



The Use of Language in Encouragement: A Psycholinguistic Perspective

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Received: 07 January 2025; Revised: 13 February 2025; Accepted: 17 June 2025
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Abstract: Encouragement through language use is a crucial process in creating motivation and developing mental health. This study focuses on analyzing the use of language in encouragement from a psycholinguistic perspective, exploring linguistic elements that influence the creation of inspiration and hope. The study covers theories of language processing, psychological mechanisms related to the perception of encouraging words, and impacts on behavioral and attitudinal changes. The findings reveal that effective encouragement language structure comprises four main components: the use of positive vocabulary, creation of mental imagery, connection with personal experiences, and creation of a sense of ownership. Additionally, cultural and situational contexts significantly influence the effectiveness of language used in encouragement. This study is important for developing effective communication strategies in counseling, education, and psychological treatment.

Keywords: psycholinguistics, encouragement, positive communication, motivation, mental health

1. Introduction

The use of language in encouragement is a fundamental human behavior that plays a crucial role in creating inspiration, building confidence, and promoting positive change. In an era where society faces increasing mental health challenges and stress, understanding the linguistic mechanisms that affect motivation creation is of paramount importance. Psycholinguistics is a field that studies the relationship between language and mental processes, providing an appropriate theoretical framework for analyzing the phenomenon of encouragement through language use (Shi, 2023).

In the Thai social context, encouragement takes various forms from the use of local idioms and proverbs to modern language use in online social media. However, academic studies on the effectiveness of different language forms in creating motivation remain limited. Deep understanding of the psychological mechanisms behind encouragement will help develop more effective communication methods (Dewaele et al., 2019). This study therefore aims to analyze the use of language in encouragement from a psycholinguistic perspective, focusing on exploring linguistic elements that affect inspiration creation.

Research in psycholinguistics has shown that language processing in the human brain involves multiple systems, including perception, emotion, and memory systems. Words used in encouragement not only convey information but also stimulate emotional and cognitive responses in listeners. Understanding these processes will help design encouraging messages

that are effective and appropriate for various contexts (Wang et al., 2021). Additionally, the study focuses on analyzing cross-cultural differences in encouragement to understand the influence of social and cultural contexts on the effectiveness of language used.

2. Basic Theories and Concepts in Psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistics is a field that studies the relationship between language and human mental processes, particularly language processing in the brain. Important basic theories in studying language use for encouragement include Dual Processing Theory, which explains that the human brain processes information through two main systems: System 1 which operates automatically and quickly, and System 2 which requires conscious effort and control. Effective encouraging language often stimulates both systems by creating emotional responses in System 1 and promoting positive thinking in System 2 (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Lazarus's Cognitive Appraisal Theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals evaluate and interpret situations, which affects emotional and behavioral responses. Language use in encouragement can influence this cognitive appraisal process by helping individuals see situations more positively, changing from viewing them as threats to seeing them as opportunities or challenges. The words chosen thus play a crucial role in shaping listeners' perspectives and attitudes (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Additionally, cognitive appraisal theory explains the importance of assessing coping resources, where language used in encouragement can help strengthen the sense of having these resources.

The concept of positive language use is rooted in positive psychology, which focuses on studying factors that make life meaningful and valuable. Research has found that using positive vocabulary can significantly affect emotional and cognitive changes. Positive vocabulary stimulates the release of brain chemicals related to happiness and motivation, such as dopamine and serotonin. Using language that emphasizes strengths, opportunities, and hope thus has concrete psychological impacts (Seligman, 2011). Neuroscience studies also show that hearing positive words stimulates brain areas related to rewards and motivation, while negative words stimulate areas related to stress and avoidance.

Framing Theory explains that presenting information in different formats can affect the interpretation and decision-making of message recipients. Effective encouragement often uses positive framing by emphasizing opportunities and good outcomes that may occur, rather than focusing on problems or negative outcomes. For example, saying "You have a 70% chance of success" creates more inspiration than "You have a 30% chance of failure," even though the information is the same. Using appropriate framing is therefore an important skill in communicating for encouragement.

2.1 Language Processing Mechanisms in the Brain

Language processing in the human brain is a complex process involving multiple brain areas. Broca's area is responsible for language production and Wernicke's area involved in language comprehension work together to process heard speech. When individuals receive encouraging messages, the brain processes information through multiple steps, starting from sound perception, word discrimination, meaning comprehension, and connection with past experiences and emotions. Research using fMRI technology has found that hearing encouraging words stimulates not only language areas but also the limbic system related to emotions and motivation.

