

Lesson 17: The Tact (OA)



This lesson defines and provides examples of the tact.

- ☰ Definition of the Tact
- ☰ Irrelevant Features of the Tact
- ☰ The Tact's Controlling Variable
- ☰ Tact Example #1
- ☰ Tact Non-Example #1
- ☰ Tact and Response Topography
- ☰ Complexity of the Tact's Controlling Stimulus
- ☰ The Tact and Reference
- ☰ Tact Example #2

 Knowledge Check

 Review

Definition of the Tact



00:09

The **tact** is a verbal response in which the controlling variable is a non-verbal stimulus. A non-verbal stimulus is an object or event or a property of an object or event.

Tact

A form of verbal behavior with the following features:

DEFINING FEATURES

●	A verbal response
●	The controlling variable is a non-verbal stimulus, which is an object or event or a property of an object or event

Irrelevant Features of the Tact



00:12

Features **irrelevant** to the classification of the tact include the musculature involved in executing the response, the modality of the stimulus, whether or not there is any reinforcement for the current response, and the “correctness” of the response.

Tact

A form of verbal behavior with the following features:

IRRELEVANT FEATURES

●	The specific topography and dynamic characteristics of the vocal response
●	The musculature with which the response is executed (vocal, written, gestural, etc.)
●	The modality of the stimulus (auditory, visual, gustatory, olfactory, etc.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| • | Whether or not there is any reinforcement for the current response |
| • | The “correctness” of the response |

The Tact's Controlling Variable



00:23

All of the elementary verbal relationships we have studied up to this point have had some type of verbal stimulus as the controlling variable. But what about verbal behavior whose form is controlled by a prior non-verbal stimulus? Whenever we identify some feature of our physical environment the description we give is typically controlled by prior non-verbal stimuli in the form of objects or events or the properties of objects or events.

Tact

A form of verbal behavior with the following features:

DEFINING FEATURES

IRRELEVANT FEATURES

- A verbal response

- The controlling variable is a non-verbal stimulus, which is an object or event or a property of an object or event

DEFINING FEATURES

IRRELEVANT FEATURES

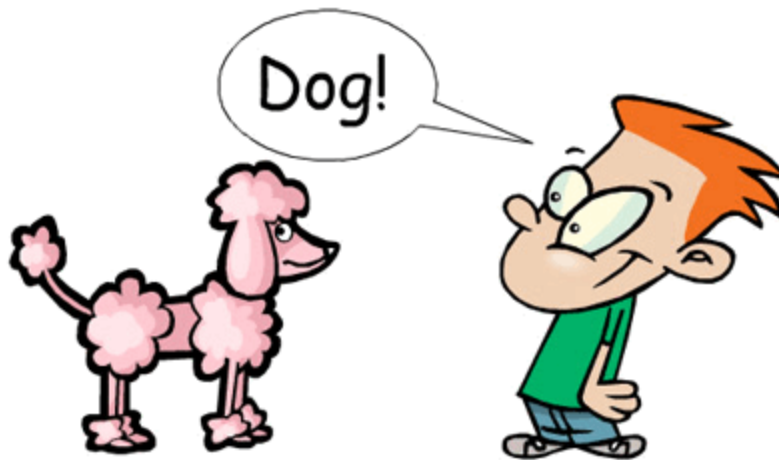
●	The specific topography and dynamic characteristics of the vocal response
●	The musculature with which the response is executed (vocal, written, gestural, etc.)
●	The modality of the stimulus (auditory, visual, gustatory, olfactory, etc.)
●	Whether or not there is any reinforcement for the current response
●	The “correctness” of the response

Tact Example #1



00:20

Saying “dog” as the result of seeing a dog is an example of the tact relationship. If we say “dog” either because we see the word “dog” or hear it spoken, then the relationship is either textual or echoic, respectively. These latter two cases would not be tacts because the prior controlling stimuli are not non-verbal stimuli.



i Note how this example has all of the defining features of the tact:

Tact

A form of verbal behavior with the following features:

DEFINING FEATURES

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✓	A verbal response
✓	The controlling variable is a non-verbal stimulus, which is an object or event or a property of an object or event

DEFINING FEATURES

IRRELEVANT FEATURES

•	The specific topography and dynamic characteristics of the vocal response
•	The musculature with which the response is executed (vocal, written, gestural, etc.)
•	The modality of the stimulus (auditory, visual, gustatory, olfactory, etc.)
•	Whether or not there is any reinforcement for the current response

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ● | The “correctness” of the response |
|---|-----------------------------------|


Tact Non-Example #1



00:14

Likewise, if you say “bring me the dog,” the response form “dog” is controlled by the fact that being presented with the dog would currently be reinforcing — that is, the form of the response is controlled by an establishing operation, not a non-verbal stimulus.



