Applications of Skinner’s Analysis of Verbal Behavior to Older Adults

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The presence and impact of age-related language deficits have been acknowledged both within the field of behavior analysis (e.g., Gross, Fuqua, & Merritt, 2013; Skinner, 1957; Sundberg 1991) as well as the broader field of gerontology (Cohen-Mansfield & Werner, 1997), though relatively little research has focused on remediation of those deficits. This dearth of intervention research is partly related to the notion that age-related language deficits are the result of biological processes. However, there is growing support that environmental variables can and do play a role in language deficits among older adults. This talk will review data from a series of studies aimed at the assessment and treatment of age-related language deficits among older adults, as well as discuss directions and implications of future research.