TEACHING VOCAL WORDS AS MANDS: Echoic-to-Mand Transfer Procedure

Procedure:
- Make sure that the student has an EO (motivation) for the item/activity and that it is in view (ex. reach for it, grab it, look at it, etc.).
- Say the specific name of the item/activity.
- Student echoes (vocally imitates) the name of the item/activity.
- Deliver the item/activity while saying the name again.

Prompt-fading procedure:
- After several successful prompted trials (procedure above), try to use a brief time-delay procedure (3 seconds) to see if the student will say the name of the item by himself/herself. If so, say and deliver the item immediately. Because the student says it without a prompt, deliver a larger quantity of the item/activity (use differential reinforcement).
- If the student does not say the name of the item during the time delay, use the least amount of prompting necessary to evoke the correct response. The following is the most-to-least prompting hierarchy:
  - Say word
  - Say initial sound (phonemic prompt)
  - Item present
  - EO (item out of sight)

Note: Some students may only echo the phonemic prompt given. If the phonemic prompt does not evoke the full word from the student, avoid providing initial sounds as prompts in the future.

Error-correction procedure:
- Scrolling occurs when the student says the name of one item or activity but in fact has an EO for another reinforcer. This indicates a lack of discrimination among the student’s vocal mands.
- Never deliver the reinforcing item/activity after the student mistakenly says the name of a different item/activity, even if he/she “self-corrects”.
- Wait 3 seconds, then say the correct name of the reinforcing item/activity.
- Student echoes the name.
- Deliver the item/activity while saying the name again.
B.F. Skinner's Analysis of Verbal Behavior and its Implications for Teaching Children with Autism

1. A word is not defined by its form. The definition of a word is determined by its functional category (e.g., mand, tact, etc.)

2. The same word (candy) has many different meanings based upon the conditions under which you learned to say it.

3. Many students with autism do not have verbal repertoires that include responses in each of the categories for the same word (topography).

4. This happens because the categories are functionally independent and the responses (words) may not transfer across the categories without explicit training. For example, being able to mand “candy” by saying “candy” does not guarantee that the same student will be able to tact (label) candy when they see it and there is no EO (motivation) for it.

5. A common profile of students with autism includes a large receptive repertoire, many tacts, very few mands and almost no intraverbals. Failing to have responses in all of the categories leads to a less than adequate and useful verbal repertoire.

6. This problem may be the result of instruction that failed to assess the language repertoire of the student according to the behavioral classification and then failed to recognize the need for explicit teaching. Usually the student’s “cognitive abilities” and not the teaching is said to account for the failure to develop spontaneous language and conversational skills.

Teach ALL the “Meanings”

CANDY

MAND
TACT
ECHOIC/MIMETIC
INTRAVERBAL
RECEPTIVE
RFFC
TFFC
IFFC
COUNT & MAND

USE: Child is engaging in inappropriate behavior TO GET something they CAN HAVE.

STEPS: No direct attention

Say only “Quiet”

Count on fingers until behavior has stopped for the entire count

Prompt the specific mand

Deliver the item
WAIT

USE:  Child mands appropriately for something that they **CAN HAVE**, but engages in inappropriate behavior while waiting for the item to be delivered

STEPS:  No direct attention

  Say only “Wait”

  Count on fingers until behavior has stopped for the entire count

  Deliver the item
ACCEPTING “NO”

**USE:** Student mands for something he/she **MAY NOT HAVE**

**STEPS:** Tell the student “No, but you can have (alternative reinforcer)”

If inappropriate behavior occurs, remove the alternative offered

Walk and peel if safety permits or present tasks until the student is calm

Do not deliver either the requested or alternative reinforcer

Engage student in another activity when calm
ESCAPE EXTINCTION

USE: Child engages in inappropriate behavior to \textbf{GET OUT OF} a demand

STEPS: No direct attention

Say only the ORIGINAL DEMAND until child complies on his/her own (no praise)

Add a varied number of additional demands at a similar difficulty level (no praise)

Child continues on to next activity
References

Augmentative Communication Systems


Stimulus-stimulus Pairing and Automatic Reinforcement


Functional Assessment and Treatment of Problem Behavior


General References


