Editorial

Volume 15 of *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior* (TAVB) contained a special section in which 15 behavior analysts contributed their views on the status and future directions of the analysis of verbal behavior from a natural science perspective. In the editorial introducing Volume 15, I noted some general themes in the commentaries. First, behavior analysts were expanding their experimental and theoretical interests, both within and outside of behavior analysis. Second, behavior analysts were addressing more complex issues in the analysis of verbal behavior, including (a) analyzing relationships historically claimed by mainstream psychologists, such as the development of verbal behavior in children, (b) incorporating different methodological designs and theoretical concepts, and (c) interpreting linguistic phenomena that have traditionally been of interest to linguists and cognitive psychologists. The articles in Volume 16 confirm my impressions.

Although the articles in this volume were probably not directly influenced by the commentaries in the special section of Volume 15, the problems addressed are similar. For example, some commentaries spoke to the need for more experimental analysis, in particular, of language learning in children, and this volume contains three experimental articles that investigate verbal relationships in children. The article by Shimamune and Jitsumori looks at a very interesting combination of instructional strategies, including mastery and fluency training, to teach native speakers of Japanese the use of the English articles *the* and *a*. Their study has implications for using similar instructional technologies to teach other verbal relationships. Hupp and Reitman examine the effects of complex verbal contingency-specifying stimuli, as independent variables, on compliance in young children and, in so do-

ing, continue a discussion not only of the variables that determine compliance in young children but also about distinguishing between verbal stimuli as discriminative versus function altering. And for those behavior analysts who teach children with autism, there are two articles of interest. In the first, Drash, High, and Tudor examine how teaching mands can facilitate the acquisition of echoic and tact repertoires in young children with autism, and in the second, Esther Shafer reviews Mark Sundberg and Jim Partington's book *Teaching Language to Children with Autism or Other Developmental Disabilities*.

Several of the commentaries in Volume 15 suggested that behavior analysts need to expand their analyses of verbal behavior to topics that have been the purview of traditional language scholars, which may mean only that behavior analysts should apply their interpretive skills to a more diverse range of language phenomena. Or it may mean that behavior analysts should not rule out incorporating different methodological designs or theoretical concepts. The remaining four articles, I believe, reflect this expansion.

In an invited article, David Palmer calls for behavior analysts who have some expertise in any area of the traditional language literature to submit review articles, book reviews, or tutorials (to TAVB) so that we may become more familiar with the types of questions addressed by those outside our field and, in turn, so that we might more successfully persuade others of the validity of our approach. Palmer then suggests some topics as possible candidates, including structural regularities of speech; properties of verbal behavior that may be constrained by the structure of the vocal apparatus, respiratory system, or even the central

nervous system; and prosody, among others.

Bill Potter continues the discussion of the use of protocol analysis by behavior analysts that was begun in Volume 15 in a cautionary reply. Potter clarifies several issues that should make behavior analysts pause before they rush to use protocol analysis as anything more than supplemental to more reliable dependent measures. Such critical analyses are necessary if behavior analysts are going to adopt different methodological designs.

In his article, Ernst Moerk attempts to bridge the chasm he sees between the traditional language-acquisition research literature and behavior-analytic approaches to the same topic and, in so doing, encourages behavior analysts toward methodological innovation. Moerk continues his previous work of analyzing sequences of recorded verbal interactions between mothers and their language-learning children in an effort to demonstrate that behavioral relationships are at the core of such learning and to try to identify some of the more complex of those relationships.

And finally, Lawrence Fraley argues that a scientific approach to philosophy is possible precisely because we already have a mature natural science of the verbal behavioral phenomena of which philosophy is comprised. Fraley

then explores a functional approach to the analysis of philosophical behavior by carefully defining and delineating several related classes of behavior (philosophical, scientific, technological, and technical or intuitive) and discussing the implications of such an analysis for philosophy.

All in all, the articles in this volume (and Volume 15) attest to the fact that behavior analysts are indeed addressing more complex issues in the analysis of verbal behavior, and I believe that such a trend can only strengthen our contribution to the understanding of language phenomena in a field that has traditionally been dominated by nominal psychology and linguistics.

I would like to thank all of those who submitted manuscripts to *TAVB*, and to encourage anyone interested in the analysis of verbal behavior from a natural science perspective to consider *TAVB* as an outlet for your work. I am also grateful to the members of the editorial board who served as reviewers for manuscripts, and to the following guest reviewers: Philip Drash, Mike Perone, Sal Soraci, and Robert Stromer (Volume 15), and Paul Andronis, Joe Layng, Ed Morris, David Reitman, and Janet Twyman (Volume 16).

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Editor