers from the questionnaires were displayed in tables (see tables 3, 4 and 5 in chapter 4). The participants' perceptions about a well-written text were noted and linguistic elements students alluded to indirectly were also considered. In the sequence, a graph was built to show how many

students mentioned cohesion and coherence as important features of a well-written text.

Regarding the concepts of cohesion and coherence specifically, similar responses were clustered and a graph was built showing different definitions students gave to each aspect. Their answers were compared with the definitions given by important authors in the field of linguistics, and a graph was built to show the number of students who defined cohesion and coherence according to the specialized literature.

3.4.1.1 Cohesion analysis

The use of cohesive elements was examined in all essays, according to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework, which follows the author's classification of cohesion into five types - reference, conjunction, lexical reiteration, substitution, and ellipsis. Table 1 was extracted from Tomitch (2012, p. 48) and contains examples of each category that helped to identify the cohesive devices applied in the essays, to verify if they were used appropriately, and to detect excerpts from the texts in which cohesive elements should have been used but were absent. The cohesive devices found in the compositions which do not appear in the table were classified according to the category they have similarities with. In an attempt to discover students' abilities and detect their possible difficulties, the percentage of correct and incorrect use of the different categories of cohesion was calculated according to this framework.

Table 1 - *Framework for cohesion based on Halliday and Hasan (1976)*

Type	Subcategory	Example
Reference	Pronominal	pronouns (I; my; mine; me; myself...)
	Demonstrative	this; that; these; those; over there; over here...
	Definite article	the
	Comparative	as...as; so...as; less than; more than...

Conjunction	Additive Adversative Causal Temporal Continuative	and; more; moreover; in addition however; nevertheless; and yet; but consequently; because before; after; until; soon of course
Lexical	Reiteration Collocation	Same item – repetition Synonymous (or near synonymous) book volume Superordinate – flower – violet General item – creature; thing; aspect Using terms which occur in the same semantic field (boy -girl/ wet-dry/ order-obey)
Substitution		Do you enjoy Lounge Music? <i>Yes, I do.</i>
Ellipsis	[0] (substitution by zero)	Call us before you dig. Otherwise, you might not be able to [0] afterwards. (Example from Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981, p. 8)

Presented by Tomitch, 2012 (p.48)

From all essays, the cohesive devices in each of the categories ‘used correctly,’ ‘incorrectly,’ and ‘the ones missing in excerpts where they should have been used’ were summed up in relation to each type of cohesion under analysis: article references, other types of references, substitutions, ellipsis, lexical reiterations, and conjunctions of five types – additive, adversative, causal, continuative, and temporal. After collecting these results, tables and graphs were built to expose the occurrences of each category in all compositions and the students’ difficulties in using different cohesive elements. The quantity of cohesive devices applied correctly in all essays was compared to the quantity of elements used incorrectly or absent, in order to calculate their percentage of use. The types of references, substitutions, ellipsis,

and lexical cohesion detected were not specified in terms of their subcategories in the analysis. Even though all these types of cohesive devices and their subcategories are described in the framework, the analysis of lexical cohesion focused on lexical reiteration, leaving lexical collocation aside due to the difficulties involved in its classification, as argued in the upcoming paragraph.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) assume that lexical collocation is "the most problematic part of lexical cohesion" (p. 284), and "there is always the possibility of cohesion between any pair of lexical items which are in some way associated with each other in the language" (p. 285). In agreement with these ideas, Hoffmann (2012, p. 92) considers the definition by Halliday and Hasan (1976) to be vague and broad, which possibly turns cohesive collocation into the "most controversial cohesive category of lexical cohesion". Corroborating these views, Tanskanen (2006) assumes that "collocation is a very intricate relation - the items are only linked by a subtle association, since they cannot be said to, in any way, repeat each other" (p. 34). This author also believes that collocation is a very subjective relation because "what is considered valid relation will inevitably slightly vary from one communicator to the next" (Tanskanen, 2006, p. 34).

3.4.1.2 Coherence Analysis

In order to analyze coherence in the compositions, an adaptation of Charolles' (1978) framework made by Val (1991) (see table 2) guided the analysis. Aiming to verify students' ability in writing coherent texts, the essays were analyzed qualitatively, by the researcher and the advisor, to check if they met the four requirements proposed by Charolles (1978) to achieve coherence - *continuity*, *development*, *non-contradiction*, and *congruity*. Regarding the last requirement, congruity, a slight modification adopted by Val (1991) was followed. Differing from Charolles (1978), who establishes that two facts are congruent whenever one is the cause, condition, or consequence of the other, in this study the requirement of congruency was considered fulfilled whenever there was any appropriate relation between facts and concepts other than continuity, progression and non-contradiction. Consequently, other connections established between propositions that might promote logical relations can be considered to generate congruency.

Table 2 - Framework for coherence based on Charolles (1978) and Val (1991)

Coherence requirements	Features
Continuity	The <i>continuity</i> in coherence is manifested through the repetition of ideas and concepts contributing for the text to become a unified whole.
Development	New information should be added to the concepts that are repeated throughout the text in a way that the text progresses and is not limited to the same reports from the beginning to the end. New accounts about the same subjects must be added so there is a renewal of semantic load.
Non-Contradiction	Related to consistency, the <i>non-contradiction</i> should be present within the text and in the relation between the text and the world. In other words, the writer cannot make a statement and contradict it in the same text. The text should also be compatible with the world that it represents.
Congruity	It expresses the way facts and concepts presented in the text are organized, which role they play in relation to each other and what kind of relation is established between the ideas in the text. These ideas should be well articulated.

According to Val (1991), who explains Charolles' framework, *repetition*, or *continuity*, is related to “the necessary repetition of elements throughout the discourse” and to “the permanence of constant elements in the development of the text” (p.21, my translation¹⁵), which turns a text into a unified whole. She mentions that in coherence, continuity is fulfilled through the “recapture of the concepts and ideas” mentioned previously, while in cohesion, it “is manifested by means of repetition of words, the use of definite articles, demonstrative pronouns referring to entities already mentioned, anaphoric pronouns, ellipsis of terms easily retrievable, among other mechanisms” (Val, 1991, p. 21, my translation¹⁶). In the excerpt “Picasso died two years ago. The

¹⁵ **Original text:** “a continuidade diz respeito à necessária retomada de elementos no decorrer do discurso. Tem a ver com sua unidade, pois um dos fatores que fazem com que se perceba um texto como um todo único é a permanência, em seu desenvolvimento, de elementos constantes”.

¹⁶ **Original text:** “Na coerência, esse requisito se manifesta pela retomada de conceitos e ideias. Na coesão, pelo emprego de recursos linguísticos, como a repetição de palavras, o uso

painter donated his works of arts to Barcelona Museum”, for example, the repetition happens by means of a substitution, when the word “painter” refers to the previous term “Picasso”.

Development, or progression, is related to the need of presenting new information and ideas that should be added to the ones already mentioned. Val (1991) observes that the text cannot be limited to the repetition of elements to fulfill the requirement of continuity: at the same time that concepts mentioned previously are repeated in the following paragraphs, new information must be added to those concepts in a way that the text progresses. Usually, the old information, which is repeated, introduces paragraphs or phrases and constitutes the main idea of a paragraph. The new information is frequently expressed by a comment about the repeated topic finishing a phrase. The progression might occur by adding new comments on the same topic or by adjusting comments to fit new topics. It is essential for writers to make clear when they are changing the topic and some expressions that highlight the topic, placing it in a central position to be noticed, are ‘regarding the, in respect to’, among others (Val, 1991). The following excerpt is an example of a text without progression, because it is limited to the repetition of the same subject and new themes are not introduced:

Justice is the virtue of giving to each person what belongs to him. Justice is the faculty of giving to the individuals what they possess by right. Justice is the virtue of giving to all men their belongings.

The requirement of *non-contradiction*, according to Val (1991), “must be observed internally and in the relations of the text with the world it refers to” (p. 24, my translation¹⁷). The author cannot make a statement and contradict it later, disrespecting logical principles. His statements and ideas must be compatible, even implicit, and inferred ideas cannot generate contradictions. The textual world should also be compatible with the world that it represents. A discourse referring to the real world, for example, must consider its ways of living and thinking: two bodies cannot occupy the same place at one time; causes have effects, so eating too much makes people fat instead of thin; etc. There

de artigos definidos ou pronomes demonstrativos para determinar entidades já mencionadas, o uso de pronomes anafóricos, a elipse de termos facilmente recobráveis, entre outros mecanismos”.

¹⁷ **Original Text:** O requisito da não-contradição deve ser observado tanto no âmbito interno quanto no âmbito das relações do texto com o mundo a que se refere”.

is an example of contradiction in the sentence “We need a list of specific problems unknown which we will find”, because it is impossible to make a list of things that are unknown and were not found yet.

Val (1991) explains that the requirement of non-contradiction is applicable not only to the conceptual level (coherence) but also to the level of expression (cohesion). She adds that by means of verbal tenses, for instance, the text establishes its own system in relation to the situation of the facts it alludes to, using as reference the moment of communication or a specific moment determined by the text itself (Val, 1991, p. 25, my translation)¹⁸. Modality is another element of the discursive functional system. It is related to the writer’s attitude regarding the propositional content and to the value of the truth of his utterance in relation to the receptor. This attitude is manifested linguistically by means of verbal tenses and specific items, such as modal verbs, some adverbs (maybe, certainly) and the illocutionary verbs (for instance: to think, to accept, to consider, to admit, to declare, to deny...). Contradictions regarding those elements might confuse the reader. The textual world setting may be expressed linguistically by means of verbs, expressions that suggest imaginary world, such as to dream, to imagine, to think, to believe, would like, if. A contradiction in using those resources may also cause problems of interpretation since it could frustrate the expectation of the receptor (Val, 1991).

It is also important to observe that cohesive elements contribute to fulfill the requirement of non-contradiction, and Val (1991) mentions that this is achieved by means of verbal tenses, which install a system of facts, and modality, which reflects the writer’s attitude regarding the propositional content and toward the value of truthfulness of its statement. She explains that this attitude is manifested linguistically through the use of modal verbs, some adverbs such as ‘maybe’, ‘certainly,’ and illocutionary verbs such as ‘to consider’, ‘to declare’, ‘to deny’. The contradictions related to the use of those elements may disturb the reader (Val, 1991).

Congruity, or articulation, the last requirement, is fulfilled whenever two facts are related to each other, one being the cause, condition, or consequence of the other, according to Charolles (1978). Following the methodology applied by Val (1991) in her research, in this study the requirement of congruity was considered fulfilled not only

¹⁸**Original Text:** “Através do emprego dos tempos e aspectos verbais, o texto instaura um sistema próprio de situação dos fatos a que alude, tomando por referência o momento da comunicação ou um momento determinado pelo texto mesmo.”

when these three types of relations were established, but whenever the facts and ideas presented in the text established any relation among them, other than non-contradiction, progression, and continuity, and this relation was relevant. For her, in order to express congruity, the connection between ideas and facts in the text may be established only semantically and still promote coherence. However, this condition is expressed formally by the use of connective mechanisms, such as conjunctions, logical connectors (expressions such as for example, on the other hand), and linguistic resources that allow the establishment of temporal relations between textual elements (the linear order to present those elements, temporal conjunctions, some adverbs and adverbial expressions, ordinal numbers, and some adjectives such as prior, later, after, subsequent) (Val, 1991). In the next excerpt, there is an absence of congruity, since it is impossible to relate the two propositions: “Mary will give birth soon; therefore the romantic singers do not please the intellectuals”.

Charolles (1978) believes that a coherent and cohesive text meets the four meta-rules he proposed by means of the ways ideas and concepts are presented as well as the way cohesive devices and other linguistic mechanisms are used to help the fulfillment of those rules (Val, 1991). However, in this study coherence and cohesion were considered separately: the former was analyzed according to the framework of Charolles (1978) and the latter followed Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) taxonomy. Consequently, the misuse and absence of cohesive devices were considered errors in cohesion and were not related to coherence.

3.4.1.3 The relation between Students’ Perception of Cohesion and Coherence and their Actual Performance

After cohesion and coherence were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively in the essays, students’ definitions of both concepts were compared to the results found in their written texts regarding the fulfillment of Charolles’ (1978) rules and the use of cohesive devices according to Halliday and Hasan (1976). The goal was to verify if acknowledging the meaning of cohesion and coherence according to the specialized literature helped students to write coherent and cohesive essays. Each participant and his/her written productions were examined individually to determine if their performances and knowledge of the concepts matched, and a graph was built to present these results.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the main results of the study are presented first and discussed in the light of the relevant literature. Then the research questions are reviewed one at a time, and answered based on the evidence obtained by the results.

4.1 STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF A WELL-WRITTEN TEXT AND OF COHESION AND COHERENCE

The questionnaire administered to 19 students with the purpose of verifying their knowledge about writing, cohesion, and coherence, began with the question:

1) “What are the features of a well-written text”?

By analyzing participants' answers, it was possible to conclude that, in general, a good text must present the following characteristics: 10 students wrote that it must be *clear* or *easy to understand*, 5 said that it should be *straight forward*, 4 valued a *good structure*, 3 mentioned the importance of grammar, 2 cited the *compatibility with the audience* to be reached, 10 mentioned cohesion, and 15 coherence. The table 3 presents students' answers to question 1.

Table 3 – *Students' perceptions of a well-written text*

Student	Features of a well written text
1	Tem clareza, coerência e coesão.
2	Claro, legível e compreensível, sem significados ausentes, sem ambiguidades.
3	Além de se ater o assunto no qual foi proposto, possui uma estrutura (parágrafos, pontuação, etc.) e é de fácil absorção pelo leitor.
4	Aquele aonde o escritor consegue passar sua mensagem de forma clara e objetiva. Ele usa as normas padrões, e com isso, o seu leitor alvo irá compreender a mensagem.

- 5 Um texto coerente e compatível com o seu público, com informações precisas e claras.
- 6 Num texto bem escrito a leitura flui, o texto faz sentido e possui continuidade.
- 7 Apresenta boa gramática, elementos de coesão e coerência.
- 8 Apresenta coesão entre as palavras e coerência no que está querendo passar ao leitor; ou seja, as palavras estão bem ligadas e conectadas para o texto ser bem compreendido, ter coerência.
- 9 A estrutura do texto conta muito, assim como seus elementos internos. Acho que as ‘transitions’ são importantes, assim como um bom uso da língua escrita, que pode ser entendido também como gramática. Dentro desta gramática, eu entendo que existam a coesão e a coerência, elementos que, se faltam em um texto, poderão causar estranheza e até incompreensão por parte do leitor.
- 10 Tem ideias organizadas, coerência e talvez coesão.
- 11 Depende do tipo de texto, mas geralmente pode-se dizer que o texto deve ser compreensível. Ele deve fornecer elementos que ajudem o leitor a entendê-lo. Coerência e coesão, por exemplo, são elementos que um texto padrão deve tentar ao máximo ter, seguir, pois assim facilita a leitura.
- 12 Possui coesão e coerência, de forma que o seu leitor consiga entender o que está nele escrito.
- 13 Deve primeiramente preencher aspectos como coesão e coerência, para tanto, é necessário que o autor desse texto conheça o público para o qual se destina o mesmo. É importante que o texto possa dialogar com o leitor, e que este seja capaz de fazer suas inferências contribuindo para o “texto final”.
- 14 Seguir uma ordem, ter lógica, coesão e coerência. Dependendo do tipo de texto já outras características. Se for poesia há um leque maior para interpretações.

- 15 São 2 ferramentas essenciais: coesão e coerência textuais.
- 16 Um texto bem escrito deve ser claro e guiar o leitor para atingir seu objetivo.
- 17 Precisa ter começo, meio e fim além de não ser confuso.
- 18 Objetivo e claro
- 19 Um texto bem escrito deve ser objetivo, isso facilita seu entendimento, e também claro; para que isso aconteça ele precisa ser coeso e coerente.

According to Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), a text should meet seven standards of textuality - *intentionality*, *acceptability*, *informativity*, *situationality*, *intertextuality*, *coherence* and *cohesion* - to be considered a “communicative occurrence” (p.3). In the questionnaires, informativity, intentionality and acceptability were mentioned implicitly by students 3, 4, and 6, respectively, as features of a well-written text, while coherence was cited by 15 students, both implicitly and explicitly, and cohesion was mentioned by 10 students explicitly as essential aspects of writing. Since both aspects were considered more important than grammar, mentioned by students 4, 7, 9, and structure, mentioned only by student 3, these results contradict English’s (1999) beliefs that grammatical and formal aspects are usually overestimated among students. In the present study, students tended to value more global aspects in writing.

The figure 2 compares the number of students who considered cohesion and coherence important aspects of a well-written text:

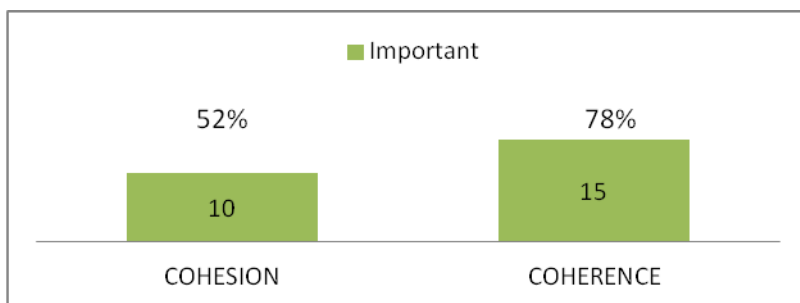


Figure 2: Importance of cohesion and coherence in writing

The next questions aimed to investigate students' knowledge about coherence were: 2) a) What is coherence? b) How do you make your text coherent? c) Does coherence contribute to good writing? If so, how?

The following table presents students' answers to the second set of questions, relating to 'coherence':

Table 4 - Students' answers about coherence

Student	Question	Answers about Coherence
1	a)	A ordem das ideias em um texto.
	b)	Procuro fazer um outline previamente da escrita.
	c) d)	Sim, pois ela que dá sentido lógico ao texto.
2	a)	A escrita do texto de uma tal maneira que o torne compreensível.
	b)	Procuro ler e reler o texto o mais detalhadamente e quantas vezes possível
	c) d)	Sim, pois salva o texto de ser um punhado de sentenças sem significado.
3	a)	Vai ajudar o texto em relação ao seu sentido.
	b)	Tento ser coerente nas ideias e expressões para o benefício do possível leitor.
	c) d)	Contribui e é essencial para um texto passar o tema, assunto do qual se dispôs.
4	a)	É o texto em si, que às vezes pode fazer sentido para uns e não para outros.
	b)	Contextualizo o leitor, mostrando meu objetivo com o texto logo no início; desta forma, quando o leitor não for familiar com o assunto, terá um breve background no próprio texto.

- c) d) Contribui, pois assim mais pessoas estarão expostas ao conhecimento compartilhado no texto, e a voz do autor será melhor compreendida e espalhada.
- 5** a) Faz com que os leitores entendam e interpretem o texto.
- b) Mantenho o foco no meu objetivo, no que quero escrever, e tento usar palavras que mais tenham relação com o assunto e o tipo de texto.
- c) d) A mesma coisa que a coesão, a coerência contribui para que qualquer texto seja bem escrito. O sentido do texto se dá através da coerência.
- 6,7** SEM RESPOSTA (não lembraram dos conceitos)
- 8** a) É quando num contexto o texto torna-se compreensível e o leitor entende o que está acontecendo.
- b) Tento organizar as ideias antes de colocá-las no papel e também tomar cuidado com as palavras que utilizo para transmitir minhas ideias.
- c) d) Contribui, mas não precisamos saber o que é coerência pra saber disso.
- 9** Coerência é 'relevância', se um texto é coerente, relevante dentro de um contexto, se faz parte de uma unidade e se se relaciona com 'o mundo lá fora' ou fora dele.
- 10** É, principalmente, não se contradizer.
- 11** É quando o texto faz sentido no todo, não necessariamente focando nas palavras, mas de uma forma ampla. É necessário, dependendo do tipo de texto, apresentar meios de conexão entre as partes do texto, para que este seja fluido, não fragmentado e assim, coerente. Há grandes escritores que não seguem automaticamente essas regras, mas são compreendidos pelos leitores.

- 12**
- a) A coerência é o sentido que o texto traz para o leitor.
 - b) Evito deixar partes ambíguas em meus textos e, quando necessário, acrescento referência a conhecimentos que talvez não sejam divididos com os leitores.
 - c) d) Sim, porque mesmo que um texto tenha coesão ele pode não ser coerente. A coerência é o fator mais importante, pois carrega todo sentido que damos a ele.
- 13**
- São marcas estabelecidas no texto que auxiliam o entendimento do leitor. Ela ocorre quando leitor e autor estão em sintonia. O texto precisa apresentar características capazes de fazerem significado no universo do leitor, pois é através do seu conhecimento de mundo que ele constrói o sentido do texto.
- 14**
- a) Coerência está fora do texto, ou seja, o texto deve ser coerente com a realidade.
 - b) Para fazer um texto coerente tento encontrar referências para provar que o que estou escrevendo é real, tem base no que realmente acontece.
 - c) d) Acho que não é necessário haver coerência para um texto ser bem escrito. Obras de ficção, onde animais falam, não são coerentes, pois animais não falam, mas os textos são bem escritos.
- 15**
- a) A coerência preocupa-se com a relação lógica entre as ideias do texto.
 - b) Faço uma série de revisões.
 - c) d) A coerência contribui para que uma mensagem seja fluente.

- 16 a) Diferente da coesão, que está no nível da superfície do texto, presente no léxico e na sintaxe, a coerência está no nível das ideias: os significados presentes no texto precisam estar relacionados e interconectados para que se construa uma unidade de sentido. Mais do que a coesão, a coerência é elemento essencial para que haja a interação entre autor e leitor e, portanto, um texto “bem escrito”.
- 17 a) Tem relação com o que faz sentido, comparado a situações da realidade.
- 18 a) A qualidade do texto de fazer sentido. A coerência é dependente da coesão e diz respeito à relação lógica de ideias e argumentos.
- b) Procuo conhecer o assunto sobre o qual escreverei e levar em conta o leitor.
- c) d) Sim. O texto bem escrito depende da coerência, sem ela o texto será somente de palavras que não carregam sentido.
- 19 a) A coerência dá sentido ao texto.
- b) Uso elementos de coesão para estabelecer relações lógicas entre os argumentos.
- c) d) A ‘coerência’ é muito relativa, pois ela depende não só do escritor, mas também do conhecimento prévio do leitor, e da interpretação que ele tem do texto. Por isso, não acho que haja resposta sim ou não para a pergunta “c”. A coerência contribuirá sempre que ambos escritor e leitor estejam “de acordo”.
-

By relating coherence to meaning and relevance, most students followed Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), who defined it as “the ways the ideas of the text are related” and “the ways in which the components of the textual world, i.e. the configuration of concepts and relations which underlie the surface text, are mutually accessible and relevant” (p. 4). Besides recognizing the importance of coherence in writing, several students acknowledged that “coherent linguistic sequences might be

considered texts even without cohesion” in agreement with Koch and Travaglia (2011), who view coherence as “the basis of textuality” (p.28). Three participants followed the specialized literature, mentioning at least one aspect of coherence according to it, but contradicted the literature at some point, revealing opposing ideas about this concept. One student stated that coherence is not necessary because fiction can be well-written even though it does not reflect reality. Another student affirmed that it depends on cohesion, and yet another defined coherence as being the own text, contradicting Koch and Travaglia (2011), who assure that “coherent linguistic sequences can be considered texts even without cohesion” (p. 28), and Blanpain (2006), who defines coherence as “the underlying logical relations which make the text a unified whole (p.25).”

The following figure shows the different ways participants defined coherence, revealing that students of the Letters Course seem to have an informed view on the topic:

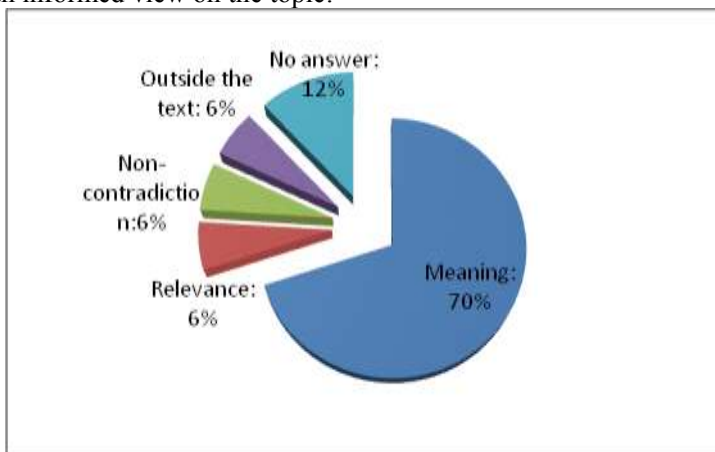


Figure 3: Students’ definitions of coherence

When defining coherence, the participants did not explicitly mention the four requirements Charolles (1978) presented as necessary for any given text to fulfill - *repetition*, *development*, *non-contradiction*, and *relationship* – but many of their definitions tackled at least one of his requirements – *non-contradiction* or *congruity*. Four participants (21%) alluded to *non-contradiction*, which is the consistency throughout the text - the writer cannot make a statement and contradict it – and its compatibility with the world that the text represents. Three participants referred to *non-contradiction* indirectly when they mentioned that a text

must be coherent with reality. One student cited it directly, but s/he defined coherence as mainly the act of not contradicting oneself and gave no consideration to the other three aspects for a text to be coherent. In relation to *congruity*, the presence and the pertinence of the relations between the facts and concepts presented (Val, 1991), 16% of the participants (students 15, 16 and 18) alluded to it when mentioning the need for a logical relation between the ideas, meanings, and arguments in a text. When mentioning this quality as necessary for a text to be coherent, Charolles (1978) explains that two facts are congruent if one is the cause, condition, or consequence in relation to the other. *Progression* and *continuity*, two other aspects that promote coherence according to Charolles (1978), were not mentioned in the protocols. The former is acquired by adding new ideas to the ones already mentioned and by information added to the repeated concepts, while the latter refers to the repetition of ideas and concepts in coherence, and in cohesion, it is expressed by the repetition of words and by the use of other mechanisms (definite articles, demonstrative pronouns, anaphoric pronouns, ellipsis) referring to entities already mentioned.

Other aspects that a few students mentioned in their definitions of coherence were *previous knowledge* and *interaction between author and reader*, which indicates that they are acquainted with Koch and Travaglia's (2011) assumptions that coherence depends on the interaction between text, writer, and receptor. Students 13 and 19, which correspond to 10% of participants, recognized that a text makes sense for a reader depending on his background knowledge and 10% of students (participants 13 and 16) mentioned the need for writer and reader to interact in order to build coherence. Considering that these students acknowledge important aspects of coherence and they were also able to write coherent texts, it is possible that this knowledge helped them to write.

The following questions were intended to investigate students' knowledge of cohesion: 3) a) What do you understand by cohesion? b) Give an example. c) Does cohesion contribute to good writing? If so, how?

Almost all participants (95%) mentioned that cohesion is in the surface of the text and achieved by the use of elements that play the role of connectors. Most students related it with unity, connection, and organization of the text and defined cohesion based on Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), to whom it "refers to the ways the components of the surface text are connected" (p. 3). One participant connected cohesion with relations of meaning within the text and two students gave

examples of this quality that do not match with their definitions. Three students agreed with Meurer (2003) that cohesion is not essential to achieve coherence, and all of them believed that it contributes to a text being well-written. From 19 students, ten defined cohesion as a mechanism that connects ideas; two related it to the organization of thoughts and text; two others related it to unity or uniformity; another defined it as a semantic relation between textual elements; another one mentioned that it is inside the text; another, that it is important but not essential, and two students said they had forgotten its meaning. Such results indicate that these students do not hold a naïve view of cohesion and coherence, which probably influenced their writing, since the results of their written production were positive.

The next table shows students' answers to question 3, in relation to cohesion.

Table 5 - Students' answers about cohesion

Student	Questions	Answers about Cohesion
1	a)	É a unidade de um texto.
	b)	Por exemplo, se um parágrafo liga-se a outro.
	c) d)	Sim. Permite um melhor entendimento do texto.
2	a)	Mecanismo que serve para orientar quem escreve o texto a organizar seus pensamentos de forma a evitar ambiguidades.
	b)	O uso dos mecanismos coesivos para organizar o texto.
	c) d)	Sim, pois ajuda o escritor a organizar ideias e afastar ambiguidades.
3	a)	Fator importante para o texto ser legível e conectado, mas há textos sem coesão.
	b)	O termo de consentimento desta pesquisa
	c) d)	Sim, porque desta maneira podemos perceber uma conexão entre os parágrafos

- 4 a) Quando o texto é escrito de uma maneira uniforme podemos entendê-lo, pois contém os elementos coesivos (como conjunções).
- b) João Maria compraram uma casa. João e Maria foram ao supermercado. Na primeira frase, a conjunção 'e' não foi colocada, a princípio o leitor pode achar que 'João Maria' é o nome de uma pessoa, mas após a leitura da frase entendemos que são duas pessoas.
- c) d) Sim, pois dessa forma podemos nos expressar melhor e nossas ideias serem compreendidas.
- 5 a) Um texto coeso possui elementos coesivos que o torna fácil de ser entendido. Esses elementos fazem com que frases e parágrafos estejam interligados.
- b) Em "João levou sua mãe para casa porque ela estava passando mal", o pronome 'sua' nos faz entender que é a mãe de João, e 'ela' mostra que a mãe de João que passava mal.
- c) d) Sim. Coesão e coerência dão sentido ao texto, fazendo dele um 'arremate'.
- 6,7 NÃO LEMBRARAM DOS CONCEITOS
- 8 a) É como as palavras estão interligadas entre si.
- b) "Mesmo" dá coesão à frase 'mesmo não gostando de inglês, preciso saber essa língua'.
- c) d) É essencial para um texto bem escrito, mas não precisa ter consciência que ela existe pra saber isso.
- 9 São elementos internos de um texto que interligam as frases. Entendo coesão como o bom uso da gramática (pronomes, advérbios...), e também do conhecimento da língua que o escritor possui. Acho que a 'prática leva à coesão'.

- 10** As ligações que conectam as partes do texto que fortalecem o sentido do texto.
- 11** Vejo coesão como algo importante e muitas vezes necessária para a compreensão de um texto, porém depende do texto, por exemplo, poesia não precisa ter este elemento para ser compreendido, dependendo do tipo de poesia.
- 12** **a)** Coesão é um conjunto de regras que façam com que as ideias do texto sejam conectadas, porém, nem sempre é necessária para estabelecer coerência textual.
- b)** “João estava com fome, por isso comeu um pão”, onde “por isso” é um elemento coesivo que estabelece uma relação de causa entre as orações.
- c) d)** Sim, pois facilita a compreensão do texto, ajudando a eliminar ambiguidades.
- 13** Elementos presentes no texto capazes de guiar os leitores para o entendimento deste. Por meio de conectivos as ideias são conectadas possibilitando que o leitor construa sua coerência no texto. A coesão do texto facilita a compreensão do mesmo e assim o leitor é capaz de significar esse texto.
- 14** Coesão está dentro do texto e ocorre através do uso de elementos coesivos, como conjunções, advérbios, etc. Acho que um texto sem coesão pode ser bem escrito, pois o autor pode fazer uso de outros recursos para que o texto seja lógico.
- 15** Ela se preocupa com a articulação gramatical entre palavras, sentenças e parágrafos.
- 16** **a)** Coesão corresponde aos elementos textuais (visíveis na superfície) que auxiliam na conexão de ideias presentes na superfície do texto.
- b)** Pronomes de referência, termos de ligação,

conjunções, etc.

- c) d)** A coesão certamente contribui para a qualidade de um texto, pois ela é responsável por construir uma unidade que se sustenta e que auxilia na compreensão do conteúdo por parte do leitor.
- 17**
- a)** Coesão é o que faz o texto não ficar confuso.
- b)** Utilizam-se elementos coesivos para unir frases, como “e”.
- c) d)** Acho que contribui por fazer o leitor entender o que você está escrevendo.
- 18**
- a)** A correta ligação sequencial de elementos em um texto
- b)** A casa de João é amarela, e a minha também.
- c) d)** Sim; contribui no desenvolvimento de um texto bem escrito por facilitar a leitura e compreensão.
- 19**
- a)** A coesão é uma relação semântica entre elementos textuais (sejam eles frases inteiras, parágrafos ou até mesmo elementos no interior da frase)
- b)** “Quando o presidente levantou-se, todos fizeram o mesmo”. A expressão “todos fizeram o mesmo” é um mecanismo de substituição, uma relação interna da frase.
- c) d)** Acredito que sim, pois ela facilita a compreensão global do que está sendo dito.