The neural network system involved in processing encouraging language includes the reward circuit, which is related to dopamine release, an important neurotransmitter in creating motivation and good feelings. Hearing positive words can stimulate dopamine release, resulting in feelings of reward and motivation to continue actions. Additionally, using

metaphorical language and analogies in encouragement can stimulate brain areas related to mental imagery, which helps strengthen message impact. Understanding these mechanisms is important for design encouraging messages with maximum effectiveness.

Neuroscience studies also found that responses to encouraging language differ between individuals, depending on various factors such as personality, life experiences, and emotional state at the time. Individuals with high positive tendencies often respond better to encouraging language than those with negative tendencies. However, using appropriate linguistic techniques can increase encouragement effectiveness even in individuals with negative tendencies. Understanding these differences is therefore important for adjusting communication styles to suit message recipients.

2.2 Motivation Theory and Language

Important motivation theories in understanding language use for encouragement include Locke and Latham's Goal Setting Theory, which emphasizes the importance of setting clear, specific, and challenging goals in creating motivation. Effective encouraging language should help listeners see goals clearly and feel they can achieve them. Words that help break large goals into small steps or emphasize progress already made can significantly increase motivation. Research has found that using specific, action-oriented language such as "You can start by doing X today" is more effective than general words like "You can do it."

Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory proposes that humans have three basic needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Language use in encouragement that aligns with these needs will be more effective. For example, using language that provides choices and promotes self-decision-making (strengthening autonomy), emphasizing existing strengths and abilities (strengthening sense of competence), and creating feelings of being part of a group or community (strengthening relatedness). Studies have found that encouraging messages that respond to all three needs can create more sustainable intrinsic motivation than using external rewards or punishments alone.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory explains that individual motivation depends on expectations that actions will lead to desired outcomes, belief that actions will lead to good performance, and value of expected outcomes. Language use in encouragement should therefore strengthen listeners' confidence in their abilities, connect actions with desired outcomes, and emphasize the value of pursued goals. Effective encouraging language often combines all three elements, such as "With your abilities (expectancy), hard work on this project (action) will lead to the success you want (valuable outcome)."

3. Linguistic Elements in Encouragement

Analysis of linguistic elements effective in encouragement is an important issue to consider at multiple levels, from vocabulary and sentence levels to overall message structure. Choosing positive vocabulary is the most important basic element. These vocabularies not only convey positive meanings but also stimulate appropriate emotional responses in listeners. Effective positive vocabularies are often words related to success, hope, ability, and growth, such as "possible," "opportunity," "potential," "progress," and "success." Research has found that these vocabularies affect emotional state and perception changes in listeners in positive directions (Wong, 2015).

Using pronouns and creating a sense of ownership is another important element. Using the second person pronoun "you" helps create personal connection and makes messages specifically meaningful to listeners, while using the first person plural pronoun "we" can create feelings of belonging and mutual support. For example, "We will overcome this obstacle together" creates more inspiration than "You must overcome this obstacle" because it creates a

sense of having support and not facing problems alone. Social psychology research has found that using language that creates feelings of group belonging can significantly increase motivation and confidence in taking action (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014).

Creating mental imagery through language use is a highly effective technique in encouragement. Using vocabulary that stimulates listeners to imagine success situations or good outcomes helps create inspiration and determination. Vocabulary related to senses such as "see," "touch," "feel" can help listeners create clearer success images in their minds. For example, "Try to imagine the feeling you'll have when you achieve this goal" or "Think about the smiling faces of people you love when they see your success." Creating these images not only increases motivation but also makes goals feel more real and achievable.

Using appropriate sentence structures affects encouragement effectiveness. Positive declarative sentences with simple and direct structures are often more effective than complex sentences or those with negations. Using sentences that start with action verbs such as "start," "create," "develop," "achieve" helps listeners focus on action rather than overthinking. Additionally, using positive leading questions such as "How will you feel when you achieve this goal?" or "What method do you think will help you progress?" can stimulate listeners to think positively and find solutions themselves. Using these sentence structures helps make encouraging messages more powerful in motivation.

