

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS "REVISTA MEXICANA DE ANALISIS DE LA CONDUCTA"?

¿DÓNDE ESTÁ EN EL MUNDO LA
REVISTA MEXICANA DE ANÁLISIS DE LA CONDUCTA?

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When the *Revista Mexicana de Analisis de la Conducta* (hereafter, RMAC or the Journal) was founded twenty-five years ago, the inaugural editorial noted that "[T]he journal is bilingual because scientific effort is not restricted to one country. The journal has been planned as an international forum whereby the contributions will not be restricted to only Mexican psychologists, but the work of psychologists from all over the continent will be published" (*Revista Mexicana de Analisis de la Conducta*, 1975, p. 9). The RMAC is the most widely-circulated journal exclusively devoted to behavior analysis that is published outside of the United States and its silver anniversary seems an appropriate occasion to assess its role in the international arena of behavior analysis. In so doing, the question of the title will be answered.

RMAC: An international journal?

The *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* defines "international" as:

1. Between or among nations; involving two or more nations...
2. of or pertaining to two or more nations or their citizens...
3. pertaining to the relations between nations...
4. having members or dealings in several nations...
5. transcending national limits or a nationalist viewpoint.... (1971, p. 743).

The fourth and fifth definitions seem most germane to a discussion of the international activities of RMAC, for any journal claiming to be "international" should involve individuals from several nations in its activities and it should be concerned at least in part with broad, universal principles that transcend time or geographical place. The fifth definition, however, is more qualitative in that it relates to the most general of activities of behavior analysts

and the fourth, while allowing the possibility of more quantitative assessment, needs to be refined and operationalized to be useful in answering the question posed in the heading of this section. "Having members or dealings in several nations" may be refined by defining (a) "members" as participants in the Journal, either as authors or as those who participate in the editorial review process and (b) "dealings" in terms of the activities of the journal, that is, publishing pieces devoted to "basic research and applications with humans and animals, methodological and theoretical contributions, and brief communications in clinical, educational, and experimental areas, as well as critical book reviews relevant to behavior analysis" (*Mexican Journal of Behavior Analysis*, 1975, p. 9). Below, these refinements are operationalized along several dimensions which, through the Journal's historical record, will shed light on the international activities of RMAC.

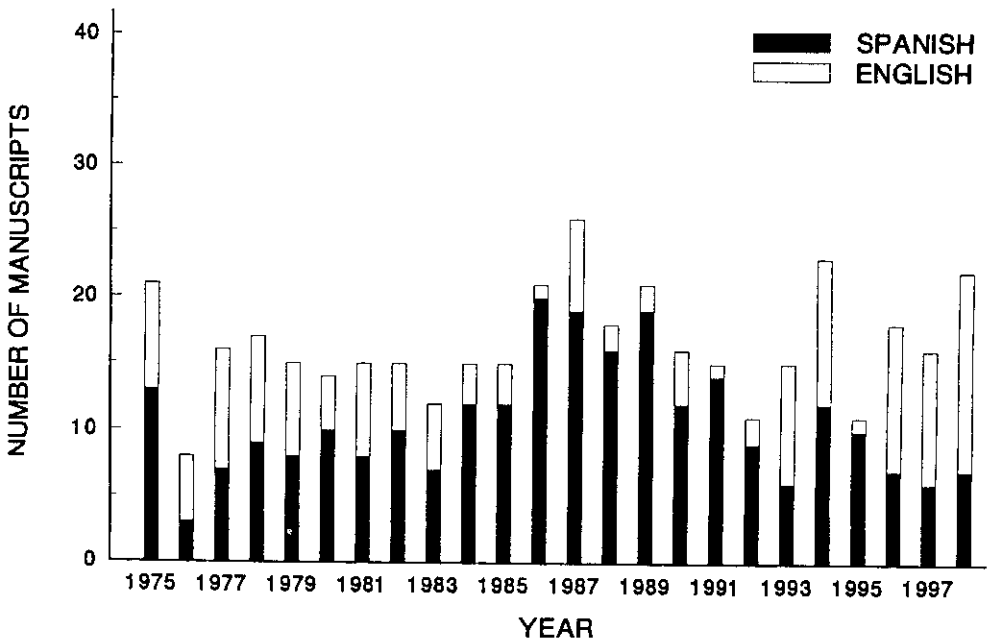


Figure 1. The number of articles published in RMAC, by year, in Spanish (filled portion of the bar) and in English (unfilled portion of the bar) from 1975 through 1998.