The figure 4 presents the diverse definitions of cohesion given by students:

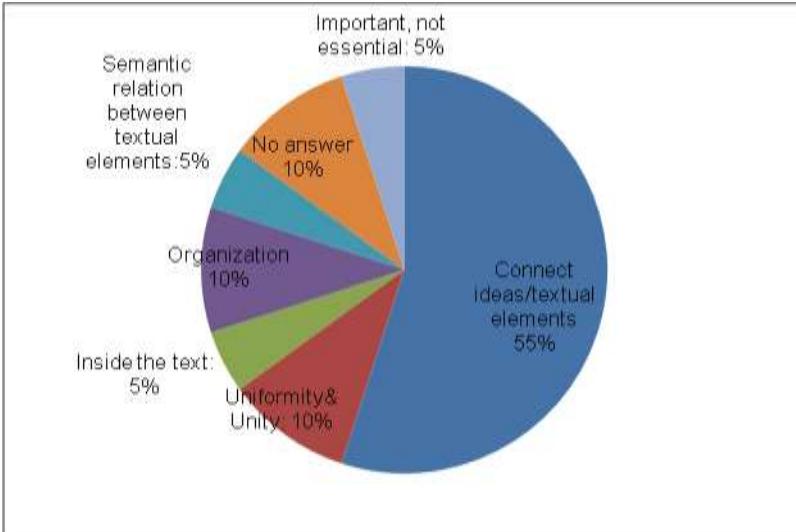


Figure 4: Students' definitions of cohesion

The following figure shows the quantity and percentage of students who defined cohesion and coherence according to the specialized literature, those who didn't and the participants who did not remember their concepts. These results are compatible with the type of population they belong to – Letters Course.

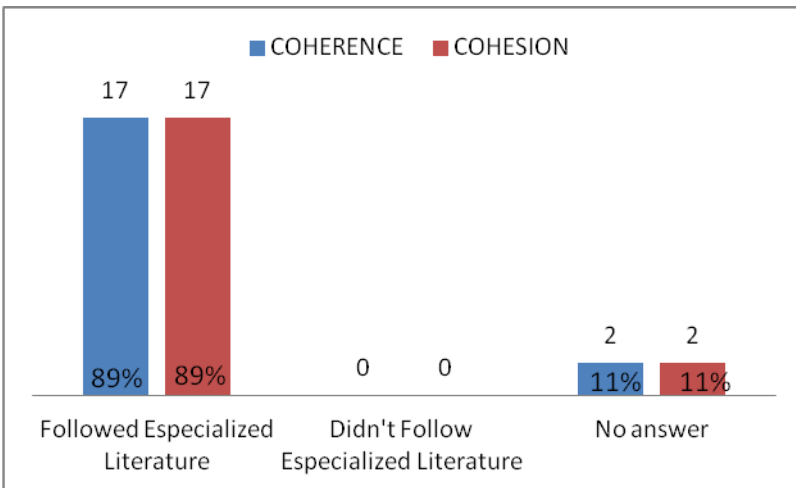


Figure 5: Students' definitions of cohesion and coherence

4.2 COHERENCE IN WRITING

Regarding the use of Charolles' meta-rules to achieve coherence, from the 19 participants, 9 students (47%) followed Charolles' framework, fulfilling all requirements to achieve coherence, and 10 students (53%), although they followed his framework in some parts of their texts, violated at least one of its aspects and did not achieve coherence in the text as a whole. The next figure reports these findings:

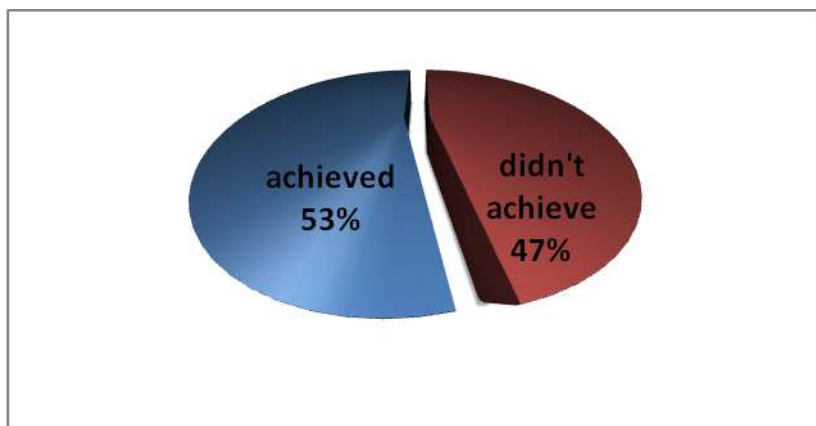


Figure 6: Students' achievement of coherence according to Charolles' framework (1978).

Considering the 45 essays that 19 students wrote and the four requirements Charolles mentioned that a text should meet to achieve coherence, non-contradiction was the requirement that students violated most often, followed by continuity and congruity, respectively, and finally, progression, the requirement that only a few students did not fulfill.

The figure 7 shows the average of Charolles' (1978) rules in relation to coherence that each student violated in his written text. The horizontal line shows the participants and the vertical line represents the number of errors in coherence and the colors indicate the types of meta-rule which were violated.

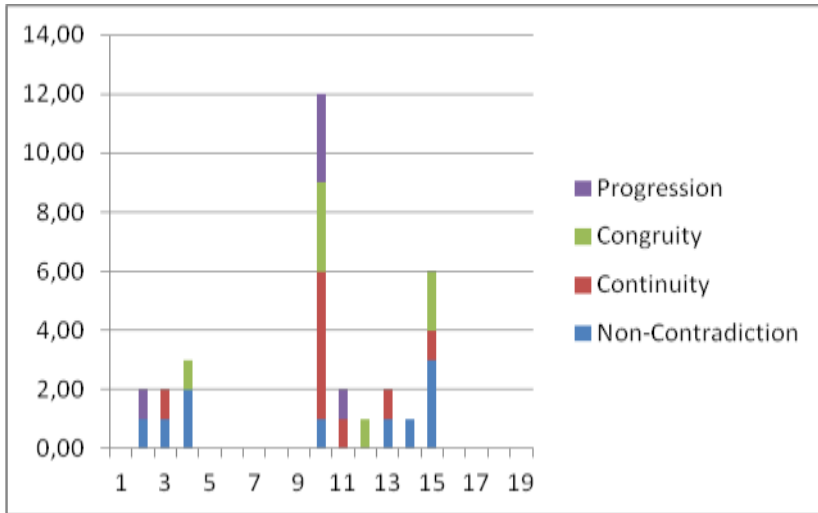


Figure 7: Violation of Charolles' (1978) rules to achieve coherence by each student

Regarding non-contradiction, the requirement students violated more often - 10 participants had difficulties in following this meta-rule from the total of 19. The next passage is an example of this problem, because the writer discussed the causes for Marijuana legalization but he meant the barriers for such legalization, an opposing relation. He mentioned that the commercialization of drugs as medical treatments is profitable to some who work in medical segments, and those who would lose money with the legalization of marijuana (See appendix D2):

It is a common sense that influent and powerful people make a huge profit from Marijuana smuggling alone. Therefore, this segment of people have no interest and will act very effectively in order to not lose the control of their business. In addition to the causes on Marijuana legalization, there is the so called “drug” medical use on muscle healing and pain relieving.

Another example can be visualized in the next extract of the comparison-contrast essay of student 4, in which he mentioned negative aspects as advantages, instead of disadvantages (See appendix C4):

“Living in a small town has its advantages as not having a good health system or good school system.”

The second requirement that students had difficulty to fulfill was **continuity** – 9 students out of 19 violated this principle. One of the possible obstacles in fulfilling this rule is that in several essays the authors did not repeat key words throughout the texts to connect the paragraphs not referring to elements mentioned previously nor using synonyms in new paragraphs referring to these important words from previous paragraphs when needed. The reason for this might have been the lack of thesis statement and of explicit main ideas, in development paragraphs. The thesis statement, which usually appears near the end of the introduction, presents what the text will discuss, defining the writer’s position in relation to the topic, and helps to organize and develop arguments. It is developed, supported and explained in the course of the text through examples and evidence. The main idea, which is the most important idea of a paragraph, is often stated in its first sentence to help the reader. Without a clear thesis statement and a clear delimitation of the arguments to be discussed, important concepts were not repeated in the following paragraphs and sometimes not restated in the conclusion of some essays.

The following introduction of a comparison-contrast essay, written by student 3, does not contain a clear thesis statement announcing the arguments to be discussed in the development paragraphs, which makes it difficult for the reader to follow the author’s idea (See appendix C3):

We are always reflecting on to what extent is the small town life more worth than the big city life. We do not really know, but we do know that the only way of proving it, is moving to a small town and living its life as much as we can, and then reflect about what we have gained with such an experience.

In several situations, difficulty in meeting the requirement of continuity might have been related to the structure of the written texts. Some students did not define, in the introductory paragraphs, thesis statements or arguments to be discussed. This made it impossible to repeat these elements in the development paragraphs. In many essays, the main ideas were not clear in each paragraph, and they were not

placed right at the beginning. Consequently, lexical reiterations were absent in certain excerpts they should have been present, a factor that affects continuity. Four students, in some of their compositions, did not repeat important nouns throughout their texts to facilitate the reader's comprehension. In some compositions, the conclusion did not repeat the topics presented in the introduction or the ideas discussed in the development paragraphs. In certain cases, new topics not related to the ones previously discussed in the texts were introduced in the concluding paragraph or arguments presented in the introduction were not discussed in the development paragraphs. Considering that it would not be possible to develop the subjects introduced in the conclusion because it was the last paragraph, this type of situation was pointed out as a problem of continuity since the topics were not cited in the introduction nor in development paragraphs as they should have been.

In the following example, the author affirmed, in the introduction, that big cities have 4 advantages but only 3 were discussed later throughout the text – the theme medical care was not mentioned in the development paragraphs (Appendix C3):

Every small city's dream is to become big. This sentence might sound harsh to some people but it reflects our present. Nowadays, with the increase of global relationships, you have to be in tune with the latest events. Big cities have plenty of opportunities: from 1) education and 2) work to 3) entertainment and 4) good medical care. It is time to face the real world and give yourself a chance to get immersed in the daily routine of a metropolis.

Student 10 asked questions in the introduction - "What are these people's priorities?" "How do people turn to be cold and forget the fundamentals of being a social specie?"- but did not answer them later (See appendix C10). In his argumentative essay, student 4 argued that "eating meat is not good for your health" and later stated that "substituting other healthy protein sources, such as fish, poultry, nuts, and legumes, was associated with a lower risk of mortality," not including meat to be substituted (See appendix E4). By not repeating the word "meat," a problem of cohesion originated because a lexical reiteration was missing, and coherence was affected since the requirement of continuity was not fulfilled.

Regarding the difficulties with **congruity**, a meta-rule violated 7 times, some of these problems might be related to the misuse of cohesive devices. Student 4 also had difficulties in this regard: in the same essay (Appendix E4), he does not make clear the relation between methane, digestion, and a vegetarian nutrition in the following extract, which violates the principle of congruity. It seems that this gas is produced by humans and/or animals whenever they eat meat, since we are being advised to abstain from it. However, it is not clear that methane is produced not only during animal digestion, after eating meat, but also during human's digestion (see the following extract):

During the digestion process, animals produce methane, a greenhouse gas, able to trap heat in atmosphere with more efficiency than carbon dioxide [...]. Many studies in this field demonstrating that this gas contribute to the global warming more than any other source, PETA say that "not eating meat is the 'single most effective thing you can do to reduce your climate change impact".

Student 12, in his argumentation (Appendix E12), presents the idea that a person who smokes will suffer bad consequences because smoking affects people around smokers, but the reason for that is because smoking especially affects the person who smokes. Moreover, someone who smokes one cigarette per day is already a smoker and will not be affected by the smoke of other people but by his own cigarettes (See extract below).

Even if a person smokes only one cigarette per day, some harm to his/her body will be brought, maybe not in weeks or months, but certainly in years this person will meet the consequences. It happens because smoking is a vice that does not affect only the smoker; it also affects everyone around him/her.

Development or **progression** was the requirement most students fulfilled - only three participants violated this principle. Student 11 (See appendix E11), for example, mentions "the ruin of the family image and balance" as possible consequences of homosexual adoption or as a reason for people to reject it. However, the author did not explain

the concept of family and balance, why or how this could happen, nor developed this subject. He just wrote: “The ruin of the family image and balance, the concern that the child adopted by homosexuals will automatically become homosexual too.” Student 10 also had difficulties in fulfilling the requirement of progression (Appendix C10). In the second paragraph, he presents characteristics that both small and big cities have in common, but he does not mention the differences between them, an explanation that readers expect in a comparative-contrast essay. In the third paragraph, he mentions that big cities have “a whole deck of choices”, but these choices are not presented nor discussed. (See the following extract).

It is natural that humans want to live near each other, it is our nature. This relationship develops into cities which, big or small, have the same basic characteristics to accommodate a large or small group of people. Those characteristics are: availability of goods; transportation; sanitation; entertainment; education; organization. With all these aspects in common, the way they appear in towns is what shows their differences.

Even though small cities have difficulties to offer a great variety of goods, people can have a quiet, worthy, and warm life. Big cities might have a whole deck of choices, but also have a lack of trust among their population because of violence growing at an alarming rate that gives to the people living in big towns the sensation that everything is out control. Despite all those negative aspects which diminish quality of their lives, people seem to not mind it much.

The following figure shows the percentage of students who violated each rule established by Charolles (1978):

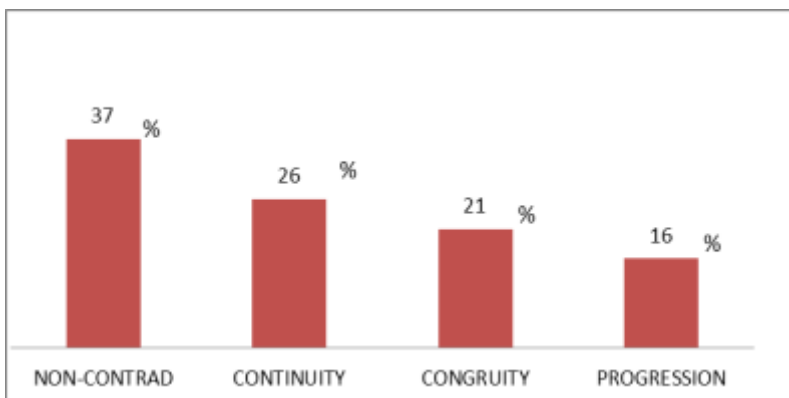


Figure 8: Percentage of students who violated each of Charolles' requirements for coherence

From the total of 45 essays, 36 compositions (80%) had clear these statements and only nine essays (20%) did not have well-established arguments in the development paragraphs (See figure 9). This is the case in the argumentative essays written by students 6, 10, 11, 15, in the comparison-contrast essay from students 2, 8, and 10, and in cause-effect essays written by students 10 and 15. Regarding the main ideas, in 33 compositions (74%) they are well formulated and in 12 essays (26%) the students did not state it clearly in the beginning of the development paragraphs, including the themes to be discussed. This happens in the argumentative essays written by students 6, 8, 10, 11, 15, and 19, in comparison-contrast essays from students 2, 8, 10, and 15, and in cause-effect essays written by students 10 and 15. All these factors might have affected the continuity in coherence, since elements were not repeated throughout the text to fulfill this requirement – arguments which support the thesis should appear in the development paragraphs, and they could be presented also in the introduction of essays to prepare the reader by showing which ones will be developed, but this did not always happen.

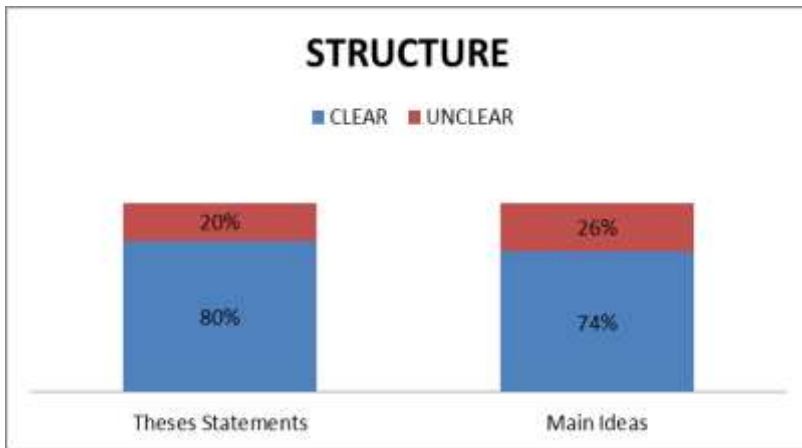


Figure 9: Number of essays with unclear theses statements and main ideas

The results related to structure problems show that students had more difficulty in organizing the structure of argumentative essays than other types of essays. This might be related to the fact that “the writing of formal argument places heavy cognitive demands on the writer,” as mentioned Dastjerdi and Samian, which indicates that this type of text seem to be of a more difficult nature (2011, p. 67). They observed that “studies in various countries have reported poorer performance in argumentative writing than in other genres” and concluded that “argumentative compositions by foreign students often deviate characteristically from expected forms” (Dastjerdi & Samian, 2011, p. 67).

4.3 COHESION IN WRITING

The students wrote three types of essays throughout the semester in the following order: comparison-contrast, cause-effect, and argumentative. The majority of participants followed the framework of Halliday and Hasan (1976) and achieved cohesion. In cause-effect essays, cohesive devices were used appropriately in 98% of the cases, and in argumentative and comparative contrast essays, cohesive elements were used appropriately in 99% of the cases, an expected finding since these students are in an upper-intermediate level. The percentage of inappropriate use (2% and 1%) included the absence of

cohesive elements, which should have been used in excerpts where needed.

In all types of essays, the cohesive element most used was *lexical reiteration*, usually followed by *article reference*, *other types of reference*, or *additive conjunction*, and their order varying according to the kind of essays. *Adversative* and *causal conjunctions*, respectively, come next as the fifth and sixth elements most applied in all essays. Finally, the elements with lower occurrences were *substitution*, *ellipsis*, and two types of conjunctions, *temporal* and *continuative*, the latter being the least applied. The infrequency of substitution or ellipsis ties in students' essays was expected because of their low frequency of occurrence in formal writing, as observed by Liu and Braine (2005, as cited in Abdelreheim, 2004), as these two types of cohesive ties tend to be used more often in oral language than in written language (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Similarly, Mudhhi and Hussein (2014) believe that the low number of continuative conjunctions "may be attributed to the fact that the number of continuatives is relatively smaller and it is mainly used in conversation" (p. 27).

The following table presents the number of cohesive elements each participant used in the comparison-contrast essays. Students 18 and 19 did not write this type of essay. At the bottom, the total number of cohesive devices each student used, misused, and missed is shown as well as the quantity of words each essay contains (see table 6).

Table 6: *Number of cohesive elements used in comparison-contrast essays*

STUDENT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	SUM
Def.Art	25	25	28	25	23	16	14	25	32	14	18	27	15	6	22	31	8	354
Other Refs	30	21	24	65	32	19	27	31	25	15	28	23	29	12	31	28	16	456
Cj-Additive	17	10	17	32	14	21	22	35	32	10	20	11	21	19	30	38	18	367
Cj-Adversative	2	3	2	14	3	4	3	8	9	3	4	2	1	3	7	2	4	74
Cj-Causal	7	0	1	3	4	1	5	2	4	1	2	0	4	4	2	3	2	45
Cj-Continuative	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	8
Cj-Temporal	2	2	3	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	3	0	2	3	1	1	23
LexicalReiteration	48	36	33	129	41	44	44	76	77	37	47	69	53	49	39	57	41	920
Substitution	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	6
Ellipsis	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	8
Devices Used	140	70	108	256	115	100	118	178	181	80	119	136	124	96	138	160	92	2211
Devices Misused	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	4
Devices Missing	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	2	1	0	0	3	1	2	0	4	19
Total of Words	386	319	412	898	403	421	427	636	642	297	487	448	472	374	468	612	348	8050

Different from the other types, in comparison-contrast essays the second kind of cohesive device most used was *other types of references*, followed by *additive conjunction* and *article reference*, the fourth. In the sequence of occurrences were *adversative* and *causal conjunctions*, in the fifth and sixth place in all types of essays, followed by *temporal*, *continuative conjunctions*, *ellipsis*, and *substitution*, elements used with lower frequency in all kinds of essays, but their occurrences varied according to the type of text. See figure 10:

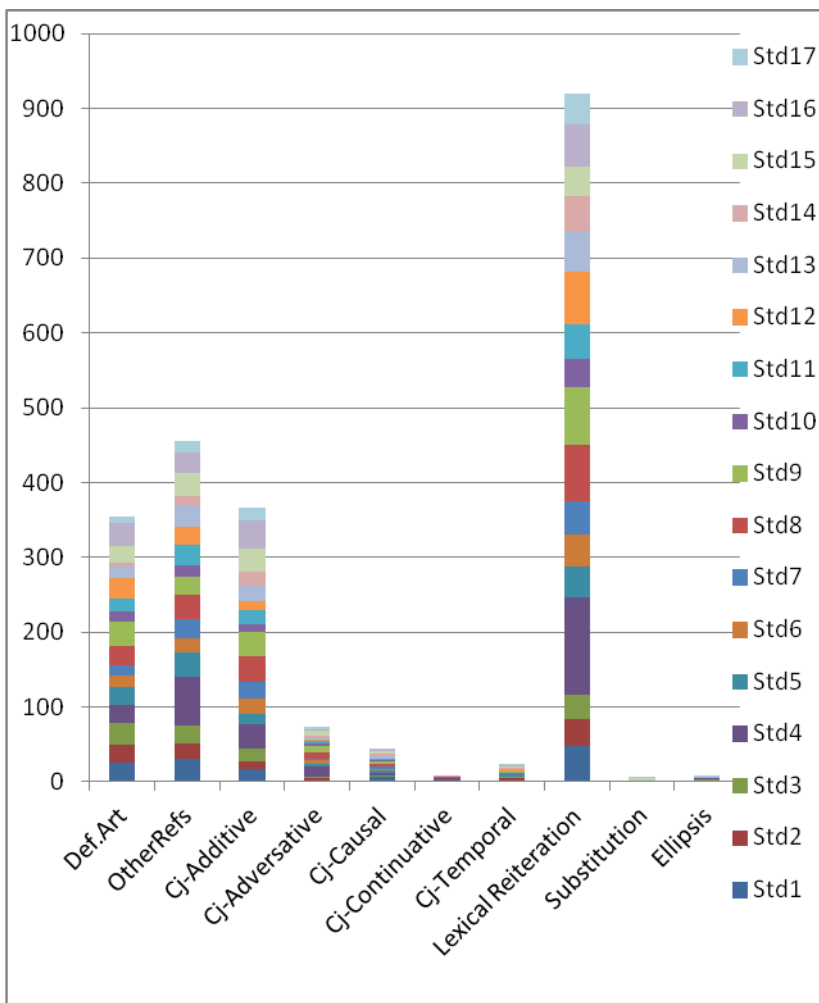


Figure 10: Average of cohesive elements used in comparison-contrast essays

It is understandable that the use of *other types of reference* was outstanding in comparison-contrast essays since the use of demonstrative and comparative pronouns such as *these, those, here, there, better, less/more than* were necessary to compare opposite types of cities - small and big. It was also expected that, differently from the other types of essays, *additive conjunctions* occupied the third place in this kind of essay because features needed to be added to each type of city in order to describe and compare them, besides giving examples of their characteristics whenever needed.

The table 7 presents the number of cohesive elements each participant used in cause-effect essays. Since the researcher did not have the access to this type of essay written by students 1 to 8, neither by students 18 and 19, the table starts with participant 9 and finishes with student 17. At the bottom, the total number of cohesive devices each student used, misused, and missed is shown as well as the quantity of words each essay contains.

Table 7: *Types of cohesive elements used in cause-effect essays*

STUDENT	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	SUM
DefiniteArticle	60	39	44	33	42	19	27	67	20	351
OtherReferences	46	30	42	38	35	14	29	33	14	281
Cj-Additive	29	23	39	14	24	9	13	39	12	202
Cj-Adversative	2	4	5	3	4	0	4	8	3	33
Cj-Causal	7	1	1	3	1	3	1	6	4	27
Cj-Continuative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cj-Temporal	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	4
Lexical Reiteration	113	38	109	91	77	29	21	128	34	640
Substitution	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
Ellipsis	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	6
Devices Used	259	137	241	183	183	74	98	286	87	1548
Devices Misused	0	1	2	0	0	0	3	0	2	8
Device Missed	0	0	0	0	1	6	1	0	5	13
Total of Words	866	565	873	573	666	255	345	1086	341	5570

In cause-effect essays, after *lexical reiteration*, the second element most used was *article reference*, which exceeded the number of

other types of references, the third element, in about 30% of these essays. These were followed by the use of *additive*, *adversative*, and *causal conjunctions* devices. Subsequent in occurrences were *substitution*, *ellipsis*, and *temporal conjunction*. There is only one occurrence of *continuative conjunction*, perhaps a result of the quantity of cause-effect essays written. Considering that this kind of cohesive device is scarce in all types of compositions, it is possible to infer that in cause-effect essays, its number was even smaller because there were fewer essays written of this type. There were double the number of argumentative and comparison-contrast essays, so the same could have happened with the number of continuative conjunctions used. See figure 11:

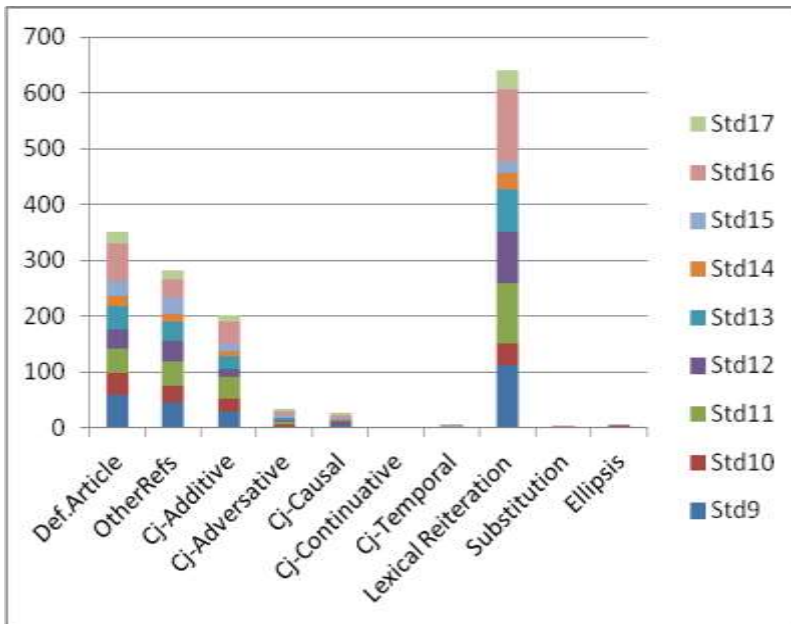


Figure 11: Average of cohesive elements used in cause-effect essays

The next table shows the number of cohesive elements each participant used in the argumentative essays. At the bottom, the total number of cohesive devices each student used, misused, and missed is shown as well as the quantity of words each essay contains.

Table 8: *Number of cohesive elements used in argumentative essays*

Student	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	SUM
Article	95	89	101	42	90	54	31	58	56	41	29	39	58	81	41	149	36	30	49	1169
OtherRef	21	73	22	87	96	78	80	74	56	42	30	84	43	48	28	85	52	30	24	1053
Cj-Add	32	66	17	58	66	86	51	44	53	25	20	47	44	48	25	74	14	32	41	843
Cj-Adv	6	9	8	6	6	8	11	5	10	5	7	9	6	12	5	13	6	6	7	145
Cj-Cau	10	6	3	10	11	2	9	10	5	1	1	10	4	16	5	9	4	3	0	119
Cj-Cont	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	5
Cj-Tp	3	0	4	5	4	6	3	4	6	1	0	2	1	2	3	6	2	2	1	55
LexRt	109	130	70	176	192	181	104	112	118	76	57	193	103	84	36	268	67	66	96	2238
Subst	1	5	1	1	0	3	0	2	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	1	24
Ellipsis	0	3	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	2	1	17
DUsed	277	381	227	387	466	419	290	309	304	193	145	386	265	292	143	607	182	175	221	5669
DMisu	0	0	5	3	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	2	0	1	23
DMiss	1	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	5	4	0	0	5	0	0	29
TotWord	779	1145	1527	1642	1395	726	979	1006	1313	802	580	1198	1123	716	513	2049	729	684	886	19792

The results found in argumentative essays were similar to the ones from cause-effect essays considering the four elements most applied. According to Ghasemi (2003), who refers to lexical items as “the major building blocks of any composition” as well as “the main carrier of message” (p.1619), some researchers hold that *lexical cohesion* is the most commonly and broadly used category in both good and weak essays and, indeed, in this study *lexical reiteration* was the element found in greater quantity in all essays. Dastjerdi and Samian (2011) believe that extensive use of lexical devices is reasonable in argumentative essays “because this genre requires forming arguments and elaborating ideas to support them which necessitate the effective use of various lexical devices” (p.75). *Article references* were in second place in argumentations, and the next elements most used were *other types of references, additive, adversative, and causal conjunctions*, as was the case in cause-effect essays. These results are in line with those of some researchers such as Johns (1980), Liu and Braine (2005), Zhang (2000), and Dastjerdi and Samian (2011, p. 66), who “maintain that lexical devices form the largest percentage of the total number of cohesive devices, followed by references and conjunctions in students’ writings”. In studies conducted by Neuner (1987) and Yvette and Yip (1992), the frequency order of cohesive devices was also lexical devices, references, and conjunctions (Dastjerdi & Samian, 2011). Regarding conjunctions, the results in this research are somewhat different from Dastjerdi and Samian (2011), in which additive devices had the largest percentage of use, followed by causal, adversative, and temporal devices.

The fact that in comparison-contrast essays the number of adversative conjunctions was higher than in cause-effect essays shows the participant’s ability in using cohesive devices. This difference was expected since participants needed to discuss a controversial topic, exposing different points of view, and compare opposite types of cities, showing their differences. These results reveal that students were able to do that with the help of cohesive elements. The number of adversative conjunctions is even higher in argumentative essays, probably because they are much longer and were the last type of essay written, which means that students had acquired more practical experience and knowledge to write. It also shows that they progressed over time.

Differently from cause-effect essays, the cohesive devices mostly used in the argumentative essays were, respectively, *temporal conjunctions, substitution, ellipsis, and continuative conjunctions*, the least applied. See the following figure:

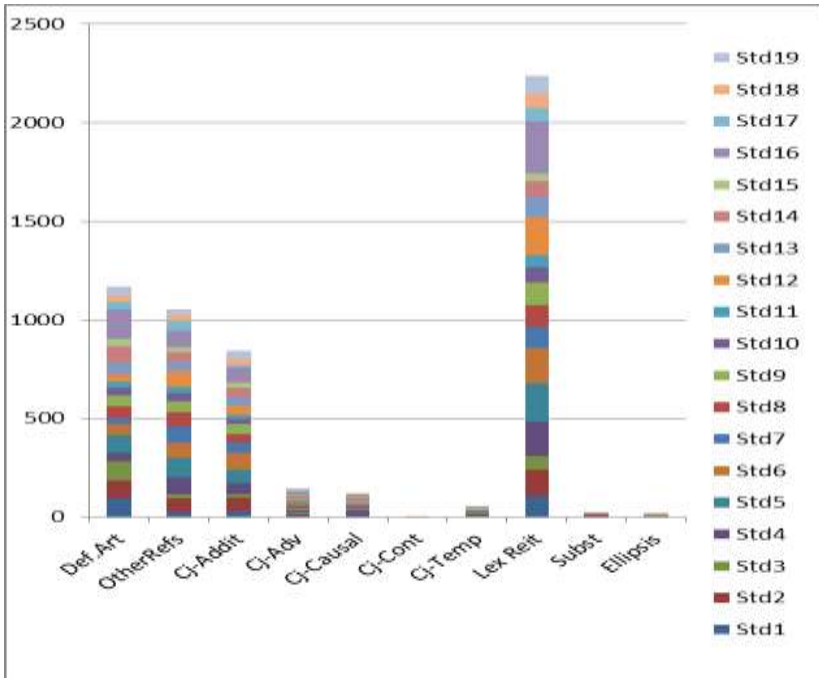


Figure 12: Average of cohesive elements used by each student in argumentative essays

A possible explanation for the fact that temporal conjunctions appeared more often in comparison-contrast and argumentative essays is because they were useful to introduce the development paragraphs when students presented new advantages of the types of cities they were describing and to present a sequence of arguments in order to support their thesis in argumentative essays. In cause-effect essays, not many temporal conjunctions were found to be missing because their presence was not necessary.

Comparing the average of mistakes in the use of cohesive devices among all students in the three different types of essays, it is possible to infer that argumentative was the most difficult type to be written and comparison-contrast the easiest. Although the order of their written products was comparison-contrast, cause-effect and argumentative essays, the average of mistakes for each type was, 0.2, 0.9 and 1.2 mistakes for each student, respectively, which means that student's difficulties in using cohesive devices properly increased through time. In respect to cause-effect essays, it is difficult to make a balanced

comparison since only half of students wrote this type of text, but regarding argumentative essays, it is plausible to find such results. The first possible reason is the fact that student's argumentative essays were much longer than the other texts, and, consequently, more likely to contain errors. The second cause for student's troubles with this type of essay, is that "English argumentative writing poses rhetorical difficulties for second-language writers", according to Zhu (2001, p.35). He investigated the argumentative written production of ESL Mexican graduate students who perceived the structure, organization of ideas and development of arguments as the major areas of difficulties. The similar results reported by Zhu (2001) in Al-Abed-Al-Haq and Ahmed's (1994) study examining argumentative writing by Arabic ESL writers might suggest that, trying to accomplish the demanding task of writing argumentative essays, students focus their attention on organizing ideas and building arguments to persuade the reader when producing this type of text and pay less attention to grammar aspects, including the use of cohesive devices. Students might also achieve lower performances in writing this type of essay because the structure of argumentative texts is more complex or less practiced in their academic life.