 Note how this example is missing one of the defining features of the tact:

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A form of verbal behavior with the following features:

DEFINING FEATURES

IRRELEVANT FEATURES

✓	A verbal response
✗	The controlling variable is a non-verbal stimulus, which is an object or event or a property of an object or event

DEFINING FEATURES

IRRELEVANT FEATURES

●	The specific topography and dynamic characteristics of the vocal response
●	The musculature with which the response is executed (vocal, written, gestural, etc.)
●	The modality of the stimulus (auditory, visual, gustatory, olfactory, etc.)
●	Whether or not there is any reinforcement for the current response

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ● | The “correctness” of the response |
|---|-----------------------------------|

Tact and Response Topography



00:16

The response topography is not an important consideration in the classification of the tact. The response may be vocal, writing, gestural, or any form of behavior, as long as the reinforcement is mediated and the form of the response is controlled by a prior non-verbal stimulus.

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IRRELEVANT FEATURES

DEFINING FEATURES

●	The specific topography and dynamic characteristics of the vocal response
●	The musculature with which the response is executed (vocal, written, gestural, etc.)
●	The modality of the stimulus (auditory, visual, gustatory, olfactory, etc.)

●	Whether or not there is any reinforcement for the current response
●	The “correctness” of the response

IRRELEVANT FEATURES

DEFINING FEATURES

●	A verbal response
●	The controlling variable is a non-verbal stimulus, which is an object or event or a property of an object or event

Complexity of the Tact's Controlling Stimulus



Furthermore, the controlling stimulus may be any type of stimulus (as long as it's non-verbal) and may be simple or complex. It may only be a single property, such as color, or it may be the entire object, such as a dog, or a city, or the universe.

Tact

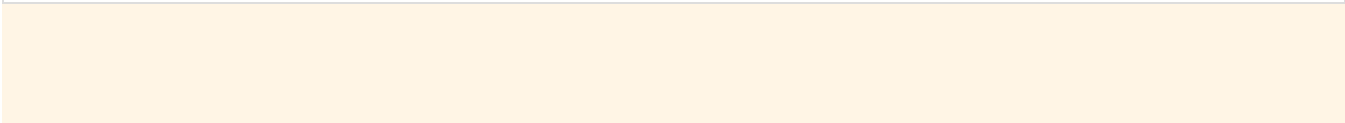
A form of verbal behavior with the following features:

IRRELEVANT FEATURES

DEFINING FEATURES

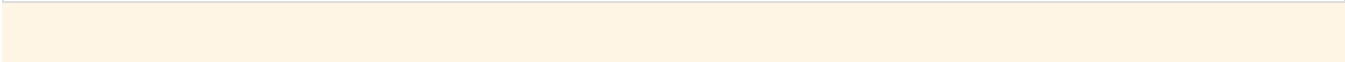
●	The specific topography and dynamic characteristics of the vocal response
●	The musculature with which the response is executed (vocal, written, gestural, etc.)
●	The modality of the stimulus (auditory, visual, gustatory, olfactory, etc.)

●	Whether or not there is any reinforcement for the current response
●	The “correctness” of the response



IRRELEVANT FEATURES	DEFINING FEATURES
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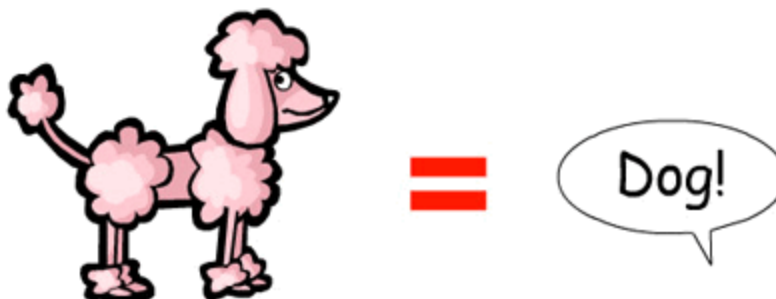
●	A verbal response
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The Tact and Reference



When we say that a speaker uses a word to “refer” to an object, we are usually talking about a tact relationship. To say that a word refers to something often simply means that the word is a response controlled by a non-verbal discriminative stimulus.



