

## Separate Discipline Status Corroborated Again

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Although I am a TIBIA member normally residing in China, I have spent the 1999–2000 school year in a graduate linguistics program at a university in Singapore. As the last ten weeks of the program began, my class was being introduced to behaviorism. I had recently received a copy of Ma Wen's translation into Chinese of an article by Professor Stephen F. Ledoux titled "Behaviorology in China: A status report" (Ledoux, 1997a). Shortly after it arrived, an incident occurred that yet again corroborated the independent status of the behaviorology discipline as described by Ledoux in that article.

The incident began by my being praised—and later put down—by my psycholinguistics professor in class. A Hong Kong lady in her fifties, she told us she got her Ph.D. in psychology from Harvard. That day, when she introduced us to behaviorism and structuralism in class, she found that I was the only one (among 35 of us) who could answer almost all the questions quickly and satisfactorily. So she asked me curiously how come I was so familiar with behaviorism. I told her that I had taken two courses in behaviorology, "Verbal Behavior" and "Behaviorology for Teachers," in China. (They were part of my MA program at the Xi'an Foreign Languages University [XFLU] where I have been on the faculty since graduation; they were taught by Professor Ledoux when he was at XFLU teaching in 1990–91 as part of a faculty exchange.)

Then I also told her that I was interested in this discipline and would like to do research and applications in this area in the future. After that she said, "Well, it is good for a young man to be ambitious, but you need to be aware of the limited scope there; behaviorism is mainly applicable to animal behavior and it is rather outdated ..." I told her that behaviorology is different from behaviorism and I also mentioned Professor Ledoux and TIBI to her. Unexpectedly she said, "Well, there are always people who like to use new terms to impress others." I didn't say anything more.

When I got back to my apartment, I took out Dr. Ledoux's book (Ledoux, 1997b) and our TIBI newsletters. Thumbing through a book of over 300 pages plus a six-page bibliography about behaviorology, I further assured myself that she must be completely ignorant of behaviorology. Later on, some of my classmates asked me what behaviorology is about. I told them it is the natural sci-

ence that studies human behavior. It is an independent discipline different from behaviorism and it is applicable to many situations including foreign language teaching and learning. I also showed them Professor Ledoux's book and the translated article, plus the TIBI newsletters, and I recommended the related web sites to them.

This experience shows that "resistance from outmoded opinion" (Ledoux, 1997a, pp. 194–195) not only exists in China but also in Singapore. My psycholinguistics professor is an example. TIBI's training programs are needed even more than we may have thought.✻

### References

- Ledoux, S.F. (1997a/2002: *Second Edition*). Behaviorology in China: A status report. In Ledoux, S.F. *Origins and Components of Behaviorology* (pp. 187–198). Canton, NY: ABCs. Translated by Ma Wen. (1999). [Also 2002: *Behaviorology Today*, 5 (1), 37–44.]
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