A Behavioral Analysis of Linguistic Structure:
Increasing the Length of Utterance in
Children with Autism

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CONTENT OUTLINE

A. Linguistic description of verbal behavior
B. Morphemes as units of “meaning”
C. Mean length of utterance (MLU) as a measure of language development
D. Roger Brown’s description of language development
E. Brown’s stages of development
F. Skinner’s description of autoclitic responses
G. Typical development and the autoclitic
H. Relationship between primary and secondary verbal operants
I. Problems of increasing MLU without meeting prerequisites.
J. Examples of unusual linguistic structure.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the linguistic/cognitive explanation of language.
2. Define the morpheme
3. Explain the mean length of utterance (MLU) as a measure of the sophistication of language
4. Describe Roger Brown’s analysis of language
5. Define the autoclitic and its value in understanding morphemes and MLU.
6. Describe typical development of the autoclitic response.
7. Describe the value of the autoclitic in understanding the development of the MLU.
8. List the prerequisites for autoclitic verbal development.
9. Describe the problems that result from teaching the autoclitic without regard to the student’s verbal repertoire.
10. Explain the behavioral processes that account for the problems of increasing the MLU prematurely.
Related Readings