4.4 Students' difficulties in cohesion and coherence

Among the few problems students had in following the framework of Halliday and Hasan (1976) for cohesion, two categories were analyzed: cohesive devices misused and cohesive devices missing. In the 45 essays, the number of cohesive elements missing were almost double the number of elements misused (45 missing and 26 misused). See figure 13:

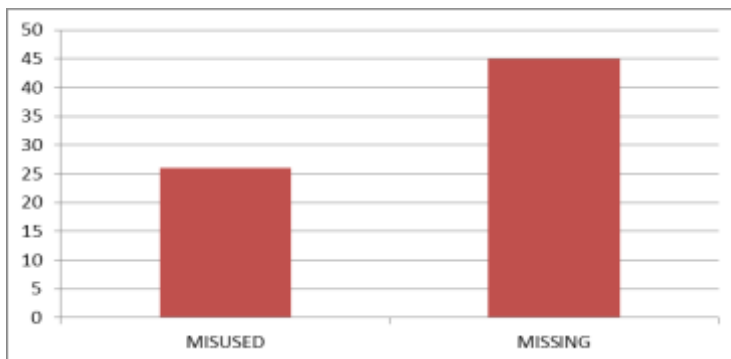


Figure 13: Number of cohesive devices misused and missing

In their essays, students had problems using eight cohesive devices in the following order: *referent pronouns*, *causal conjunction*, *demonstrative reference*, *adversative* and *additive conjunction*, *lexical reiteration*, and *article*. No mistake was found in the use of *temporal conjunctions*, which differs from the results of a study by Field and Oi (1992), who found that the three hardest writing devices were temporal conjunctions, causal conjunctions, and adversative conjunctions. The participants in the present study did have difficulties with causal and adversative conjunctions but not regarding temporal conjunctions, even though this type of conjunction was the most absent. It might also be true that causal and adversative conjunctions were the most difficult devices if we consider that seven mistakes in demonstrative and reference pronouns were due to lack of agreement between nouns (singular and plural), subjects and verbs. These results suggest that students were distracted, which lead them to make mistakes in spelling, and such cohesive problems were influenced by grammatical errors instead of being caused by the lack of knowledge about cohesion (See figure 14).

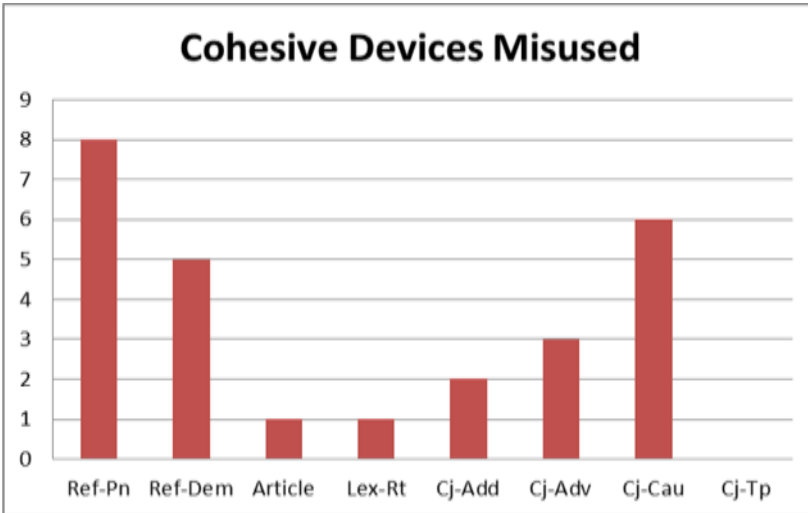


Figure 14: Average of cohesive devices misused

Regarding the use of pronominal and demonstrative references, seven mistakes found were due to problems in verbal or nominal agreement, committed by students 4, 9, 12, 17, 13, 11 and 15. Another

type of problem that sometimes occurred pointed to elements not mentioned previously in the text. This happened three times, and the participants who made this mistake were students 4 and 8 in their argumentative essays. Another problem, which occurred four times, was the use of “then” instead of “than” in passages in which a comparative pronoun was required. Although we can see that this was a spelling mistake, it interferes with the flow of thought and thus with coherence. This happened with students 4 and 11 in comparison-contrast essays and with student 16 in his argumentative essay. The next Figure shows the number of elements each student used incorrectly.

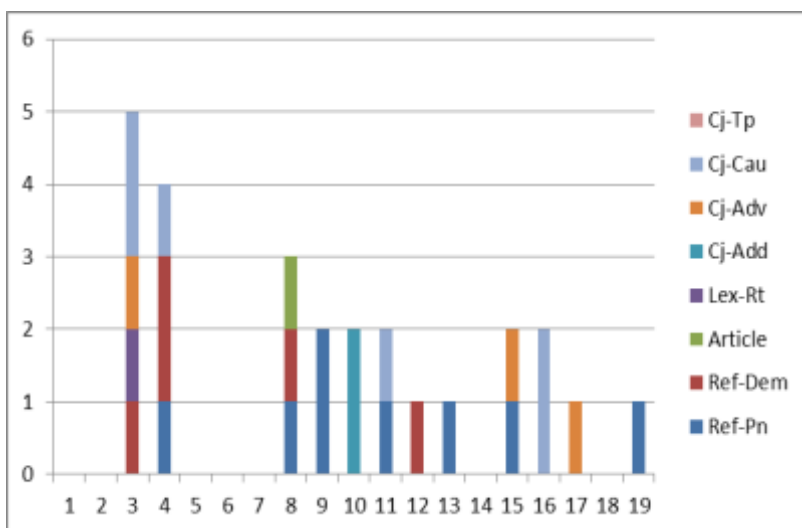


Figure 15: Quantity and type of cohesive device misused for each student

Regarding the absence of cohesive devices, the most outstanding problem was related to *temporal conjunction*, followed by *lexical reiteration*, *additive*, *adversative* and *causal conjunction*, *referent pronoun*, and *article reference*. No one forgot to use *demonstrative pronouns* whenever needed (See following figure):

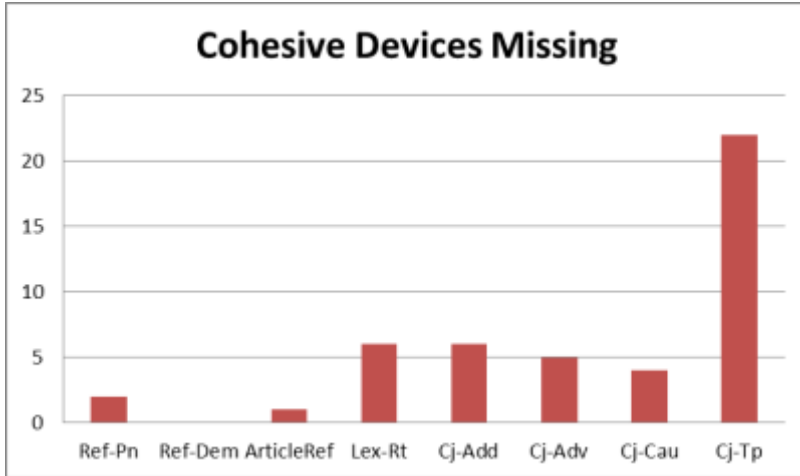


Figure 16: Average of cohesive devices missing

The element most participants forgot to use was temporal conjunction. A total of 22 students did not use this element to make transitions between paragraphs. Consequently, certain paragraphs started abruptly, not guiding the reader in a sequence of arguments, and some conclusive paragraphs did not signal that the text was ending. Student 14 (see appendix C14), for example, started the last paragraph without a temporal conjunction to signalize the conclusion of the text, which is normally a useful connector for this occasion:

Life in big cities is more comfortable. Big cities provide more options for people to have a good life. In big cities, people are only bored if they want, because there are many things to do. Also, people find the best educational centers there. And, last but not least, people do not have to worry about traveling to another city to buy something or to get a better treatment for a disease. The solution is nearby.

Considering the use of conjunctions in all essays, six additive (students 3, 4, 11, 14, and 17) and five adversative (students 3, 14, and 15) were not used where they should have been to expose relations of addition and opposition (See figure 17):

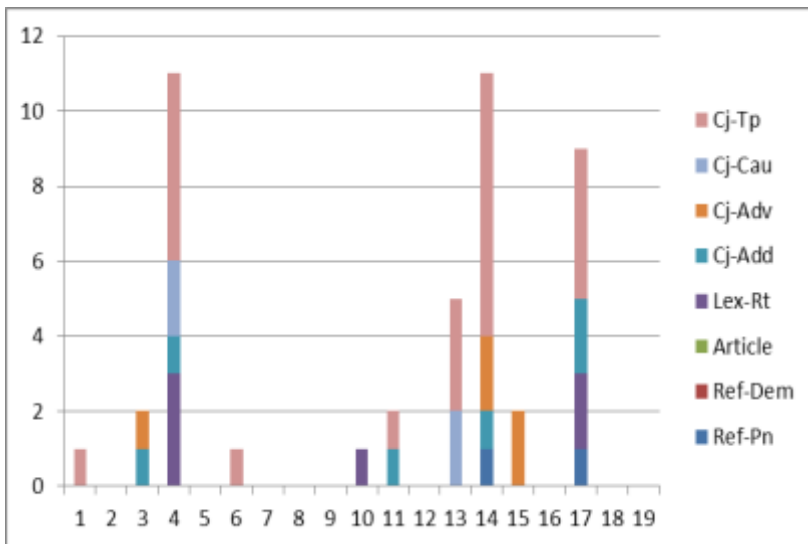


Figure 17: Quantity and type of cohesive devices missing for each student

The essay written by student 17 (see appendix E17), for example, finishes the last paragraph with a citation which is not introduced by any connector:

In brief, death penalty is the best way of punishing a killer. It has been proved that it deters crimes, functioning as a warning; that it saves innocents lives preventing other murders; and makes justice for the victims who can't speak for themselves anymore. "The execution of a murderer sends a powerful moral message: that the innocent life he took was so precious, and the crime he committed so horrific, that he forfeits his own right to remain alive".

Student 13, in his argumentative essay, did not use any additive conjunction to unite the two last items of the sentence (see appendix E13):

Every woman must have the freedom of choice to decide whether or not they want to have an abortion; this abortion should be legalized since it is not a murder, avoids deaths, unwanted children.

Student 16 misused a causal conjunction twice, repeating a spelling mistake (see appendix E16):

They came to the conclusion that black students have, in an average, a poorer learning

performance **then** the whites, regardless of their socioeconomic conditions (for instance, in a Portuguese exam, black students of private schools achieved a lower performance [179 points] **then** the white students from the same schools [228 points]).

In the following excerpts, the students 9, 13, 15 and 17 made the same type of mistakes, related to lack of agreement between nouns, pronouns and verbs (see appendices E9, C13, D17 and C17):

Among **this** students, 76,5% were female. (See appendix E9)

People tend to take life slower and paying attention to simple and small things which a big city with all **their** skyscrapers and noise do not allow you to enjoy it. (See appendix C13)

When the animal is lifted by **their** feet. (See appendix D17)

Problems like **this** won't disappear completely. (See appendix C17)

In the same type of essay, an adversative conjunction would be appropriate to start the third paragraph, which introduces opposite ideas in relation to the previous ones (appendix C15):

In the big city, there are better work and study opportunities. A dedicated can develop a professional life and provide good living conditions for his /her family. On the other hand, there is much noise and many impolite people, much crime and pollution too. In fact, we can not leave a window open and go shopping, because there are many thieves. Walking down the street at night can be dangerous too, but if we need a hospital, any big city offers a excellent medical treatment, not to mention supermarkets, universities, airports, and many other advantages.

Living in a small town can be a very happy experience. We know everyone and everyone knows us. People are friendlier and receive everybody at home. There are good schools and teachers, but there are not universities. Who lives there has to complete his/her studies in a big city, and there are almost no technological resources. On the other hand, the air is pure and there is not noise or pollution. We can have lunch with our

family during the working break and take a nap after lunch.

The second most frequent occurrence regarding the absence of cohesive elements was the misuse of lexical reiteration. This might be related to problems of continuity, sometimes making it difficult for the reader to recover what was being discussed and possibly also causing problems of congruity. The absence of these statements in the introductions of nine essays and sentences without main ideas clearly stated in the beginning of each paragraph in 12 essays probably contributed to generate problems of continuity.

Considering the 45 essays from 19 students and the four rules that should be met for a text to achieve coherence, non-contradiction was the requirement most difficult to be fulfilled, being violated ten times, followed by continuity and congruity, violated nine and seven times respectively, and finally, progression, the requirement most students fulfilled, which was violated in only five occasions (See figure 18).

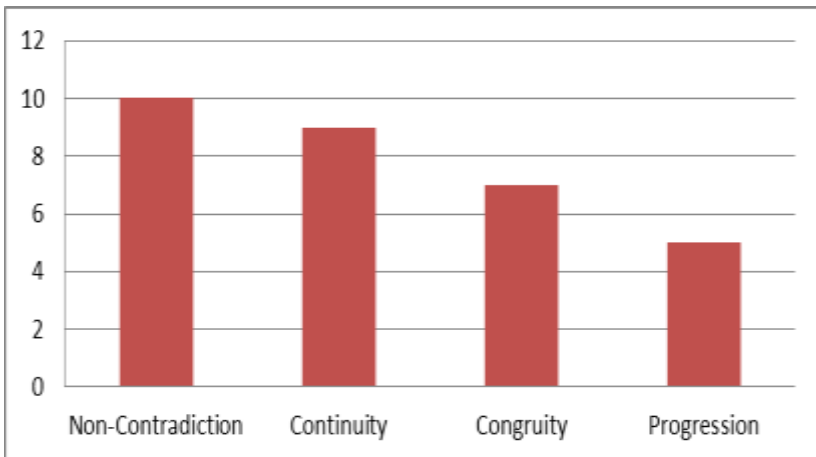


Figure 18: Number of Charolles' meta-rules violated in all essays

4.5 COHESION AND COHERENCE: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION AND ACTUAL PERFORMANCE

In this section, based on the answers given in the questionnaire, students' knowledge about cohesion and coherence will be compared to their performance in writing, considering the fulfillment of requirements

from the framework of Charolles (1978) to achieve coherence and from Halliday and Hasan (1976) to use cohesive devices. The goal is to determine whether their declarative knowledge of the concepts, that is, the fact that they were able to talk about cohesion and coherence, actually helped them to write cohesive and coherent texts.

Regarding cohesion, most students (89%) in their definitions mentioned at least one of its aspects according to the specialized literature; only two participants forgot its concepts (11%). Among the cohesive devices found in all essays, 98% were used correctly and 2% were not: some were used improperly and others were absent in certain excerpts in which they should have been placed to facilitate comprehension.

As to coherence, although the majority of students (89%) were able to define it, mentioning at least one of its aspects according to the specialized literature, almost half of them were incoherent in their writing (47%). Non-contradiction was the requirement most students (21%) mentioned in their definitions of coherence but, at the same time, the one they had the most difficulties meeting – 37% of participants violated this rule. Congruity (16%) was mentioned by 16% of the students who defined coherence and was the third rule they had difficulties to fulfill – 21% participants violated this rule. The figure 19 describes the relation between student's perception of coherence and their performance.

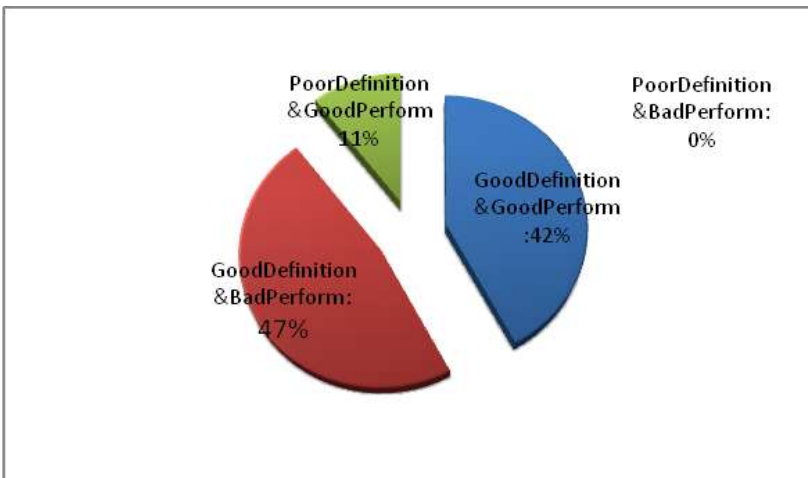


Figure 19: Students' definition of coherence related to their performances in writing

4.6 RESEARCH QUESTION'S DISCUSSION

In this subsection, all research questions will be answered based on the results presented above.

Research Question 1

- What do students from the seventh semesters majoring in English understand about the concepts of cohesion and coherence?

Almost all students (95%) mentioned that cohesion is in the surface of the text and achieved by the use of elements that play the role of connectors. Most of their definitions matched the concepts of the specialized literature. Some of the students related cohesion with connection of ideas (53%), some with unity and uniformity (11%), some with text organization (10%), one defined it as a semantic relation between textual elements (5%), and another as a quality inside the text (5%).

Regarding coherence, most students (70%) related it with meaning, 6% connected it to relevance, 6% defined it as non-contradiction, and 6% as an aspect outside the text. The requirement of non-contradiction, established by Charolles (1978), was mentioned by 21% of students, directly or indirectly, and 16% alluded to congruity when conceptualizing coherence. Although all students followed the specialized literature to define coherence and mentioned at least one of its features according to it, three participants (students 4, 14 and 18) misunderstood some aspects related to coherence: they mixed concepts that follow the specialized literature with definitions that contradict this literature, at the same time.

Student 4 thinks that coherence is the own text and made mistakes regarding this aspect three times: he violated the meta-rules of non-contradiction twice and congruity once. Student 14 believes that coherence is not necessary to write well because fictions can be well written texts and was incoherent once: he violated the requirement of non-contradiction once. Student 18 did not violate any rule of coherence, although he affirmed that coherence depends on cohesion. Even though these students' views of coherence contradicted the literature, they had a good performance in writing, which means that knowing the concept of coherence was not essential to write well – they

could write good texts without being able to define coherence satisfactorily.

Research Question 2

- Do students from the fourth, fifth and sixth semesters of the English Course use cohesive devices satisfactorily, and do they write coherent texts?

Most students were successful using cohesive devices since very few cohesive elements were used inappropriately (2%), considering the 45 essays analyzed. Some parts of certain essays needed cohesive devices, but the students did not use them and the overuse of repetition and reference might have happened because they were not familiar with all types of cohesive devices to the same degree. In relation to coherence, almost half of the students showed some type of difficulty to write coherent texts – 47% of participants violated at least one requirement established by Charolles (1978) to achieve coherence in parts of their texts.

Research Question 3

- What are the students' major difficulties in writing regarding cohesion and coherence?

Most problems in cohesion were related to missing elements in excerpts where they should have been placed to facilitate comprehension. The cohesive devices students missed the most were *temporal conjunctions*, followed by *lexical reiteration*, *additive*, *adversative*, and *causal conjunction*, respectively. Among the problems with elements used inappropriately, the cohesive devices students also had difficulty using were *referent pronouns*, *causal conjunction*, *demonstrative reference*, and *adversative conjunction*, respectively. In relation to coherence, students had more difficulty with non-contradiction, at first, with continuity, in second place, congruity next, and progression, at last.

Research Question 4

- Being aware or unaware about the concepts of cohesion and coherence from the specialized literature influenced students to write cohesive and coherence texts?

Students defined cohesion according to the specialized literature and used cohesive devices properly in 98% of the cases. As to coherence, they also defined it according to the literature, but only 53% of students wrote coherent texts that followed all four of Charolles' standards: non-contradiction, continuity, congruity, and progression. These results show that students were able to define cohesion and also to write cohesive texts; however, acknowledging the concept of coherence did not actually guarantee that students wrote coherent texts. Half of the students made mistakes regarding coherence although they acknowledged its basic features. When they defined coherence, they did not seem familiar with the requirements proposed by Charolles (1978), only two of them – non-contradiction and congruity - were mentioned by some students.

4.7 DISCUSSION

Alves and Damiani (2012), who analyzed written productions of Brazilian undergraduate students in Portuguese as first language, detected a lack of knowledge about textual elements due to the amount of students having problems in writing cohesive and coherent texts. In relation to the written productions of ESL students, Nunan (1999 cited in Ahmed, 2010) recognized that “producing a coherent piece of writing is an enormous challenge, especially in one’s second language” (p.211). In fact, in this study many students had difficulties with coherence, but cohesion was not problematic for most of them. Moreover, the participants, in general, seemed to acknowledge the concepts of cohesion and coherence, but many were unable to apply the definitions of coherence to write coherent texts, which reinforces Lee’s (2002) opinion about coherence, “an abstract and fuzzy concept difficult to teach and learn” (p. 135).

Although the questionnaires revealed that many students acknowledged important aspects of coherence and almost all of them understood that it is related to the meaning, no one cited all four aspects involved for a text to achieve coherence, especially the requirements of progression, continuity, and congruity, and only 42% of the students met the four requirements of Charolles (1978) in their writing. For that reason, the majority did not appear to understand the coherence phenomenon completely or maybe they do, but were not able to verbalize – they might have some implicit knowledge, which is of a tacit nature. Certain students cited some of those rules indirectly, but

certainly non-contradiction is the aspect they were more familiar with and, at the same time, the requirement most of them violated. This fact reinforces the existence of declarative and procedural knowledge, since understanding and being able to talk about the concept is different from acting upon it. In general, these results corroborates those of Chiu (2004), who observed that many students had problems in writing coherent texts, leading to the conclusion that coherence is “one of the most difficult areas in writing pedagogy, which is hard to acquire and not easy to teach” (p.155).

Indeed, being able to acknowledge the definitions of cohesion and coherence seemed to help students in writing, but it did not guarantee their success in applying this knowledge in writing for coherence. This is confirmed by some compositions belonging to students who defined those aspects well but violated important requirements of Charolles (1978). On the other hand, there were also cases of students who could not remember the meaning of cohesion and coherence but met all requirements to achieve them.

The results in this research do not corroborate those in recent literature (for example, Alves & Damiani, 2012; Oliveira & Santos, 2005; Marin & Giovanni, 2007; Cunha & Santos, 2006; Damiani, 2010), which investigated the written productions of Brazilian’s university students from different fields of study in their first language. These studies indicate that “many undergraduate students do not have sufficient knowledge of textual elements and their compositions cannot achieve the level expected.” Similarly, Vêncio and Pachane (2008) observed that several students reach undergraduate programs in their native language with serious problems in writing skills. In this research, which investigated the writing skills of students from the Letters Course, only a few participants had problems that prevent the comprehension of their texts - only two from the total of 19, had this level of difficulty, students 10 and 15. Those students had trouble in expressing thoughts and conveying ideas in their texts, mostly because of coherence problems, the majority related to contradiction, congruity, and continuity.

Several studies (Casanave, 2002; Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Paltridge, 1997) report the challenges of writing in a second language, indicating that “ESL students from diverse cultures and educational systems often have difficulty in meeting the demands of the kind of writing required of them at the graduate level”, according to Qian and Smolska (2008). Weijen (2008) observed that student’s written productions in L2 “often appear to be lower in text quality than was

expected based on the quality of their L1 texts” (p.5). A possible explanation for the difficulties in L2 writing might be that ESL students “focus almost exclusively on the word and sentence levels rather than the level of the whole discourse” since they tend to pay more attention to grammar and overlook content (Lee, 2002, p. 152).

This chapter was aimed at describing the analysis of students’ answers to the questionnaires about text, cohesion and coherence as well as commenting their essays regarding both aspects. Their performance was also related to the protocols with the goal of verifying if acknowledging the concepts of cohesion and coherence helped them in writing. The next chapter will conclude the research pointing the study’s major findings, its limitations, pedagogical implications and suggestions for further studies.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The aim of this study was to investigate undergraduate students' perceptions of cohesion and coherence as well as their ability to write cohesive and coherent texts. In order to examine learners' views and performance, students at intermediate level from the Letters Course majoring in English answered a questionnaire and gave permission to access some essays they wrote during the program - 45 compositions of the types comparison-contrast, cause-effect, and argumentative. These texts were analyzed to verify if the participants followed the frameworks of Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Charolles (1978).

Results showed that all students who defined cohesion did so in accordance with the specialized literature: almost all of them acknowledged that cohesion is in the surface of the text and that it is achieved by the use of connectors. Most students used cohesive devices following the framework of Halliday and Hasan (1976) - only 2% of cohesive elements were used inappropriately in 45 essays. Overall, students' definitions of cohesion and the low average of problems in using cohesive devices revealed that their knowledge helped them to write cohesive texts.

An analysis of students' difficulties in writing revealed that most problems in cohesion were related to cohesive devices missing in excerpts where they should have been placed to facilitate comprehension. The elements students missed the most were *temporal conjunctions*, followed by *lexical reiteration*, *additive*, *adversative*, and *causal conjunctions*, respectively. Since the absence of temporal conjunctions does not actually prevent the readers from understanding the contents of the texts, although they facilitate comprehension helping the fluency of reading by organizing in sequences the arguments presented in the development paragraphs, it seems that many students did not find them necessary. Similarly, it is possible that students did not worry too much in using additive conjunctions because their absence would hardly interfere in the meaning either. On the other hand, the absence of adversative and causal conjunctions is likely to disturb text

comprehension and students seemed to be aware of that, since just a few participants forgot to use them. Regarding the use of lexical reiteration, the second type of cohesive elements students forgot to use when they needed, its absence seemed to affect continuity, which was also the second type of requirement students had more difficulties to fulfill.

Among the problems with elements used inappropriately, the cohesive devices students misused more frequently were *referent pronouns*, in many cases due to lack of subject-verb agreement, *causal conjunctions*, *demonstrative references*, frequently because of errors in nominal agreement, and *adversative conjunctions*, respectively. Difficulties with the use of *causal* and *adversative conjunctions* were likely to affect congruity, since these elements indicate important relations among propositions.

Regarding coherence, all students who defined it followed the specialized literature and related it with meaning, but they did not show familiarity with all requirements established by Charolles (1978). This knowledge could have interfered in student's performances positively helping them to write more coherent texts: from the total of 45 essays, 31 errors of coherence were found. Almost half of the students showed some type of difficulty, violating at least one meta-rule to achieve coherence and their major difficulties were fulfilling the requirement of non-contradiction, followed by continuity, congruity, and progression, respectively. The participants seemed to acknowledge congruity and non-contradiction, which is the requirement they were most familiar with and the most violated, at the same time.

Despite the challenge of academic writing, described by Qian and Smolska (2008) as "a complex task that requires more than just improving linguistic abilities in the L2" (p.70), in the present study, only a few participants were unable to express themselves, due to a lack of knowledge about linguistic elements and English skills for expressing complex ideas, one of the reasons mentioned by Mohan and Lo (1985 as cited in Qian & Smolska, 2008) for errors in ESL students writing products. All of them were able to use cohesive devices properly in most situations, but many had difficulties in coherence. While in several cases these problems did not prevent the reader from understanding the essential message, the students still need improvement to write coherent texts.

Writing in one's mother tongue requires the use of several language and (meta) cognitive abilities and "writing in a second language is even more demanding, because several of these constituent abilities may be less well developed than in one's first language (L1)",

according to Schoonen et al (2003, p.3). They mention that finding words and correct grammatical structure in L2 requires attention that could be used to organize the text or building arguments to convince the reader of the writer's view point, which influences the quality of the text. In the same way, Jones and Tetroe (1987) observed some decrease in performance when students write in a second language, because "working in an unfamiliar language does take up cognitive capacity that would be used for other tasks, such as monitoring and revising the plan, in first-language composing" (p.106). Consequently, "the discourse and metacognitive knowledge that L2 writers are able to exploit in their L1 writing may remain unused, or underused, in their L2 writing" (p.8), according to Schoonen et al (2003). They concluded that in L2 writing, "students are more concerned with tackling language problems" while in L1 writing "the metacognitive knowledge plays a more important role" (p.29). However, Roessingh and Kover (2002) believe that "the better L1 is developed, the more likely L2 will develop to the level required for academic success" (p.4).

According to Matsumoto (1995), some studies provide evidence for transfer of already existing L1 writing strategy to L2 writing, such as Jones and Tetroe (1987). These authors looked at Spanish-speaking ESL writers generating texts in Spanish and ESL and found that certain aspects of a writer's L1 writing process transfer to that person's L2 writing process, such as the quality of planning and student's revisions (Jones & Tetroe, 1987 as cited in Matsumoto, 1995). Mohan and Lo (1985 as cited in Qian & Smolska, 2008, p.72) suggest that "there are both positive and negative transfers in L2 academic writing" – the former occurs "due to the existence of universal thinking patterns present in writing conventions" and the latter is a result of "interference from the culture-specific rhetorical organization of the writer's L1". Weijen (2008) observed that texts written in L2 are usually lower in quality than L1 texts and explained that "this could be due to the influence of language (L1 versus L2) on writers' orchestration of the writing process" (p.2), which is the temporal organization of cognitive activities. According to him, "the distribution of cognitive activities over time is not random but purposefully distributed over the writing process" and writers "have to shift continually between planning the main ideas, content translating, and text revising" (p.2). He concluded that the way that writers distribute these activities over time during a writing task is related to the quality of the resulting text (Weijen, 2008).

Whalen and Ménard (1995 as cited in Schoonen et al, 2003), who investigated the productions of Canadian students learning French as a

second language, found that, “in comparison to their L1 writing, in their L2 writing the students planned and evaluated relatively more frequently at the linguistic level compared to the textual and pragmatic level” (p.9). The authors also observed that “linguistic revisions were at a deeper level (phrase and sentence) in L1 than in L2, where most revisions concerned morphemes and orthography” (Whalen & Ménard, 1995, as cited in Shoonen et al, 2003, p.9). Indeed, the fact that many participants had problems with coherence and a few students made mistakes in grammar and cohesion in the present study might indicate that they pay more attention to form than content when writing in a second language. However, students were able to reflect on topics discussed in their essays and the protocols reveal that global aspects in writing received their attention, which indicates that the instructions they received were not limited to grammar and superficial aspects of language, contradicting the beliefs of Pavão (2007) regarding the writing pedagogy, in a study with high school students. According to him, a possible reason for students' experiencing problems in their written production is the difficulty professors have in teaching writing that, many times, is based on the provision of grammatical rules, word lists to connect phrases, and superficial aspects of language. Although it was not in the scope of the present study to verify the type of instruction students received, something that could be done in future research, a comparison of the current results with the finding of previous studies suggest that improvements in writing pedagogy occurred.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Considering the challenges of writing in a second language, English, and the good performance of most participants in their written productions, they might be able to produce better essays in Portuguese, their native language. Future research could compare the same type of essays written by students of Letters Course in both languages and verify if the difficulties with coherence and cohesion were influenced by the foreign language and if those problems disappear in their native language. Another suggestion is identifying the major problems of Brazilian students writing in English as a second language. There are not many studies on this language group and such investigation could foster the designing of specific material and the development of methodologies to help Brazilian ESL students in their particular difficulties.

Regarding teacher's feedback to improve student's writing, Bertoldi (1986) realized that professors' written comments on students' final drafts have been shown to be of little or no help, and he pointed out that "feedback between drafts has been found to be very helpful" (p.282). Keh (1990) mentioned several advantages of peer feedback, defined as "input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision" (p.294). According to him, "learners can gain a greater sense of audience with several readers", "the writer learns where he/she has misled or confused the reader" and "the reader learns more about writing through critically reading other's papers" (p.296). He also reports that "students felt the peer feedback was useful in gaining a conscious awareness that they were writing for more than just the teacher" and that affected positively their writing because they started writing "with a more specific focus" (Keh, 1990, p.296).

In the present research, the students made drafts before writing the final versions of their compositions, commented the drafts of their colleagues, received teacher's comments in their texts and corrected their own mistakes according to the suggestions they received. Before writing their essays, students also made outlines to organize their ideas in which they exposed theses statements and arguments to be developed later in their compositions. This might have helped to organize the structure of their texts and a deeper analysis could examine that in more details, comparing the outlines produced and their final essays to understand the cause of diverse problems found in their compositions. All these practices seemed to be useful for students to produce well written texts and the positive results should incite future researchers to verify, in more details, the techniques that might have contributed to obtain such outcomes. Considering that "recent textbooks are more innovative, learner centered, and communicatively oriented because of their incorporation of new conceptions of education and international developments in language education" (Qian & Smolska, 2008, p.71), analyzing teaching materials together with teacher's practices in classroom could help to reflect on the teaching of writing and find ways to improve students' written productions. Future research could examine which tasks are fostering reflection during the writing process and what types of activities are helping students to develop writing abilities more satisfactorily.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Some factors might have affected the evaluation of performances. Not all students wrote the three types of essays and the number of compositions written by each student was not equal – some participants wrote one, others two, and some students wrote three essays. Consequently, more mistakes were probably found in the compositions of those students who wrote more essays. Moreover, the number of words in each essay was not considered and this could also have affected the number of cohesive elements used as well as their mistakes – essays with higher number of words are expected to have more mistakes.