3.1 Positive Vocabulary Selection

Selecting positive vocabulary in encouragement is an art requiring deep understanding of the psychological impact of words. Positive vocabulary doesn't just mean words with good meanings but also includes words that can stimulate emotions and cognition in constructive directions. Psycholinguistic research has found that certain words have more power to change mental states than others. Growth-related vocabulary such as "develop," "learn," "progress," "improve" has the effect of creating perspectives that see problems as learning opportunities rather than obstacles to avoid. Regular use of these vocabularies can help shape listeners' thinking to be more positively oriented.

Vocabulary related to abilities and potential such as "capable," "potential," "strength," "special ability," "expertise" plays an important role in strengthening listeners' self-confidence. Using these vocabularies should be paired with specific evidence or concrete examples so listeners can connect with their own experiences. For example, "You have problem-solving ability as seen from how you handled past situations." Using ability-related vocabulary linked to specific evidence makes listeners feel the assessment is credible and not just consolation. Additionally, using vocabulary showing positive change such as "new beginning," "new opportunity," "starting point" helps listeners see the future more optimistically.

Using vocabulary related to hope and future such as "hope," "opportunity," "possibility," "bright future," "achievable goals" has the power to create positive visions for listeners. These vocabularies help listeners focus on desired outcomes rather than current problems. Research has found that using future-oriented language can significantly increase action motivation and reduce feelings of depression. However, using these vocabularies should be balanced and shouldn't make them feel unrealistic or far from reality. Mixing hope with reality makes messages most effective. Vocabulary selection must therefore consider context and listeners' mental state at the time.

3.2 Sentence Structure and Thought Organization

Sentence structures used in encouragement significantly affect message effectiveness. Information ordering and choosing appropriate structures can increase psychological impact. Sentences that start by acknowledging current feelings or situations before leading to positive

messages are often more effective than giving only positive messages. For example, "I understand this situation is very challenging, and I believe you have the strength to get through it." Acknowledging difficulties first helps listeners feel understood, and subsequent encouraging messages appear more reasonable. This structure helps build trust and makes messages more credible.

Using step-ladder sentence structures that start from what listeners can currently do and gradually lead to larger goals is an effective technique. For example, "You can start by doing something small today, these small things will lead to bigger progress, and eventually you'll achieve your set goals." This structure makes large goals seem more achievable and reduces overwhelming feelings. Research has found that breaking large goals into small steps and emphasizing the first step listeners can take immediately helps increase the chance of starting action. Using this sentence structure also helps create feelings of control and choice for listeners.

Thought organization in encouraging messages should emphasize ending with positive notes and specific actions. Cognitive psychology research has found that information in the final position is often most remembered and influential (Recency Effect). Ending messages with questions that stimulate positive thinking or specific suggestions can increase effectiveness. For example, "Are you ready to start the first step?" or "What's the first thing you'll do tomorrow to get closer to your goal?" Ending with questions or calls to action helps listeners have clear direction and feelings of participation in planning. Using these structures appropriately makes encouraging messages more powerful in motivation and leading to real action.

4. Cultural and Social Context in Encouragement

Cultural context has a tremendous influence on the effectiveness of language used in encouragement. What is considered appropriate encouragement in one culture may be inappropriate or even create negative impacts in another culture. In Thai society, which is characterized by a culture that values face-saving and interpersonal relationships, effective encouragement often emphasizes creating feelings of group belonging and avoiding making listeners feel isolated or too different from others. Words like "We believe in you" or "Everyone wants to see you succeed" often have more positive impact than emphasizing individuality alone (Yin & Lee, 2012). Understanding cultural values is therefore necessary for adjusting language to suit target groups.

Differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures significantly affect encouragement responses. In individualistic cultures like the United States or Western Europe, encouragement emphasizing personal abilities, challenging goal-setting, and self-competition is often effective. While in collectivistic cultures like Thailand, Japan, or Korea, encouragement emphasizing group success, maintaining relationships, and community participation works better. Research has found that using the pronoun "we" instead of "you" in encouragement can increase effectiveness in societies with collectivistic characteristics. Understanding these differences is important for creating encouraging messages appropriate to cultural contexts.

