



**EXAME DE PROFICIÊNCIA EM LEITURA EM LÍNGUA INGLESA/ESTRANGEIRA -  
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**GRANDE ÁREA: INGLÊS - LINGÜÍSTICA, LETRAS E ARTES**

**NÚMERO DO RG DO CANDIDATO:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**The Role of Context in Discourse Analysis**

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

[1] The study of context has been gaining popularity in recent years, either in linguistics itself or in many other interdisciplinary subjects such as semantics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis as well. However, context theories are not formed overnight. They involve a long process of development, during which comparative linguistics, structural linguistics and transformational-generative linguistics all contributed to the theoretical foundations of context theories.

[2] When we introduce context theories to the field of discourse analysis, we must take into consideration not only the discourse itself, but also the context in which the discourse takes place. Just like what Fillmore (1977, P, 119) said, “The task is to determine what we can know about the meaning and context of an utterance given only the knowledge that the utterance has occurred ... I find that whenever I notice some sentence in context, I immediately find myself asking what the effect would have been if the context had been slightly different.” (Gillian Brown & George Yule, 2000, p.35)

**II. DEFINITIONS OF CONTEXT**

[3] Different linguists seek to define context from different point of view in order to answer questions encountered in their own fields, and to support their own ideas and theories.

[4] H. G. Widdowson, when focusing his study on language meaning, thought “context” as “those aspects of the circumstance of actual language use which are taken as relevant to meaning.” He further pointed out, “in other words, context is a schematic construct... the achievement of pragmatic meaning is a matter of matching up the linguistic elements of the code with the schematic elements of the context.” (H.G. Widdowson, 2000, p.126)

[5] When Guy Cook was studying the relationship between discourse and literature, he took “context” into consideration as well. In his definition, context is just a form of knowledge the world and “the term ‘context’ can be used in a broad and narrow sense. In the narrow sense, it refers to (knowledge of) factors outside the text under consideration. In the broad sense, it refers to (knowledge of) these factors and to (knowledge of) other parts of the text under consideration, sometimes referred to as ‘co-text’.” (Guy Cook, 1999, p. 24)

[6] When studying reference and inference, George Yule also took “context” into account. He provided us with a somewhat general definition, “Context is the physical environment in which a word is used.” (George Yule, 2000, 128)

[7] Although they are viewed from different perspectives for different purposes, these definitions have an important point in common: one main point of the context is the environment (circumstances or factors by some other scholars) in which a discourse occurs.

### **III. CLASSIFICATIONS OF CONTEXT**

[8] Opinions on how to classify context vary from one to another. Some linguists divide context into two groups, while some insist on discussing context from three, four, or even six dimensions. According to different circumstances mentioned in the above definitions, I would like to divide context into linguistic context, situational context and cultural context.

#### **A. Linguistic Context**

[9] Linguistic context refers to the context within the discourse, that is, the relationship between the words, phrases, sentences and even paragraphs. Take the word “bachelor” as an example. We can't understand the exact meaning of the sentence “He is a bachelor”, without the linguistic context to make clear the exact meaning of this word.

[10] Linguistic context can be explored from three aspects: deictic, co-text, and collocation. In a language event, the participants must know where they are in space and time, and these features relate directly to the deictic context, by which we refer to the deictic expressions like the time expressions now, then, etc., the spatial expressions here, there, etc., and the person expressions I, you, etc... Deictic expressions help to establish deictic roles which derive from the fact that in normal language behavior the speaker addresses his utterance to another person and may refer to himself, to a certain place, or to a time.

[11] In recent years, some linguists began to pay attention to the previous discourse co-ordinate. Levis introduces this co-ordinate to take account of the aforementioned sentences. It is the case that any sentence other than the first in a fragment of discourse, will have the whole of its interpretation forcibly constrained by the preceding text, not just those phrases which obviously and specifically refer to the preceding text. The interpretations of the words which occur in discourse are constrained by, following Halliday, their co-text.

[12] In 1934, Porzig argued for the recognition of the importance of syntagmatic relations, between, e.g., bite and teeth, bark and dog, blond and hair, which Firth called collocation. Collocation is not simply a matter of association of ideas. Although milk is white, we should not often say white milk, while the expression white paint is common enough.

#### **B. Situational context**

[13] Situational context, or context of situation, refers to the environment, time and place, etc. in which the discourse occurs, and also the relationship between the participants. This theory is traditionally approached through the concept of register, which helps to clarify the interrelationship of language with context by handling it under three basic headings: field, tenor, and mode.

[14] Field of discourse refers to the ongoing activity. We may say field is the linguistic reflection of the purposive role of language user in the situation in which a text has occurred. Tenor refers to the kind of social relationship enacted in or by the discourse. The notion of tenor, therefore, highlights the way in which linguistic choices are affected not just by the topic or subject of communication but also

by the kind of social relationship within which communication is taking place. Mode is the linguistic reflection of the relationship the language user has to medium of transmission. The principal distinction within mode is between those channels of communication that entail immediate contact and those that allow for deferred contact between participants.