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DEFINING FEATURES

IRRELEVANT FEATURES

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A verbal response

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DEFINING FEATURES

IRRELEVANT FEATURES

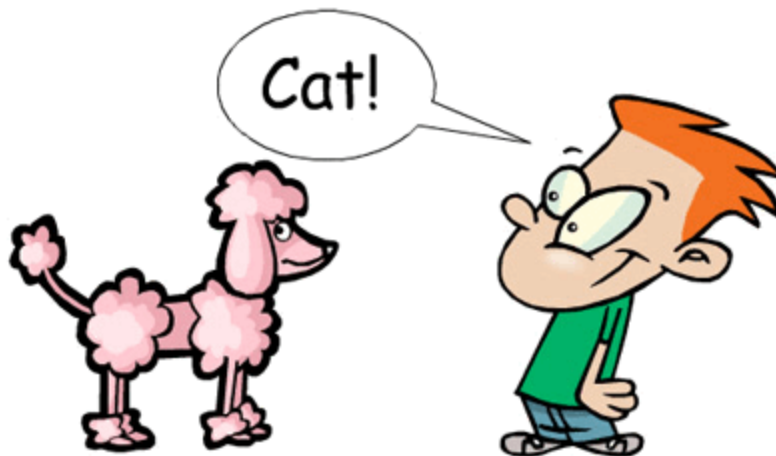
- The specific topography and dynamic characteristics of the vocal response
- The musculature with which the response is executed (vocal, written, gestural, etc.)
- The modality of the stimulus (auditory, visual, gustatory, olfactory, etc.)
- Whether or not there is any reinforcement for the current response
- The “correctness” of the response


Tact Example #2



00:18

Correctness is a final issue. Saying “cat” in the presence of a dog is a tact. We call it incorrect and typically do not continue to reinforce this response, but it is nevertheless a tact. Incorrect tacts often represent a type of extension of verbal behavior which is discussed in the next part of the tutorial.



 Note that this example still has all of the defining features of the tact:

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IRRELEVANT FEATURES

•	The specific topography and dynamic characteristics of the vocal response
•	The musculature with which the response is executed (vocal, written, gestural, etc.)
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•	Whether or not there is any reinforcement for the current response

- The “correctness” of the response

Knowledge Check

You will be presented a series of examples. For each example, you must indicate the type of control (formal or thematic) and the type of elementary verbal relationship (if any) that is being illustrated.

Question

01/12

Saying “goose” as a result of seeing a duck.

What type of control is illustrated?

- formal control
- thematic control

Question

02/12

Saying “goose” as a result of seeing a duck.

What type of elementary verbal relationship is illustrated?

- copying a text
- echoic
- intraverbal
- tact
- taking dictation
- textual
- none of these

Question

03/12

Saying “duck” as the result of hearing someone say “soup.”

What type of control is illustrated?

- formal control
- thematic control

Question

04/12

Saying “duck” as the result of hearing someone say “soup.”

What type of elementary verbal relationship is illustrated?

- copying a text
- echoic
- intraverbal
- tact
- taking dictation
- textual
- none of these

Question

05/12

Saying “duck” in order to get someone to get out of the way of something that has been thrown at them.

What type of control is illustrated?

- formal control
- thematic control

Question

06/12

Saying “duck” in order to get someone to get out of the way of something that has been thrown at them.

What type of elementary verbal relationship is illustrated?

- copying a text
- echoic
- intraverbal
- tact
- taking dictation
- textual
- none of these

Question

07/12

Someone holds up a card with the word “duck” on it and you say “duck.”

What type of control is illustrated?

- formal control
- thematic control

Question

08/12

Someone holds up a card with the word “duck” on it and you say “duck.”

What type of elementary verbal relationship is illustrated?

- copying a text
- echoic
- intraverbal
- tact
- taking dictation
- textual
- none of the verbal relationships listed above

Question

09/12

Saying “dog” as a result of hearing a dog bark.

What type of control is illustrated?

- formal control
- thematic control

Question

10/12

Saying “dog” as a result of hearing a dog bark.

What type of elementary verbal relationship is illustrated?

- copying a text
- echoic
- intraverbal
- tact
- taking dictation
- textual
- none of these

Question

11/12

Saying “loud” as a result of hearing someone shout “duck.”

What type of control is illustrated?

- formal control
- thematic control

Question

12/12

Saying “loud” as a result of hearing someone shout “duck.”

What type of elementary verbal relationship is illustrated?

- copying a text
- echoic
- intraverbal
- tact
- taking dictation
- textual
- none of these

Review

The **tact** is a verbal response in which the controlling variable is a non-verbal stimulus. A non-verbal stimulus is an object or event or a property of an object or event.

Features **irrelevant** to the classification of the tact include the musculature involved in executing the response, the modality of the stimulus, whether or not there is any reinforcement for the current response, and the “correctness” of the response.

End of Lesson