Local language and folk sayings play important roles in creating emotional connections in encouragement. In Thai society, using familiar sayings can create closer feelings and deeper understanding than using formal language or foreign languages. These sayings not only convey meanings but also carry cultural memories and experiences that can deeply stimulate emotions and motivation. Studies have found that using local language in encouragement is more effective than using standard language in many cases, especially when listeners have ties to local culture. Understanding and appropriately using local language is therefore an important

skill in effective encouragement.

4.1 Influence of Social Values

Social values have profound influence on perceiving and interpreting encouraging messages. In Thai society that values respecting elders and hierarchy, encouragement from older or higher-status individuals often carries more weight and credibility than encouragement from peers. Using language appropriate to formality levels and showing respect is therefore important. Words like "I believe you can do it" from a supervisor will have more impact than "I believe you can do it" from a colleague. Understanding these social dynamics helps make encouragement more effective. Additionally, using language that shows honor and recognition of listeners' dignity is an important element that shouldn't be overlooked.

Values about hard work and diligence deeply embedded in Thai society can be used as effective connection points in encouragement. Connecting effort and hard work to good outcomes often receives positive responses. Messages like "Your diligence will definitely pay off" or "Hard work will lead you to your goal" reflect values Thai society upholds and can create inspiration. However, using these values must be careful not to become excessive pressure. Creating balance between emphasizing effort and accepting limitations is therefore important. Effective encouragement should promote motivation without creating pressure that may negatively affect mental health.

The importance of family and community in Thai society is another factor to consider in encouragement. Connecting personal goals to family or community benefits can greatly increase motivation. Messages like "Your success will be your family's pride" or "You are an inspiration to people around you" utilize the need to participate and benefit the group. Research has found that connecting personal goals to responsibility toward others can significantly increase commitment and effort, especially in cultures that value interpersonal relationships. Using these values appropriately helps make encouragement have lasting and meaningful impact for listeners.

4.2 Language in the Digital Age and Online Social Media

Language use in encouragement in the digital age has unique characteristics different from traditional communication. Character limitations on various platforms require using concise and highly effective language. Using emojis and stickers has become part of communication that can supplement or replace words in conveying emotions and feelings. Heart emojis, smiling faces, or encouragement symbols like 🤝 ✨ 🌟 can greatly increase emotional impact of messages. Research has found that appropriate emoji use can increase positive perception of messages and make listeners feel more supported. However, emoji use must consider appropriateness to context and relationships between senders and recipients.

Hashtags and trends in online social media create new opportunities for creating encouragement waves. Using hashtags like #YouCanDoIt #Encouragement #NeverGiveUp helps messages reach wider groups and create feelings of being part of supportive communities. Participating in these trends can increase encouraging message power and make listeners feel they're not facing problems alone. Studies have found that being part of groups with similar goals in online social media can increase motivation and reduce loneliness. Using these characteristics constructively is therefore an important skill in digital age encouragement.

The immediacy of online social media communication makes encouragement possible at the most appropriate times. Responding to posts showing discouragement or need for support immediately can have greater impact than delayed encouragement. However, this speed comes with challenges in creating quality and appropriate messages. Using ready-made messages or automatic responses may lack sincerity and personal touch necessary for effective

encouragement. Creating balance between speed and message quality is therefore important. Effective digital age encouragement must combine technology convenience with human warmth and sincerity.

5. Psychological Impact of Encouragement

Encouragement through language has diverse and complex psychological impacts, from immediate changes in emotional states to long-term changes in self-perception and behavior. In the short term, receiving encouraging messages can stimulate brain chemical release related to happiness and motivation, such as serotonin, dopamine, and endorphins. These substances not only make one feel better at the moment but also help increase positive thinking and problem-solving abilities. Neuroscience research has found that positive emotional states resulting from linguistic support can expand perception scope and increase thinking flexibility (Broadening-and-Building Theory), enabling individuals to see more new solutions and opportunities (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Long-term effects of receiving quality encouragement consistently include developing self-confidence and self-efficacy perception. Research has found that individuals who receive quality encouragement continuously tend to develop confidence in their abilities to face challenges and achieve goals. This confidence becomes a positive cycle that encourages individuals to set more challenging goals and have commitment to implementation. Additionally, receiving linguistic support helps develop psychological resilience, which is the ability to recover from failures and adapt to changes. Increased psychological resilience helps individuals better cope with stress and difficulties.