### C. Cultural Context

[15] Cultural context refers to the culture, customs and background of epoch in language communities in which the speakers participate. Language is a social phenomenon, and it is closely tied up with the social structure and value system of society. Therefore, language can not avoid being influenced by all these factors like social role, social status, sex and age, etc.

[16] Social roles are culture-specific functions, institutionalized in a society and recognized by its members. By social status, we mean the relative social standing of the participants. Each participant in the language event must know, or make assumptions about his or her status in relation to the other, and in many situations, status will also be an important factor in the determination of who should initiate the conversation. Sex and age are often determinants of, or interact with, social status. The terms of address employed by a person of one sex speaking to an older person, may differ from those which would be employed in otherwise similar situations by people of the same sex or of the same age.

## I. NAS QUESTÕES de 1-4, ASSINALE A ALTERNATIVA CORRETA DE ACORDO COM AS INFORMAÇÕES VEICULADAS NO TEXTO. (2,0pts. 0,5 cada)

**1. Considerando o percurso teórico apresentado na introdução, qual alternativa melhor interpreta o papel das diferentes correntes linguísticas na formação das teorias de contexto?**

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| a. | Elas substituíram completamente a necessidade de estudar o contexto.                                |
| b. | Elas contribuíram de forma cumulativa para a construção das bases teóricas do conceito de contexto. |
| c. | Elas demonstraram que o contexto é irrelevante para a análise linguística.                          |
| d. | Elas limitaram o estudo do contexto à análise estrutural da língua.                                 |

**2. A citação de Fillmore (1977) sugere que o significado de um enunciado:**

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| a. | Pode ser determinado exclusivamente por sua estrutura sintática. |
|----|--|

b.	Depende da estabilidade do contexto em que ocorre.
c.	Está intrinsecamente ligado à variação contextual e às possíveis mudanças nesse contexto.
d.	É fixo e independe da interpretação do interlocutor.

<b>3. A comparação entre as definições de Widdowson, Cook e Yule permite inferir que o conceito de contexto:</b>	
a.	É homogêneo e consensual entre os linguistas.
b.	Varia de acordo com o foco teórico e os objetivos analíticos de cada autor.
c.	Deve ser reduzido ao ambiente físico da interação.
d.	Exclui a dimensão textual da análise.

<b>4. A noção de <i>collocation</i>, conforme discutida no texto, problematiza qual das seguintes ideias?</b>	
a.	A relação arbitrária entre significante e significado.
b.	A previsibilidade semântica baseada exclusivamente em propriedades físicas dos objetos.
c.	A dependência do significado em relação à estrutura sintática.
d.	A independência entre vocabulário e uso discursivo.

**II. RESPONDA ÀS PERGUNTAS A SEGUIR EM PORTUGUÊS, DE ACORDO COM AS INFORMAÇÕES VEICULADAS NO TEXTO: (6,0 pts. 2,0 cada)**

a. No parágrafo [1], o texto menciona que as teorias de contexto não surgiram de forma imediata. Explique como o autor justifica essa afirmação e o que isso revela sobre o desenvolvimento dos estudos linguísticos.

O autor justifica a afirmação apontando que as teorias de contexto envolvem um longo processo de desenvolvimento. O avanço dos estudos linguísticos ocorreu de forma cumulativa, num

período durante o qual disciplinas como a linguística comparativa, a linguística estrutural e a linguística gerativo-transformacional contribuíram conjuntamente para estabelecer as fundações teóricas do contexto.

b. No parágrafo [2], o autor afirma que o contexto deve ser considerado junto com o discurso. Explique por que essa relação é importante para a interpretação de um enunciado.?

Considerar o contexto juntamente com o discurso é essencial porque o sentido não deriva apenas da consciência de que o enunciado foi proferido, mas do efeito que o ambiente e as circunstâncias exercem sobre ele. Se o contexto sofrer ligeiras modificações, o efeito e o significado da frase alteram-se.

c. O texto apresenta três aspectos do contexto linguístico: *deixis*, *co-text* e *collocation*. Explique como cada um desses aspectos contribui para a interpretação de um enunciado e por que eles mostram que o significado depende da relação entre os elementos do discurso.

A *Deixis* localiza os participantes no evento linguístico através de expressões espaciais, temporais e pessoais (quem fala, onde e quando). O *Co-text* refere-se ao discurso coordenado prévio, indicando que a interpretação de qualquer frase é obrigatoriamente restringida e moldada pelo texto que a antecedeu. A *Collocation* refere-se às associações convencionais de palavras na língua, demonstrando que o significado depende das relações estabelecidas entre os elementos do discurso.

### III. ANALISE AS AFIRMAÇÕES ABAIXO COM BASE NO TEXTO E ASSINALE AS ALTERNATIVAS, (V) PARA VERDADEIRA OU (F) PARA FALSA. (2,0 pts. 0,5 cada)

	Sentenças	Verdadeira	Falsa
a.	O contexto cultural inclui “culture, customs and background of epoch” das comunidades linguísticas.	V	
b.	Segundo o texto, a linguagem é independente da estrutura social e do sistema de valores da sociedade.		F

c.	O texto afirma que o status social pode influenciar quem deve iniciar a conversa.	V	
d.	As formas de tratamento podem variar dependendo da idade e da relação entre os participantes.	V	