Another factor that might have influenced the results is the unequal number of men and women who participated in the research: 15 women and 4 men. Ehrman and Oxford (1989) reported some studies, such as Maccoby and Jacklin's work, which suggest that females show "a greater social orientation" and they believe this is "highly related to communication in both first and second languages" (p.1). According to them, "these findings suggest that we can expect females to use social learning strategies more than males" and "it is reasonable to anticipate that they will enhance verbal learning" (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989, p.1). As a consequence, the greater number of women might have contributed to the positive results in the written products of participants.

5.4 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The research findings corroborate some authors who defined coherence as an abstract and fuzzy concept difficult to teach and learn (Connor, 1990; Robert & Kreuz, 1993; Lee, 2002). Even though the participants acknowledged that coherence is related to meaning, a substantial number of students did not write coherent texts, which confirms that "coherence continues to be a difficult concept for ESL students" (Lee, 2002, p.153). In fact, taking into consideration that several learners were not successful in writing coherent texts, it is possible to agree with Chiu (2004), who concluded that coherence is "one of the most difficult areas in writing pedagogy," thus its concept "should not be neglected in the writing curriculum," but it should be adapted in a way that reach students' understanding (p. 155).

Lee (2002) observed that in the classroom, EFL teachers usually refer to coherence in abstract terms without explaining and teaching it;

they only mention that students' texts 'lack unity' and their 'ideas are disorganized' (p. 153). In fact, it might not be easy to teach all aspects involved in coherence because they are frequently implicit and appear together in a text. The framework of Charolles (1978) could help teachers to be more specific and instruct students to visualize each requirement of coherence necessary to write well. At the same time, activities in reading and writing based on this framework could be designed aiming at fostering students to verify if other texts fulfill the meta-rules of coherence and requiring them to write following these rules. Learning Charolles' requirements to achieve coherence, especially continuity and congruity, might even help students to better organize their texts in terms of structure.

In addition to the challenges of academic writing in a second language, Zhu (2001) observed that "English argumentative writing poses rhetorical difficulties for second-language writers" that could be explained by "cultural and linguistic background, L1 writing ability, and experience with academic writing in L1 and L2" (p.35). However, the author believes that it is important to understand student's needs from their view point "because it can help teachers provide meaningful and relevant instruction by adopting teaching strategies that address the specific difficulties and needs of L2 learners" (Zhu, 2001, p.35). In his opinion, teachers should "ask students frequently what difficulties they have and what help they feel they need" (p.47), not only discussing their drafts. Similarly, Leki and Carson (1994 as cited in Zhu, 2001, p.36) argue that "this type of needs assessment is appropriate for all students in any environment".

Zhu (2001) does not advise to rely on text analysis alone when trying to understand learners' difficulties because "the difficulties encountered by ESL writers relate not only to textual features of writing, but also to the writing process and pertain to the cognitive as well as affective domains" (p.46). As a consequence, it would be wise that more discussion in writing be directed to the difficulties, strategies, and processes involved in producing students' texts because "it is important to see how the text is evolving and provide timely support and instruction" (p.47). In fact, "an understanding of learners' difficulties and processes allows teachers to provide relevant instruction" and "future research can assist this endeavor by examining learners' needs further" in written production (Zhu, 2001, p.48).

According to Bertoldi (1986), who follows Krashen's ideas about the writing process, the writing instruction should "initiate learners into the mental and physical processes of writing, including thinking,

planning, writing, re-writing, re-reading, and if necessary, crumpling it all up and starting again” (p.282). He believes that students “could benefit from some discussion and reflection on the writing process, with perhaps some expansion of their existing repertoire of techniques” (Bertoldi, 1986, p.282). It was not possible to verify if students had learned about the writing processes neither the type of training they received about cohesion and coherence during the Letters Course, if it was explicit or implicit, but these instructions could be included in future classes to examine if they help to improve writing skills. Teachers could consider with learners strategic ways of distributing wisely the time spent in different cognitive activities during the writing process in order to improve their abilities in writing. Considering that “second language learners do not automatically use the best or widest range of strategies” and they “influence the degree of proficiency obtained in a second language”, teachers could invest time to instruct learners in this regard and modify the strategies they are using through training (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989, p.1). By investigating students’ performances in writing cohesive and coherent texts, teachers could test different ways to approach these matters through explicit teaching in a way that help learners to develop a critical reading of their own texts to evaluate and improve their written productions.

Comparing the results of previous studies which investigated the written productions of Brazilian undergraduate students writing in their native language, the findings of this study were surprising: the participants of the present research wrote in ESL and were very successful while students writing in first language had many problems in their written productions, especially regarding cohesion and coherence. Although their task was more demanding, because they wrote in English as a foreign language, the students of Letters Course produced interesting texts including important information to convince the readers, which showed their abilities to deal with global aspects in writing, while those of other fields, writing in the native language, had serious difficulties in dealing with this task, as described in the literature mentioned previously. These results might indicate that the instructions students of Letters Course received were focused on aspects that affected meaning while the students from other fields might have received training which was concentrated on superficial aspects of writing. Considering the positive results obtained in this research, the instructions about writing students received in the Letters Course should be shared with the teaching community helping other writing instructors to apply strategies in class that help the improvement of writing skills.

Another aspect to be considered is the implementation of activities based on students' mistakes in relation to coherence. Teachers could present incoherent excerpts of texts and ask students to rewrite these passages to turn them coherent. Whole texts could be analyzed in class to foster students' perception in relation to incoherence finding solutions to turn the text coherent. According to Charolles (2002, p. 64), some instructors do not take advantage of such errors to exercise students' abilities by planning tasks that force them to deal with coherence problems and this should be changed to improve their abilities in this regard.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Termo do Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

Título do Projeto: Cohesion and coherence in undergraduate students' academic writing

Gostaria de lhe convidar a participar de um projeto de pesquisa sobre a coesão e coerência na produção textual de estudantes de graduação em inglês do Curso de Letras. Este convite está sendo feito aos alunos que cursaram disciplinas de produção textual na língua inglesa e possuem conhecimento de escrita acadêmica. Caso aceite participar, por favor, leia este termo de consentimento e, se concordar com a informação aqui apresentada, assine onde indicado.

Esta pesquisa é conduzida por Andréia Veríssimo Agostini, e orientada pela professora doutora Lêda Maria Braga Tomitch. Uma cópia deste termo ficará comigo, pesquisadora responsável pelo projeto, e outra com você.

Objetivo do Estudo:

O objetivo deste estudo é investigar a produção textual de alunos de graduação no que diz respeito à coesão e coerência. Muitos estudos foram realizados sobre este tema, porém mais pesquisas são necessárias para que possamos aprofundar as discussões no intuito de encontrar formas cada vez mais eficientes de suprir o ensino e aprendizagem da produção escrita.

Procedimentos:

Esta é a fase principal do estudo, e a tarefa envolvida é o preenchimento de um breve questionário informal sobre produção textual com perguntas que investigam o conhecimento de aspectos relacionados à escrita por parte dos alunos, mais especificamente coesão e coerência, e a opinião dos mesmos quanto às ferramentas necessárias para uma boa produção escrita. Ao assinar este termo, o participante dará permissão aos pesquisadores para acessar as respostas ao questionário em anexo, bem como suas redações produzidas nas disciplinas LLE 7494, LLE 7495 e LLE 7496 a fim de serem incluídas e analisadas nesta pesquisa.

Riscos e benefícios do estudo e confidencialidade:

Não há nenhum risco em participar desta pesquisa, apenas o possível surgimento de ansiedade e nervosismo ao responder o questionário que pode ter remota semelhança a uma situação de teste. Você apenas deverá recordar e opinar sobre questões relacionadas à produção escrita. Ao final da pesquisa, os resultados do estudo serão tornados públicos, mas sua identidade será totalmente preservada e não será incluída nenhuma informação que possa identificá-lo (a). Somente as pesquisadoras deste projeto terão acesso aos dados coletados.

Natureza voluntária do estudo:

Sua decisão de participar ou não deste estudo não irá afetar você ou sua relação com a Universidade de nenhuma forma. Você poderá desistir a qualquer momento, mesmo depois de haver participado da pesquisa, sem precisar se justificar. Basta enviar uma notificação através de um dos e-mails listados abaixo para seus dados serem excluídos do estudo. Para contato telefônico, falar com Andréia, no telefone (48) 8482 9033.

Contatos:

As pesquisadoras responsáveis por esse estudo são Mestranda Andréia Veríssimo Agostini (andreiava@yahoo.com.br) e Profa. Dra. Lêda Tomitch (leda@cce.ufsc.br). Para contatá-las você pode enviar um e-mail para um dos endereços acima.

Declaração de consentimento:

Declaro que li a informação acima. Quando necessário, fiz perguntas e recebi esclarecimentos. Eu concordo em participar deste estudo que utilizará meus dados para investigação.

Nome

Assinatura do (a) participante

Assinatura das Pesquisadoras Responsáveis

Andréia Veríssimo Agostini
Pesquisadora

Lêda Maria Braga Tomitch
Orientadora

Data: 05/04/2013.

APPENDIX B

Questionário para pesquisa

Título do Projeto: Cohesion and coherence in academic writing of undergraduate students

Aluno:

Turma: _____

Data: 05/04/2013

- 1) Quais as características de um texto bem escrito?
- 2) (a) O que você entende por coesão? (b) Exemplifique. (c) Você acha que a coesão contribui para um texto acadêmico ser bem escrito? (d) Caso positivo, de que forma?
- 3) (a) O que você entende por coerência textual? (b) O que você, como escritor, faz para deixar seu texto coerente? (c) Você acha que a coerência contribui para um texto acadêmico ser bem escrito? (d) Caso positivo, de que forma?
- 4) Durante o curso de letras, nas disciplinas de produção textual, você estudou sobre: (a) coesão? (b) coerência? Caso sua resposta seja sim, como estes estudos contribuíram para o desenvolvimento de sua escrita?

APPENDICES C

Courses Programs

Appendix C1 – LLE 7494

PROGRAMA DE DISCIPLINA

CURSO: LETRAS ESTRANGEIRAS – Bacharelado/Licenciatura

1. IDENTIFICAÇÃO DA DISCIPLINA CÓDIGO: **LLE 7494**

NOME DA DISCIPLINA: Compreensão e Produção Escrita em Língua Inglesa IV

CARGA HORÁRIA TOTAL: 72 h/a – 04 créditos PRÁTICA COMO COMPONENTE CURRICULAR (PCC): 18 h/a

EQUIVALENTE/s: LLE 5014 PRÉ-REQUISITO/s: LLE 7493

2. EMENTA

Prática intensiva de língua escrita em contextos variados com diferentes níveis de complexidade. Revisão dos conteúdos lingüístico-comunicativos praticados até o momento.

2.1 Ementa

PCC Para os alunos das duas habilitações: Relatório crítico acerca de exames de proficiência.

3. OBJETIVO

Desenvolver as habilidades lingüísticas, comunicativas e discursivas necessárias para a comunicação escrita através da compreensão e produção, em língua inglesa, de textos argumentativos sobre assuntos gerais.

3.1 Objetivo Específico

- Desenvolver a compreensão e produção escritas de textos argumentativos usados em situações variadas (por exemplo: no trabalho, na mídia e na academia).
- Desenvolver a compreensão de textos escritos argumentativos de elaboração léxico-gramatical e retórica complexa.
- Desenvolver a produção escrita de textos argumentativos complexos no que tange às estruturas léxico-gramatical e retórica.

4. CONTEÚDO PROGRAMÁTICO

- Compreensão e produção de textos escritos envolvendo as organizações retóricas de cause-effect, comparison-contrast, pro-con.

- Compreensão e produção de textos sobre problemas contemporâneos onde o autor adota e defende determinado ponto de vista.
 - Desenvolvimento dos aspectos envolvidos na produção de um texto: introdução, desenvolvimento, conclusão; parágrafo, tópico frasal.
- Suporte Linguístico:
- Grupos nominais contendo orações relativas
 - Cohesive ties
 - Palavras e frases de transição
 - Pontuação
 - Run-on sentences e sentence fragments
 - Concordância nominal e verbal
 - Paralelismo
 - Níveis de formalidade/registro
- Suporte Estratégico:
- Estratégias de produção escrita: planejar o conteúdo do texto, planejar a organização retórica do texto, preparar outline, rascunho, peer-review, revisar conteúdo e forma, reescrever, e preparar a cópia final.
 - Estratégias de compreensão escrita: reconhecer idéias principais, construir inferências, distinguir idéias principais de detalhes, resumir, reagir criticamente ao conteúdo do texto.

5. BIBLIOGRAFIA

5.1 Básica

Cohen, R. F. & Miller, J. L. (2004). *Northstar Reading and Writing - Advanced* (2nd Edition). (student's book) White Plains, NY: Pearson Education, Inc.

5.2 Complementar

Smalzer, W. (2005). *Write to be read (2nd Edition)*. (student's book, teacher's manual). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baigent, M. (2004). *Natural English: Reading and Writing Skills - Upper-intermediate*. (2nd Edition.). Oxford: Oxford University Press

5.3 PCC Allison, D. (1999). *Language testing and evaluation*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Bachman, L. & Palmer, A. (1996). *Language testing in practice*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Hughes, A. (2003). *Testing for language teachers (2nd ed)*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

**PROGRAMA DE DISCIPLINA CURSO: LETRAS
ESTRANGEIRAS – Bacharelado/Licenciatura****1. IDENTIFICAÇÃO DA DISCIPLINA CÓDIGO: LLE 7495**

NOME DA DISCIPLINA: Compreensão e Produção Escrita em Língua Inglesa

V CARGA HORÁRIA TOTAL: 72 h/a – 04 créditos

PRÁTICA COMO COMPONENTE CURRICULAR (PCC): 36 h/a

EQUIVALENTE/S: LLE 5015 PRÉ-REQUISITO/S: LLE 7494

2. EMENTA

Compreensão e produção de textos escritos em língua inglesa, de maior complexidade linguístico-comunicativa e conceitual, com ênfase nos contextos profissionais e acadêmicos.

2.1 Ementa

PCC Para alunos de licenciatura: Relatório crítico sobre observação de aulas de língua inglesa. Para alunos de bacharelado: Análise crítica do uso da língua inglesa em ambientes virtuais relacionados à área de Letras.

3. OBJETIVO

Desenvolver as habilidades lingüísticas, comunicativas e discursivas necessárias para a comunicação escrita através da compreensão e produção, em língua inglesa, de textos acadêmicos.

3.1 Objetivo Específico

Desenvolver a compreensão e produção de textos escritos argumentativos de natureza acadêmica, de maior complexidade no que se refere às estruturas léxico-gramatical e retórica.

4. CONTEÚDO PROGRAMÁTICO

- Compreensão e produção de textos escritos acadêmicos envolvendo aspectos inerentes à sua estrutura global: introdução, desenvolvimento, conclusão.
- Compreensão e produção de textos escritos acadêmicos envolvendo as organizações retóricas de cause-effect, comparison-contrast, e pro-con.
- Compreensão e produção de argumentos sólidos de suporte da tese principal (evidências: fato, achado de pesquisa anterior, estatística,

autoridade, experiência pessoal; e erros de lógica- ‘logical fallacies’).
Suporte lingüístico

- Revisão e aprofundamento de Pontuação (a vírgula; vírgulas desnecessárias; o ponto e vírgula; os dois pontos; o apóstrofe; as aspas), paralelismo, formação de sentenças e parágrafos, palavras e frases de transição (conjunções, conectivos, etc.)
- Registro acadêmico Suporte estratégico
- Estratégias de produção escrita: levantamento de informações relevantes e planejamento do conteúdo do texto, organização das informações, planejamento da organização retórica do texto, preparação de um outline e da primeira versão, revisão e reescrita, edição e reescrita, preparação da versão final.

5. BIBLIOGRAFIA

5.1 Básica

HARMER, Jeremy & Lethaby, Carol. (2005). Just Reading and Writing Upper-Intermediate. Editora: Marshall Cavendish ELT.

5.2 Complementar

JORDAN, R.R. (1999). Academic writing course - student's book. Editora: Pearson

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<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/pp/argument.PPT#256,1>, Organizing Your Argument

Appendix C3 – LLE 7496

PROGRAMA DE DISCIPLINA

CURSO: LETRAS ESTRANGEIRAS – Bacharelado/Licenciatura

1. IDENTIFICAÇÃO DA DISCIPLINA: CÓDIGO: **LLE 7496**

NOME DA DISCIPLINA: Compreensão e Produção Escrita em Língua Inglesa VI

CARGA HORÁRIA TOTAL: 72 h/a – 04 créditos

PRÁTICA COMO COMPONENTE CURRICULAR (PCC): 36 h/a

EQUIVALENTE/s: LLE 5016 PRÉ-REQUISITO/s: LLE 7495

2. EMENTA

Desenvolvimento da compreensão e produção escrita de textos acadêmicos em língua inglesa, em nível avançado.

2.1 Ementa PCC

Para alunos de licenciatura: Análise crítica do uso da língua inglesa na modalidade escrita em contextos escolares públicos.

Para alunos de bacharelado: Análise crítica do uso da língua inglesa na modalidade escrita em contextos acadêmicos.

3. OBJETIVO

Aprimorar a habilidade de leitura e produção textual acadêmica em nível avançado, a fim de desenvolver a capacidade de escrever através da análise, interpretação, avaliação e defesa de seu pensamento crítico.

3.1 Objetivo Específico

- Identificar e desenvolver estratégias de leitura-estudo necessárias para a leitura crítica de textos de divulgação científica.
- Desenvolver a habilidade de compreender e produzir textos sobre problemas apontados na área da Linguística Aplicada.
- Desenvolver a habilidade de identificar e produzir textos acadêmicos livres de plágio.

4. CONTEÚDO PROGRAMÁTICO

- Compreensão e elaboração de resumos e abstracts.
- Compreensão e produção de citações diretas e paráfrases.
- Honestidade acadêmica: Como evitar o plágio.
- Compreensão e produção de resenhas e revisões bibliográficas.
- Documentação bibliográfica (citações ao longo do texto e lista de referências).

Suporte Lingüístico

- Padrões de textualidade (coesão, coerência, intencionalidade, receptividade, situacionalidade, intertextualidade, informatividade).
- Princípio cooperativo em comunicação e máximas de Grice, implicaturas, pressuposição, inferências, conhecimento pressuposto, relevância, audiência.
- Registro acadêmico (pertinência do vocabulário e das estruturas sintáticas utilizados, entre outros aspectos).

Suporte Estratégico

- Estratégias de leitura e estudo (tomar notas, resumir, construir mapas semânticos, entre outras).

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APPENDICES D
Comparison-contrast essays

APPENDIX D1: Student 1

Living in big cities vs living in countryside

Is it better to live in the city or the country? Nowadays people are reflecting about the best place to live. Living in a big city has advantages. But living in the countryside is better in terms of health, security and elementary education.

The food, water and air in the country are healthier than in the big city. People usually sow and produce their own food in small towns and care about nature. So they know exactly what they are eating. Also because of the attention they give nature, the water and air are purer than in the big cities, where people do not care so much about natural resources. When I go to my relative's house in the country, I notice their care about the natural resources. They are constantly concerned about the river and plantation.

Another advantage is that the rate of violence in small cities is lower than in the big cities. Small towns allow people know most everyone in the community, which decreases crime and hinders the criminals when they do strike. This is different than in a big city, where there are so much people that it is impossible know each other. I do not know all my neighbors. So, with I saw a strange person I will not give attention to that. The same do not happen in the country, where everybody knows each other.

Finally, the elementary education can be better in the country. It is better to educate a child in a small city because there is not so much stress and pressure as in a big city. So, parents have more time and patience to educate their children. Furthermore, rural schools have fewer students, so parents can have more contact with teachers and school staff. My cousin is a teacher in the country. She says that teach there is easier because she knows the children's parents and they are very interested in their children's education.

In conclusion, we can say that living in the country is healthier and safer and elementary education is better. But before making this decision, you have to reflect about all the advantages and disadvantages of living in a big city or in the countryside. If I could choose, I would prefer to live in the country... and you?

APPENDIX D2: Student 2

Reflecting on a Small Town Perspective

We are always reflecting on to what extent is the small town life more worth than the big city life. We do not really know, but we do know that the only way of proving it, is moving to a small town and live its life as much as we can, and then reflect about what we have gained with such an experience.

In a few words, it is not advisable to make statements about the small town life without experiencing it first. We know that big cities have a wider range of entertainment, services, opportunities of finding a job, better housing and others, but we must consider that in the countryside, despite the limitation of resources like the ones mentioned previously, it may reveal itself as an appealing alternative compared to much problems that big cities have, as the countryside life is more centered about traditional values, some of which have been long forgotten by big city dwellers.

And one thing that we do realize about the small town life is that it values more the relations of the person with the society in general, which are fundamental to the personal success and well-being of the individual in that specific society, which makes the country life much more worthwhile to experience the true meaning of life, and living, than in the somewhat rushed reality of the major centers today, whose dwellers unjustly label the small town life as “Socially backwards”.

To conclude the reflection, it is good noting that to say if we should choose either to live in a small town or in a big city, it is up to us to make that decision, and check the pros and cons of these two lifestyles, and if possible, experience them. We must not let ourselves be carried away by biased accounts on either lifestyle, but go by what we think about them and our own experience in either one. It is not easy, but is good to reflect.

APPENDIX D3: Student 3

The bigger the better

Every small city's dream is to become big. This sentence might sound harsh to some people but it reflects our present. Nowadays, with the increase of global relationships, you have to be in tune with the latest events. Also, big cities have plenty of opportunities: from education and work to entertainment and good medical care. It is time to face the real world and give yourself a chance to get immersed in the daily routine of a metropolis.

First of all, big cities are the "promise land" when it comes to education. Children from the countryside tend to grow up with the inherent desire to move to a big city. From very early age they learn that the best chances are found in big cities and most parents end up saving money with the goal to send their kids to a good college away from home. As a consequence and, of course, with the right opportunity, these kids will turn into responsible, mature adults and are going to be well-prepared to enter the labor market.

Another aspect in favor of big cities is the range of possibilities in the cultural field. You have at your disposal countless options like museums, concerts, movie theaters, and libraries. Not to mention that public transportation (bus, taxi, subways, train and sometimes even ferry) makes it easier to go from one place to another. In the morning, maybe you can walk in the park, in the afternoon go see an exhibition and at night, perchance, an opera. Besides, while having fun, you can meet new people and expand your circle of friendship.

Of course we also have what people consider as the most important benefit when it comes to big cities: career opportunities. Whether you are a doctor, an electrician, a housekeeper, or a bartender and since big cities indeed have more places (commercial establishments, for example) it is more likely to find exactly what you are looking for as well as a good salary.

Therefore, do not think twice if you are given the chance to get immersed in the daily routine of a metropolis and enjoy all the good possibilities big cities allows you to have. Take advantage of the entire social-cultural environment, go find your dream job, get familiar with the urban scenario. Perhaps at the end of the day, just like me, you will be sitting at home surrounded by all these options with a "big city" smile on your face.

APPENDIX D4: Student 4

Living in Big Cities or Living in Small Town

The new Brazilian dream is to live on a farm. Brazilians are getting tired of all those hours in traffic jams and being surrounded with disrespectful people. The majority of people want to live in a small town because they are tired of these things. This is a fact that is being common to see people complaining about, mainly, in the internet. They say that big cities are always full of people that do not care for each other anymore and that in small towns you can find more the animals that are creatures which you can count on. Living in a small town has its advantages as not having a good health system or good school system. However, living in a small town near a big city would be a great thing because you would still have the advantages of having a big city close enough at hand but would have the benefits and the pleasures of a small town.

Neighbors are the first reason why living in a small town would be better. Just the thought of not listening to your neighbors' stereo blasting is one thing that could change your life forever. Sometimes, neighbors throw parties and play loud music all night long. And this can be a big problem if you need to sleep or if you have any homework to do, and your neighbor is there, with that horrible noise, shaking your windows all night. But sometimes this things happens even at day, and it is a problem if you have a small child or a senior person at home. Nonetheless, it is your right to live in a calm and peaceful home, so if your neighbor should not bother you; however, this is something that is difficult to be achieve in a big city. This is a difficult situation that in a small town, you would, hopefully, not have to face as much as in a big city.

Have a big house would be the second advantage to live in a small town. Living in a small town is possible to buy to buy a big house for less money than in a big city. Having a big house is a dream for many people that live in the big cities. Imagine all the space that you can have for your things. You could have a room to call your own. You could have a room for your hobbies, and in this room you could put only things that are related to this hobby, or even to some things you like. You would be able to improve this hobby, because you would have more space to practice it. This is great because sometimes people can earn money with their hobbies, and this is a good opportunity to make craft things and sell them.

Although, living in small towns is better for the physical and mental health, eventually is necessary go to a doctor. However, in a small town hospitals are not as good as those in big cities. Since access to a good doctor is important, it is good to live in small town near a big city. Thus, when you need a doctor in an emergency, you can just hop in your car and go to a major urban hospital. Unfortunately a hospital in a small town in Brazil do not have the same infrastructure as in a big city, so in a emergency is better, if it is possible, go to a big city hospital. There, the treatment will be much better.

And in addition, sometimes shopping in a big city it is better than in a small town. It is easy to find a variety of stores and products and more price options due to the competition. And also it is better to make a research a bit before buying a product to see if they are offering you something of good quality or if the price is fair. You can also find big shopping malls and supermarkets, as well as products and services that are sometimes hard to find in small towns. However, it does not mean that shopping in the small town is a bad thing. You can find a good variety of vegetables that are not possible to find in the big city. They have more quality and less pesticides then that ones that you can find in the big city.

Living in a small town near a big city is perfect for people that are tired of the chaos in modern and crowded cities, love calm neighborhoods, want to have a big space for their things and are tired of that small apartments in the big city, but do not want to give up of having a good health treatment around. For instance, when I have my children, I would like to live in a place like that. With a big house, in a good neighbor, but near enough to a big city where they could study in a good school and have some fun. I am not saying that living in a small town is the solution of all our problems, but, right now, I cannot think of something much better than that. Our society is facing some big problems in big cities that if the population do not start to pay attention to them it would be impossible to live in the big centers.

APPENDIX D5: Student 5

Living in a big city: life at its fullest

Oh, the land of opportunities! For sure a big city is not the most perfect place in the world because of the violence and the smog, but it has everything you need to have access to important points for quality of life, like the access to new information, cultural events and job opportunities. That is what makes life in a big city so much better.

Living in a metropolis keeps you connected to what is new in the world. Journalistic information, movie releases, new technology and inventions that make life easier: it all comes to you quickly. If a movie is released in Hollywood, the big cities around the world will have it in their movie theaters much faster than in small cities. You can also read what other people, no matter where they are from, think about the movie on the internet, which you can access through your computer, your mobile, your tablet... You even have access to Wi-Fi internet for free, on the streets, in some cities. Anytime, anywhere, you are connected to the rest of the world.

Besides the easy access to information, there are lots of both old and new cultural events in big cities. For instance, in Buenos Aires you can find tango dancers on the streets, with old men singing live while couples dance, in restaurants that serve regional cuisine. Meanwhile, there are international bands giving concerts, art exhibitions, museums with classical paintings and drawings by modern young artists, etc. It is very easy to find arts and music events in a city.

In addition, big cities have many job opportunities in every professional area. It is easier to advance in your career, no matter what your occupation is. It might be more expensive to live in a big city, but for sure you will have clients for any business that you start. Employees are always needed because things happen so fast in big cities, so you might find your place there.

In conclusion, living in a big city is better because of the easy access to technology, culture and job opportunities. Once you leave your hometown and go study or work in a big city, you can't go back. It is only after visiting a city like this that you realize how wonderful it is to be surrounded by such an interesting way of life.

APPENDIX D6: Student 6

Big City Living

People are different in many ways, and different people have different needs when choosing a place to live. There are many advantages to living in small towns, but big cities are still a better choice when certain aspects are considered. A greater number of entertainment options, job opportunities and a better infrastructure along with a greater availability of modern resources are usually the most favored characteristics of bigger cities.

Big cities offer various entertainment options for all its inhabitants. For the ‘nightlifers’, there are tons of events to choose from. There are many popular bars, shows and performances, great movies, theater presentations, respectable and not-so-respectable clubs and many other possibilities. For those who prefer calmer evenings or would just rather stay home, there are plenty of options, as well. There is 24 hour food delivery from a great number of establishments and restaurants with very tasty cuisine from all over the world –most of which deliver and some of which even take online orders-, movie rental, cable TV and, for those who may be interested, there are also *certain* performers who offer very discreet house calls. Many of these services are not available in smaller cities.

Also, by being the constant target of new industries, hotels, stores and business companies, bigger cities are usually filled with job opportunities. Though these jobs may require higher education levels than jobs in smaller cities, they present much better prospects for future opportunities, the promise of growing in a chosen business, or of even becoming someone who could be considered “important”. In contrast, in smaller cities those prospects are often rare, if not nonexistent.

However, the greatest benefit of living in big cities is the availability of modern technology and better infrastructure. If you ever need advanced or specialized medical treatment, modern transportation or communications systems, prestigious public institutions, like schools and post offices, or simply want to buy the latest technological invention, then smaller cities would not be able to meet your needs.

In a big city people can find the best chances to grow in life, as well as enjoy the best quality service providers available for every single need that might arise. That is to say, the bigger the city, the wider the range of options for a life filled with entertainment, job opportunities, infrastructure and modern quality of life. Small cities may be good, nice

and quiet, but if the desired life includes being surrounded by excitement and endless possibilities, then, undoubtedly, big cities are the much better choice.

APPENDIX D7: Student 7

The advantages of living in a small city

Many cities are becoming much bigger than what they used to be in the past decades. Most people seem to prefer living in urban areas nowadays, because they present countless amenities. Also, there is always something interesting to see or a nice place to go. Living in a big city has its advantages, but living in a small town is a good option as well, since it provides us with a better environment, a nicer community and a higher quality of life overall.

Small towns allow us to enjoy a clean and healthy environment. Pollution is the primary issue that people have to face in big cities; the huge amount of traffic releases countless toxic substances into the air. Many factories and manufacturing facilities are located in larger cities, which causes many pollution issues. Since big cities have larger populations, they also produce much more garbage. Small towns, on the other hand, have cleaner air, more natural surroundings and usually far less traffic than bigger cities. It is not hard to find small towns that are still surrounded by unspoiled countryside.

In addition to that, living in a small town, you are always a part of your community. People who live in big cities tend to be individualists, or, at least, more reserved. Sometimes, they are even afraid of talking to each other, since they cannot know for sure if others are dangerous. People in small towns are usually receptive and friendly and generally already know each other or know who their neighbors are. In such a setting, it is much easier to make good friends and enjoy your life with the people around you.

Also, small cities tend to have a higher quality of life, and not only due to the healthier atmosphere. Crime rates tend to be much lower than in bigger cities; children can play in the streets and their parents can have fewer worries. Walking down the streets from one place to another does not seem as dangerous as in a big city. And, finally, the cost of living and bills tend to be much lower in small cities than in big cities or capitals.

In conclusion, living in small cities allows people to lead peaceful lives since the residents can enjoy the clean environment, make good friends and be a part of each other's lives and benefit from the good and peaceful lifestyle. I have always lived in a capital, but I will surely move to a small town when I get the chance.

APPENDIX D8: Student 8

Worthwhile Opportunity

Despite the fact that breathing a clear air and playing safely outside is a healthy and pleasing way to be raised, when it is time to find a career and opportunities to meet different people, a big city would be considered a great place to accomplish that. Small cities have always the same cycle; for instance, if someone who lives in a small city wants to be an actor, that person will not be able to follow this career. Also, if the same person leads a different lifestyle, that person might be seen as crazy or weird or even frightening. Moreover, it is only in a big city that everyone tends to their own business. While a small city gives you the opportunity to have a standard profession, friends and higher graduation, a big city offers you a life of unusual opportunities and different experiences.

When it is time to decide on a career, a person must choose a university to be accepted, the more options, the more opportunity to get into a satisfactory college. Generally, small cities do not have top-ranked universities nearby, so when someone from a small town is about to choose a college, if he does not want to move, he will probably have very limited options. Furthermore, a big city may offer you more majors, such as petrochemical engineering or astronomy. Besides the graduation, the job field is much broader in a big city. Could you have a weather station in a city of twenty thousand inhabitants? While in a small city there would be a few doctors, dentists, financial or commercial professionals, lawyers, a small radio station and newspaper with local news, in a big city you could be a pilot, oceanographer, television show host, or the editor of a famous magazine. Such a range of opportunities would be hard to find in a small city.

