



## Increasing mands for information in children with autism in the presence of establishing operations; a replication study

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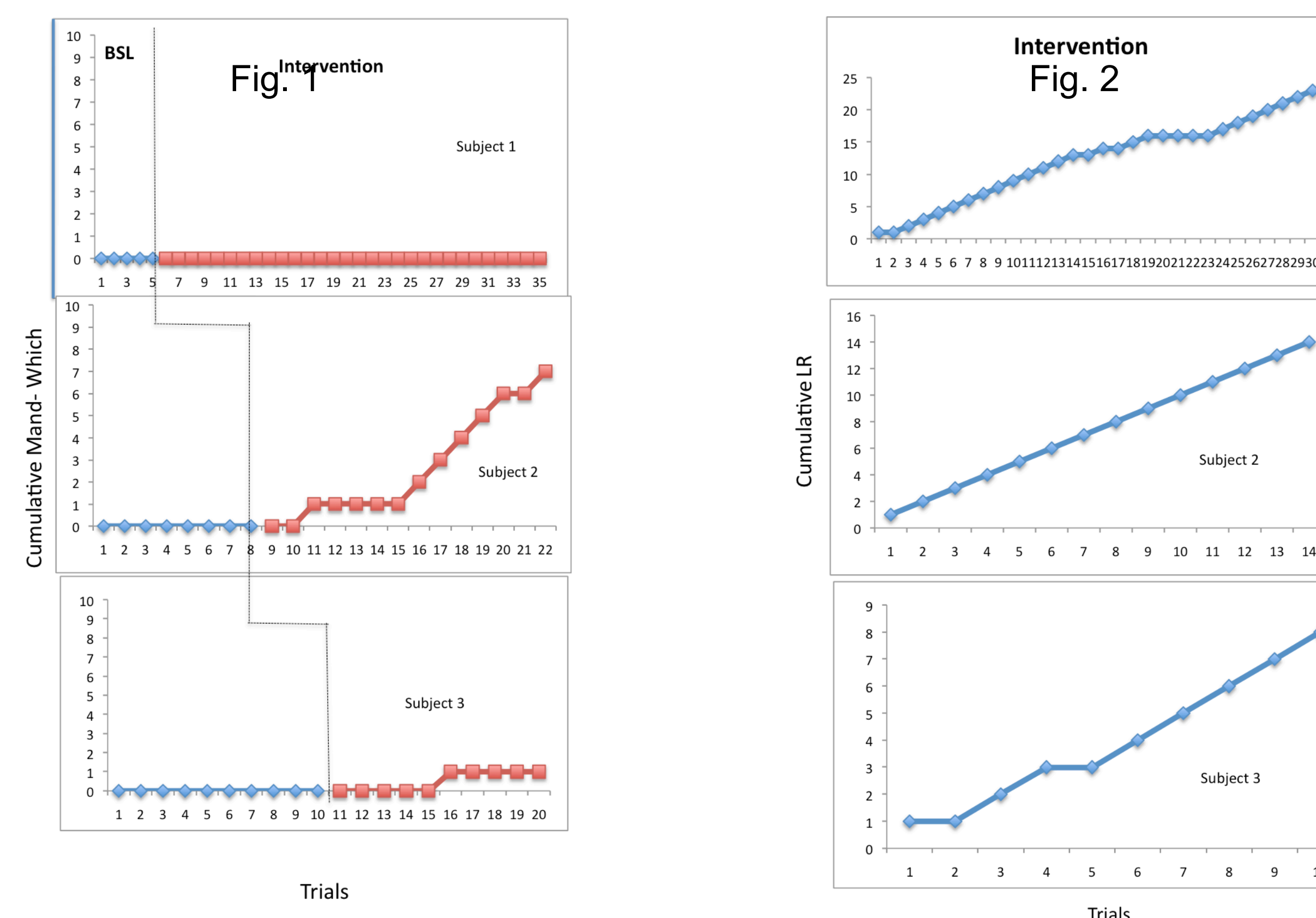
### Introduction

- The current study examines the effect of a teaching procedure on the acquisition of mands for information using the word “which?” in the presence of establishing operations
- The purpose of this study is to replicate a 2014 study conducted by Shillingsburg et. al. and expand upon existing literature on mands for information
- In previous studies, mands for information have been maintained by tangible reinforcers rather than access to information that allows the learner to obtain a reinforcer. The previous studies have failed to manipulate antecedent variables to contrive an EO
- The current study aims to establish a relationship between a mand training procedure and appropriate requests for information that is necessary to access a reinforcer

### Methods

- Participants
  - 3 children diagnosed with ASD (ages 4, 5, & 7)
  - All receiving center-based ABA services 5 days/week
  - Level 2 (VB-MAPP) Mand Repertoire
  - Level 2 (VB-MAPP) Listener Responding skills
- Materials
  - 6 opaque colored or character cups
  - Preferred edible & tangible items
- Procedure
  - *Pre-assessment:* 3 consecutive sessions participants chose the correct cup from an array of 6.
  - *Baseline:* 6 opaque cups were set up upside down with a preferred item under one cup. A wrapper from the preferred item or other stimulus signaling the availability of the item was left in the child’s view. A trial began when the child requested the item. The therapist responded, “Yes, it is under the \_\_\_ cup.” If the child did not ask “Which cup?” the score of 0 was recorded and the therapist moved on to the next trial.
  - *Treatment:* Procedures were identical to baseline except the learner was prompted to ask “Which cup?” following a 2-second prompt delay. Data was recorded on the occurrence of the mand for information. Data was collected on whether the participant chose the correct cup based on the information provided.

### Results



- Fig. 1 shows the cumulative record of mands for information using the word “which?” during baseline and treatment phases
- Fig. 2 shows the cumulative record of appropriate listener responses

### Discussion

- Results demonstrate that a mand training procedure that manipulates antecedent variables to contrive EO’s can increase mands for information in some children with autism.
- Results show that contriving EO can also lead to increases in listener responding behavior in some children with autism
- Future research should focus on other ways to contrive establishing operations to facilitate mands for information when teaching this skill.
- Future research should also consider the role of listener behavior in reinforcing mands for information (i.e. does the information provided appropriately reinforce mands for information?)
- Limitations:
  - Only 3 participants
  - Study conducted in a limited time frame
  - Procedures were implemented in a contrived situation in instructional setting
  - Replications could be improved by implementing procedures in a more natural settings and by assessing generalization