One of the goals of RMAC was to publish papers in Spanish and English, which should in turn and almost by definition, attract authors from

several countries where each of those languages is used. Figure 1 shows the number of articles published in RMAC by year, in Spanish (filled portion of the bar) and in English (unfilled portion of the bar) from 1975 through 1998. Of the 396 articles and reviews (excluding obituaries and editorials) published, 256, or 65%, have been in Spanish and 140, or 35% percent, have been in English. With the exception of the last two years depicted in the figure, when there was a larger proportion in English language papers as a function of a specific change in editorial policy toward widening the scope of international involvement in the editorial review process (Bruner, 1996), there is no systematic trend in the proportions. Some years are higher than others but the overall proportion of Spanish to English articles may be described as more or less constant. It is significant to note, however, that every article published in RMAC has included two abstracts, one in English and one in Spanish.

A question germane to "having members... in several nations" is that of whether authors from several countries publish in RMAC. The data in Table 1 answer this question affirmatively by showing the affiliation of the first author on each paper published in RMAC. The data in Figure 2 show these data by years. A strong majority of authors were affiliated with Mexican institutions, followed by authors affiliated with institutions in the United States. Other regions and countries are represented by smaller numbers of authors, but overall authors from institutions around the world have published in RMAC. The year-by-year data shown in Figure 2 do not reveal any systematic trends in the frequency of publication by country.

Table 1. Number and percentage of first authors whose home institutions were located in the indicated countries or continents.

Country or Continent	Number of First Authors	Percent of Total
Mexico	246	62%
United States	89	22%
South America	23	6%
Central America	2	< 2%
Continental Europe and Russia	22	5%
Other English-Speaking Countries (e.g., England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand)	16	4%
Japan	1	< 1%

Another, related, index of intercourse among behavior analysts in different countries is the number of multiply-authored articles in which the

authors are from at least two different countries. Table 2 shows the number of these types of international cooperation by year and by the authors' affiliations. The number of such multi-nationally authored papers is small, but the number of such papers over the years has been rather steady and without systematic trends. The largest number of such cooperative publications has been between authors affiliated with Mexican institutions and those affiliated with institutions in the United States.