What is the topic sentence? Big cities allow for diversity? The best way to discover and have unusual experiences is to meet different people. Talking to, going out, and understanding people who run away from the traditional standard, people who travelled the planet, who think and act out of keeping with the norm. Such people are more likely to have something new to teach you and to express. Learning about another culture can significantly change a person's opinion. It can expand minds, eliminate prejudices and lead to more respect for people's differences. Comprehending different people could improve for sure a person.

Most people know each other in a small city, and thus look forward to finding about everybody's life. People who live in big cities are not generally so interested in other's lives, because they have many more things to occupy their time with. Otherwise, in small cities, some people try to discover some details of someone, as it would improve themselves. Nevertheless, they do not know it will just make them inferior and less developed. Additionally, some of them also increase a gossip, lying about something that might not have even happened, which is even worse.

Although small cities are great for growing up and retiring, having a variety of work choices, study options, knowledge of others viewpoints and the chance to lead a private life are even more fascinating and tempting. As a person who experienced these two environments, I could attest to every argument I have presented with personal examples. However, I will summarize with the following; when I moved to a big city after high school, doors opened for me and the world became extremely huge and full of new things to discover and to realize about, including new lifestyles to observe, learn and respect. My mind now is much opener, freer of judgments and ready for unexpected experiences. It is totally worthwhile to experience the opportunities big cities offer.

APPENDIX D9: Student 9

Life Quality: a choice to make

By the definition of the World Health Organization (WHO) the term Health is defined as being "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". In order to achieve these completeness people make choices regarding their jobs, life style and the place where they live, and also how these options influence the quality of their living and consequently their health. Life in small towns is known to promote a greater life quality and this is why people are choosing small villages over big cities. When it comes to the place we choose to live, it is essential to consider how certain aspects as stress, sociability and the health system affect our health.

Stress is one of the major problems in modern life. Some common stress symptoms include irritability, muscular tension, inability to concentrate and a variety of physical reactions, such as headaches and elevated heart rate. Recent researches show that big city dwellers have more probability to develop such symptoms. Visual and noise pollution, daily traffic and work pressure are in fact among modern life conditions that people have to face every day when living in big centers. Also it is hard for a person that lives in a big city to insert a sport practice into his daily routine. While in small towns there are almost no entertainment options, such as the ones found in the city (museums, theaters, cinemas, exhibitions, etc.) it is a great place to practice outdoor sports and exercises, thus improving life quality and lowering stress levels.

Although there is a wide range of entertainment options, living in a big city can be very lonely sometimes. The better are the job opportunities, the greater is the competition. This can lead to the famous "rat race", when everyone is after its own good. There is no compassion to one another, and normally city dwellers live by themselves, with no family around. Furthermore it is hard to know all the neighbors and to keep a close relationship with them. Nevertheless, in small towns the sense of community can be too strong at times. Everyone knows about one's life and there is a certain "obligation" to please every member of the community, where gossip is one of the most interesting entertainment options. However, violence in small centers comes in a minor scale due to this sense of community, while in big centers it keeps increasing each day.

Finally, there is the Health System and it also plays a very important role when it comes to choosing where to live. Indeed, life in small villages can be healthier, as people eat better and exercise more, hence, having a more preventive kind of life style. Yet, if they happen to face any health matter, they may have to search for a major hospital or specialists, mostly found in city centers. The access to hospitals may be easier in the cities, but the high levels of air, visual and noise pollution create a huge amount of respiratory, physical and mental health problems in long term. Additionally, the lack of open and hygienic housing facilities expose inhabitants to unhygienic life conditions and large traffic jams on the roads can increase the chances of fatal accidents.

In brief, there are many decisions to be made when choosing the right place to live. Though, considering life quality, it is clear that small towns are a better option. It is not the city that has to adapt to people's life style it is them who have to adapt their life style to the city. Big cities never stop, while in small towns the time doesn't seem to pass at all. So when talking about health people have to decide if their biological clock can follow the clock that runs wherever you live.

APPENDIX D10: Student 10

Small cities are for humans

Cities like Los Angeles, Sao Paulo, New York, Tokyo and Mexico City are the best examples of big or very big cities and for the big majority of the people in the world, these mega towns are where the opportunity resides. What is the price to pay for living in such places? Is it worth to run after those opportunities? What are these people priorities? The competition, in those savage towns, turns people into cold working machines. These people, who live in big cities, forget the fundamentals of being a social specie.

Is natural that humans want to live near each other, is our nature. This relationship develops into cities which, big or small, have the same basic characteristics to accommodate a large or small group of people. Those characteristics are: availability of goods; transportation; sanitation; entertainment; education; organization. With all this aspects in common, the way they appear in towns is what shows their differences.

Even though small cities have difficulties to offer a great variety of goods, people can have a quiet, worthy and warm life. Big cities might have a whole deck of choices, but also have lack of trust among their population due to the growing of violence at alarming rate that give to the people, living in big towns, the sensation that everything is out control. Although all those negatives aspects, which diminish quality of their lives, people seem to not mind it much.

There will be a time when people would praise issues like sustainability, environment, ecology, health and trust in each other, things that were forever impossible to find in big cities. Humans are to live in small towns with clear air, green vegetation, people with open hearts and hopes for the future... or else.

APPENDIX D11: Student 11

Multicultural home

The search for a better way of life has been, for a long time, a very important aspect of mankind. Although the countryside seems to have recently been the choice for most people, big cities have advantages that are unbeatable. Taking the city of Whitby in Ontario, Canada with around 124 thousand inhabitants as a small city and Toronto also in Ontario, Canada with an average of 3 million inhabitants as the big city, the choice should be easily taken. The crucial decision of where to live should involve matters such as education, lifestyle and culture, and in the globalized world we live in, there is no better place than a big city like Toronto to obtain that and be able to achieve the best way of life.

Education is an important aspect of our life. In smaller cities like Whitby there are good schools, however when considering the entire educational system there isn't a strong external support accessible. In Toronto, for instance, many extra class activities are available to give the support needed. As well as universities and libraries that provides the best environment to have an educational system of quality.

Another matter is lifestyle. Small cities may give better opportunities to relate to people. Nevertheless, a good lifestyle isn't just about how well you know your neighbor and what kind of friendly relationship you hold. It is a fact that most people nowadays, even in smaller communities, don't have time to bond with each other. This way, when choosing for a good lifestyle, you should seek what gives you the opportunity to grow, what challenges you to break boundaries that are imposed by society. A good lifestyle with multiple activities to escape from routine and be in contact with our multicultural world can easily be yours in big cities like Toronto.

Furthermore, in Whitby not many cultural aspects are explored. Even though it can be understandable because of its size, it is still a negative trait of smaller cities. The current abundance of cultural aspects in a big city like Toronto, who is considered the most multicultural city in Canada, can not be neglected. Museums, art galleries, historical sites, music and film festivals, and more, are very important in today's world, because it is through them that multiculturalism and diversity can manifest and show its true genuine value.

Taking into account education, lifestyle and culture as important facets when deciding on where to live, the choice of a big city is

undoubtable. Besides having a better way of life, by choosing Toronto you will be able to build a greater consciousness on multiculturalism and diversity. In today's world frontiers no longer exist, the sooner our children are immersed into this constant exchange with more ease our society will grow. The awakening to the reality and multicultural world we live in, given by big cities such as Toronto, is to me a precious gift.

APPENDIX D12: Student 12

Small countryside city, a place of boredom

Countryside cities are the worst nightmares of big cities-addicted people. If one has lived all of his/her life in a big city, s/he cannot even imagine living in a distant city in the middle of nowhere that sometimes does not even have electrical energy. Try to imagine a big city-addicted person living in a place that does not have a mall, a place that does not offer anything for leisure that only big cities can offer, and to make things worse, a place without television, computer, internet and not even cell phones. It could be a description of hell, but it is worse, it is a countryside city.

First of all, what characterizes a big city? It is the big malls, of course. They simply have all the things needed to survive in a big city. In the malls one can find the newest clothes, can do the groceries, meet his/her friends, go to the cinema, find about all the newest technologies and so on and so forth. Now, try to imagine a big city-addicted person living in a small city without malls, it is simply boring for him/her. A big city without malls loses its identity and becomes worse than small cities, in other words, it turns into a place of boredom.

Another topic that makes a big city-addicted person hate a small city is that it has nothing to offer for leisure. In the other hand, in a big city there is the cinema, the mall, the stadium, the beach, the downtown crowded with people, the clubs, the pubs, or even a quiet place like a library. A big city-addicted person will be the most bored person in the world in a small city that does not have anything to offer for leisure.

And finally, the most important point of all: the terror of small cities without electrical energy and technologies. How can a big city-addicted person live in a place where s/he cannot play his/her video games? How can s/he live in a place without computers and internet? And how can s/he live in a place where his/her cell phone does not work? One simply cannot, it is a torture for him/her. Without electrical energy, a big city-addicted person cannot live.

To sum up, a big city-addicted person will not survive in a small countryside city. All the basic items that a person like this needs to survive are offered only by big cities, just like malls, some big city leisure and electrical energy. A small city is the place of the big city-addicted person's worst nightmares where a boring life awaits at every corner of that place.

APPENDIX D13: Student 13

The benefits of having a laid-back lifestyle

Stress, loneliness and competition are just a few of the issues that a person has to deal with day-to-day living in a big city. Big cities are known as the right places for opportunities – for example, a good job and a qualified education; however better opportunities demand a huge amount of time and effort to be accomplished. People from the big cities are so involved with trying to reach these things that they forget the most important ones regarding their own health and life quality. The place where a person decides to live in might be determinant in their way of life and well being. Living in the countryside is by far better than living in the big cities.

Having a country life is more comfortable for people because they have more time to relax and appreciate nature. Typically in a small town people have more free time to spend with their families or visiting nice places. On that way people tend to take life slower and paying attention to simple and small things which a big city with all their skyscrapers and noise do not allow you to enjoy it.

Small cities are often known by their friendliness. Inhabitants from small towns usually spend more time talking and socializing with each other in every day places such as bakeries, stores and banks. When you walk around people smile at you and there is always somebody ready to help you when you most need.

Being in the countryside you do not have to turn into a car race competitor every day just to get to work. When we talk about mobility the country is definitely the best option. There are not too many cars on the streets which make your way to work much less competitive because you do not have to battle with other drivers to see who is not going to get late for work or find a place to park the car. Another positive aspect of small cities is that everything is nearby so once on foot you can get where you want to.

A laid-back lifestyle allows you to appreciate the most valuable things in life such as family, friends, nature, and freedom to go wherever you want and whenever you need to. When I lived in a small town I used to have a lot time to spend with my friends, to go to a quiet park or swim in a beautiful clean lake. Nowadays living in a big city I barely have time to myself to do what I like, even talking with my friends on the phone has become infrequently. Having spent a few years in a small town and many more in a big city have showed me that life is no doubt happier in the countryside.

APPENDIX D14: Student 14

Big cities, great life

Living nowadays is not easy anywhere. When people look for a place to live, they may find that living in small cities is easier. But then, they think about their needs to life, and put in a balance the things that small and big cities provide. Of course, small cities are more peaceful, but when it comes to basic resources, school education and, for consequence, job vacancies, big cities are better.

Big cities have many resources, like courses, places to visit, stores, hospitals and so on. They give people more options to solve their problems or in finding something to do on the weekends. For example, if a person wants to improve some ability, it is easier to find a course in a big city. In a rainy day, people can visit museums, theaters, galleries, malls, etc. If a person looks for something to buy, it would be easily found and in more variety in a big city. And if someone gets sick or has an accident, in a big city there are many hospitals to go. They also have medical centers to treat specific diseases.

Living in big cities is also good because there are public universities, which have more education quality. People usually leave small cities when they want to grow professionally, especially if they want to study in areas like construction, tourism, medicine, etc.

Finally, another good thing that big cities have is the large quantity of job vacancies. In a big city, people can find a great number of places to work, no matter if the person has only primary education or a college degree. Big cities also offer jobs for high season. For example, hotels, inns, bars and others establishments always have more vacancies at that time of year.

Life in big cities is more comfortable. Big cities provide more options for people to have a good life. In big cities, people are only bored if they want, because there are many things to do. Also, people find the best educational centers there. And, last but not least, people do not have to worry about traveling to another city to buy something or to get a better treatment for a disease. The solution is nearby.

APPENDIX D15: Student 15

The Best Place to Live

For someone who wants peace and happiness, would it be better to live in a big city or in a small one? What are the advantages and disadvantages? Firstly, before answering these questions and many others, we have to analyze the experiences that people tell us. Reflecting on our story and goals will help us too. So it will be possible to choose the best place to live with our family. Sometimes, it does not depend on our own will. However, according to the examples that follow, we will see it is wonderful to live in both places.

In the big city, there are better work and study opportunities. A dedicated person can develop a professional life and provide good living conditions for his/her family. On the other hand, there is much noise and many impolite people, much crime and pollution too. In fact, we can not leave a window open and go shopping, because there are many thieves. Walking down the street at night can be dangerous too, but if we need a hospital, any big city offers an excellent medical treatment, not to mention supermarkets, universities, airports, and many other advantages.

Living in a small town can be a very happy experience. We know everyone and everyone knows us. People are friendlier and receive everybody at home. There are good schools and teachers, but there are not universities. Who lives there has to complete his/her studies in a big city, and there are almost no technological resources. On the other hand, the air is pure and there is not noise or pollution. We can have lunch with our family during the working break and take a nap after lunch.

There is also a third option: to work in a big city and live in the countryside. It is a way of enjoying the culture that the city offers (theaters, cinemas, museums, libraries) and better opportunities (a higher salary and access to universities). At the same time, it is possible staying with our family at night and playing with our children in the playground on weekends. Would you be too tired? Many people live this way and are happy!

In a word, to choose the best place to live, we have to decide what is the best thing for us and for our family. We have to review the concept of happiness and the meaning of enjoying life. If we like noise, agitation, cinema, and beach, the best place for us is a big city; if we like silence, fresh air, walking at night, and having coffee with our neighbors, the best place for us is a small city; but if we like both places, the best option is to work in a big city and live in a small one!

APPENDIX D16: Student 16

Living in a small city: life out of chaos

People living in big cities are so concerned with urban issues and problems that they tend to forget that there is still life out of it. Recently, I took a trip to Santa Catarina's Countryside to visit some distant relatives and I was pleased with what my eyes could see. The nature, the tranquility, the strengthened relationship between neighbors and relatives found in a small city, all of this confirms that life out of chaos still exists.

First of all, there is the nature strong presence. In small cities, you can feel the air. You can look around and the world is green. It is not difficult to find fresh tangerines in trees and people usually have large gardens where they cultivate all kinds of plants and vegetables. So you can eat food with no agrototox. Also, in small cities, you see stars in the sky at night and you can listen to the silence or to the fauna sounds. In big cities, though, the strong lights, the air pollution and the noise keep you away from that. In relation to nature, all you have there are artificial parks and some trees on the sidewalks.

Along with nature, there is the tranquility and lack of criminality found in small cities. People come in and out of their homes leaving the doors opened, a practice that I have witnessed. Likewise, you can walk on streets at night without the common fears and suspicions of those who live in big cities. Besides, there is the calmness of the day. You can feel it in people who live in the countryside. There is no rush. People just live their lives the way they can, with good humor and few complaints. It is surprising to face this, considering life in big cities, where people are anxious, everything is a matter of complaint and time is never enough.

Another aspect that caught my attention during my trip to the countryside was the strong relationships seen between relatives, friends and neighbors in a small city. Especially among relatives, you can see that the family really gets together every day. Brothers and sisters respect each other, cousins are true friends, uncles and aunts are like an extension of parents and the grandparents' residence is never empty. In addition, relationships between friends and neighbors are more strengthened in small cities. People know each other and stay in touch for many years. Besides, there's still a bell that rings in the countryside and calls everyone to get together and go to the church. So life does not

seem to change much there. In big cities, on the other hand, people hardly have time to themselves and even less to their relatives. Parents and children are too busy to stay together, cousins hardly see one another, aunts and uncles live far away and grandparents are usually left alone. Moreover, in big cities, the bell can not be heard (since there is too much noise around), people do not know their neighbors and relationships in general are too short-lived.

It is a relief to perceive that there are still places on earth where nature and people live together in harmony. The countryside still remains, to some extent, uncontaminated by the hunger and disturbance of big cities. Therefore, to live in a small city is to have a more pure and healthy way of life. For those who are stuck with big cities' violent urbanization, I would recommend a time off: a trip to the countryside once or twice a year would be a reminder of values of great importance that society keeps putting aside.

APPENDIX D17: Student 17

Big Cities, Big Problems

Everybody faces problems in a new city. Small or big, both of them have advantages and disadvantages, according to different people. But there are disadvantages about living in big cities which we do not find in small cities and cannot be ignored, such as pollution, noise mixing with crowd, and violence.

In big cities, people have to breathe a heavy and polluted air. Thousands of cars expel toxic gases all the time, and it does not only contribute to deteriorate people's health, but also leads to environmental problems. Unfortunately, since there are cars all around every day, people don't feel any difference, mainly the ones who were born and are raised in a big city. They get used to it. They think it is normal.

Two problems that come with pollution are noise and crowd. When a city has too many inhabitants, sometimes it is hard and tiring to get out of home. Streets are full of cars, there is traffic everywhere, and people get stressed. To try to make things go faster, they use hoots. Then the hoots mix with people selling things on sidewalks letting no space to walk. A simple visit to the mall can be disastrous.

Being big, violence is common. Incidents such as robberies and murders are most found. Differently as in small cities, where everyone knows everybody, in big cities people get awkward to talk to strangers because they might be criminals. Police, depending on how big the city is, delays to show up, and sometimes criminals are never caught. The fear of being robbed is always there, in the morning and at night.

People who live in big cities have to face those problems every day. They have to breathe bad air, to deal with the usual but annoying noise, to frequent crowded places and to take precautions every time they want to get out of their houses. Problems like these won't disappear completely. In one way or another, they are a part of big cities. It was easy for them to appear, but will be difficult to extinguish.

APPENDICES E

Cause-effect essays

APPENDIX E1: Student 9

Religious Fanaticism

How would you feel if you saw someone on the street holding a sign that states “God Hates You”? Would you feel intimidated? Would you feel angry? This sign is one of the slogans of the American church named Westboro Baptist Church. They consider themselves as messengers of God’s evil and they preach that all the rest of the world is doomed because we tolerate homosexuality. These people are following their religious impulse and they tend to be labeled as fanatics. This kind of behavior is largely disapproved by society nowadays and it is not recent. Since the birth of Christianity and other religions it is possible to see how religious fanaticism led to violent behavior in history. What may be the cause of religious fanaticism is the literal interpretation of the Bible, an extreme emotional attachment to religious beliefs and a deviant leadership.

When religions were brought to power violence was a common way of imposing their authority and this led to many conflicts throughout the years. It was on the empire of Constantine I (ca. 272-337) that the fanatic behavior started to take place in Christianity. It repressed all non-Christians and even Christians who did not follow the official Orthodox ideology and practice. The extremist behavior continued into the Middle Ages with the Crusades (1095-1291), when Christians reclaimed the Holy Land from the Muslims. The Islam also shares a history of violent behavior. The disputes over religious leadership led to the Islamic Civil war (632-750), and killed many civilians within the Islamic Caliphate.

The literal interpretation of the Bible is one of the major causes that lead to fanatic behavior. The Bible is the most translated book in history and it is important to mention that most translations were ordered by Kings, in an attempt to establish a dominant doctrine. The Holy Book was translated into many languages, and only a few times from Hebraic - the original written language; leading to indirect translations, thus passing through many interpretations. So many reinterpretations might have led to a text far in meaning from the original text. Therefore, it may be erroneous of us to interpret the

passages in the Bible so literally, given the fact that the text had been written and rewritten, in order to favor the Kings' need of domination before their people. When it comes to religious fanaticism, people tend to interpret what is written in the text in such literal way that in fact one would say that it is the literal word of God, forgetting that it was written by the hand of ordinary men. It becomes a problem when these people try to use their beliefs as a guide for how they believe the world should be.

In order to fulfill their emotional needs fanatic devotees tend to develop a sort of an irrational attachment to religious beliefs. On one hand there is the "positive" Faith, which can be understood as a secure belief in God and a trusting acceptance of God's Will. On the other hand there is the "negative" faith or the "overfaith", which can be defined as fanaticism, meaning a complete and extreme worship to certain religious concepts. In his book, *Holy War, Just War*, Lloyd Steffen states that "fanatics are persons who attach to some object an ultimate valuation and then attend to that overvalued object with what is recognizable as a kind of religious devotion". For the emotionally dependent individuals, the religious motivation is fed by their needs of security; they need to know that they are safe (even if it is not in this life), thus justifying all sorts of behavior, even violence.

Many of the fanatic religions of today have as a leader someone with persuasive and deviant characteristics. Louis Theroux, the journalist who interviewed the pastor of Westboro Baptist Church, said about the church's leader: "He was a very verbal, very persuasive, an extremely compelling speaker". These individuals seem to have the gift to intimidate and persuade one's mind that a certain statement is true. They usually touch the point where people are most fragile: their sense of belonging. It is proven that humans have an emotional need to bond with others; people need to feel that they are part of something, they need to socialize with others that share the same concepts and ideas; the need of identification. Fanatic leaders often use powerful arguments to support their cruel ideas and teach their disciples to hate and flee those who oppose them. For the purpose of identification to the leader and the religious cause devotees sacrifice everything, including themselves and family.

It is possible to conclude that some of the causes that induce to religious fanaticism are the literal interpretation of the Bible, an extreme emotional attachment to religious beliefs and a deviant leadership, thus leading to violence. Extreme behaviors of any nature will always be seen by society with disapproval and distaste and the history has been

showing us that violence and religion must not walk together on the same path. Fanatics often share a history of personality deviance and destructive behavior. "A fanatic is one who can't change his mind and won't change the subject"- Winston Churchill.

APPENDIX E2: Student 10

Legalize Marijuana

People that smoke Marijuana are been treated as criminals in streets around the earth. Do not matter their roles in the society, they are considered as a regular criminals and are suffering heavy penalizations. This people have been victims of police abuse as mugging, illegal search, false incrimination through fake graft and so forth more times than it is bearable. These embarrassing situations must come to a end. On top of these, researches on Marijuana medicals faculties have been used to easy the pain of cancers patients.

Nobody I know, have the wish of getting involved with the police department in any instance but Marijuana users and sellers are normally hostages of this, sometimes very sick, corrupted and violent segment of our society. It is a common sense (I do not intend to prove it) that influent and powerful people make a huge profit from Marijuana smuggling alone. Therefore this segment of people have no interest and will act very effectively, in order to not lose the control of their business. In addition to the causes on Marijuana legalization, there is the so called “drug” medical use on muscle healing and pain relieving.

Moreover, in a situation where a Pot dealer supplies the product before payment and the user delays to fulfill his obligations, compromising a trusty business between gentlemen. The dealer won't be able to relay on the legal procedures to solve this problem, he usually ends up using the capital punishment which just sets a pattern as the last and only resource and do not get the money anyways. Even worse is a situation when there is a dispute for dealing area which is done in a sort of war zone that harms all civilians lives around the neighborhood creating commotion and havoc.

There might be many others causes for Marijuana legalization but let the consequences be the motive from this point on. We can only imagine the amount of income would be generated for the state if tax were applied on Marijuana transactions, moreover the quality of the product that would appear on the market after a inspection gets done over it. Do not forget all the “criminals” crowding the jail houses that are there just for sake of been involved in Marijuana deals or consumption. Those would be released back to their lives and families instead of be living of public money.

Continuing with the consequences, it is known that Marijuana comes from Hemp which the source of one of the strongest fabrics

known to men, which after the legalization, would come back to a undiscriminated and legal production, probably harming the textile industry, which is another agent on the Marijuana criminalization (this information is ruffly qualified as a one of many conspiracy theories) as well as the drug industry. I once, in a skate fair at Long Beach Arena, was told that Hemp seeds are the easiest and richest source of protein for the human body there is.

In conclusion, the Marijuana legalization it is definitely not just about the right to get safely and honestly high but also the right to produce basic needs products which turns this discussion around and hopefully would open the conception people have about this great plant and we could get rid of this prejudice towards it once for all.

APPENDIX E3: Student 11

Bilingual world

For a long time in the history of mankind languages have been an issue. Being Europe the powerful land for many centuries, it is easy to understand that its main languages dominated most of the rest of the world. The issue ended up easily solved by obliging the language of the one in power to its colonized nations, forbidden them to use their native languages. Even though this historical fact affected many nations, the native languages in most part of the world have been preserved and are recently taking back the importance that they once had.

After the liberation of those many nations other significant matters happened in which languages had an important place. Migrations, international relations and exchanges, globalization, travelling facilities, are among those matters. In search for a better life many people travelled far from home to richer countries and began one of the aspects that make our world so diversified. As a consequence of these migrations researchers started looking at languages with a different eye, arriving slowly but solidly today, considering it a priority. Changes in cognitive researches, sociocultural relations and the educational system of many countries have shown positive effects of bilingualism throughout the world.

Since the early 20th century, around the 1920s, literature has been written on bilingualism, but it is only in the 1960s that it gained an optimistic approach. Those early studies had very pessimist remarks saying that

“the largest proportion of these investigations concluded bilingualism has a detrimental effect on intellectual functioning; a smaller number found little or no relation between bilingualism and intelligence; and only two suggested that bilingualism might have favorable effects on cognition”.

Studies from the 1960s show divergent results. A more diversified intelligence, advantages on measures of cognitive flexibility, creativity, skill at auditory reorganization and flexible manipulation of the linguistic code were some of them. From those years on researches have grown and showed more and more positive cognitive effects. Bilingualism was seen as a detriment to the person, it was said to divide

one's brain reducing its efficiency. However, it is known now, that instead of dividing it unites, being an addition to one's brain and not a subtraction.

As a consequence of these studies and their results multiple investigations were conducted taking a sociocultural perspective. When this topic of bilingualism and biculturalism started one of the greatest concerns was that children would lose their predominant identity and undergo psychological and social conflicts. Quoting Taylor

“For members of more powerful ethnolinguistic groups, positive attitudes toward the other group are essential for promoting bilingualism. Most ethnolinguistic groups are ethnocentric, group members believing that characteristics of their culture, customs, and language are better than others. (...) Such circumstances clearly provide a poor basis for promoting bilingualism.”

we understand how important the intergroup relation is to people and the positive effect of bilingualism. The attitude toward minorities had reached a level of necessary changes. All the studies showed the benefits of speaking a second language and being culturally involved in it were predominant and pressured for those changes. The effect of new legislation gave the opportunity to those changes to happen, if its use was put in place in either a good or bad way, isn't a topic for this essay. We have been witnessing how bilingualism and multilingualism is growing among people's attitude and opinion has a positive trait of one's personality. Though the ethnocentric aspect is inert of the human being, making it natural to have persisted in some people, the change is eminent and present in today's society.

The evolution of the positive effects of bilingualism for people wouldn't have had such an impact if the educational system hadn't been involved as well. For many decades or more a bilingual education was seen as prejudicial for children, however this concept changed abruptly. Thanks to studies, changes in people's attitude, like mentioned above and new legislation, schools started giving a more important place to the second main language spoken by their nation. Examples such as the country Luxembourg show that it is possible and has positive outcome to provide a bilingual system to one's student. In Luxembourg both official languages are taught since the earliest stages of school. Another example would be in Belgium where French and Dutch are languages

spoken by the inhabitants, and in Brussels, capital of Belgium, both languages are considered official. For this reason some schools have programs in both languages and have shown positive outcome results. Being proved that the earlier a second language is learnt the better its proficiency will be and taking the advantage of having such a diverse world, all children should be provided with a bilingual education.

As seen above throughout the text, changes in cognitive researches, sociocultural relations and the educational system has provided a worldwide knowledge that bilingualism has only positive effects. We can only expect those changes to persist and improve with time continuing to show how important and helpful they are. The maintenance of one's identity is only in distress when it is at its base weak and superficial. Whatever characteristic given by other cultures, languages and experiences can only add beauty to one's identity. And, like this, build an even more diverse and respectful world.

APPENDIX E4: Student 12

Video Games – the new English learning tools

Video games are not only toys; they are a very good tool for English learning. If used on the ‘right’ manner they can improve significantly the English of an English learner as a second language. It happens because video games offer a context where the players (English learners as a second language) feel very comfortable, lowering their affective filter. This filter makes part of a second language acquisition hypothesis formulated by Stephen Krashen where he claims that “some affective variables play a role on the learning process such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety”, which means that, if the learner feels uncomfortable with the learning situation, the learning will not be effective at all. In this context, video games will help creating this ‘appropriate’ atmosphere (lowering the affective filter) for the second language learning, together with the interest for learning English, skills such listening, spelling and vocabulary will be upgraded through a joyful way.

Playing video games improve the learners listening skill. During the game, players will get in contact with many dialogues with spoken language. From this interaction, a player can learn many words pronunciation, and the usage of intonation. And it is not just it, besides those two benefits; players will get in contact with many different English accents, which makes them know that does not exist only one ‘kind’ of English, but many of them, depending on the region. Furthermore, players will get used to many degrees of formality of the English language, as within the games, characters have hierarchical positions, which make them talk to different characters in different ways.

Together with listening skill, playing video games improve the spelling skill. As the players advance through the game’ story, they will have to read a lot of written text, which means that they will have access to a lot of written words and consequently to their right spelling. And depending on the games, the players will have to give answers to the characters and give names to things. All this amount of visual information help the players create a mental image of the words, which make the learners develop a more accurate written English without misspelled words.

The most developed skill while playing video games is vocabulary acquisition. It happens because in order for the players to

have the right to proceed on the game, they will have to know what that character is speaking. This makes the players face many words that they have never met, with this, players will always check on the dictionary for unknown words, and in this process, they will learn a lot of new vocabulary. For this situation, Stephen Krashen has another hypothesis that explains why this happens, which is called input hypothesis, where he says that "the learner improves and progresses along the 'natural order' when he/she receives second language 'input' that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence". To put in other words: when players face a new structure that they have not seen before they will acquire it.

To put in a nut shell, playing video games will provide the players with an upgrade to their English skills, from listening and spelling to vocabulary acquisition. As much as they have interest even in video games and in English, they will find out that video games are a great tool for learning another language while having fun.

APPENDIX E5: Student 13

The lack of communication in a globalized world

Lack of communication is perhaps the biggest issue of modern life. Communication plays an essential role in humans' lives. It is the tool to identify and solve issues in all sorts of relationships. Overlooking man's history throughout the time we can notice the progress of many sources for communication that have permitted people to have more access to information. On the other hand, the impact of this progress on peoples' relationships has led them to a communication breakdown. There are three major causes for the lack of communication in relationships: the rush of modern life, financial problems and technology. Their affects on a family's structure can lead couples to divorce and children to drugs abuse and violence.

The modern society takes life in a very fast way. People are constantly battling against the clock. This way of living demands much time and energy to do the daily chores such as working, studying, cleaning the house and other matters. Nowadays individuals are required to be more qualified in their career fields and also have longer work shifts. All these aspects from modern life are causing lack of communication. People have no more free time to reflect on their lives or gather with their family members and friends.

Another aspect that contributes drastically for the lack of communication specially in marriages are the financial problems which have become more frequent over the years. They are the most common topics in many couple's argues and at the same time they provoke discord and lack of trust in a relationship. Trying to discuss a financial problem can eventually turns people aggressive and this could be a reason for them to give up talking with each other leading to a communication breakdown.

Technology is also a cause for the lack of communication in relationships. The huge number of technological devices that has been created to facilitate our communication is actually tearing people apart. There are so many gadgets available to turn people's lives easier that they became essential to everyone. Nowadays it is more common to see children locked in their rooms playing video games instead of playing with their parents, women talking on the cellphone and men navigating on the Internet instead of spending time together.

When man and woman fail to communicate well they might have to face a drastic consequence: the divorce. Couples have such busy lives

that they have no more time to talk on a regular basis, they tend to keep their issues for themselves specially men who usually avoid discussing relationship matters with their partners. According to Catherine Kohler Reissman in her book *Divorce Talk* (United States, 1990) most of the women she interviewed – but only a few of the men – gave lack of communication as the reason for their divorces. Given the current divorce rate of nearly 50 percent, that amounts to millions of cases in the United States every year – a virtual epidemic of failed conversation.

Another consequence of the lack of communication in relationships is the raise of the number of teenagers involved with drugs and violence. Parents are so preoccupied to provide the best for their children such as better education and nice clothes, for example, that they neglect to do the most essential: to communicate with them. Because of that children feel disoriented with no boundaries to guide them, the shortage of the dialogue between parents and children might encourage adolescents to commit violent acts and end up using drugs in order to call for their parent's attention.

Mankind is failing in one of their priority skills. The lack of communication is deeply affecting all the groups that compound the society from a young age until adulthood. The busy life of modern society, financial hassles and the development of technological devices have changed the social bonding and the way people communicate with each other. Globalization has decreased the distance between different countries. Nevertheless, it has increased the distance among family members.

APPENDIX E6: Student 14

Online Shopping

Internet has become an easy way to bring people together. Also in business it is a tool to sell things and advertise. What are the effects of doing business on Internet? There are effects that can be already detected, such as the change of the “buying culture”, the reducing in expenses, and the facilities Internet has brought to the sellers.