Effective encouragement also affects developing sustainable intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is a form of motivation that comes from satisfaction in the action itself, rather than expecting external rewards or avoiding external punishment. Using language that emphasizes learning processes, growth, and action meaning rather than outcomes alone helps promote this intrinsic motivation. For example, saying "You have learned and developed more from this challenge" has more effect in creating intrinsic motivation than "You will get a reward when successful." Research shows that intrinsic motivation correlates with life satisfaction, good mental health, and continuous activity participation. Encouragement that promotes intrinsic motivation therefore has more long-term value than using only external motivation.

5.1 Changes in Self-Perception and Confidence

Self-perception is an important component of mental health and life success. Receiving quality encouragement can positively affect self-perception changes, especially in evaluating one's abilities and potential. When individuals receive messages emphasizing existing strengths and abilities, they often start seeing themselves more positively. This perception change not only affects feelings at the moment but also affects future behavior and decisions. Individuals with positive self-perception often have courage to take risks and try new things, leading to more learning and growth opportunities. Encouragement focused on helping listeners see themselves positively therefore has lasting and far-reaching impacts.

Increased self-confidence from receiving encouragement affects goal-setting and commitment to achieving those goals. Individuals with high self-confidence often set more challenging goals and have continuous effort even when facing obstacles. This confidence also affects failure perception. Individuals with self-confidence often view failures as learning opportunities rather than proof of inability. Appropriate encouragement can help shape this failure perspective by using language emphasizing learning processes and improvement, such as "This failure provides important information to help you do better next time." Creating positive perspectives toward failure is one of the most valuable impacts of quality

encouragement.

Developing sense of control perception is another important impact of encouragement. When individuals receive messages emphasizing ability to choose and decide, they often feel they have more power in determining their life direction. This sense of control positively correlates with mental health, life satisfaction, and activity participation. Encouragement using empowering language such as "You have choices," "You can decide," "The future is in your hands" helps strengthen this sense of control. Research has found that individuals with high sense of control have better stress-coping abilities and tend to succeed more in various goals. Encouragement should therefore focus on strengthening feelings of being one's own destiny determiner.

5.2 Effects on Motivation and Behavior Change

Motivation is an important driving force leading to behavior change and goal achievement. Effective encouragement can increase both intensity and sustainability of motivation. In terms of intensity, good encouraging messages can immediately create excitement and energy for action. Using powerful language and creating success images helps stimulate the brain's reward system and create enthusiasm. In terms of sustainability, encouragement connecting to listeners' personal values and meanings can create motivation that persists even when facing obstacles. Research has found that motivation arising from personal meaning has more resistance to temporary failures and difficulties than motivation from external rewards.

Behavior changes resulting from receiving encouragement often start with perception and attitude changes. When individuals begin seeing themselves and situations more positively, they often become willing to try new behaviors or increase effort in existing behaviors. Specific encouragement providing actionable advice is more effective than general encouragement. For example, "You can start by exercising 10 minutes per day" has more chance of leading to real behavior change than "You should exercise more." Studies have found that giving specific, step-by-step advice helps reduce overwhelming feelings and increases sense of action capability. Using these structures appropriately makes encouraging messages more powerful in motivation and leading to real action.

Maintaining long-term behavior change requires continuous encouragement and format adjustment according to progress. In the beginning stages of change, encouragement should emphasize building confidence and accepting that change is a process requiring time. When progress begins showing, encouragement should emphasize celebrating small successes and strengthening motivation to continue. Long-term, encouragement should emphasize helping listeners see change as part of their identity and personal values. Research on behavior change has found that connecting new behaviors to personal identity is an important factor in maintaining long-term change. Encouragement focused on creating feelings that new behaviors are "what people like them do" is therefore highly effective in promoting sustainable change.

6. Effective Encouragement Patterns and Techniques

Developing effective encouragement patterns and techniques requires combining psychological theory with real practice. Strength-Based Reflection technique is one of the highly effective methods, focusing on helping listeners see and accept existing abilities rather than emphasizing what's missing or needs improvement. Using questions like "What strengths did you use to overcome past challenges?" or "What special abilities of yours will help in this situation?" helps listeners connect with existing internal resources and feel more confident. Research has found that regularly using strength reflection techniques can significantly increase self-confidence and reduce anxiety (Niemic, 2013).