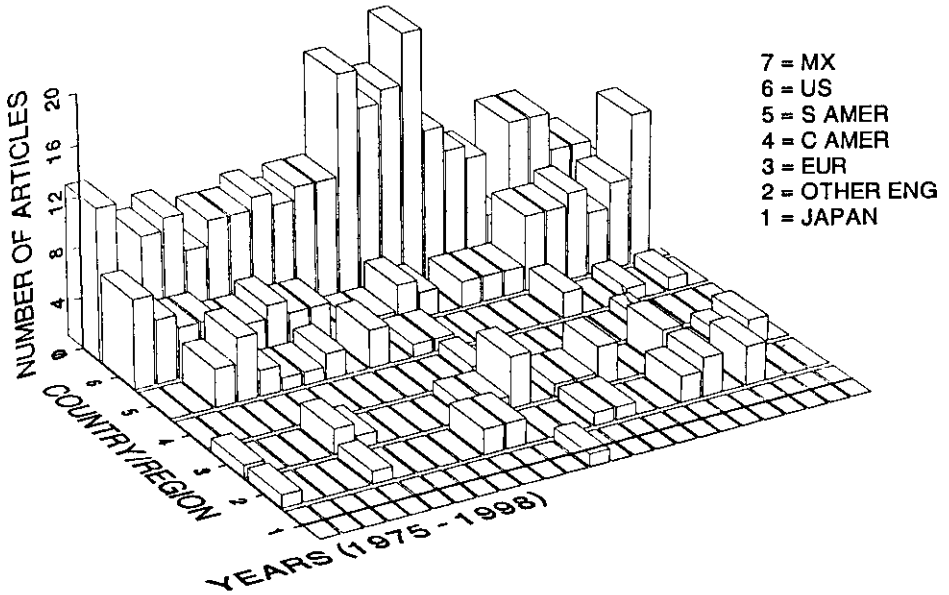


Figure 2. The number of articles published by year as a function of the country/region of the institution of the first author of each article (Mx=Mexico; US=United States; S Amer=South America; C Amer=Central America; Eur=Continental Europe; Other Eng=Other English-speaking countries besides the US (e.g., England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand)). Note that the number 7, for Mexico, does not appear on the country/region axis but it is the back most row of data.

Yet another index of "having members in several nations" is the composition of the editorial staff. During the first 25 years of the Journal, each of the Editors has been affiliated with a Mexican institution, most frequently UNAM. With two exceptions (Alliston Reid and Jack Gewirtz), all of the Associate Editors also have been from Mexican institutions until the time of Carlos Bruner's Editorship (1996-2000). Bruner appointed a larger number (8)

of Associate Editors from five different countries, and he created a new position, Editor for English Language Submissions, to which he appointed Lattal from the United States. Members of the Editorial Board have been drawn from many countries, as the data in Figure 3 illustrate. The total number of Editorial Board members has ranged between approximately 13 and 18 since the inception of the Journal. Most members have come from Mexico but with the exception of 1989-1993, at least one Editorial Board member has come from a country outside Mexico. In the early and recent years of the Journal, several US behavior analysts have served on the Board. In between these times, members of the Board have come from non-US countries.

The more qualitative definition of international suggests that this term is used when events or activities transcend "national limits or a nationalist viewpoint." This can be assessed by examining the Journal's content. Behavior principles are, like the principles upon which any science is constructed, assumed to be universal and therefore not provincial. Inspecting the content of each issue of RMAC reveals the authors' concerns with universal scientific and professional issues that affect the conduct of behavior analysis any place in the world. Few, if any, of the articles could be construed as focusing exclusively, or even substantially, on issues unique to Mexico, Mexican culture or Mexican society (although the issues addressed by behavior analysts in those articles certainly are relevant to all of these sectors).

Special issues and invited articles both shape and reflect broader issues in the field of behavior analysis. For several years, it has been the Editor's practice to include both Mexican and international behavior analysts in both of these activities, again suggesting a sensitivity to broader issues in behavior analysis.

Other content features that provide insights into the focus and orientation of the Journal are book reviews and obituaries. The first reveals the particular topics to which the Journal's readership is being oriented and the second reveals those individuals whose work has most influenced readers of the Journal. Ten book reviews have appeared since the Journal's inception in 1975. These reviews include books written or edited by 4 Mexicans, 4 Americans, 1 Canadian, and 1 Englishman. Of the eight obituaries appearing in the Journal, 6 were of American behavior analysts and two were of Mexicans. Given the origins of behavior analysis in the United States and the relative youth of Mexican behavior analysis and analysts, such a distribution is not surprising. It does, however, further reflect the attunement of the Journal to events in behavior analysis beyond Mexico.

