

Current Issues in Verbal Behavior: Autoclitics are Real but Mediation Isn't



Department
of
Psychology



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1720 Chem

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Skinner's analysis of verbal behavior has had a huge impact on the assessment and treatment of communication deficits in young children with autism. Most of these advances have arisen from the functional analysis of the basic verbal operants, relatively introductory material when compared to Verbal Behavior as a whole. However, there have been efforts to investigate more complex parts of Skinner's interpretive work, not least of which the assertion that verbal behavior can be emitted privately and the verbal organism can respond as a listener to those private events. In this way, covert verbal mediation has been touted as an explanation for some instances of delayed matching-to-sample and sequencing tasks, perhaps ignoring conflicting data or alternative explanations. This talk will present two experiments investigating tasks which have so far been assumed to require verbal mediation, and an additional novel experiment demonstrating the control of descriptive autoclitics with adult subjects.

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