Internet has changed the “buying culture” in many ways. Some years ago people had to go downtown and walk a lot to find what they want to buy. With online stores, the consumers have only to sit in front of the computer and search what they want.

Buying products on the Internet is cheaper. Once the storekeepers do not have to pay for rent, products will be cheaper. This is another reason why people are accessing Internet to shop. There are products that can cost half of the price. This way, people spent less and reduce their expenses.

To the sellers, Internet has brought a some changes. The effects for them are very positive in terms of renting a space (they only have to pay to keep the website online) and the accessibility of the products, because they are 24 hours on show.

It is a fact: Internet is already among us. It is a promising resource to business owners and to the consumers. Since life become hectic, people do not have time to take a day off to go shopping. With products online, they can shop anytime they want. Business’ future is online.

APPENDIX E7: Student 15

A visit to the slaughterhouse

Nothing is as aggressive as the slaughterhouses of animals. Describe what happens in them is not an easy task. Some people believe that these animals have a life of pleasure, playing in the fields with other animals, and that one day they are transported and slaughtered with no pain. This is the image that the meat industry conveys, with advertisements of smiling animals and bright packages that almost do not bleed.

The animals come from farms and are transported on trucks where they try to stand hardly. When the truck enters in the slaughterhouse, the animals are removed from it with a lot of violence. Most of them watch the death of their partners and smell the scent of their blood, feeling fear and horror.

The animals resist to the end trying not to cross the corridor that leads to the room of the slaughterhouse, watching everything that happened to their partners: some are hanging, some are broken, and their blood and guts all over the floor. They try in vain to escape, but they are completely surrounded by steel bars.

When the animal is lifted by their feet, many times it is still alive, his head moves and his eyes still blinks. Does this animal not feel pain? Is it just a lot of meat, breathless and heartless? However, the man who works in the slaughterhouse says there is no problem. Then, the animal is bled, skinned and beheaded. The blood is flowing down. With huge knives its belly is opened and the casings are used to make sausage.

Although the suffering of the animal starts since its birth, it is in the slaughterhouse that it meets its end. People do not believe - or do not want to believe - that these animals had a miserable existence, deprived of sunlight and fresh air. The objective of a breeding is not their welfare, but only profit. And the human being, superior in intelligence, compromise their moral values, because not even the predators, in nature, treat their prey this way.

APPENDIX E8: Student 16

Overcrowded university: negative effects of REUNI at UFSC

Over the last 2 years, UFSC University has been passing through visible changes: a considerable and recent increase of new students, courses and campi has been taking place there. The cause of these rapid changes in our University meets its basis on REUNI - or Program of Support to Plans of Reestruturation and Expansion of Federal Universities - a program set by the government in order to and according to its decree (6096 of 05-24-2007): "create conditions for increased access and retention in higher education at the undergraduate level, to take better advantage of the physical and human resources available in Federal Universities" with an increase of 20% in the total budget reserved to the institutions that adhere, voluntarily, to the program. The universities that accept this, must achieve the following objectives in the time of 5 years: to increase the rate of completion of courses to 90% (in Brazil, according to INEP - National Institute of Educational Studies and Research - in 2005, the graduation rate is around 60% in universities) and to increase the student-teacher relation to 18 students for 1 teacher (the current average is 10 for 1).

UFSC had adhered to REUNI in november 2007, after the consent of the council, though with the disapproval of many students. At a first sight, the program appears to provide several advantages since it claims for the otimization of the universities; but to achieve those objectives mentioned above without harming any sphere of the university is not an easy task – a task that needs to be well thought through. But how to think through in such a short time? The implementation of REUNI at UFSC have several negative effects starting to be felt on the students' lives, such as, to increase of lines at RU and at other services, the inappropriate use of spaces in campus for new courses and the likely creation of inadequate curricula.

The first immediate and visible effect is the increase of lines at RU (University Restaurant), xerox places, libraries and other services, duo to the expansion of the university vacancies. For instance, the students who depend on RU to have their daily meals (where else would they have lunch and dinner for R\$1,50 a meal?) got used to wait in line for about 30 minutes per day to get to the restaurant. The lines are a common consequence of a service that attends around 4.100 people a day, a number that keeps increasing since the implementation of REUNI. Since 2008, 681 new students from brand new courses or from

the extension of vacancies in the existent ones are now in campus, according to the pro-rectory of education at UFSC, and this number will enlarge until 2012. For the next year, the project plans an increase of 37% in the number of freshmen. The problem is not the increase of students itself, but the fact that some services of great importance at UFSC, such as RU, do not have enough infrastructure to assist so many students, what affects directly on the students' lives. Thus, xerox places, libraries and services in general are also suffering these consequences. In the case of RU, there is indeed a project of implementation of a third restaurant (there is two restaurants for lunch and a smaller one for dinner), but that will take at least two years to be ready, according to estimates of ETUSC – Administrative Technical Office of UFSC.

The inappropriate use of spaces in campus in order to stand the increasing number of new courses is another negative effect. Since the implementation of REUNI, 20 new undergraduate are being offered in the vestibular (university entrance examination), with 4 of them taking place in new campi (in Aranguá, Curitibaanos and Joinville). The other 12 courses in the campus of Florianópolis have to fight for space in different departments and centers, since many of them do not have a proper space for their own. For example, the group of Scenic Arts, undergraduate course created in 2008, had to ask for a classroom in CFM (Center of Physics and Math) to turn it into a “mini-theater” and for a gymnastic room in CDS (Center of Sports) to do their practical classes two times a week, according to their coordinator, Prof. Alai Diniz. This is actually an agravant to the existing problem of lack of space in general to attend all sorts of acitivities, involving teaching, research and extension, that take place in our university. There is, indeed, projects of constructing new buildings and reforming the existing ones in campus, but, again, it takes time for them to be completed. In the mean time, people will have to life with this problem of overcrowding.

The high number of courses created in a rush also can likely lead to the creation of inadequate curricula. Courses take some time to be well established and need secure curricula to provide the future professionals with what they need. Are those courses – created just to expand vacancies and accomplish REUNI's goals – providing these fair curricula? This is something to be questioned. I believe some of them are not, what can serious interfere in the students formation and academic self-identity.

In conclusion, what is announced to be a progress in the university education is actually bringing a handful of negative effects to

UFSC, such as the increase of lines at RU and at other services, the inappropriate use of spaces in campus for new courses and the likely creation of inadequate curricula. Hence, it is compromising the education quality. These are effects of a more global, political issue. Therefore, many student organizations are fighting against the program. For instance, in order to discuss and denunciate the unreliability of the program, a group of students of UFBA (Federal University of Bahia) created the “gray book of REUNI” that is what they call a dossier-denouncing of REUNI consequences and that aims to circulate at a national level. That is an attempt to call the program off and bring their negative effects to an end. Brazilian Universities do need a transformation, but the proposal of REUNI is certainly not the right mean to do so.

APPENDIX E9: Student 17

The Effects of Sleep Deprivation

Every human being needs to sleep well. But sometimes there are situations that do not let us sleep the amount of hours considered the ideal for a human brain. The effects caused by those situations may affect seriously the daily life, such as slower reaction times, irritability and lack of concentration.

Reaction time is needed in several situations. With sleep deprivation, it tends to get slow, bringing a numerous of problems. A person practicing soccer, for example, needs a fast reaction time to kick a soccer ball on the exact moment. Without it, one's team can be injured. Another situation is while crossing a street. Sometimes the person does not look to both sides before crossing a street, and a car might run over him/her if it was passing. Taking this last happening to illustrate another example, if a person is driving a car on the street and suddenly another person crosses the street, the reaction time of the driver is required, so then he/she can stop the car before hitting the person.

Also to drive a car, the driver needs to be concentrated. The lack of concentration can lead to accidents, for example, in curves. To study, no one can focus in the subject without the necessary concentration. Any distraction may ruin it. During a talk with friends, a person can pass unnoticed because his/her mind is not totally focused in the conversation, and so he/she does not have anything to say about.

Another possible effect is deep irritability. If a person does not sleep well, everything tends to irritate him/her, difficulting the relationship among friends, family and co-workers, bringing more and more problems in each environment.

A person's life can change because of sleep deprivation. It gets worse through time. The more people get used to sleep less, the more they have to deal with bad effects. To maintain a healthy life, people not only have to worry about eating healthy food or making exercise, but also about having a good night of sleep.

APPENDICES F

Argumentative essays

APPENDIX F1: Student 1

The variants in Portuguese language: a call for respected

Many people argue that only the standard Portuguese is the correct Portuguese to write and talk. Is that so? During the transition between the empires to the republic appeared the belief that the standard Portuguese was a indication of status; and the clarity and simplicity were not the focus on the communication in that time. Nowadays people know the importance of being clear and concise, but the idea of standard Portuguese as a sign of status persists. On the other hand, Brazil is the fifth largest country in area and is also the fifth most populous country in the world. So, with this large number of territory and population it is expected that Brazil suffers from regionalism and linguistics variants that are considered as grammatical “errors”.

According to Roncarati (2008) the prestigious in the language can be categorized in three ways: sociological, linguistics, and sociolinguistics. In the sociological niche the prestige has a direct relationship with the satisfactory performance degree of a function in the society. The linguistics niche points that the prestigious in the language combines to social and linguistic injunctions used by the individual that form a variety. The occupation and attitude of the individual are the basis for measuring the prestige in the sociolinguistic scope. So, regarding Brazil’s reality and the sociolinguistic category, which focuses on the individual’s occupation and attitudes in the society, it is possible to affirm that the variants in the Portuguese language cannot be classified as an error and should be respected.

Among the arguments against variants in Portuguese, it is common to find these thoughts: the language is homogenous, so there is just one standard Portuguese; variants can harm the communication, because if there is no error in the language, people cannot understand each other; if the variants are accepted and are not considered as an error, it is not necessary to learn the standard Portuguese. In attempt to deconstruct these erroneous arguments, the following paragraphs will provide evidences in favor of the Portuguese variants, which have to be handled with respect and linguistic knowledge.

First of all, the language is not homogenous; it is completely the opposite, the language is heterogeneous. It is on the level of form that the heterogeneity most appears. For example, in the Portuguese, it is common hear the verb *lavar* (to wash) inflected on first person plural in many ways, such as *lavamos*, *lavamo*, *lavemos* and *lavemo*. But, in this case, only the form *lavamos* is considered on the standard Portuguese. The others forms do not change the meaning, just reflect the social value besides the speaker. The person who says *lavemos* or *lavemo* suffers clearly a prejudice that goes beyond the scope of language, reaching the speaker. Following this biased reasoning, speakers that use *lavemo* do not able to think or cannot speak.

Regarding Szundy (2011), if the speech is intelligible it should be classified as adequate or inadequate. These terms are more appropriated, because the speakers have to adjust his speech to the context; if s/he is in an informal context the variants would be more adequate than the standard Portuguese. Pasquale (2011) says that to speak properly the language is to be a polyglot within the language. The speaker should know how to use the appropriate entry in any situation. So, there is "error" in the language, but just when the speech is unintelligible; in other cases the speech is adequate or inadequate.

Finally, teachers have to teach the standard Portuguese and also the notion of adequate or inadequate speech. Last year in Brazil, the government implemented a book that shocked the population, because presented the variants to the students. Prejudiced speakers pointed that the book was not teaching the "correct" Portuguese while the linguists were defending the government's attitude of teaching the students that the language depends on the context. They pointed that the students need to learn the standard Portuguese to adequate their speech in all contexts, but it is a school function to explain the terms adequate and inadequate, thereby avoiding a greater number of prejudiced speakers.

To conclude, having all this in mind, the variants in Portuguese language has to be respected and should not be considered as "error". The variants make part of the Brazilians culture and reality, therefore they should be respected. It is very important to create awareness about the terms adequate and inadequate, by doing that it will be possible to decrease the prejudice to the language's variants and its speakers. Fiorin (2003) argues that the democracy is a political system that demands respecting the differences. So, when linguistics proves that language is heterogeneous and educates to tolerance, it is educating to democracy.

APPENDIX F2: Student 2

Education on the Divan: what does education really mean to people's social and cultural perspectives

If people think of education as something useless, they must try being ignorant to taste how it is. Educated people know how to value the role of education in their lives, and know to what extent it is a driving force to the prosperity of a nation, especially a nation as big and diverse as Brazil. Culture is an indispensable part of the make-up of a country, whichever it is, with no doubts. But how can we become aware of this reality and make sure it may be shared with the ones who are a part of it? Through education.

The role of education on keeping the values and the way of life of a certain society is essential to sustain that lifestyle, but not only that. It's also essential to interact with other cultures, which may add more new characteristics to a cultural context. On this way, Educators act like a bridge between the person and its reality, and the reality of others, molding his or her way of seeing the world and instilling a set of values. Therefore, the role of education in the context of a given society is a vital characteristic for the affirmation of that society in the broad cultural context.

People must be aware of the role of teachers as transmitters of culture and as the ones who prepare the person to face life and its hardships, especially in the work market. It is also important to note that the knowledge we receive from them may also on the future be the basis to generate new knowledge, and such knowledge may be useful to develop new ideas and debate, which generates more knowledge, and what we learn, especially in cultural exchange with other nations, may contribute to enrich the culture of a given country.

However, there are the ones who manipulate educational and cultural resources in order to enforce their own point of view, and say that it is the way the country sees this or that particular situation of another culture to make it seem harmful, ridiculous or stupid. This may provide fertile ground for the creation of stereotypes, which may be prejudicial to cultural exchange. People have the alternative of trying to be ignorant to see how much of a burden it is. No one should think of educated people as arrogant, stuck-up and conceited aliens who know it all and despise other people. Education is important for the people's well – being, and it must be considered as such.

Education is an important step for reaching higher standards in life. Some people may not see it as such, but several employers and enterprises certainly do. How many times do we read on the newspaper's classified ads how much experience is demanded from candidates for a determined kind of job, both on the specific part of the said job and other things considered important, such as, for example, proficiency on a foreign language, like English, Spanish or French? People who possess those abilities, and some others, are considered able to be competitive, creative and successful by employers and enterprises around the world, who are frequently looking for people like those for important jobs and higher positions on their hierarchy.

Education is an important cornerstone of merit. A society which values merit also places emphasis on education as a means of obtaining important positions by merit, once educated people know how to understand the value of it. People often appreciate the ones who are successful in their careers, their jobs and positions, in every field of work, from art and music, passing through science and technology until high government officers, and most specially the ones who manage to achieve their situations by merit, and education is also essential to understand the conception of merit, and its application to any kinds of situations on the world market, and especially on the government, whose members are chosen to represent the people, and the election of those people should take into account education and merit, because these characteristics should be taken into account do determine if a candidate for a given political office can be deemed worthy enough of representing the people who are electing the said candidate, so that people are not wasting their votes. A stark contrast for this is our former president, who frequently says, and is seemingly proud of saying, that education was not necessary for him to reach the position he attained for eight years.

Education is a weapon against cultural stereotypes. We are frequently bombarded by all kinds of false ideas against one culture or another. The most frequent ones are the stereotypes which afflict a particular group, undermining it in the context of a given society. How many times do we see people belonging to a certain social group boasting their supposed superiority over other social groups just because they are the dominant group within the society they are inserted in, and in their vision they must be regarded as such? Examples of this are frequently seen, for instance, in North American schools, where the most known stereotypes are the ones of the "nerd", the "geek", the "outcast", the "loner", the "loser", and several others, frequently

directed to students belonging not only to lower classes, but also belonging to other ethnic groups who are not the supposedly “dominant”, like for example, Latinos and Asian-Americans. From the latter, for example, we have the Japanese-Americans, known in these schools as in most of situations belonging to the “nerds” or the “geeks”, or also the “know-it-all”, mainly derived from the fact that the Japanese people value the role of education on their children’s lives. (In a personal note, here on Brazil, it was the Japanese people themselves who taught us Brazilians the real value of work.). And more important, it’s by interacting with people belonging to these groups that we are able to put down these stereotypes. The role of education in this situation enables us to learn more about other cultures, and value them more.

Therefore, we must recognize that education is important to the development of a nation, not just the Brazilian one, but all the nations, especially the diverse ones like the Brazilian and the North American ones, because it may actually be used as a means of cultural independence and affirmation before other countries. We must not, in any case, tell that being educated and cultured make people arrogant and stuck – up, like it was already said before. Ignorance itself, on the other hand makes people more stupid, emotionally unstable and even violent. There is a popular proverb that says: “Ignorance is Bliss”. That may be right in some situations but must not be incorporated into someone’s mind as something true. Wisdom is important, but education enhances wisdom. Whoever has this in mind is definitely bound to comprehend the role of education in people’s lives, and to be successful, both in mind and spirit.

APPENDIX F3: Student 3

Did we land on the moon?

July 20, 1969, at 20:18 UTC. – Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk on the Moon, our only natural satellite. According to his own words (1969), it was a “one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind.” Although the irrefutable proofs and the fact that more than 500 million people around the globe watched the live broadcast, some conspiracy theories gained visibility throughout the years trying, with no success, to prove that Apollo 11, the American spaceflight from NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) and its crew, Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin Buzz Aldrin never actually made it. The evidence is clear: the astronauts not only succeeded in this mission achieving their goal by landing on the Moon but also became part of the History.

These conspiracy theorists claim, among other aspects, some of the following: the lack of stars in the pictures taken by the Apollo 11 of the dark lunar sky, the waving American flag – a flag cannot wave considering the vacuum on the space and last but not least the lunar rock the astronauts brought as sample was actually petrified wood.

The paragraphs below will show how the suppositions in favor of this Moon hoax are nothing but a fantasy created in a naïve attempt to destroy one of the greatest achievements we ever had.

First of all, the non-sense begins with the photo issue. Some people keep saying NASA used the Nevada desert as set for the photos – surprisingly the area where the American government has a military base called Area 51; they also point the why there are no stars in the sky in some of the NASA pictures. Countless photographers were called to examine the photographs and the verdict is: the stars are there. David John Owen, president of the Hamilton Astronomical Society, located in New Zealand, explains:

The answer is very simple and involves one of the most basic elements of photography - exposure. Anyone who has learnt how to use a camera iris knows that exposure should be set correctly for the subject. If other parts of the picture are significantly brighter or darker, they will not be exposed correctly.

Furthermore, there is the controversy about planting the flag on the Moon. In the lunar mission pictures we are able to see the flag waving, something not possible since the vacuum on space. NASA has an entire section on their website explaining the phenomenon for the skeptic ones. Clearly the flag waves as consequence, according to Platoff (1993), author of the book *Apollo and America's Moon Landing Program - Enchanted Rendezvous, John Houbolt and the Genesis of the Lunar-Orbit Rendezvous Concept and Political and Technical Aspects of Placing a Flag on the Moon*, because of the flagpole's design: "a flagpole with a horizontal bar allowing the flag to 'fly' without the benefit of wind to overcome the effects of the moon's lack of an atmosphere. Other factors considered in the design were weight, heat resistance, and ease of assembly by astronauts whose space suits restricted their range of movement and ability to grasp items"

Finally, the 382 kilograms of moon rock the American astronauts brought in the Apollo 11 that is believed by people defending the Moon Hoax to be nothing but petrified wood. Likewise the photographs that had been deeply analyzed, renowned geologists were given the opportunity to study the lunar solids coming to conclusion that they are real not just for their uniqueness but because they differ from our rocks in several aspects. Norman (2001), a lunar geologist at the University of Tasmania, elucidates the case: "lunar samples have almost no water trapped in their crystal structure, and common substances such as clay minerals that are ubiquitous on Earth are totally absent in Moon rocks. We've found particles of fresh glass in Moon rocks that were produced by explosive volcanic activity and by meteorite impacts over 3 billion years ago..."

To conclude this controversial topic, there are, indeed, enough proofs that the American astronauts did land on the Moon. Despite the eagerness to win the Space Race, NASA did not invent a story by faking the photos, planting flags or using artificial rocks; a genuine mission was accomplished. This Moon Hoax might be far from ending but one truth remains firm: the United States of America flag is still in the lunar soil.

APPENDIX F4: Student 4

Vegetarians: ethic and clean

Having a life totally free of cruelty is something money cannot buy, but you can have a healthy and ethic life not eating meat, it only depends of your attitude. For vegetarians, in general, to eat animal's flesh is disgusting and not right according to their beliefs. Vegetarians believe that when someone eats animal's flesh is not a wise choice, especially nowadays, because the information is everywhere and there would be no excuse to be a non-vegetarian person. So I would like to show you the main reasons why it is good not to eat meat. For instance, when you eat meat it is not good for your health, you are collaborating with the animal suffering and the environment suffers with the consequences of these big industries of food.

Most people are against the idea of a life without meat, to be a vegetarian person. Most of their arguments are based on antisocial behavior, extinction of farm animals and that it would not solve animals' problems and, also that it is not possible to get all necessary nutrients eating only vegetables. They say that vegetarians become antisocial for not eating the same things that others do, so in a family reunion or in a friends party, vegetarians would be completely isolated and would not talk with others. Also that farm animals would be extinct, if we stop to eat them there is no purpose to let them be alive and, also that if you stop eating meat you would not be able to stop the animals' factory to kill them, because you are only one person against this huge market. And there are some people who say that protein or vitamins are only available on animals' meat, that if you do not eat it, you would be malnutrition with these nutrients.

On the other hand, vegetarian food is being accepted for most part of the people because they are very tasty and healthy and, with all information available nowadays, people are starting to think more of animals' rights. With more tasty vegetarian food, more people are getting interested in trying it and they are enjoying it. We can take more advantage over vitamins found in vegetables and fruits eating them directly than eating animals to get nutrients. Some studies say that the rate for having cancer and heart diseases is increased when eating meat, particularly beef and processed meat. According with this study "it contains ingredients such as saturated fat, sodium, nitrates and other cancerous substances that are connected to chronic diseases, including

heart diseases and cancer"¹⁹ (author's free translation). Concerning animals, it is available on internet a lot of movies showing how industries of food mistreat all animals before they are killed. In some of these movies it is possible to see employees and, in some cases, the factory owner beating animals with their own hands, feet and with handle fork. So, I would like to develop more these subjects in order to show what is behind a vegetarian mind.

Stop eating animal meat can prevent you to have serious problems with your health. You can have a good and normal quality of life eating only vegetables, fruits, legumes, and grains, because all necessary nutrients can be found in them, as Brown University Health Education website reports. This website also gives some tips for a healthy vegetarian life, such as to "choose whole-grain products; eat a wide variety of foods; if you eat dairy products, choose non-fat or low-fat varieties; use eggs in moderation; limit intake of sweets and high fat foods". Harvard studies found that the possibility of cancer is higher in people that eat meat; "researchers have found that red meat consumption is associated with an increased risk of total, cardiovascular, and cancer mortality." Researchers also found, as secondary result that "substituting other healthy protein sources, such as fish, poultry, nuts, and legumes, was associated with a lower risk of mortality." This study underlies the idea of not eating meat to have a healthy life. You can find in any grocery store many vegetarian foods that taste very well and are very nutritious. Specialty food stores may carry some of the more uncommon items, as well as many vegetarian convenience foods.

Animals die every day just for you to have their piece in your everyday meal, a piece that you call meat. According to Gary Yourofsky²⁰, every year 10 billion land animals and 18 billion marine animals are killed in the USA, just to keep market on. This cruelty begins since animals start to live; most of them are kept in small cages, with no move possibility, for their entire life. According to PETA's website, to increase profit "The giant corporations that run most factory farms have found that they can make more money by cramming animals into tiny spaces, even though many of the animals get sick and some

¹⁹A carne vermelha processada contém ingredientes como a gordura saturada, sódio, nitratos e outras substâncias cancerígenas que estão ligadas a muitas doenças crônicas, incluindo doenças cardíacas e câncer.

²⁰Gary Yourofsky is an activist for the animals' rights and "has been arrested numerous times for random acts of kindness and compassion, and banished by five countries from entering their borders".

die." So your meal is a scared and confined animal and when they reach the expected weigh, they are send to slaughterhouses in a crowded truck and are killed in cruel form. According to PETA, after get killed "Many [animals] remain conscious when they are plunged into the scalding-hot water of the defeathering or hair-removal tanks or while their bodies are being skinned or hacked apart." PETA encourages people to look closer in this issue with their video "Meet your Meat", that is describe as a video that "exposes the truth behind humanity's cruelest invention—the factory farm", with Alec Baldwin narration.

When you eat meat the environment suffers with animal industry more than with car pollution. According to PETA:

A recent United Nations report concluded that a global shift toward a vegan diet is necessary to combat the worst effects of climate change. And the U.N. is not alone in its analysis. Researchers at the University of Chicago concluded that switching from a standard American diet to a vegan diet is more effective in the fight against climate change than switching from a standard American car to a hybrid.

During the digestion process animals produce methane, a greenhouse gas, able to trap heat in atmosphere with more efficiency than carbon dioxide, says the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Many studies in this field demonstrating that this gas contribute to the global warming more than any other source, PETA say that "not eating meat is the 'single most effective thing you can do to reduce your climate change impact". Besides the global warming, animal industries waste a lot of water with the process of meat production. Still in PETA's website they say "It takes more than 9084,98 liters of water to produce 0,45 kilogram of meat, while growing 0,45 kilogram of wheat only requires 94,64 liters. You save more water by not eating a pound of meat than you do by not showering for six months!"²¹ So it is quite reasonable to stop to eat meat for our planet.

Knowing that billions of land animals need to eat tons of corn, wheat and soybeans to grow and then be killed, it is possible to start thinking in the end of world hunger. If these huge quantities of animals are not longer needed for consumers, animals would not eat all those

²¹ Quantities converted to kilogram and liters for a better understand of Brazilian public.

tons of grains that could be used to feed people around the world who are starving. Animals eat the great majority of grains that are produced, a contradictory idea, letting animals live for you to eat them and let people die just because you want a piece of meat. An important fact found in PETA's website is that "animals raised for food have to eat as many as 16 pounds of grain to create just 1 pound of edible flesh"²², the rest of their flesh are not eaten by us.

After seen that you can have a lot of benefits for your health, that a lot of animals suffer everyday on farm industries and in slaughterhouses because of market huge demand for meat, that the environment suffers every day and also that is possible to give an end to the world hunger, would not you think twice before putting a piece of meat on your plate? I was a totally meat-eater, however, I research a lot about how animals are treated, how we can still have a healthy life for not eat meat and that is possible to live in a better planet, and I changed my life. For me, is possible to have a non-cruelty meal every day, we have a lot of options in supermarket and grocery stores, it is only a matter of choice. As Albert Einsten said "Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances of survival for life on earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet."

²² Quantities converted to kilogram and liters for a better understand of Brazilian public.

APPENDIX F5: Student 5

Breeding Cruelty

Going to a pet shop may seem a very simple way to choose a pet, but there are many issues behind it. What people do not know or see are the animal's conditions before they get into the pet shop, from where they come, and how are their parents. There are few exceptions, but most of the puppies sold in pet shops come from kennels in which they are bred in terrible ways. The puppies' parents are kept imprisoned with the only purpose of reproducing and making money for the owners. They do not have a life; they are there to serve the market.

The definition of a kennel, according to the Oxford Dictionaries, is "a small shelter for a dog or cat; a boarding or breeding establishment for dogs or cats." Kennels are legal when the owners respect the established rules on this subject, but there seems to be very little inspection, and this inspection often ends in the hands of the Non-Governmental Organizations. To have a close view on this, Cesar Millan, known as "the Dog Whisperer", recorded one of the episodes of his show on this issue. Together with the nonprofit animal advocacy organization "Last Chance for Animals - LCA", he visited what they call "puppy mills" to try to rescue some of the dogs imprisoned in there. With undercover footage, they were able to record the conditions in which the owners keep their animals, and all they could see was mistreatment and disrespect for their lives. To end with this nonsense and insolence towards these animals, people should stop buying puppies on pet shops and boycott this market built on suffering.

There are several reasons that lead people to be in favor of selling/buying puppies. First of all, there is this old idea that animals exist to serve humans. As examples, we have the use of horses for transportation, of donkeys to carry weight, etc. Another reason is that kennel owners make great profit from selling puppies, so this market is a good deal for them, especially when they simply do not spend money in favor of the animal's comfort and health. Also, keeping the same breeders through their whole lives until they are sick and tired makes it even more profitable. And finally, from the viewpoint of the buyers, there is this culture that breed dogs are more beautiful and valuable than mongrels. Most adoptable dogs do not have a definite breed, and some buyers also have the intention to breed their dogs later. In addition, they may choose the breed with different intentions, like buying a Pit Bull to train it to become a frightful secure against home invasion or to fight

against other Pit Bulls until death, so the owner makes money when they win. In order to deconstruct these ideas, the following paragraphs are going to bring evidence in favor of animal adoption and against the “puppy mills”, aiming to make people aware of all the problems and suffering behind a cute puppy on sale.

First, when kennel owners turn animals into mere breeders, they are subjugating them to their will, and that is against the federal law 9.605/98 in Brazil. The law “provides criminal and administrative sanctions derived from conducts and activities harmful for the environment, and other measures” (free translation by the author). This includes crime against animal life, as related in the fifth chapter of the cited law, first section, article 32: “To abuse, mistreat, injure or mutilate wild animals, domestic or domesticated, native or exotic” (free translation by the author). Unfortunately, mistreatment is the word to define most kennels. In Cesar Millan’s episode cited below, “Inside Puppy Mills”, we have video evidence recorded by LCA, where we can see that animals are kept imprisoned in small jails through their whole life. According to Chris de Rose, founder and president of the LCA, “you don’t see the animals that are dying and suffering in these puppy mills, freezing to death. In the summer time, they die from dehydration, they die from exposure.” The episode shows the situation in the United States, but what happens here in Brazil is not very different. There is a report published in a Brazilian news website about animals that were found in a house in São Paulo, imprisoned in cages, almost dying because of the mistreatment. One hundred and thirty of them had to be sacrificed because, according to the vet Gabirella Gonzalles, their situation was terminal and there was nothing they could do about it. People who look for a puppy to buy do not know about these conditions, since they are, obviously, hidden from everyone. This way, they are funding criminals who act against federal law and animal rights.

Besides, there is a strong reason for kennel owners not to care about their animal’s welfare: their only objective is to make money, no matter what. And they do make a lot of money. If you just take a walk through your neighborhood, you probably will find a pet shop with a showcase full of puppies. There are usually glass boxes, with a couple of puppies each. They are cute, small and sleepy. You can imagine how nice it is to stay all day in a glass box with people calling your attention and knocking on the glass because of how cute you are. But the owners have this good reason to keep them there: the price tag is generally R\$3,000 to R\$3,500 for a Pug puppy, for example. That is why people should pay attention to this when going to a pet shop. If you do some

research on the Web, you will see how easy it is to buy a puppy. You can even make the deal through one of these websites that sell every kind of things, that is, they are not specialized. One example is “Mercado Livre”, a website where you find all kinds of puppies, sold for R\$400 to R\$4,000. Some people say “if I do not buy it, someone will do it anyway”. Of course, while there are still people searching for puppies to buy, there will be people “fabricating” puppies to sell. So, it is through making people aware of the puppy mills problems, which will lead them to prefer animal adoption, that it will be possible to put an end to this market.

In addition, in the breeding process, since the owners do not care about the animal’s health, that includes not taking the genetic diseases into consideration. They breed kin animals, spreading the disease, not to mention the ones that are born with a physical problem and are discarded. This is also a way to make more profit, since the owners do not have to spend money with medical research nor with the use of more animals as breeders. These animals live their whole lives in some kind of pain. One example is the disease Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca, also known as “dry eye syndrome” source is desirable. It is an eye disease, very common in breeds like Pugs, Yorkshires, Samoyed, among others, caused by decrease of tear production or increase of tear film evaporation. Animals which have this disease have to use a daily medication, usually an ointment, in order to ease the pain and help to lubricate the eyes. It does not have a cure, so the use of the ointment is needed through the whole animal’s life. Even with surgery, it is needed eye drops to regulate the lubrication. Some people do not have patience to deal with that every day, and cases of abandon are very common in these situations.

Finally, the result of puppy mills, besides crime, mistreatment, and disease propagation, is abandonment. When the breeders are too old and sick to keep reproducing, they are brutally exterminated or abandoned, when they do not have the lucky to be rescued by a NGO. Also, the puppies born in the kennels come from a non-healthy environment, which turns them into unbalanced animals, tending to have difficulty to be trained. This is like a “behavior disease” and also leads people to abandon their animals. The result of this is the increase of animal population on the streets, which leads to more disease propagation and car accidents, not to mention the suffering they go through when there is no food, water, and the weather is too hot or too cold. Another problem is that those rejected animals are generally abandoned before they are castrated. The result is that the males get into

fighths because of a female in heat, and since they do not have veterinary care, they stay injured, not to mention the puppies that will be born on the streets. So, to abandon your animal is equivalent to let them die slowly.

Taking everything in consideration, we can conclude that people should stop buying animals from kennels. The reasons are that the animals are mistreated just to make money for the owners, which is against federal law and animal rights, living their miserable lives just to reproduce, and breeding puppies with the same genetic diseases that spread through the breed. Also, there is the problem of increase of animal population on the streets, causing further spread of disease, accidents, and trouble for both animals and people. It is about time to make the population aware of all of this, to spread the idea that adoption is the best way to choose your pet. Nowadays, with the popularization of virtual social networks, it became much easier to propagate this campaign in favor of adoptable animals and to denounce every act that violates animal welfare. It is very easy to feel sorry for an injured dog living on the streets and do nothing. Acting is what can really change things, and every act we take has to take another life into consideration.