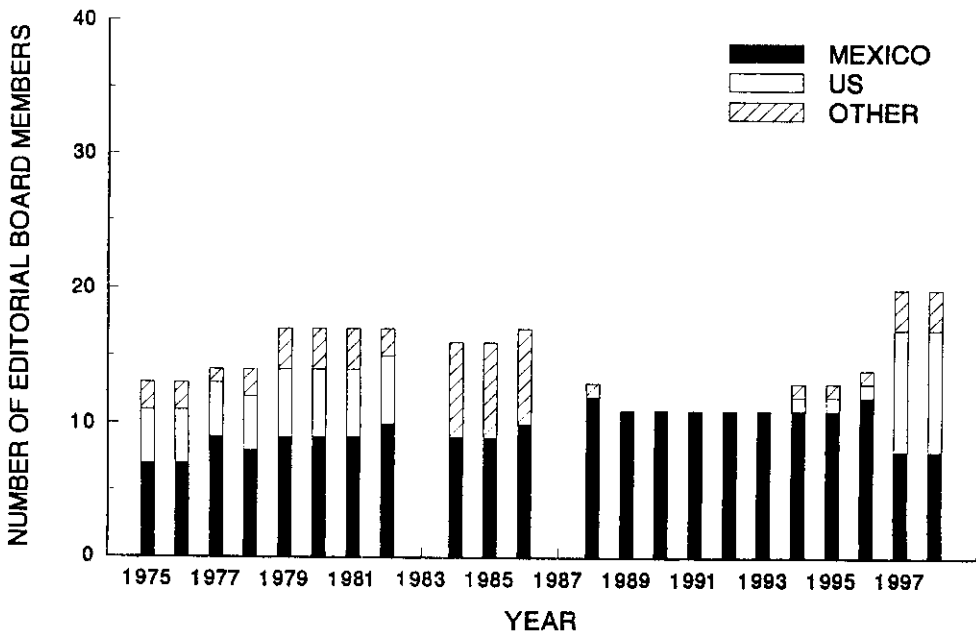


Figure 3. The number of editorial board members, by year, affiliated with institutions in Mexico (filled portion of the bar) and in other countries (unfilled portion of the bar).

Broadening the World View, or Not

Having considered the historical evidence for the international efforts of RMAC, let us turn briefly to the present, and then to the future of RMAC. The Journal has developed a strong international focus under the leadership of its current editor, Professor Carlos Bruner. In his inaugural editorial, he presented a plan to increase the international participation and visibility of RMAC (Bruner, 1996). He has accomplished this goal admirably. The editorial board consists of an equal number of Mexican and international scholars, and seven countries are represented among the Associate Editors of the Journal. Reciprocal advertising of the other's journals has been undertaken with the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* (JEAB) and the advertisements in JEAB include a table of contents of the most recent issue of RMAC. In addition, the Journal has become very visible at international meetings, where subscription and submission materials are made available to attendees. In 1997 and 1998, 11 articles have appeared in Spanish and 27 in English (the two special issues in that period, representing 16 articles, were all in English), and

a total of 20 different institutions outside of Mexico are represented by the authors.

The contents of each issue of RMAC appear in *PsycScan: Behavior Analysis and Therapy* and the abstracts of each article appear, in English, in *Psychological Abstracts*. Both of these reference sources are standard reference sources for behavior analysts and psychologists around the world. The Journal's recently-established web site (<http://www.tiac.net/users/commons/portada.html>) is becoming linked to other behavioral web sites, increasing further its global visibility and impact (cf. Commons, 1997).

As RMAC moves into the 21st century, it may be at a critical juncture as more and more behavior analysts are trained in Mexico rather than, as in the past, in other countries. The development of behavior analysis in Mexico to the point that students are able to receive training here rather than abroad is excellent for behavior analysis. Part of that training, however, hopefully will be not only to have these upcoming behavior analysts address significant social and academic issues in Mexico but also to continue to look outward to the international community. As these Mexican-trained behavior analysts come into leadership of Mexican behavior analysis, and in particular this Journal, they will encounter a three-forked junction. First, they can focus the Journal more on Mexico and Mexican authors. This is easily done by discontinuing publication in the English language. Second, they can maintain the status quo. This also seems easy. The RMAC has achieved a good international focus in its first 25 years and this focus likely could continue by continuing to do what now is being done. Third, and hopefully the path that will be taken, even greater efforts could be made to further integrate the journal into the international behavior analysis movement. The world will be at the door of these behavior analysts. We in the international community are optimistic that they continue to keep it open to all of us.

Into the future

If the door continues to stay open, and there is every reason to think that it will, there are many issues to address concerning the international dissemination and impact of the Journal. Before considering these issues, however, I wish to address a specific suggestion which appeared in a recent editorial in the Journal by Commons (1997). Commons proposed that one way of increasing visibility of the Journal might be to change its name, perhaps to the "International Journal of Behavior Analysis." This does not seem a good idea to the present author for two interrelated reasons. First, the Journal already has an international reputation as the *Revista Mexicana de Analisis de la Conducta*. Second, changing the name of a journal is an effortful process that,

when complete, can confuse users of the Journal and cause them to believe that publication of the Journal has ceased altogether. Thus, the net effect of a name change can be a decrease rather than an increase in visibility. Furthermore, there is ample precedent for journals that are used and cited internationally to carry the name of the country in which they originate, for example, the *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, the *American Journal of Psychology*, or *Japanese Psychological Research* (the latter with articles written in English, French, and German).

