

Verbal Behavior

Goals

- Learn what verbal behavior means
- Learn the history of verbal behavior
- Learn about verbal behavior as a language theory
- Describe how verbal behaviors are categorized

Verbal behavior is a theory of language based on the principles of learning theory. It is also a language theory that is data driven.

Verbal behavior explains how language develops in humans and how and why it is maintained.

Verbal behavior also refers to language-based behaviors that are reinforced by other people. Verbal behavior does not necessarily mean spoken language.

In the early to mid-1900s, BF Skinner developed his verbal behavior theory as a response to a popular theory at the time that suggested that language was innate from birth.

Skinner disagreed; he conducted 1000's of experiments on language/verbal behavior and demonstrated that verbal behaviors operated under the same principles as other non-language based behaviors _____

Book: *Verbal Behavior* by _____ in 1957 summed up 23 years of research

Conclusions: Verbal behavior is _____ behavior

Verbal behavior responds to the same variables as _____.

_____ and punishment are effective in changing verbal behavior, the same as any non-language based behavior.

In verbal behavior, reinforcement is always provided by _____.

_____ is defined by its _____ rather than its form.

Function: the type of reinforcement provided when behavior occurs _____, _____.

Form: how behavior looks or sounds. Form has nothing to do with what came before or after

Verbal Behavior and the 3-Term Contingency

Antecedents are events _____

Behavior: what a person does or *says*
_____ events that occur _____

Analyzing verbal behavior within the 3-term contingency informs us of the situation in which the behavior occurs and the consequences that _____ that behavior, that is, maintain that behavior.

Verbal Behavior (continued)

Examples:

A - Thirsty student sees teachers B- "Can I have water?" C-Teach gives student water

A- Student sees his friend B-Student says "Hi" C-Friend replies "Hi"

A- Seeing text in book to read aloud B-reads to students C- listeners are quiet and attentive

Verbal behavior always involves interaction between a speaker and a listener.

Speaker and listener roles can change quickly in conversation; a person can be both speaker and listener.

7 Categories of Verbal Behaviors

Mands:

Behavior: speaker makes a request of expresses a need/want

Mands are reinforced by access to the specific item: _____, or information such as _____.

This is a very valuable skills to enable the speaker to access help from others to get their needs met.

Mands are typically one of the first verbal behaviors learned by young children.

The form of a mand can be words and verbal approximations, or may not be spoken at all. _____, _____ a Voice Output Communication device, PECS _____ . Even behavior like crying and reaching are considered mands in some situations.

A	B	C	
Wants _____	Asks for help	Gets help	= Mand
Wants juice	Signs _____	Gets juice	= Mand
Sees toys	Cries	Gets _____	= Mand
Lost keys	_____	Friend tells you	= _____

What makes a verbal behavior a _____? = Access to the item or information

Tact

A tact involves naming something in the environment that the speaker observes.

The Sd is seeing or experiencing a specific item or event in the immediate environment.

Reinforcement for a tact comes from providing a generalized conditioned reinforcer, such as ___ or social approval from the (speaker/listener). **Circle one**

Tacts involve labeling nouns/ verbs/prepositions/adjectives/pronouns.

A	B	C	
Student sees red fast car	"car"	Praise "that's right!"	= Tact
Student sees red fast car	"fast"	Praise "that's right!"	= Tact
Student sees red fast car	signs red	Praise "that's right!"	= Tact

Verbal Behavior (continued)

Echoic

Speaker repeats something s/he just observed A= verbal behavior of another person

B= verbal behavior must look and/or sound the same (hence the word *echo*)

C= reinforcement is a generalized condition reinforcer _____

A	B	C	
Parent says bird	"bird"	Praise "that's right!"	= Echoic
Parent signs bird	signs bird	Praise "that's right!"	= Echoic

Intraverbal

Differential responses to something that was said, such as answering a question, commenting or giving an opinion.

Antecedent and behavior are different (So the speaker is not just repeating or echoing)

Reinforcement = praise or other generalized conditioned reinforcement

Intraverbals are the basis of conversation

A	B	C	
"Hi, I'm Jane"	"Hi, I'm Sally"	Social approval	= Intraverbal
"Did you like the movie?"	"Yes, I did"	Social approval	= Intraverbal
Teacher asks a question	Child answers	Praise/toy	= Intraverbal

Textual

Textual behavior occurs when a learner is shown written words and speaks them/reading out loud

A= written words

B= read words out loud

C= praise / _____

Transcription

Spoken word when words are written down (verbal behavior is the product of the written word) Letter formation and spelling must be accurate

A= speaker says word

B= learner writes it down

C= praise or generalized condition reinforcer

Ex: oral spelling tests, verbal directions, _____, _____

Verbal Behavior (continued)

The same principles affect verbal and non-verbal behavior.

The same strategies can be used to modify and teach verbal and non-verbal behavior.

Example:

Forward chaining is a strategy that can be used for:

Non-verbal

Tooth brushing

First step: _____

Verbal

Answering a question "What's your phone number?"

First step: _____