



Do you know your ABCs from your RFTs? An Introductory Workshop on Relational Frame Theory

Dr Denis O'Hora, NUI Galway



Outline

- * 00:15 – 00:30 **Language as behaviour?**
- * 00:30 – 00:45 **Ex 1 - Language as behaviour**
- * 00:45 – 01:15 Languaging as Relational framing
- * 01:15 – 01:45 Exercise 2 - ME, CE and ToF
- * 01:45 – 02:15 Empirical Research
- * 02:15 – 02:30 Exercise 3 - Deictic Framing
- * 02:30 – 02:50 Application
- * 02:50 – 03:00 Q & A

“Twas brillig and the slithy toves,
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe,
All mimsy were the borogroves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.”

* *Through the looking glass and what Alice found there*, Lewis Carroll (1872)

Language?

* Let's say the following words together:

red

pink

green

purple

blue

black

yellow

Language?

* Let's say the following words together:

red

green

blue

yellow

pink

purple

black

Language?

* Let's say the following words together:

blue

green

purple

pink

yellow

red

black

Language?

* Let's say the colour of the following words together:

blue

green

purple

pink

yellow

red

black

Functions of Words

DUE TO PHYSICAL
PROPERTIES OF THE
STIMULUS
(NON-ARBITRARY)

SIZE

SHAPE

COLOUR

DOG

STROOP
CONFLICT

DUE TO A
CONVENTIONAL
HISTORY OF
REINFORCEMENT
(ARBITRARY)

SYNONYMS
CANINE

SOUND
"DOG"

REFERENT



Meaning?

- * Words may occasion many functions (colour, shape etc)
- * However, words occasion linguistic responses (meaning) so strongly that we feel compelled to understand them
 - * “Sticks and stones can break my bones but words will never hurt me”
 - * We only say this because words hurt!

Meaning?

Let's say "language" 20 times

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Language

Meaning?

- * We extinguished (weakened in relative terms) the linguistic function (meaning) of “language” in that context by preventing its reinforcement
- * Anyone feel anxious?

Functions of Words

**DUE TO PHYSICAL
PROPERTIES OF THE
STIMULUS
(NON-ARBITRARY)**



SIZE

SHAPE

COLOUR

DOG

**DUE TO A
CONVENTIONAL
HISTORY OF
REINFORCEMENT
(ARBITRARY)**



**SYNONYMS
CANINE**

**SOUND
"DOG"**

REFERENT



**THESE
RESPONSES
ARE USUALLY
STRONGER**

Stimulus object vs Stimulus

- * A 'stimulus object' such as DOG can actually be thought of as many 'stimuli' occurring simultaneously
- * There is no sole response to DOG - there is competition between many responses

