



LÍNGUA INGLESA - Grupo F - Gabarito

Read the following texts and answer the questions in **English**.

TEXT I

The Language Faculty

The language faculty is indeed held to be specific to the human species; no other creature apart from human beings possesses a language organ. The evidence for this consists partly of the obvious truth that no species of animal has spontaneously come to use anything like human language; apes and dolphins, whatever they do in captivity, appear not to use anything like language in the wild. Some controversial studies in recent 5 years have claimed that apes in particular are capable of being taught languages.

It might be questioned whether the languages used in these experiments are fully human-like; they may be communication systems that use none of the distinctive features of human language.

None of the systems learnt by animals seem proper in view of what is considered above, either because they fail to reflect abstract features of language or because they are artificially 'taught'.

(Adapted from Cook, V.J. *Chomsky's universal grammar: an introduction*. Oxford, Blackwell, 1988)

TEXT II

Rico's remarkable "vocabulary" raises new questions about language learning in animals

A 9-year-old border collie who apparently understands a vocabulary of 200 words - most of them in German - has led scientists to conclude that the remarkable dog has language-learning ability comparable, in some ways, to a human toddler. Their findings raise anew the question of whether language is strictly a human trait.

5 Rico is hardly the first non-human animal to show skills at language comprehension; his vocabulary size is comparable to that of language-trained apes, dolphins, sea lions and parrots. But researchers writing in the 11 June 2004 issue of the journal *Science* say the German canine shows a process of learning called "fast-
10 mapping" not seen to this extent in animals other than humans.

The researchers tested Rico's ability to learn new words through fast-mapping. The German scientists placed a new toy among seven familiar toys. In a separate room, the owner asked Rico to fetch the new item, using a name the border collie had never 15 heard before.

Rico correctly retrieved the new item in seven of 10 such tests. His retrieval rate is comparable to the performance of three-year-old toddlers. Like a young human child, Rico can quickly form rough hypotheses about the meaning of a new word after a single 20 exposure by inferring that the new word is connected to an object he sees for the first time. That suggests to scientists that the ability to understand sounds is not necessarily related to the ability to speak, and that some aspects of language comprehension evolve earlier than, and independently from, human speech.



Rico, a dog with an approximately 200-word "vocabulary", can learn names of unfamiliar toys after just one exposure to the new word-toy combination.

Image courtesy of Susan Baus

Glossary

anew – in a new or different way
toddler – a small child who has just learnt to walk
surmise – infer

(Adapted from AAAS Journal, 2004)



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1st QUESTION: (2,0 marks)

Avaliador

Revisor

The word “vocabulary” in the title of Text II comes between inverted commas. What is the implication of the use of this quotation mark?

Resposta:

The word vocabulary normally refers to words used by human beings; in the text, it is used to refer to the language performance of an animal, which seems unsuitable. Thus, the inverted commas.

or

Inverted commas can be used to convey inadequacy of the term in the context it is used. The word vocabulary is normally used to refer to human language, and not to animal linguistic performance; therefore, the inverted commas.

2nd QUESTION: (2,0 marks)

Avaliador

Revisor

From the reading of Text II, what is surprising in Rico's performance?

Resposta:

“The German canine shows a process of learning called “fast-mapping” not seen to this extent in animals other than humans”.

or

Rico can fetch an object after hearing its name for the first time.
(There are other possible answers).

3rd QUESTION: (2,0 marks)

Avaliador

Revisor

The word **that** is repeated four (4) times in the 4th paragraph of Text II. Does it have the same function throughout? Explain.

Resposta:

No. Only the second occurrence of **that** is used to make reference to what was previously mentioned (a case of pro-form). The other occurrences are conjunctions.



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4th QUESTION: (2,0 marks)

Avaliador

Revisor

The notions of captivity and wilderness in relation to language acquisition are raised in Text I. Discuss this dichotomy with regards to animal language performance.

Resposta:

Animals do not learn “languages” in the wild spontaneously, only in captivity. Even so, it is questioned whether what they learn could be called human language.

5th QUESTION: (2,0 marks)

Avaliador

Revisor

According to Text II, the scientists’ findings from observing Rico’s performance “raise anew the question of whether language is strictly a human trait” (lines 3-4). Discuss this statement in view of what Cook says in Text I.

Resposta:

It may be accepted that the dog Rico may perform some type of “linguistic” activity, but he will never be able to speak a language because he does not possess a language organ like human beings.