

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL JARGON IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Like in any professional sphere, psychological jargon refers to specialized terms and concepts commonly used in the field of psychology. Thus, it is a language, used by the professionals of the sphere. From the linguistic point of view, the main peculiarity of jargon is defined by the usage of specific vocabulary. Psychological jargon helps professional communicate complex concepts with precision but may be difficult for non-professionals (including patients) to understand. Here are some of the examples: *reconnect with your emotions, feel your feelings, give yourself permission to feel your feelings, be more in tune with your emotions, engage with your experience with intentionality, holding space for something or someone etc.*

In general, psychological jargon is characterized by the following distinctive features:

- It is **technical** and **specialized**. Psychological jargon consists of terms that are specific to the field of psychology. These terms often have precise meanings and may not be commonly used outside of academic or clinical contexts, e.g. “cognitive dissonance”, “neuroplasticity” etc.

- **It is abstract**. Many terms are abstract and refer to internal mental processes, emotions, or unconscious mechanisms that cannot be directly observed, e.g. “ego defense mechanisms”, “cognitive biases”, or “self-actualization”.

- It is **complex**. Psychological jargon can be complex, often requiring a deep understanding of theories and concepts. These terms are used to explain intricate mental processes, behaviours and theories, like “classical conditioning” or “operant conditioning”.

- It can be derived from **theories** and **models**. Many psychological terms are rooted in specific theoretical frameworks or models developed by psychologists (e.g., Freud, Skinner, Bandura, Maslow), like “Maslow’s hierarchy of needs” or “Freudian slip”.

- It can have **Latin** or **Greek origins**. Some psychological terms have Latin or Greek roots, making them sound more technical and academic. These roots help describe complex ideas in a more concise manner, for example “neurosis” (from Greek “neuron,” meaning nerve), “psychopathology” (from Greek “psyche,” meaning soul, and “pathos,” meaning suffering).

- It is **clinical** and **diagnostic**. Psychological jargon often includes terms used to diagnose and categorize mental health conditions, personality traits, or cognitive states, like “generalized anxiety disorder”, “bipolar disorder”, or “schizophrenia”.

- It can be used as **abbreviations** and **acronyms**. Professionals in the field often use abbreviations or acronyms to simplify longer terms or concepts, e.g. “CBT” (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy), “DSM” (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders).

- It is **context-specific**. Psychological jargon often depends on the context in which it is used. Terms can have different meanings or implications in clinical practice, research, or educational settings. For example, “attachment theory” might refer to different concepts depending on whether it’s being applied to child development, clinical therapy, or research.

- It is **neutral** or **value-free**. While psychological jargon can describe behaviours or phenomena, it generally aims to remain objective and neutral, avoiding subjective judgment or emotional language, e.g. “impulsivity” is a neutral term describing a tendency, not necessarily good or bad.

Thus, these characteristics make psychological jargon effective for professionals in conveying detailed and specific ideas. On the other hand, from the point of view of successful communication, it can also create barriers to understanding for those outside the field. Patients may find it difficult to interpret some specialist’s instructions or therapy requirements, getting lost and confused by the complexity of the language. In these terms, speakers should mind the context and the environment, making sure the interlocutor decodes the meaning easily and correctly.

Among the most common examples of psychological jargon the following ones should be named: *cognitive dissonance* – “mental discomfort experienced when holding conflicting beliefs, values, or behaviours”; operant conditioning – “learning through rewards (reinforcement) or punishments to shape behaviour”; *confirmation bias* – “favouring information that confirms pre-existing beliefs while ignoring contradictory evidence”; *projection* – “attributing one’s own unacceptable feelings/thoughts to others”; *the bystander effect* – “the tendency for individuals to avoid helping a victim when others are present, assuming someone else will act”; *neuroplasticity* – “the brain’s ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections”; *self-fulfilling prophecy* – “a belief or expectation that influences behaviour in a way that causes the belief to come true”; *fundamental attribution error* – “overemphasizing personality-based explanations for others’ behaviour while ignoring situational factors”; *classical conditioning* – “learning by associating a neutral stimulus with a meaningful one”; *ego depletion* – “the idea that self-control/decision-making drains mental resources, leading to poorer choices later”; *implicit bias* – “unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that affect decisions/behaviour. *Dunning-Kruger effect* refers to the situation when people with low ability

overestimate their competence, while experts underestimate theirs”. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs in its turn defines “a theory prioritizing human needs from basic (food, safety) to higher (love, self-actualization)” etc.

СПИСОК ВИКОРИСТАНОЇ ЛІТЕРАТУРИ

1. APA Dictionary of Psychology [Electronic resource]. – Access mode : <https://dictionary.apa.org/>