Language as Behaviour

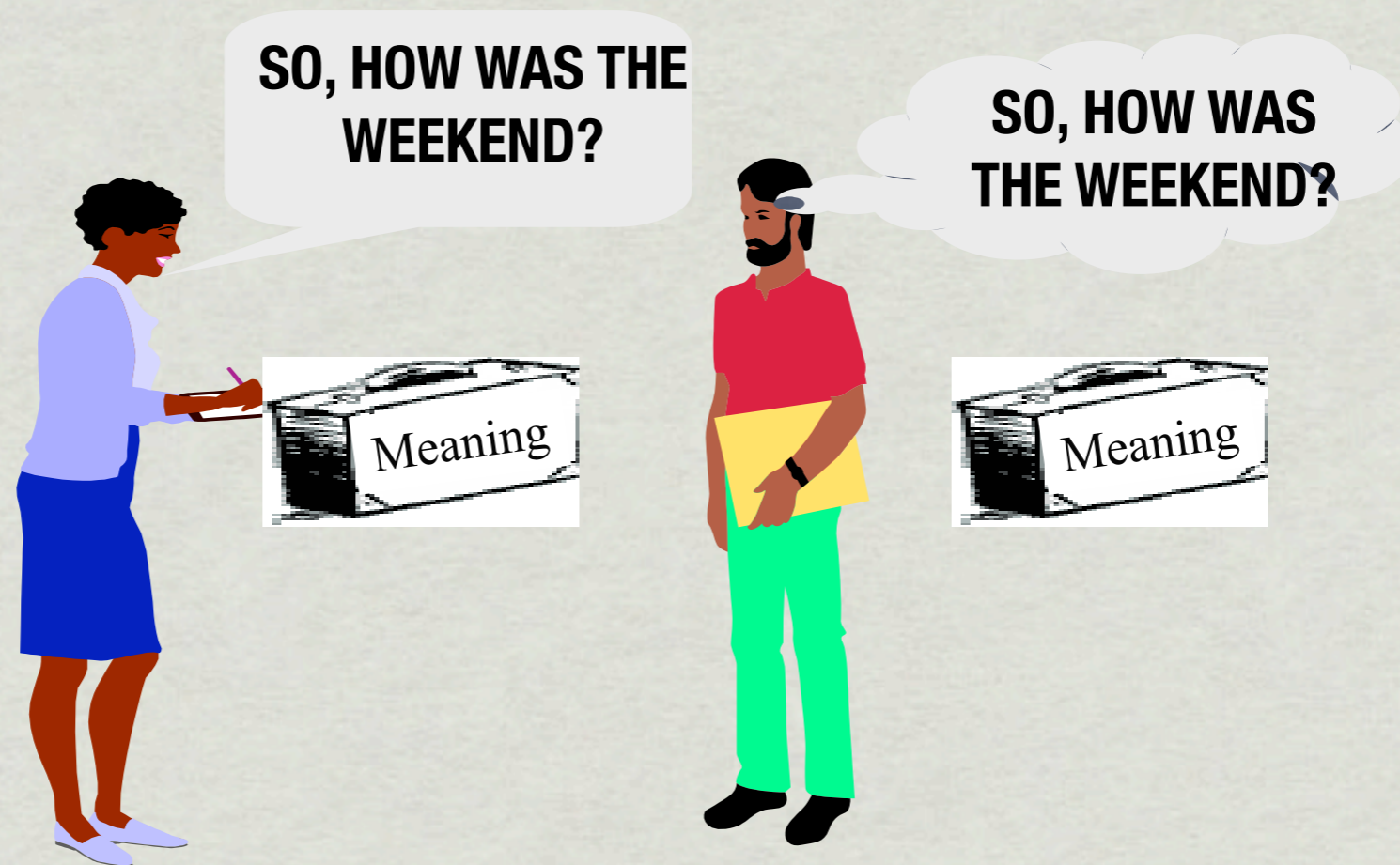
- * We speak of **using words** as though they were **objects** rather than **behavioural events**
- * You cannot use a word any more than you can use a hand claps
- * Deciding to use a word is simply describing your own likely behaviour (the word you will say) based on descriptions occasioned by the current situation
- * This illusion of control blinds us to the environmental causes of our language behaviour

USING WORDS!



Language as Behaviour

- * We think that words *transport/contain* meanings



**THE PROBLEM IS THAT MEANINGS ARE NOT IDENTIFIABLE EVENTS
(THEY DON'T REALLY EXIST!)
IF SOMEONE "GETS OUR MEANING", THEY SIMPLY BEHAVE AS WE EXPECT THEM TOO**

Language as Behaviour

- * Language is behaviour
 - * However, we usually make assumptions about language that we would not make about other behaviour
- * We often fail to distinguish between spoken and written words
 - * Different responses – physically, spatially and temporally
 - * Occur in Different contexts
 - * Controlled by different consequences
 - * We tend to think same referent --> same thing

Exercise 1

- * **Language as behaviour**
 - * **Time 5 mins**
 - * **Groups of 5**

 - * Examples of language as behavior
 - * Treating words as 'real'
 - * Examples of behavioral processes
- * **Exercise**
 - * Each group:
 - * At least one example of language as an antecedent stimulus
 - * At least one example of language as a response
 - * At least one example of language as consequence

Exercise 1

- * **Language as behaviour**
- * Time 5 mins
- * Words as antecedent stimuli: SDs (“Break time!”), Queries (“What’s this?”)
- * Words as responses: Tacts (see apple - say “apple”), Mands (request “apple”), Rules (complete this by Friday)
- * Words as consequences: reinforcement (“Nice job!”), punishment (“Seriously?”), extinction (....), others
- * RE: working for words (approval, status), fleeing from words (weak, foolish)
- * PUN: words reducing behaviors (fail, substandard)
- * EXT: extinction bursts from ignored colleagues