

Mand

Authored by
mohammad looti

November 19, 2022

RECOMMENDED CITATION

mohammad looti (2022). *Mand*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from
<https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=39219>

Mand is a term that B.F. Skinner used to describe a verbal operant in which the response is reinforced by a characteristic consequence and is therefore under the functional control of relevant conditions of deprivation or aversive stimulation. One cannot determine, based on form alone, whether a response is a mand; it is necessary to know the kinds of variables controlling a response in order to identify a verbal operant. A mand is sometimes said to "specify its reinforcement" although this is not always the case. Skinner introduced the mand as one of six primary verbal operants in his 1957 work, *Verbal Behavior*.

Chapter three of Skinner's work, *Verbal Behavior*, discusses a functional relationship called the mand. A mand is a form of verbal behavior that is controlled by deprivation, satiation, or what is now called motivating operations (MO), as well as a controlling history. An example of this would be asking for water when one is water deprived ("thirsty"). It is tempting to say that a mand describes its reinforcer, which it sometimes does. But many mands have no correspondence to the reinforcer. For example, a loud knock may be a mand "open the door" and a servant may be called by a hand clap as much as a child might "ask for milk".

Mands differ from other verbal operants in that they primarily benefit the speaker, whereas other verbal operants function primarily for the benefit of the listener. This is not to say that mands function exclusively in favor of the speaker, however; Skinner gives the example of the advice, "Go west!" as having the potential to yield consequences which will be reinforcing to both speaker and listener. When warnings such as "Look out!" are heeded, the listener may avoid aversive stimulation.

The Lamarre & Holland (1985) study on mands would be one example of a research study in this area.

Dynamic properties

The mand form, being under the control of deprivation and stimulation, will vary in energy level. Dynamic qualities are to be understood as variations that arise as a function of multiple causes. Dynamic in this case is opposed how someone reading from a text might sound if they do not simulate the normal dynamic qualities of verbal behavior. Mands tend to be permanent when they are acquired.

Extended mands

Emitting mands to objects or animals that cannot possibly supply an appropriate response would be an example of the extended mand. Telling "stop!" to someone out of earshot, perhaps in a film, who is about to hurt themselves is an example of the extended mand. Extended mands occur due to extended stimulus control. In the case of an extended mand, the listener is unable to deliver

consequences that would reinforce the mand, but they have enough in common with listeners that have previously reinforced the mand that stimulus control can be inferred.

Superstitious mands

Mands directed to inanimate objects may be said to be superstitious mands. Mands to an unreliable car to "come on and start" for example may be due to a history of intermittent reinforcement.

Magical mands

A magical mand is a mand form where the consequences have never occurred that are specified in the mand. The form "I wish I had a million dollars" has never before produced a million dollars might be said to be magical. Skinner posits that many literary mands are of the magical form. Prayer might also be analyzed as belonging in one of the above three categories, depending upon one's opinion of the likelihood and mechanism of its answer.

Clinical application

Failure to adequately mand appears to be correlated with destructive behavior. This seems to be especially true for those suffering from developmental disabilities.

Behavior under the control of verbal stimuli

Textual

In Chapter 4 Skinner notes forms of control by verbal stimuli. One form is textual behavior which refers to the type of behavior we might typically call reading or writing. A vocal response is controlled by a verbal stimulus that is not heard. There are two different modalities involved ("reading"). If they are the same they become "copying text" (see Jack Michael on copying text), if they are heard, then written, it becomes "taking dictation", and so on.

Echoic

Skinner was one of the first to seriously consider the role of imitation in language learning. He introduced this concept into his book Verbal Behavior with the concept of the echoic. A behavior under the functional control of a verbal stimulus. The verbal response and the verbal stimulus share what is called point to point correspondence (a formal similarity.) The speaker repeats what is said. In echoic behavior, the stimulus is auditory and response is vocal. Often seen in early shaping behavior. For example, in learning a new language, a teacher might say "parsimonious"

and then say "can you say it?" to induce an echoic response. Winokur (1978) is one example of research about echoic relations.

Tacts

Chapter Five of Verbal Behavior discusses the tact in depth. A tact is said to "make contact with" the world, and refers to behavior that is under the control of generalized reinforcement. The controlling stimuli is nonverbal, "the whole of the physical environment". It can undergo many extensions: generic, metaphoric, metonymical, solecistic, nomination, and 'guessing'. It can also be involved in abstraction. Lowe, Horne, Harris & Randle (2002) would be one example of recent work in tacts.

ARABPSYCHOLOGY.COM