

Lesson 40: Word Blends and Phrase Blends (OA)



This lesson discusses the similarities and differences between words blends and phrase blends.

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Definition of Word Blend and Phrase Blend



Fragments may recombine either at the word level or at the phrase level. Saying “tair” as a result of looking at a chair and a table is a word blend. Saying “right out” as a result of a tendency to say both “far out” and “right on” is a phrase blend. The key distinction is in the size of the fragments that form the recombination. If the fragments are only letters, or phonemes, then the new response is a word blend. If, on the other hand, the fragments consist of entire words, then the new blend is a phrase blend.



word blend



phrase blend

Word Blend and Phrase Blend



If the blending of the two phrases occurs as the blending of one word within them, then that is not considered a phrase blend. For example, if you have a strong tendency to say both “right on” and “far out,” and end up saying “fright out,” that is an example of a word blend, not a phrase blend.



word blend



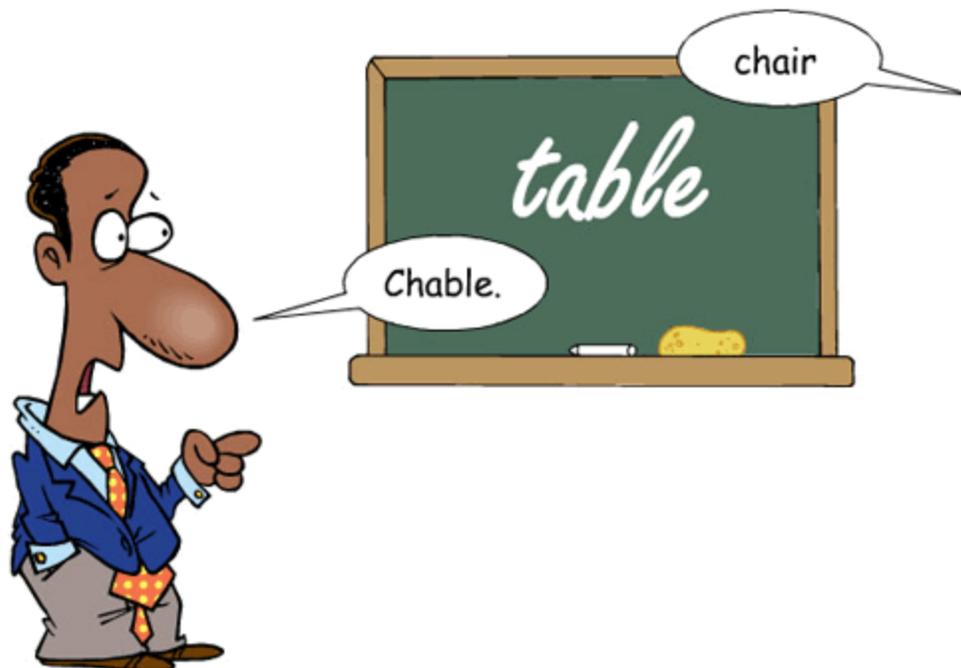
phrase blend

Blending Basic Verbal Operants



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The relationship between the controlling variables and each part of the blended response may be any of the elementary verbal relationships, excluding the audience relationship. You might say “chable” as a result of seeing the word “table” and hearing someone say “chair” at the same time. The response “guestimate” may have originally been the blend of two mands: “Give me an estimate” and “make a guess.” The controlling relationships in phrase blends may also be any of the elementary verbal relationships.

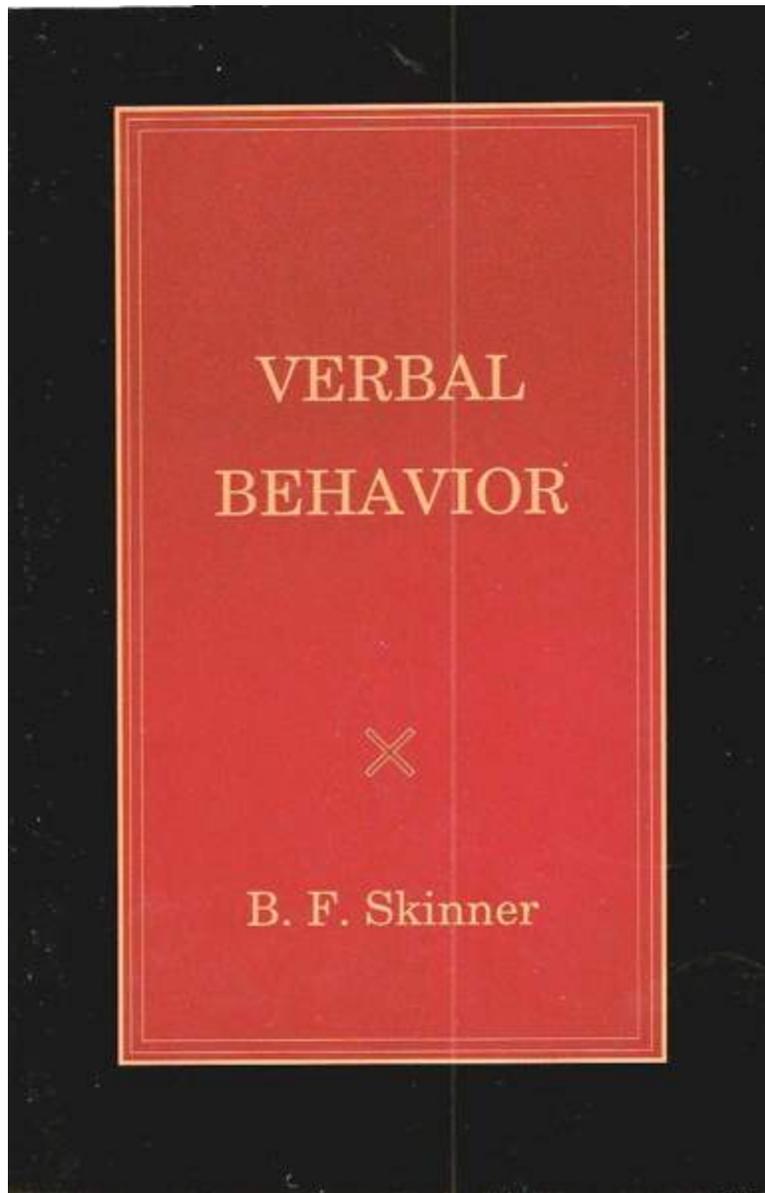


More Information on Blends



00:19

Refer to Chapter 11 of *Verbal Behavior* for a more detailed analysis of word blends and phrase blends. Understanding this process helps in analyzing many verbal “mistakes” and “slips” of the tongue. Chapter 11 of *Verbal Behavior* also demonstrates how the blending process results in witty or stylistic effects often seen in the works of writers such as Ogden Nash.



Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal behavior*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Review

- Fragmentary recombination can occur at the word level or the phrase level.
- A **word blend** is a fragmentary recombination of letters or phonemes.
- A **phrase blend** is a fragmentary recombination of entire words.

End of Lesson