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“You can do it!” Language and Persistence in Brazilian School-Aged Children

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Abstract

The present study was the first to explore persistence related language in 39 Brazilian school-aged children ($M_{age} = 90$ mos, $SD = 3.65$ mos). Additionally, we tested for a possible association between this type of language (e.g., compliments, encouraging words) and their persistence in a challenging task. Children were asked to narrate a story from a wordless book showing a baby trying to overcome a challenge. During the task, 89.7% of participants used persistence-related words (e.g., “try,” “train”), and 38.4% produced explicit messages encouraging persistence (e.g., “You have to train hard to achieve something”). However, no correlation was found between use of persistence-related words ($p = n.s.$) or use of explicit messages encouraging persistence ($p = n.s.$) and persistence levels. The present work contributes to advancing a promising line of investigation on the effects of language on important metacognitive and social cognitive developmental processes.