A key to increasing the visibility of RMAC is not in changing its name but in making the contents attractive and, then, known to the international community. The range of articles related to all facets of behavior analysis and a selective editorial policy with respect to accepting manuscripts for publication both contribute to the attractiveness of the Journal. Making them known to the broader community ultimately requires that the journal be placed in the hands of more behavior analysts.

Circulation and citation go hand-in-hand with one another. An accessible article is more likely to be cited. Once cited, it becomes more likely to be cited again by other researchers, assuming that they too can gain access to the article. Citation rate is one of the major indices of the prestige and effectiveness of a journal, so it is in the best interest of RMAC to optimize its circulation.

A conventional way of increasing visibility is through increased library subscriptions, but this is no easy task because library budgets in the US are tightening and librarians are constantly asking faculty to review the library's periodicals subscriptions for possible cuts. Persuading librarians to subscribe to the Journal is made even more difficult in academic libraries in the US by the fact that the articles are not all in English. Nonetheless, access to the Journal in at least some representative US libraries would increase accessibility, if only through its availability on interlibrary loans.

Increasing submission rates helps both circulation and citation of a journal. Authors who publish in RMAC would seem to be more likely to cite their RMAC work in papers or other journals, which in turn may encourage others who read their work but are unfamiliar with RMAC also to cite articles from RMAC. Increased submission rates can result from individual contacts with potential authors to invite submissions, making the Journal visible at international conferences, special issues where a variety of individuals are invited to submit on a common topic (which already is done annually by the Journal). Invited papers (which are, of course, subjected to the same editorial review as any other manuscript) enter into the citation-circulation equation in that authors want to have their work cited and it is more likely to be cited when published in journals that have good visibility among their peers.

Increased citation rates may result by the recent wider availability of the Journal's table of contents. Certainly, RMAC's appearance in PsycScan: Behavior Analysis and Therapy is useful in this regard. It also might be possible to have RMAC included in Current Contents, a weekly periodical that publishes tables of contents from professional journals in many areas and is widely circulated among behavioral scientists. The same group that publishes Current Contents also publishes the Social Science Citation Index, which in turn lists the citations of every author who publishes in journals that it includes in its contents. Current Contents also is available on the world-wide-web. The inclusion of recent Tables of Contents of the Journal on the RMAC web site makes that information easily and quickly available to the international community.

The web site also currently serves in part as an outlet for getting out subscription information about the Journal in a timely fashion and as a means for communicating with the Journal's editorial staff. An increase in individual subscriptions would provide both increased circulation and useful financial support (cf. Commons, 1997). The web site also might serve a more far-reaching purpose. One historical difficulty for the Journal has been its slowness in arriving in other countries by conventional international mail delivery services. Perhaps in the not-too-distant future it will be possible to subscribe to RMAC on-line, obviating the slowness in delivery inherent in conventional mail services. Such a system might increase the number of subscribers while concurrently minimizing the cost of producing and circulating the Journal.

Conclusions

Dymond (1997) recently reported that international participation in the three major United States-based behavioral journals, the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, the Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, and The Behavior Analyst, was limited to about 5-10% of the articles published therein. The data in Table 1 above suggest a higher level of international participation by authors in *Revista Mexicana de Analisis de la Conducta*--almost 38 percent of first authors from countries outside Mexico. Many of these international authors are from the United States, but these must be considered "international" and furthermore there still are approximately 12% from other countries around the world. In addition, in recent years there has been strong international representation in the editorial process of the Journal. The data reported above suggest that there is room for improvement in involving the international community in the Journal; nonetheless, the international efforts to this point are most encouraging. These results suggest a positive and proactive stance by the journal, leading to an answer to the question posed in the title of,

"in Mexico...but also firmly in the international community of behavior analysis."

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