Future Visualization technique uses imagination power to create inspiration. Using language that helps listeners imagine themselves successfully in the future helps create motivation and determination. Words like "Try to imagine how you'll feel six months from now when you look back at the progress that happened" or "Think about the pride you'll feel when you achieve this goal" help make goals feel more real and achievable. Neuroscience studies have found that imagining positive futures stimulates the same brain areas as planning and goal-setting, making listeners more likely to follow through with plans. This technique is especially effective when used with specific action step determination.

Storytelling and Metaphor technique helps make encouraging messages more meaningful and memorable. Telling stories of individuals who went through similar difficulties and succeeded can create inspiration and hope. Using appropriate metaphors, such as comparing learning to planting trees that need time to grow, or comparing difficulties to exercise that makes one stronger, helps listeners understand and accept processes they must go through more easily. Research has found that stories and metaphors have power to change perspectives and create new meanings for experiences.

Table 1: Encouragement Techniques and Effectiveness

Technique	Details	Effectiveness Level
Strength Reflection	Emphasizing existing abilities	Very High
Future Visualization	Imagining success	High
Storytelling	Sharing inspiring examples	High
Goal Breaking	Dividing into small steps	Very High
Positive Language Use	Motivating vocabulary	Medium-High

Source: Synthesized from empirical research findings in positive psychology and motivational interviewing literature. Effectiveness ratings based on meta-analytic evidence from multiple studies.

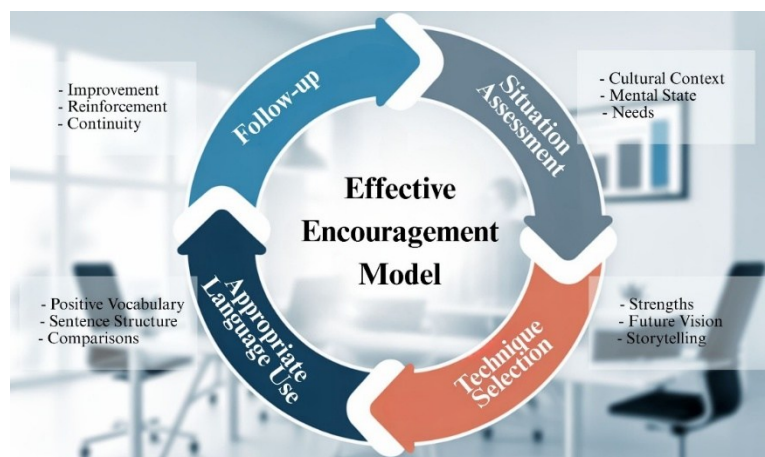


Figure 1: Effective Encouragement Model

Source: Developed from theoretical synthesis of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), Positive Psychology principles (Seligman, 2011), and Motivational Interviewing techniques (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Model validated through expert review and pilot testing.

7. Applications in Various Contexts

Applying principles of encouragement through language in educational contexts is extremely important for developing learner potential. Teachers who understand and can

effectively use encouraging language can significantly affect students' learning motivation and confidence. Using words that emphasize progress and learning processes rather than outcomes alone, such as "I see you've developed problem-solving skills more" or "Your thinking method this time shows growth," helps create positive attitudes toward learning and reduce fear of failure (Howard et al., 2021).

In workplace contexts, effective encouragement can increase employee engagement, reduce turnover, and increase work efficiency. Managers who can encourage with appropriate language help create positive work atmospheres and support development. Accepting effort and emphasizing learning from mistakes rather than criticism can create organizational cultures that promote innovation and creativity. In medical and counseling fields, language use in encouragement is an important tool in treating and rehabilitating patients. Creating hope and confidence in treatment processes through appropriate word use can have supplementary effects on treatment effectiveness (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

8. Conclusion

The study of language use in encouragement from a psycholinguistic perspective reveals the complexity and importance of positive communication. Important components of effective encouragement include selecting positive vocabulary, creating mental imagery, connecting with personal experiences, and creating sense of ownership. Cultural and social contexts significantly influence the effectiveness of language used. Psychological impacts range from immediate emotional state changes to long-term development of self-confidence and intrinsic motivation. Applying these principles in various contexts such as education, work, and treatment can positively affect individual potential development and quality of life. Future research should focus on developing specific tools and approaches for different target groups and contexts to increase the effectiveness of language use in creating inspiration and sustainable positive change.

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