APPENDIX F6: Student 6

The Roots of Women's Subordination: How to Cut Them

This is the 21st century and there have been many changes concerning how women are seen and treated by society. However, while progress has been made, real change in the quality of women's lives - the achievement of social, economic and political equality and basic human rights for women- is still very remote this would make a very good thesis statement for an argumentative essay and it is controversial, since many people would say otherwise. Issues such as poverty, violence, religion beliefs, local conventions, and intractable social attitudes are still responsible for categorizing women as less important, subservient, and as inferior to men. Women's roles in society could be of much more importance if it were not for the subordination rooted in social oppression, antiquated beliefs and distorted information. In these modern days, both sexes need to understand where this subjugating behavior originates from, how to better confront it and, eventually, change it.

Women have been oppressed and repressed for so long that in most countries they still have to go through many hardships to ascend to a different social position than the one originally reserved for or even expected from them. Uchem (2001) argues that women form one-half of the world's population, do three-fourths of the world's work, receive one-tenth of the world's salary, and own one-hundredth of the world's land. The United Nations Statistical Department (2000) claims that two-thirds of illiterate adults are women. In addition to that, over three fourths of starving people are women and their dependent children.

But why is it so difficult for women to receive the same respect and chances in life that men do? Rosaldo (1974) claimed that "The biological role of women in reproduction and the socially and culturally defined role as mothers, bearers and nurturers of children provided the basis for their subordination". That is to say, women's role as child bearers makes them 'nature creators', while men are more associated with producing culture. Ortner (1974) agrees that the subordination originates through the "intertwining of ideas about the physiological nature, ascribed social roles and psychic structure". Many religions may oppose to change by using these antique beliefs as acceptable arguments when it comes to women's inferior treatment in certain countries where politics, religion and marriage are closely intertwined.

Muslims and Mormons, for example, work very hard in keeping women disempowered, controllable and incredibly dependent on men. Catholics and Jews have improved somehow through the years, although they continue to prohibit women to be part of religious roles allowed only to men. In general, religious laws treat women differently, in various circumstances. And said laws are usually much more severe to women than they are to males.

However, in spite of religion being a very strong influencing power, these kind of antiquated beliefs need to be revised and altered. Times have changed and so have women. They are just as capable of producing culture as men are. There is no place for pre-arranged social roles anymore. It should be about earning your place, and not being designated one simply because of gender.

Furthermore, violence walks hand-in-hand with social oppression and antiquated beliefs. It emerges from those beliefs and works as a potent enforcer to this kind of subjugation. Girls and women worldwide, across lines of income, class and culture, are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Research made by the United Nations (2000) shows that, around the world, at least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or abused in some other way - most often by someone she knows, including her husband or another male family member. Studies by UNICEF (2000) made in Costa Rica and the Philippines have indicated that 33% and 49% respectively of battered women are beaten by their partner during pregnancy, and that in India, 6,000 women are killed each year because their in-laws consider their dowry inadequate. Every continent has its share of the crimes against women and "[...] many cultures condone or at least tolerate a certain amount of violence against women" (UNITED NATIONS, 2000c). This must be stopped. Violence is never acceptable, even less when its purpose is to subdue women.

Feminist researcher Ranjini Rebera (1996) writes about patriarchy and women's collective power to challenge it when they understand the structural basis of its oppression, which, as she attests, entangles them. If women do not start to stand up for themselves, stop accepting this abuse and disrespect and start showing how strong and capable they really are while demanding their rights to be treated as equals, nothing will ever change. The abusers will continue to abuse, and think it is correct to do so, the abused will continue to pretend the abuse is not happening or that they, in fact, deserved and/or asked for it somehow, and, worst of all, the acquiescing masses will continue to ignore it all. There are so many people who are aware of the horrible

things that are happening and still turn a blind eye to it, doing nothing to change it, stop it or try to prevent it. It's time for our fellow humans to start showing some of their so-called humanity and try to make a difference.

Women's sexuality is yet another excuse for this general subjugation. Most societies still consider sexuality and women as synonymous. Sexuality is still linked to temptation and sin, and female sexuality has always been seen as the property of men. A woman has no right to enjoy her sexuality; it is something she has to offer to the man. With this kind of imagery embedded in our psyche, it is not difficult to see how and why women become easy victims of prostitution. It is often the only way they can earn a living. When society closes the door to economic survival in the workforce, then a woman's body and her sexuality become the only tools of trade left, explains Rebera (1996, p. 107).

To this day, in many countries the vast majority of women still spend their lives dependent on men for survival. First they depend on their fathers and brothers, later on their husbands, and, finally, on their sons or sons-in-law. Such dependence affects every facet of a woman's life, from a childhood in which she may receive less food, care and education than her male siblings, to an adulthood in which she can neither choose her own husband nor the number of children she will bear. Poverty and intractable social attitudes underlie most women's dependence on men and impels them into situations that they might otherwise reject. Additionally, the opposition of the Catholic Church to the liberalization of women's roles continues to place serious obstacles in the path of efforts to reduce the effects of machismo. In a country where 90 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, the Church wields enormous power and influence both on the government and the people. Playing the nationalist card, it claims that campaigns promoting women's rights reflect subversive political interests.

It is possible to conclude, then, that women's subjugation is rooted in social oppression, antiquated beliefs, physical, sexual and psychological abuse, women's sexuality and their dependence on men for survival. All of those aspects, along with many others, serve to impede the progress of women's empowerment and their deserved acknowledgement as worthy and capable citizens. In order for these thick and stubbornly strong roots to be cut, there are some very simple steps that could be taken, such as the designation of a non-machista educational curriculum to teach and "humanize men" from an early age, and government-sponsored "sensitivity" seminars for adult males. A

good example of progress in this matter is the creation of special tribunals where domestic violence cases can be heard and special laws made to protect women and children.

We need humans to translate into practice what they say in theory about the equal human dignity of women and men, putting an end to women's subjugation. For instance, if we agree in principle that women are human, then women should not be restricted in roles in the family and community. Roles should be assigned or regulated according to individual giftedness of women and men and not according to sex, and respect and equality distributed to all, regardless of sex or social position.

APPENDIX F7: Student 7

Benevolent sexism and its effects on our current society

Have you ever wondered if all the rights that women have conquered in the past decades have really given them the freedom they desired? Many basic privileges, as the right to vote or simply wear pants came only in the last century, and after many struggles. Step by step, women have achieved an independency that was long dreamed of. However, we still live in a society where machismo is spread daily, most of the time in subtle ways. Even though women have already come a long way, there is still a long road to cross.

Nowadays, benevolent sexism is still one of the strongest forms of sexism, as it happens subconsciously. It is impregnated in our society, our customs and even our education. It can be defined as the attitudes taken towards women that might look romantic or even polite, but that actually treat them as weaker beings in need of a men's protection, such as when women still wait for men to pay for dinner, open a door for her or give her flowers. These might even be seen as romantic gestures, but are actually demonstrations of power and submission. Sexism in general still remains strong, also. Benevolent sexism and sexism itself are the causes for most of the issues women still have to face, as the obstacles they might find in their professional careers, the judgments they may suffer, the need to be always beautiful, in fashion and to always have their body in a perfect shape. Even the frustration many women face in their love and sexual lives can be blamed on sexism.

Women themselves want men to be romantic, and even expect it. It may be seen as "chivalry" and customary. So, it is expected that men make the first move. Why? Because, if a woman takes this place, she will most likely be seen as "easy" and not worth a serious relationship. Women are expected to be ladylike and take care of themselves and their esthetic no matter what they do, which also implies that women should always be feminine, perfect, "fragile". And, as there are several differences between sexes, they could never have the same place as men in our society. Sometimes, they are not even expected to follow specific careers because they are "more suited for men", just as some jobs are already considered women-exclusive, as babysitting, house-cleaning or being a secretary. These arguments are sometimes already implied during growth, even if not downright explicit, but in our rational thoughts. However, the situation does not have to be so strict.

First of all, countless women still oppress themselves when it comes to their love life, which might lead to a terribly frustrated life in that matter. This happens most of all because women are seen as “sluts” if they have too many partners throughout their lives, or sometimes simply if they try to approach someone first. Women are expected to only date if they are in love, while men are expected to have as many women as possible during their lives. Most of the time, the judgment comes from other women themselves. That is to say: women want men to be romantic and protective, which leads to a form of benevolent sexism. Also, it is not uncommon to see a woman stuck in a dead relationship for fear of being alone, or dying alone, unprotected. What happens is that women often end up unhappy or frustrated because of their fear of loneliness or other people’s judgments and expectations.

Besides that, women have to always pay attention to their body and physical appearance, as well as the clothes they wear. Society not only expects women to be beautiful, but they also have to be in shape and follow the newest fashion. Women are judged if they do not fit in the feminine, fragile stereotype, sometimes even seen as “manly”. Or, depending on their clothing style, they might also be seen as “whores” and, again, this judgment often comes from other women themselves. So women become gradually forced to be in shape and have a kind of beauty and style that might not be what they would pursue otherwise.

Finally, sexism is still strongly present in women’s jobs and careers. There are also jobs seen as more fitting for women for their stereotyped abilities, as babysitting, because women (and only women) should know how to take care of children. Saying a job is fitting for some of their abilities might sound better than saying women lack the ability to take other jobs, but is still another form of benevolent sexism and condescension, just as when married women who work or study tend to say that they are able to do everything they have to because their partners help them with the domestic chores, as if it was a woman’s obligation, or something that men were not supposed to, or expected to be doing. Women should not let these statements affect them as they choose a job or a career, just as it is unfair to give them a lower salary than a man in the same position would receive, which unfortunately is not that rare to occur.

So, in conclusion, due to the strength sexism still has in our society, women find many obstacles in their love/sexual, their physical appearance and even in their professional careers. Benevolent sexism and sexism itself are issues that women themselves have to start fighting instead of subconsciously accepting, because, as ironic as it may seem,

sometimes women are the ones to spread it the most. The difference between sexes exists, both physically and psychologically, but it does not mean one is better than the other; it simply implies they are different. The hugest difference is still in our minds, and this fight still has not come to an end.

APPENDIX F8: Student 8

Is It Protection?

Are parents bringing benefit to their children when they act overprotectively or are they harming them, instead? Due to the increase in violence, parents' protection instincts have been much more active. However, these instincts – when expressed in an exaggerated manner - could be harmful for children's growth, as some research studies made in this field have pointed out, such as a recent research carried out by members of the National Association of School Psychologists, which proves that children who are victims of bullying usually have overprotective parents (Cohn & Canter, 2003). The consequences on the child's future may be dire for his or her life. This type of parents' behavior would cause serious troubles, such as development of low self-esteem; privation of the child's choices; likewise, isolation from the society; and lastly - as some research studies which will be shown later on have shown - such personality traits will linger even after his/her adult life.

In the current days life is getting more dangerous; people around the world try to achieve success by stepping on others, television transmits negative messages every single day, and robberies occur frequently. Murders, drugs, bad companies and so forth are situations which concern people in general. Therefore, since violence has increased at high rates, parents feel they could protect their children more in order to prevent them from harmful situations.

Certainly, parents only desire the best to their offspring and want to protect them from the stark reality. However, there is a thin line that differentiates protection and overprotection. The person who raises a child must know the limit between these two sides and thus, learn how to lead them into adulthood with protective feelings, but at the same time being capable of making their child a responsible and mature adult.

Firstly, considering that parents hold a great amount of influence in children's personality, they may also influence the development of their self-esteem, which means that there is a relationship between self-esteem and protection. Self-esteem is defined in a research about the relationship between self-esteem and parenting style "as the extent to which an individual believes him or herself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy" (Coopersmith, 1981 as cited in Herz & Gullone, 1999). Although parents want to protect their children, they do not comprehend the limit of their influence and might end up overprotecting

them, intentionally or unintentionally intervening in a situation that children should face by themselves, such as doing homework, making decisions, choosing friend and so forth, leading to a lack of development of self-esteem, since it is improved through dealing with problems on their own.

Furthermore, choices play an important role in life. Children are in the adequate stage of their lives to explore themselves, to experience the world around them with their own feet, and to realize what they are able or not to face by themselves. Moreover, making decisions is a factor that fosters one's sense of responsibility; hence, if this power is hampered, the children would not have a proper social, physical and emotional development. Jane Brown, a mother who wrote an essay against overprotective parents, published in a newspaper called *The Daily News*, mentions in a certain moment that:

Nothing could be clearer to me than the belief that, by wrapping our young children in cotton wool, we are depriving them of the skills required to solve the problems which they will confront in the future. They cannot possibly learn how to deal with challenging situations in adulthood if they never have to face a problem in youth. (Brown, 2008)

This wise sentence caught the main point of making decisions, which is knowing how to deal with problems later on.

Equally important is the contact with society, a process in which a child would develop his/her abilities to interact with people and to learn how to live and work in groups. He/she would comprehend the world in a better manner and how to deal with different cultures, habits, and thoughts. It also makes him/her build friendship bonds, understand its importance in his/her life, and parenthetically be independent and form authentic personality and ideas. Besides, Jane Brown pointed out an important consequence for children's lives when parents isolate them to make sure nothing dangerous would happen to them. Bearing her opinion, Brown came up with a research made by Children's Society in Britain which claims that "children who are isolated from peers are at the greater risk of becoming depressed, overaggressive, antisocial and delinquent."

The overprotectiveness case gets worse when it is noticed that the behavior remains in the teenage and adult years. A research with 300

freshman students in college, made by Neil Montgomery, a psychologist at Keene State College in New Hampshire, USA, in 2010, discovered that about 30 of them had helicopter parents. The outcomes of this study showed that students who had helicopter parents demonstrated to be more dependent, neurotic, vulnerable, self-consciously anxious and less open to new ideas, whereas the students who were given responsibility in their childhood, called by the author as “free-rangers”, revealed exactly the opposite behavior. The researcher commented that it was based on college students because this is the ‘crisis point’ time between childhood and helicopter parents.

To sum up, due to the increase of danger around the world, parents tend to be more protective, sometimes crossing the limit line and ending up stifling their children. Children must learn how to manage difficult situations from an early age, since that is the only way to create awareness of what society and the world are, and how a person could act independently, making his/her own decisions and respecting others’ lives by interacting with them. Moreover, decisions have to be made by themselves. Parents must raise their children giving them the opportunity to choose, to play, to make friends and to experience life - in other words, they should raise their children more freely. The more parents are protective, the more children are raised unprotected. Besides that, people must make mistakes to learn the right side, way and alternative to follow, otherwise they will never be able to cope with the actual challenges that life presents them with.

APPENDIX F9: Student 9

The misconceptions of a perfect body

When you hear the words “exercise” and “diet”, what image comes to your mind? Is it an image of a “pumped-up” body with perfect curves and muscles, with no cellulite, stretch marks or extra fat? Well, if it is, that means you are just one more person following the standards imposed by the media. What people do not know is that, in order to achieve such image, there is a lot more than just exercise and dieting, and that does not necessarily mean that these people are healthy. During a research²³ with students from UFSC, it was verified that 68,4% of them were sedentary. Among these students, 76,5% were female. Researchers suggested that the status of the body weight seems to be a factor that could affect the desire and the motivation for the engagement in a physical activity, once the underweight students as well as the overweight ones showed a tendency for sedentary behaviors. These surveys may imply that there is a misunderstanding when it comes to a healthy lifestyle, since a guilty feeling can probably be more harmful than the lack of exercise, there is not an ideal diet or perfect food, there are many genetic factors that can increase the chances of many diseases, and still, health recommendations cannot be truly valid for everyone, they will depend on each person’s case.

Are only people with the average weight considered to be healthy and “allowed” to practice sports? And the most important: is there such a thing as the correct weight? With the purpose of achieving unattainable aesthetic perfection, people have been going through major plastic surgeries and have been taking steroids and dieting pills in an indiscriminately manner. Not to mention the fact that most pictures provided by the media are often “corrected” with the help of digital retouching, most known as Photoshop. Along with this, a lot of young people have been developing eating and body disorders, such as anorexia, bulimia and the most recent ones: orthorexia²⁴ and bigorexia²⁵.

²³ Cad. Saúde Pública vol.25 no.10 Rio de Janeiro Oct. 2009 – Article titled *Association between stages of behavior change related to physical activity and nutritional status in university students* by the authors Alberto Saturno Madureira; Herton Xavier Corseuil; Andreia Pelegrini; Edio Luiz Petroski.

²⁴ Also known as orthorexia nervosa is a term coined by Steven Bratman, a Colorado MD, to denote an eating disorder characterized by excessive focus

People tend to think that being thin is the only way to be truly happy and that eating should be related with sacrifice and not with pleasure. Together with this, it comes the myth that exercise and healthy eating can free you from certain diseases and that all the health rules fit to every single person. In attempt to deconstruct the misconceptions of health, three authors, Susan Love, Alice Domar and Leigh Ann Hirschman from the Harvard University, have just published the book *Live a Little: Breaking the Rules Won't Break Your Health*. They suggest that people have the wrong idea of exercise, dieting and health, especially women.

Society imposes this idea that if you do not exercise every single day you will probably drop dead of cancer or will languish of depression, thus generating a guilty feeling that can probably be more harmful than the lack of exercise. It is true though that exercise is very good for staying healthy, as stated by Love, Domar and Hirschman (2009, p. 11). However, people tend to exercise for the wrong purposes, usually to lose weight or to get firm muscles. It is known for a fact that exercising alone will not raise your life expectancy and it does not replace medication and other good habits. Exercising should be just one more way of keeping your mind healthy and the consequences of it are going to appear in a long-term run. Tension is released, mood swings decrease and sleeping becomes easier. Losing weight will also come as a consequence and should be associated with a healthy diet.

The dictionary definition for the verb *diet* is "To eat and drink according to a regulated system, especially so as to lose weight or control a medical condition"²⁶. According to this statement, it is possible to observe that it is practically common sense that people only eat healthily to lose weight and that it should be regulated, controlled, therefore, it should be a sacrifice. But Love, Domar and Hirschman (2009) say the contrary: although it is good to eat healthy food on a daily basis, it is fine to eat greasy food or sweets at some times. This is

on eating healthy foods. In rare cases, this focus may turn into a fixation so extreme that it can lead to severe malnutrition or even death. (Wikipedia).

²⁵ Muscle dysmorphia or bigorexia is a disorder in which a person becomes obsessed with the idea that he or she is not muscular enough. Those who suffer from muscle dysmorphia tend to hold delusions that they are "skinny" or "too small" but are often above average in musculature. Sometimes referred to as *bigorexia*, *reverse anorexia nervosa*, or the *Adonis Complex*, muscle dysmorphia is a very specific type of body dysmorphic disorder. (Wikipedia).

²⁶ Definition by www.thefreedictionary.com.

not going to drop levels of nutrition and it will not keep you away from being a healthy person. Furthermore, there is not an ideal diet or perfect food, people should balance their diets and try to eat according to their own lifestyle. In the same way, if you are going to believe and follow every nutrition research you will probably end up eating a lot during the day or will not eat at all.

It is intrinsic in our culture this idea that if you eat and exercise properly you will practically “live forever”. What they do not take into consideration is that there are many genetic factors that can increase the chances of you dying from a heart disease or a stroke. People should follow a lifestyle that can be enjoyable, in which your habits contribute to a better quality of living and do not make you an obsessive person. Finally the authors (Love, Domar and Hirshman, 2009) propose a health measure program named Pretty Healthy Zone. They suggest that health behaviors can be classified and put into a sort of curve graphic: “in between the extreme ends of the U-shaped curve is a very large area. We call this area the Pretty Healthy Zone, (...), because the behaviors here all seem to be conducive to a Pretty Healthy life” (p. 15). There are PH Zones not just for exercise and nutrition, but also to measure stress management, health screenings and healthy relationships.

We have been following certain health recommendations for ages, believing that they will bring us the perfect body and health, but it turns out that each person’s body work in a different way. Love, Domar and Hirschman (2009) affirm that “what we do know is that the health rules can mislead you into halfway believing that if you eat only the right things, or exercise in the proper way, you can escape not just run-off-the-mill illnesses but death itself” (p. 5). For a final analysis, looking into a few researches on the AHRQ (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality) website, it is possible to see that the agency does not agree with or support some of the surveys. Together with the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), they grade the recommendations according to one of five classifications (A, B, C, D and I), reflecting the strength of evidence and magnitude of net benefit (benefits minus harms). Taking as an example a survey entitled *Behavioral Counseling in Primary Care to Promote Physical Activity*, it is observed that the rating for this research is I, followed by the statement: “The USPSTF concludes that the evidence is insufficient to recommend for or against behavioral counseling in primary care settings to promote physical activity”. So, if the organizations do not state their position for or against the recommendations in a scientific research, why should we?

In summary, there are a few misunderstandings when talking about health. The authors from the book *Live a Little: Breaking the Rules Won't Break Your Health* suggest that society shares an erroneous idea of exercise, dieting and health, especially women, since a guilty feeling for not being thin can be more harmful than the lack of exercise, there is not such thing as the ideal diet or perfect food, there are many genetic factors beyond our control that can increase the chances of many diseases, and yet, health recommendations cannot be true for every person, they will depend on each one's case. People are not supposed to behave in extreme ways, but to make fair judgments of how their own body responds to external factors. As long as your health habits enable you to enjoy life more — and do not make you miserable in the process — then you are doing okay.

APPENDIX F10: Student 10

The Musicians Flaw

Just like many other areas in society, musicians usually produce, interact with the public and expose their works expecting a financial reward in order to maintain themselves. What happens is that a few of them are really publicly known, and the biggest part – the ones who are not famous – produce for free. It seems alright as art has hardly been made focusing mostly on a financial reward. But there is an arbitrarily process happening in society which has been exploring these “street” artists, in an unfair scheme. Producers usually get rights to produce concerts and festivals funded by the government and big companies, and musicians, who are the main object of these festivals do not earn anything on playing on them, usually with the excuse of showing their work to the public. But where does all that funding goes to? Producers and infra-structure staff are earning all the money which is supposed to promote culture and art.

It is publicly known that to promote a product, either artistic or commercial to the masses, it is important to use mass media. As redundant as this sentence might be, it is also known that big recording industries pay for radio stations to play the artists who have contracts signed with them. Internet has been changing this, but when absorbed by the mass media through the internet, an artist signs a contract straight away. Of course, as there is a lot more people focusing on their work, these artists will have a much bigger infra-structure. Although this is an unquestionable market phenomenon, not all artists need to compose pieces for mass consumption, and this diversity should be stimulated by the social apparatus that leads society to its evolution – the government.

Indeed, the government in Brazil applies funding in culture, usually by the Cultural Ministry (Ministério da Cultura), making use of legal tools like the Rouanet law, and even Petrobras (a state company with private funding that works with oil extraction in Brazil) and other companies who open space in their social development departments to fund some artistic events. This, of course, funded by tax return. As we take a look specifically in the Rouanet law, its purpose is to fund who does not have financial condition to produce their shows, concerts, plays, and so on. How then, an artist who has a contract with Sony (one of the biggest recording companies) gets R\$ 778,000,00 in funds for a tour of her second album? That is the case of Mallu Magalhães, a young

generation artist already embraced by the public and private interest of recording companies.

As a counterpoint, the musician João Parahyba has recently sent to an internet discussion group about professional music in Brazil an e-mail complaining that musicians do not have a stipulated *cache* in such projects as the ones approved on the Culture Ministry and Funarte (translation: art foundation). These are the people who live to maintain Brazilian music, and they do not get even close to make a fair living out of it, complains the musician. As another example, the Rock-Cordel festival in Fortaleza has been subject to an organized protest of musicians who were playing in the edition of 2009. It is said, in the content of the protest that musicians were not earning anything to play there, and cover the expenses they were getting approximately R\$250,00, far away from the R\$500,00 to R\$1000,00 on other festivals. In a calculator, even the R\$1000,00 *cache* is irrelevant to cover the expenses, if one thinks about the time of preparation for a concert in rehearsals and material expenses such as instruments, strings, parts, energy and so on. Just to mention, these festivals are subject to several funding sources, from municipal to state and federal governments to private investors.

When comparing funding provided to the cases in the last two paragraphs it seems easy to demonstrate how our public culture is under stimulated. A thousand reais make a hard living for anyone in Brazil, as it is about 2 minimum wages. A family can hardly be supported with that much money without cutting budget and going through financial difficulty. This is how we value our culture and it does not happen only in the artistic side. As cited in MST's website, professor Sérgio Sauer from the Federal University of Brasilia says that the biggest government funding and credit offer for agribusiness is for multi corporations, depriving familiar agriculture in order to invest in foreign companies. This parallel shows extremely well what socially happens in Brazil. To finish, I'll quote Titãs music: "A gente não quer só comida, a gente quer comida, educação e arte" which means: we do not want food only, we want food, education and art. Sometimes even food is hard to put on the table.

Until we have a government, that ignores the needs of groups of listeners and musicians we will continue with this same old canned musical productions that keep the majority of the population drowned in cultural poverty, also, will hinder the creations of many great artists yet to emerge from an unknown status and, sometimes, starvation.

APPENDIX F11: Student 11

Equality in the right for adoption; a right to every child.

It is a fact that, even nowadays, too many children are under government care waiting to be adopted. Adoption is a very important matter that has been dealt by justice for many decades now. The evolution in adoption laws is visible and quite remarkable; however, the number of children in adoption houses and foster care is still too high. This problem, even though very hard to annihilate for good, could have the help of justice by letting homosexual couples adopt. This should have already been accepted, considering that this matter is in the news, but homosexual adoption still faces resistance, due to the myths that the child will automatically be a homosexual from being raised by one, that it ruins the image of the family, and that homosexuals are not fit to fulfill this task because it is not natural for them to do so.

Although we have entered the 21st century, many people still see homosexuals with prejudice eyes. This influences on the choices made by the ones in charge when thinking about homosexuals rights to marry and have a family. Many professionals, even politicians, have studied and published that being homosexual is not a problem or a disease, like some people still, in 2010, think it is. It is necessary to leave aside the prejudice visible when talking about this adoption matter. The well being and opportunity for every child, from 0 to 18 years old, to have a family, should be the most important aspect to be considered when making such decisions.

One of the main issues is the myth that the child when adopted by a homosexual couple will necessarily become one as well. When asked to writer and researcher Dr. Abbie Goldberg:if children raised in gay and lesbian families are more likely to be gay she replies

People always want to know if children are more likely to be gay, and of course there is really no evidence children are more likely to be gay if they are raised by gay and lesbian parents. But I have to give the caveat, so what if they were. There's nothing wrong with being gay, so why do we care? I don't think that's an appropriate index of whether kids are doing okay. I argue diligently that we need to remove that as an indicator of mental health.

We perhaps should pay attention to the researches that have been done and focus on whether it would be a good thing for both the couples and the children. Is not having a family one of the greatest joys of life? Every single one of us should have the delight of this joy, even those considered by few to be living an unnatural life.

The ruin of the image of the family is also a major concern when talking about homosexual adoption. Although “according to the *American Psychological Association Policy Statement on Sexual Orientation, Parents, & Children*, "there is no reliable evidence that homosexual orientation per se impairs psychological functioning. Second, beliefs that lesbian and gay adults are not fit parents have no empirical foundation." (JOHNSON), many people still think homosexual families are not fit for the task. When doing a profound research on this matter, we could gather examples and theories, in favor of homosexual families, coming from diverse directions such as religion, social studies, common belief, and gender studies. But what should be taken into consideration is that according to “*The Sydney Morning Herald*, only 50,000 of the 120,000 children available for adoption in recent years have found homes yet groups against gay adoption seek to reduce the number of available homes based on false perception and unfounded evidence about gay parents”. (JOHNSON) These children need homes and families; we should leave the prejudice out and give them their right to have a family.

The matter of not being good for children to be raised by homosexuals is still widely believed, for instance, Henry Makow Ph.D. says that “it is wrong to place heterosexual children with homosexual parents”. In his article entitled *Homosexual Adoption is Child Abuse*, Makow repeatedly claims that letting homosexuals adopt heterosexual children can only be harmful for them. The problem is not that the parents are homosexual, since that even among heterosexual couples you never really know what to expect from them. If the parents are abusive is independent of their gender and sexual orientation, and most the examples given by Makow are from extreme cases. But I wonder what sort of cases could we gather when doing a similar research in heterosexual adoption? Is it really that different? When digging couldn't we also find abusive adoptive heterosexual parents?

It is quite clear that the main problem continues to be whether or not homosexuality is good and correct; but what about the children. Don't they deserve to have a family? The possibility is eminent and homosexual adoption has already been accepted in many places. These

children will be more likely to understand diversity and embrace it as being a positive aspect of the human being.

When talking about adoption, whether the couple is homosexual or not, should not be the main issue but yes, whether they will love and cherish that child. A lot of people are still blinded by this common, most of the time religious, absurdity, that homosexuals are not worthy of this task, of having a family, raising a child. Everyone should have the right to be happy, should have the right to feel loved, and should have the right to make decisions that are good for all the ones involved. Equality in adoption is a right to every child. I for once, would allow my children to be raised by homosexuals, because in the end, all that really matters, or at least all that should matter, is how happy and loved the child will be.

APPENDIX F12: Student 12

Passives no more

Smokers can not smoke in closed environments anymore. A new law was approved in Brazil where smokers are not allowed to smoke inside public places such as restaurants, pubs, museums, and hotels. With this law, establishments will be responsible to signal to their customers that smoking is forbidden in that place; otherwise, they can be charged if they allow their clients to do it. From now on, non-smokers can go to restaurants without having to bother with cigarettes smoke coming from the table on the other side of the place. So, to stop all this cigarette harassment, this law was approved. It will benefit the entire society, turning public places into healthier places for families to stay some time together. This law is one of the best ones already made. Because cigarettes have bad effects not only to smokers, but also to people that breathe its smoke, known as passive smokers. Stopping this villain to be consumed everywhere, the consuming of cigarettes will start to reduce at all, and this will only bring benefits for everyone; because a reduction of death by cancer for smokers will occur, it will also help mothers to have healthier kids, people will not have to endure smelly smokers, and will prevent passive smokers to die because of other people's vice.

Many people think that cigarettes are good to their health, and others say that smoking brings no harm to their health. Because they have been smoking for more than 30 years and nothing has happened to them. Others will say that it is great to socialize with people, as people get together to smoke. But it is only illusion, even if a person smokes only one cigarette per day, some harm to his/her body will be brought, maybe not in weeks or months, but certainly in years this person will meet the consequences.

Smoking kills people. Smoking is the first major cause of avoidable deaths worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that tobacco caused 5.4 million deaths in 2004 and 100 million deaths over the course of the 20th century. The excess of tobacco, substance present on cigarette, can cause many kinds of diseases to smokers. The major disease caused by cigars is cancer, and the most common of them are lung cancer, cancer of kidney, cancer of larynx, and breast cancer. Together with cancer, cardiovascular diseases can be developed, and also asthma, and impotence. To get things even worse, cigarettes contain a substance called nicotine that causes dependence.

Because of this substance, smokers do not stand staying too much time without smoking a cigar, especially when they are under stress. The act of quitting smoking becomes something really difficult to smokers, as the dependence is something really hard to control. With the approval of this new law, many smokers have the opportunity to give the first step of quitting smoking. From now on, in many places where people go to have fun, they will have to let their cigarettes outdoors. This way, smokers will discover that they can have fun without a foggy room.

Besides all the effects before mentioned, there are also the effects of smoking in pregnant women, which are even worse. Pregnant women who smoke have a high probability to lose their children, before and after birth. Cigarettes are so bad to the fetus's organism that it can kill them even before their birth, and if they can birth, they may have some sequels of it. A research conducted by INCA (Instituto Nacional do Cancer) says that kids exposed to cigarette smoke can develop cardiovascular diseases and asthma when they get to adulthood. It also shows that children from mothers that smoked during their pregnancy can be born underweight, and they have 70% of chances of suffering a miscarriage. In addition, if a baby is strong enough to survive all of this harassment, s/he may be born with some sequels. Surgeons from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) found out that children of smoker pregnant women have a great probability to be borne with "excess, webbed or missing fingers and toes". This kind of deficiency could be avoided just by not smoking. This law can help these mothers to get conscious of their acts. If they knew that all of this could happen to their children, they would probably adopt this law not only to public places, but also to their homes.

Furthermore, together with all of this problems caused by smoking, another issue that many smokers seem to ignore is that people who smoke get a terrible smell attached to them. This happens because smokers are used to cigarette smell, and they do not notice that they are stinking. It also happens because cigarettes gradually reduce smoker's olfactory system. Together with the loss of smelling senses, the smoke of cigarettes gets attached to smoker's skin, teeth, and hair, leaving them with a yellow appearance. When non-smokers get close to smokers the first thing that signals that they are smokers is the smell. With this new law, non-smokers will not have to eat in restaurants with that unpleasant smell anymore. And maybe smokers will reduce their amount of smoked cigarettes and will start sensing food taste again.

Moreover, cigarettes do not bring only problems to the smoker, it also harms the non-smokers. The law prohibiting smoking inside public

places was specially created to protect non-smokers, as they are the most damaged ones from this activity, inhaling only cigarettes leftovers. Despite what people say that smoking is a way to socialize, everyone that is in contact with the smoke has great chances of developing some diseases. Among this people, the ones that suffer the most are workers, such as: waiters/waitresses, bartenders, security people, and many others ones. According to INCA, the cigarette leftovers aspirated by passive smokers have eight times more carbon monoxide, three times more nicotine, and even fifty times more substances that can cause cancer than the smoke aspirated by first smokers. Together with this alarming information, the research conducted by Inca also shows that passive smokers have 23% more chances to develop a cardiovascular disease and 30% more chances to develop lung cancer. Now thanks to this law, those workers before mentioned can work better without having to get intoxicated every day from other people's cigarettes.

In conclusion, this new law came to help non-smokers and sometimes smokers to get rid of all the consequences cigarettes can bring to them, such as death by cancer, birth problems caused by smoking during pregnancy, the terrible smell of cigarettes itself, and last but not the least, diseases causes by passive smoking. One of the main objectives of this law was to protect passive smokers from the damaged caused by cigarettes leftovers. With this prohibition, public places became better places to stay with family, as the air you breathe there became much cleaner. In addition, adolescents are less exposed to cigarettes diminishing the chances for them to become new addicts. With this in mind, it is expected that through the years, the consumption of cigarettes becomes lesser and lesser and the quality of life of all people improves.

APPENDIX F13: Student 13

The right to abortion

In our new society feminists have always said that women should have the right to control their bodies. In the past decades women have gained more space and became visible that they play an important role in the development of the new society. However, it is also known that they still do not have the same rights as men do. One of the rights that women have not accomplished yet is self-ownership and this would include the decision of having or not an abortion. In Brazil this topic seems to be more controversial than others, especially because here abortion is considered illegal and also because of the massive influence of the Catholic Church in our society. The Catholic Church until these days exerts a powerful influence regarding moral and ethic issues. Nevertheless, abortion should not be a subject to be dealt by religion; it is in fact a matter of personal decision. Every woman must have the freedom of choice to decide whether or not they want to have an abortion; this abortion should be legalized since it is not a murder, avoids deaths, unwanted children.

It is quite relevant that people must have a pro-life attitude and that abortion should not be taken as a contraceptive method. One of the strongest arguments against abortion is that it would be considered a murder of an innocent child and also the fact that if abortion were legal it would be used in an indiscriminate way. Another aspect is that most people in Brazil are Catholics, and the Catholic Church current position states that a person exists from the moment of conception and therefore any form of abortion is wrong.

Despite that, legalizing abortion is not committing murder but saving lives because it would force the creation of a law that would specify and regulate the exactly procedure and the maximum limit of time to conduct abortions. This means that abortion would only be allowed in the earlier stage of the pregnancy; the procedure would have to be conducted in a certified hospital and the method would be a combination of drugs, used in countries that already allowed abortion to unviable the pregnancy. Adopting these criteria to conduct abortions would eliminate the risk of unnecessary surgeries, would be less invasive for the woman avoiding physical trauma and, according to many scientific researches, these procedures conducted in the first stages of the pregnancy are not consider murder. The Canadian Medical Association's Committee on Ethics says:

An embryo or fetus is a living organism of the species *Homo sapiens*. But so is every human egg and sperm cell. There is a difference between being genetically “human” and being a person in the moral sense. According to the Canadian Medical Association’s Committee on Ethics, the possession of certain capacities has become widely accepted as necessary for a person to exist. Specifically, a nervous system capable of some level of self-awareness and conscious perception (“sapient cognitive awareness”). An embryo or fetus at the early stage at which abortions in Canada are customarily performed has no consciousness or self-awareness - its rudimentary body pre-dates a mind. According to the Canadian Medical Association’s Committee on Ethics, it has not yet met the criteria for personhood that must be met by all other human beings.

If abortion were not considered a crime women would not risk their own lives resorting to unsafe methods. More than 70 thousand women die every year victims of clandestine abortions. It is not acceptable to see women dying or been treated as criminals for not wanting a pregnancy that they did not wish for. Few women in Brazil have the financial condition to pay for abortion in clandestine clinics. Most of them have to resort to some kind of domestic method and the majority of these women end up been hospitalized or even dying of complications regarding dangerous methods used by them. The necessity for the discussion on this issue can be notice in the words of José Gomes Temporão:

[...] nearly 37% of pregnancies in Brazil end in abortions - amounting to 1.1 million abortions per year [...] Women who decide to terminate an abortion in Brazil still face enormous obstacles in securing safe treatment. The Brazilian minister of health, José Gomes Temporão, declared in April 2007 that illegal abortions are a "public-health problem", and observed that criminalization has done little to curtail its practice. There is also an enormous cost to public funds; a quarter of those

1.1 million abortions requires hospital stays due to the complications of clandestine abortions.

If abortion were legalized we would not deal with a large amount of unwanted children. The orphanages are crowded with abandoned children, most of them were born to spend their childhood in institutions and will not have the chance to create family bonds and have access to good education. The ones who do not end up in orphanages are condemned to suffer many forms of violence such as child's abuse and domestic violence. Some of them will choose to live on the streets and become addicted to drugs, committing crimes and probably having their lives taken in a young age. Researchers Marianne Bitler and Madeline Zavodny have concluded through previous studies that abortion legalization in the US led to a reduction in the number of "unwanted" children; such a reduction may have improved average infant health and children's living conditions.

The legalization of abortion would create more support and proper hospitals for women that want to have abortions. It would also end with the huge number of clandestine clinics and false doctors. In Brazil, every year, many women undergo clandestine abortion procedures risking their lives in the hands of unprepared doctors or dangerous homemade methods. Legal abortion would proportionate the foundation of an organization that could offer psychological support and qualified doctors for those who decided to have an abortion.

In sum, living in the 21st century it is not acceptable to notice that women are still dying for the simple fact that they do not want conceive a baby. Today fifty four countries or 61% of the world's population have legalized abortion while ninety seven countries or 39% of the world's population does not allow abortion. Most of the countries where abortion is legalized are developed countries. It is time for Brazil to abandon this old prejudice of punishing innocent women and make a great step towards human's rights and feminism's precepts. The feminist movement has led us to a whole new perspective of women's empowerment, but in countries such as Brazil there is still a lot to learn from

APPENDIX F14: Student 14

Euthanasia: a life's choice

Facing death is not easy. It is painful for everyone, especially when it comes to making a decision about one's own death. In the recent years, the discussion about euthanasia came to the surface. This subject is a taboo on nowadays' society, because the concept of euthanasia raises a lot of questions: how can someone decide about the end of somebody's life? How can someone ask to die? When is the right time? These questions lead people think that there should never exist the "right to die". However, on the ancient mankind, people who were suffering or would not be able to follow the rest of the group were left to die, or were killed. It was cruel, but a necessary thing to be done so that society could move on and grow. Today, people are much more attached to each other; it is not that simple to decide when someone should die and, with the advances of technology, there are many treatments and ways of cure. But, when someone is in pain because of a healthy problem or a severe condition, s/he thinks about dying. Then, euthanasia is considered as an option. Euthanasia (from the Greek: *eu-* well or good, and *thanatos*-death), according to *The House of Lords Select Committee on Medical Ethics*, is "a deliberate intervention undertaken with the express intention of ending a life, to relieve intractable suffering". With this in mind, some countries already legalized Euthanasia: Netherlands (since 2001) and Belgium (since 2002). Also three US states, which are: Oregon, Washington and Montana. When making the decision about legalizing euthanasia, one should think about cases of terminal illnesses, people who do not have brain activity because of an accident or stroke, and also because it is a way to shorten the suffering of the patient's loved ones. The right to die is a right like any other else and it should be legal.

It is important to say that this is not an easy subject. There are many arguments opposed to this. The strongest one says that when a person chooses to die, s/he is rejecting the value of a human life. There is also the question of choosing when a person who got involved in an accident, or had an illness is going to die. For example, there was the case of Sidney Cohen, an American who had cancer. The doctors gave him three months to live. He was in pain and asked for euthanasia; it was refused, because it was illegal. Surprisingly, eight months later he was still alive. The Cohen's case shows that doctors commit mistakes, and it is complicated to decide for euthanasia, because one is never sure if the person is going to have a "normal" life again.

On the other hand, the person can really have only few months to live. That is why euthanasia should be implemented. In cases which terminally ill patients have the wish of ending their lives legally this option should exist. They want to die with dignity and not to commit suicide. *The Voluntary Euthanasia Society*, a non-governmental institution from New Zealand, uses the law to defend euthanasia. It bases on the fact that refusing the request for death is a violation of the Human Rights Act, Article 3, which states that no one should be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment. This institution supports the ideal that an ill person should have the right to decide to die, and not to be a guinea pig of the medical technology for prolonging life (or the dying process). Since the medical technology has increasingly grown, there are many options of treatments to prolong the life of a person with a serious or a rare illness. Often, this process of “cure” is painful, because in many cases, the treatments are aggressive to the body, mainly for the use of some strong medicines. Also, people are starting to realize that many types of equipment used on the hospitals do not really prolong life; they just prolong the dying process, which means that the person will die; it will only take more time. For instance, Diane Pretty, a woman from the United Kingdom who suffered of motor neurone disease, had the right to die denied by the European Court of Human Rights. She argued that she wanted to have a quick death without suffering, at home surrounded by her family so that she could say good-bye to them. By having the request denied, her children and loved ones had to see her dying slowly and in pain.

In addition, when a person has no brain activity, the family has to choose for his/her life or death. This “non-voluntary euthanasia” is controversial, because it is not the patient’s decision. But still, it should be valid; a person in a vegetative state is not only affecting his/her life. For family and friends it is depressing to see the dearest one in a condition like that. Keeping the person alive gives false hopes that s/he will come back and continue to live normally. For example, there is the case of Terri Schiavo. In 1990, Terri suffered a cardio-respiratory arrest and was diagnosed with hypoxic encephalopathy, caused by lack of oxygen to the brain. Years later, with no hopes that Terri was going to have a normal life again, her husband made a judicial request for euthanasia. On March 31, 2005, Terri died by having the machines that kept her alive turned off. This was a relief for all her family and friends, who could not see her suffering anymore and could do nothing but ask the justice for Terri’s death.

Finally, euthanasia should be legalized because it is a way to shorten the suffering of the patient's loved ones. It is not only the patient's life quality that matters; the whole family and friends are affected by watching a person dying slowly. Everyday psychologists say that people should not live under stress and constant agony, but how can someone not live like that when there is a relative or a friend in a hospital without any chance to really live? On nowadays' society, people already live in constant stress, because of the traffic, work, studies and many other reasons. With a loved one suffering, the person will be much more affected by that. Psychologists, of course, help families with a relative in a severe condition, but they do not solve the problem. Because of that, euthanasia, if legalized, would be a way to minimize the suffering of the family, since they will know that the person is resting in peace.

In the final analysis, decide the end of one's life or death is the major responsibility one can have. All human beings can decide when to buy a house, when they want to have children, if they want to get married, and so many things that make part of life. So, why not decide when and how to stop living? When people face an illness or an accident, it is hard to accept death, mainly when it is a relative or a friend. But no one knows what the person is going through and family and friends are also affected by the condition of the loved one. It is selfish to want the person more time among the closest ones when, in fact, the person is, maybe, pretending to be happy to make other people happy. It is a hard decision, but it should be considered the life quality the person is having. No one conscious about life wants to die. But, an illness or an accident can happen. Then, how people can deal with it? Maybe euthanasia is the answer. People should be allowed to choose what life is and when and how they want to die.

APPENDIX F15: Student 15

Teaching of literature: classroom and life experience

The concept of literature is not only limited to the books found in libraries and bookstores, but also to the art of composing writings. If we consult any dictionary, there are several similar definitions for literature in them. Most people consider it a collection of classical works selected and used in schools and universities. This statement contains only a too small portion of truth, because academic life is just the beginning. Hence teachers should encourage their students to read and write quite a lot, and not ever underestimate any cultural sources.

This vague idea of literature has originated since the school times, when it was part of the teaching of mother tongue. And no wonder: our parents and teachers taught us this way, now saying that such reading was not advantageous, now recommending only “classics” from the shelves of libraries. Prohibiting or considering superfluous the reading of comics, for example, was the start of an incomplete definition of literature. Fortunately, the traditional education system is changing. Many modern scholars recognize that only through real situations of communication we can understand how a language works. Consequently, the literature is an indispensable tool for learning any language.

Unfortunately, in Brazil, the high price of books is one of the obstacles that prevents the habit of reading, and the development of the media, such as the Internet, could not solve this serious problem. Children need books since the beginning of their school life, because not always their parents read for them. Although thousands of digitized books are already available for free, most readers prefer to handle printed matters. We have also to consider that some poor people are not connected to the Internet.

The invention of writing, there is no doubt, was the greatest invention of mankind, for almost four millennia B.C. In the beginning, its purpose was only to record business data, but it did not take a long time so that great philosophers started to register the thoughts and feelings of human life. Using papyrus and parchment as writing materials, thousands of books were produced, and libraries, the center of knowledge of the ancient cities, were built to keep them. For centuries, the book – the firstborn of literature – was handwritten, until Johannes Gutenberg revolutionized the world with his printing press. However, the art of reading and writing were privilege of few people.

In conclusion, due to technological progress of our days, we can easily produce any text, and print thousands of copies in a few minutes. However, the pen and paper will never go away, nor the incomparable feeling of reading a handwritten letter by a friend or by someone we love. Unconsciously, we live literature daily: first, it arises in thought, and then expresses itself in the paper, and it is present in the love letter, in the leaflet of medicinal, in the academic task, in the manual appliance, in the sacred texts, in the lyrics, in the book of the college, in the delicious recipe of our grandmas... and in the story of our lives.

APPENDIX F16: Student 16

The case of racial quotas

Many Brazilians claim that we live in a “racial democracy”, where white, black and pardo people have the very same rights and opportunities. Is that so? Indeed, differently from the United States or South Africa, in Brazil there has never been an official “racial segregation”. Nevertheless, this differentiation between races, in a country where nearly half of the population is black or pardo, has always been implicit (when not explicit) in Brazilians’ acts and discourses. For instance, if we ask a white person if there is racial prejudice in the country we live in, he or she will probably answer that there is, but if we ask the same person if he or she is racist, the answer will be no. Nobody wants to be tagged as a racist, but our society keeps feeding this implicit prejudice. We can see it in the media or in school books. In the latter, the black population only appears when it comes to the history of Brazil Colony, with slavery; outside this period, it is simply not represented. In the former, black people are generally represented with submissive roles, leaving the white people as protagonists in soap operas, advertisements, and so on.

Indicators of the inequality between black and white people can be seen in public health, employment and education, especially in higher education. That is what is called structural or institutional racism. Here are some facts: regarding the access to public health, the Brazilian Social Atlas from 2004 shows that, in 1998, around 70% of black people got medical care in the two weeks preceding the survey, while among whites the percentage was 83.7%. Concerning the job market, according to another survey from DIEESE (Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Economic Studies), the unemployment rate among black people in Salvador city was 45% higher than among white people and in São Paulo city 41% higher. When it comes to education, the numbers are even worse. According to Martins (2004), in 2003, the illiteracy rate among blacks (16,9%) was more than two times the observed among whites (7,1%). In terms of years of study, whites have an average of eight year of study, which means complete basic education, while the blacks have an average of 6.3 years of study, that is, many of them do not even complete primary school. Finally in the university sphere, only 2,5% of the black population had higher education in 2001, a quarter of the observed among whites. The discrepancy of access between the two races is indubitable. In this context, the Affirmative Action through

racial quotas in universities came as an immediate attempt of extenuating this disparity. Though many people are against it, Affirmative Action through racial quotas in universities must be thought as a mechanism with positive effects on social and racial inclusion in society.

But what is Affirmative Action? It is a set of private actions or public policies that aims to repair discriminatory aspects that block the access of people from different social groups to manifold opportunities (IBASE, 2008). Quotas for women in public office or quotas for the physically handicapped in big companies are examples of Affirmative Action. Quotas for university access are, perhaps, the most controversial of them, especially when it comes to *racial* quotas. This policy was first implemented in the United States during the era of civil rights, in the mid-1960s, in a country where the exclusion of black people in society was – and still is – very strong. In Brazil, this policy began to take place in 2003, in the University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), and is already a reality in Brazilian higher education. According to IBASE (2008), in the same year of this publication, there were 54 universities applying the policy throughout the Brazilian territory.

Among the arguments against racial quotas, it is common to find these sayings: Affirmative action violates the principle of “equality for all” of the Brazilian Constitution of 1998; quota students suffer from prejudice and have more probability of failing in their studies, since they conquered their place in university by a “privilege” and not by true merit; this policy is useless, once it does not solve the problem of discrimination and social differences. In attempt to deconstruct these negative arguments, the following paragraphs will provide evidence in favor of a different and more conscious view on the subject, where the Affirmative Action can be understood, as said before, as a mechanism of social and racial inclusion in society.

First of all, Affirmative Action in general does not violate the principal of equality for all; on the contrary, it is an attempt to *ensure* this equality. The main objective of the Affirmative Action is to give a new meaning to the concept of “social justice”. People that are against quotas claim that every person must have the same chances to undertake the entrance examination and get into a university, regardless of his/her age, race, gender, origin, etc. Hence, within the universalism, the notion of “fair” is to treat all people uniformly. The problem lies, however, in the fact that universal treatment does not mean equal treatment. If citizens are unequal, the result is inequality. In everyday life, people with different resources, not only financial, end up having differential

access to rights and services. This way, treating a group that had fewer opportunities – and, thus, is disadvantaged - in a different manner is an attempt to reduce these inequalities. It is not a privilege (IBASE, 2008). Moreover, the principle of equality, established by the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 and stated in the art. 3, item III, holds that: “The fundamental objectives of the Federative Republic of Brazil consists of: III – Eradicating the poverty and marginalization and reducing the social and regional inequalities [my translation].” The quotas policy is, therefore, in accordance to the Constitution proposal of constructing a society of freedom, justice and solidarity (IBASE, 2008).

Regarding the academic accomplishment, in spite of what people may think, students that enter university through quotas reveal a good performance, since they tend to highly value this opportunity and to put effort in their studies. Several universities have published surveys about the situation of quota students among their courses. In the University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), the first to adhere the policy in Brazil, from 2003 to 2006, the average rating of racial quota students exceeded the average rating of non-quota students in 29 of 48 courses (60% of the total), according to Penha-Lopes (2007). Another research from Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) shows that, in 11 of the 18 courses of higher competition (61% of them), the quota students achieved an equal or better performance than non-quota students in the year of 2005, which was the first year of implementation of the policy in this institution. For instance, in Law School, the coefficient of performance of quota students was 95.2, better than the coefficient of 88.9 from non-quota students (Queiroz & Santos, 2007). Another fact indicated by a study in UERJ confirms the commitment of quota students to get the diploma. Among blacks, the percentage of students who drop out is 12.99%, while among the non-quota students the drop-out rate rises to 16.97%. All these facts confirm that the presence of quota students in a university does not indicate a lowering of quality in the higher education in Brazil. On the contrary: A survey conducted by the Laboratory of Public Policies from UERJ in 2006 shows that 90% professors from 4 Brazilian universities, asked about this issue, affirm that the university development is equal or better after the adherence of quotas policy (IBASE, 2008). They also affirm that the concern over the raising of conflict in terms of prejudice and racism cannot be confirmed, since race relations have remained the same or improved.

Finally, it is true that the quotas policy by itself cannot eradicate discrimination and social differences, but it is a palliative measure to reassure racial inclusion and to light up the debate over racism and

social exclusion. Some people that are only half way against quotas claim that the reservation of vacancies in universities for students that come from public schools is fair – since the problems in public education are all evident -, but the reservation for black students is not. The argument is that if a black person suffers from bad financial conditions, he or she has the chance to enter university through quotas for public schools; so there is no need for racial quotas. However, the truth is that the adoption of quotas for public school students does not meet the needs of the black population directly. The assumption above illustrated reinforces the misleading idea that there are no mechanisms of racial exclusion in schools, this being one of the factors that most reproduce the inequalities between black and white students. So, even among students from public schools, we would see a greater inclusion of white people in university. To bring evidence, data collected by the System of Evaluation of Basic Education (SAEB) and discussed by IBASE (2008) evaluated and compared the school performance of black and white students in the 4th grade, between 1995 and 2001. They came to the conclusion that black students had, in an average, a poorer learning performance than the whites, regardless of their socioeconomic conditions (for instance, in a Portuguese exam, black students of private schools achieved a lower performance [179 points] than the white students from the same schools [228 points]). For Munanga (1996, as cited in IBASE, 2008), this happens because “the prejudice instilled in the teacher’s head and his or her incapacity to deal with diversity in class, added to the biased content of books and the prejudged relationships between students from different ethnic-racial and social backgrounds, discourage the black students and compromise their learning process [my translation].” These barriers found in the school journey and life of the black students determine a serious and reduced expectation of the group with respect to the access in the university; they feel as if the university is not a place for them. To illustrate that, according to a study conducted in the University of Brasilia (UnB), the number of black professors in public universities does not reach 1% (IBASE, 2008). Of course the education in public schools must be improved, but as the process of exclusion tends to perpetuate inside and outside schools, the State needs to enforce a measure that may help lessen this inequality. Besides, the quotas policy has a role beyond promoting the entrance of a specific population in university. It encourages the debate on race, questions the diversity in education institutions and invites us to rethink old prejudices and stereotypes – consequence of our slavery past.

To conclude, having all of this in mind, Affirmative Action through racial quotas in universities does result in positive effects on social and racial inclusion. Certainly there are many other aspects involved in this delicate issue that were left unmentioned here, such as the difficulty of categorizing blacks, pardos and whites in a country where the miscegenation has played an enormous role. About this issue, the American cultural theorist and sociologist Stuart Hall, in his lecture "Race: the floating signifier", draws on the propensity, also referred to as a cultural impulse, of classifying sub-groups of human types according to essentialized characteristics, whether physical or intellectual ones. Hall believes that, in a way, classifying is very positive for us to generate meanings. The problem is when the systems of classification become the objects of the disposition of power. "That's to say," in his own words, "when the marking of difference and similarity across a human population becomes a reason why this group is to be treated in that way and get those advantages, and that group should be treated in another (Hall, 1996)." That is what happens with race. This is our reality. The Affirmative Actions are trying to attenuate this reality. Of course they are urgent, temporary measures, subject to constant evaluation for their improvement. Nevertheless, all these actions that attempt to reach a new sense of democracy by reducing inequalities of race, gender and others, must be seen as fundamental and also constant until the value of diversity and access can be universal in truth.

APPENDIX F17: Student 17

Death Penalty: A Fair Punishment

It is difficult to say if a murderer should die or not because of what s/he has done. There are many questions concerning this topic. Does the murderer deserve the same destiny of his victim? Does he deserve a second chance to redeem himself with society? Should he be executed under the death penalty punishment? It has already been proved that death penalty is a deterrent to crime. It also protects the living and makes it possible for justice to be done.

Anti-death penalty propagandists affirm that the capital punishment goes against the human rights, since "it violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights"²⁷. They also say that innocent may be wrongly executed, and that executions cost more than life in prison. In numbers, this last argument means \$2 million per person vs. \$500,000. The costs are with free counsel for defense, for appeals, and maximum security on a separate death row wing.

Although anti-death penalty movements have their reasons to believe that death penalty is not the way to punish murderers, one of the motives which come along with the capital punishment is that it is a deterrent to crime. According to a paper by three Emory University economists, their results suggests "that capital punishment has a strong deterrent effect (...) In particular, each execution results, on average, in 18 fewer murders -- with a margin of error of plus or minus 10". Death penalty is a way to warn potential killers what they may have to face if they commit a crime. They would think twice before doing something, and as a consequence, innocent people would be safe. As John McAdams from Marquette University/Department of Political Science says, "if we execute murderers and there is in fact no deterrent effect, we have killed a bunch of murderers. If we fail to execute murderers, and doing so would in fact have deterred other murders, we have allowed the killing of a bunch of innocent victims. I would much rather risk the former. This, to me, is not a tough call"²⁸.

In addition, it protects people in one more way: it prevents the murderer to kill again. No one can assure that, after released, the murderer will not kill anyone else one more time. Is it advisable to trust

²⁷ <http://www.antideathpenalty.org/reasons.html>

²⁸ <http://www.prodeathpenalty.com/>

someone who already took a person's life? Maybe the problem is on the system. Nowadays, when a person gets arrested, he can parole. If he has a good behavior in prison, his sentence is cut off. After some time, he can even spend the rest of his "prison days" in conditional. It might work for some of them. Some people can really regret their attitudes, but some can be even colder. As an example, in 1985, South Carolina, 13-year-old Karen Patterson was killed in her own bed by her neighbor, Joe Atkins, who had already served 10 years of a life sentence for killing his half-brother. Then, Joe murdered his adopt father, Benjamin Atkins, who worked on releasing his foster son from the life sentence.

Finally, death penalty means justice. It speaks for those who can not defend themselves. It does not leave the chance for a second row of murders. It is not possible to a family to keep living with the knowledge that the killer of its beloved one might be released someday. The murder of a family member is hard to face. It is not something people can just erase from their minds, mainly if the murderer still has a chance to live, while the life of his/her victim was taken all of a sudden. Justice does not work if it is just for a certain period of time. A person who takes someone's life does not have the right to live. Punishment should fit the crime. A simple equation: *an eye for an eye*; a life for a life.

In brief, death penalty is the best way of punishing a killer. It has been proved that it deters crimes, functioning as a warning; that it saves innocents lives preventing other murders, since the system may let criminals free; and makes justice for the victims who can not speak for themselves anymore. As Jeff Jacoby says in his article in *The Boston Globe*: "The execution of a murderer sends a powerful moral message: that the innocent life he took was so precious, and the crime he committed so horrific, that he forfeits his own right to remain alive"²⁹.

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http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2003/09/28/execution_save_s_innocents/

APPENDIX F18: Student 18

Legalizing Gay Marriage: a Fundamental Right

John and Mary want to get married, Peter and Steve too. For many years now, same-sex people have been fighting to have the right to get married legally, just as heterosexual people do. There has been some progress in that objective, but there is still much to be done. Every person should have the fundamental right to constitute a legally and recognized marriage, regardless of their partners sexual category.

But not everyone support this issue. Some people believe that the relationship between homosexuals doesn't last long, given that they are very promiscuous, so they conclude there is no need to enshrine their relations with marriage. Others state that same-sex marriage goes against the moral, constitutional, and religious laws. There are even those who argue that the main objective of getting married is to form a family, and in such gay relationships, they can't provide a safe, loving, and caring home for the children.

Certainly, every person has the right to have their own opinions about any issue, including, of course, the one brought up in this essay, which is indeed very controversial. However, as it will be presented in the following paragraphs, the arguments against recognizing homosexual marriages are superficial and they don't mirror the truth.

First of all, the sexual orientation of a person does not affect the durability of their relationships, or how intense and strong it can be. Dianne Hales (2008), a well respected American writer on health subjects, states that

Like heterosexual couples, same-sex relationships progress through various stages. The first, blending... Gradually the couples move through nesting (starting a home together), to building trust and dependability, to merging assets, to establishing a strong sense of partnership.

Following the same line, Sean Robert Cahill (2004) points out a land-mark decision from the Canadian Court, in 2003, which ruled: "Same-sex couples are capable of forming a long, lasting, loving, and intimate relationship."

There have been many discussions about gay marriage by politics and religious people. Some countries have already legalized same-sex

marriage, as the Netherlands, Belgian, Spain, and Canada. Many more nations have been studying this issue, all around Europe and even in Latin America.

Some traditionalist Jewish communities, The Unitarian Universalists General Assembly, and a few Lutheran groups selectively support some aspects of same sex marriage. According to Tricia Andryszewski (2008), “same-sex weddings are being performed by some congregations”. She also highlights that even some religious authorities are pro legalizing gay marriage, as a demonstration of compassion and justice.

Conservative people believe gay marriage corrupts the sacred unity of family. Looking at countries that have already legalized such institution, we face the opposite reality. According to Eskridge and Spedale (2006),

An increasing number of lesbians’ couples, and some gay couple as well, are bearing and raising children within their partnerships, and doing so successfully. Their life experiences are changing the way Scandinavians conceive of family.

Regarding this subject, the American Psychological Association adopted the following resolutions:

WHEREAS there is no scientific evidence that parenting effectiveness is related to parental sexual orientation: lesbian and gay parents are as likely as heterosexual parents to provide supportive and healthy environments for their children (Patterson, 2000, 2004; Perrin, 2002; Tasker, 1999);

WHEREAS research has shown that the adjustment, development, and psychological well-being of children is unrelated to parental sexual orientation and that the children of lesbian and gay parents are as likely as those of heterosexual parents to flourish (Patterson, 2004; Perrin, 2002; Stacey & Biblarz, 2001);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the APA opposes any discrimination based on sexual orientation in matters of adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care, and reproductive health services

In conclusion, same-sex relationships don't present characteristics that differs them to the heterosexual type of relationship, and so, shouldn't be treated differently. There has been an evolution regarding the acceptance of gay relationships/marriage in the cultural, religious, and political spheres, but there is still much to be done. There is a need to disregard all prejudice to homosexual families, and to just accept them as they are, regular people like everybody else.

APPENDIX F19: Student 19

International adoption: a humanitarian act

According to Xinran Xiu, a Chinese journalist and a worldwide renowned writer, over one hundred and twenty thousand Chinese girls have been adopted overseas in the last six years. Families from 27 different nations have volunteered to take in the girls that China has been neglecting for so long. With a millenary tradition of favoring male heirs, China has a dark past. Countless girls have been murdered right after they were born, and many were either abandoned or submitted to a life of child labor, sexual abuse and social prejudice. Even though this situation has been changing over the last few decades, Chinese orphanages are still swamped with unwanted girls. The *One Child Policy* introduced in 1978 makes it now impossible for these girls to find a family in their own country. The Chinese government has been facing the economical and social challenge of supporting these children. When a childless couple from a developed country decides to adopt a child from a country that has no means of providing for her/him, they're not only making a political and economical decision, but they are performing a humanitarian act.

Nevertheless, the term "international adoption" has been tainted by cases of child trafficking and child laundering in Third World Countries, where adoption policies are still poorly regulated. International adoption has also been raising controversy when it comes to transracial adoption. Some consider that the phenotypical differences between parent and child may interfere with their bonding, and that internationally adopted children may not feel like they fit in. Others even argue that transcultural adoption could lead to a serious loss of birth culture and identity. Indeed, these used to be legitimate arguments, but nowadays the international community is making efforts to deconstruct these ideas.

Since 1893, the *Hague Conference* has been developing treaties to respond to global needs in several areas. Among them are the *Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction* and the *Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption*. These legislations are relatively new, and even though they are being slowly implemented worldwide, they are the first steps to protect children from illegal, irregular, premature or ill-prepared adoptions abroad. Even if several countries, such as

Guatemala, The Dominican Republic, Thailand and Cambodia haven't yet ratified the treaty, setting these policies might not only enable overseas adoption, but also encourage the elaboration of other domestic legislation, such as child and adolescent welfare in underdeveloped countries.

For the last few decades, several European nations have been facing a decrease in their birthrate. In the meantime, there are more than 11 million abandoned children in India, children who will grow up in institutes and orphanages with no prospect of contributing to the country's intellectual production. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that by 2030 the European Union can expect a reduction of 14% in the work force. By legalizing international adoption, those Indian orphans, as many others all over the world, would have the chance to grow up in a nuclear family, and would, in the future, be able to contribute to their adoptive country's output.

Apart from the economical aspects, there are other factors that involve the adoption process, either the domestic or the international one. Studies have already confirmed that children who have been neglected may have psychological scars that will last a lifetime. Unfortunately, many children that live under the care of the State don't reach adulthood and those who do usually show severe emotional damages. Low self-esteem, difficulty to relate with other human beings and problems in the work place are a few examples of the many problems they may present. Adoptive parents can provide the love, the financial security and the education an orphanage or similar institution can't.

Nowadays, adoptive parents are incorporating another matter of concern regarding international adoption. For the last two decades, the preservation of the child's cultural heritage has been debated and some measures are already being taken. For instance, in New York, where at least one thousand Chinese adoptees are now living, a support group was created in an attempt to construct for these girls a reality where Chinese culture and traditions may be present in an urban American context. *Families With Children from China* has now spread to all North America and Europe, where they sponsor discussion panels, publish newsletters regarding intercultural parenting and promote traditional events such as the Chinese New Year. Despite being just one example among so many interracial families, this may lessen the worries concerning loss of cultural identity.

In sum, whether it is a domestic or an overseas adoption, the welfare of the child is the most relevant issue to be considered. If a

foreign country can offer basic human rights – “the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life”¹, many other concerns seem irrelevant. Giving a child means of growing up to be an adult emotionally, financially and culturally able to contribute as a citizen is a humanitarian act and a very important contribution to the receiving country. In fact, in the future, this child may even go back to his/her birth country and help other children who are in the same situation.

