

Parentinguistic: Parenting Supportive Message of Expressive Act in Parenting Perspective

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: parenting, pragmatic, support message, communication, expressive speech act</p> <p>DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v8i2.1440</p> <p>How to cite: Kurniawan, K. (2023). Parentinguistic: Parenting Supportive Message of Expressive Act in Parenting Perspective. <i>Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics</i>, 8(2), 13-23</p>	<p><i>This research focuses on the use of parental support messages for children and what these messages mean. Messages of support are a form of positive communication to encourage children to become better individuals. This research used the qualitative method. In answering the formulation problem, speech act theory was used by Yule (2006) which was elaborated by Duncan (2009) regarding messages of support, and Wolfson & Judd (1983) about the meaning behind these support messages. The data in this study are expressive utterances that contain praise, approval, and encouragement originating from films about parenting. The data were collected using listening and note-taking techniques and then analyzed using Spradley (2016). From the research that has been done, it is concluded that each message of support conveyed has its own aims and objectives. The delivery of messages of support is influenced by the background of speakers and speech partners. Those indicate that parenting support messages play a role in parent-child communication. Its main role is to strengthen solidarity and maintain harmony between speakers. So, the language aspect must be considered by parents. This research used term "Parentinguistic" or abbreviation of Parenting Linguistic, to invite further research on the relationship between parenting and language.</i></p>

1. Introduction

Messages containing support for children clearly have a positive impact. Discussion of the meaning of messages commonly studied in the pragmatic field. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that discusses the meaning of utterances according to speech situations (Leech, 1983). Messages that intend to provide support to children can spur them to try their best or repeat good deeds (Romas, 2016). In a pragmatic study, a message containing an appeal to do something is called a speech act. In particular, Yule (2006) categorizes speech acts derived from the speaker's feelings as expressive speech acts (Yule, 2006). In the world of childcare or what is called Parenting, one of the keys to its success starts with communication.

Communication plays an important role in maintaining the closeness of a relationship (Edy, 2020). According to research, child development is influenced by parent-child communication. The effectiveness of communication can be an indicator of family quality. These two things influence each other. Thus, communication within a family should be open, honest, and full of love (Duncan, 2009). Moreover, parents are responsible for the physical and mental development of their children, especially in the task of educating them (Sinaga, 2018). The way of parents teaches their children about life as well as communication styles must also be considered so that a healthy relationship between children and parents can be created. The breakdown of parents' relationships with children, lately is often called toxic parenting. The characteristics of toxic parenting are when parents are lacking in showing physical and emotional closeness to the child. Real examples of toxic parents in everyday life, such as: putting too much pressure on child to be what parents want; often doing physical violence to children; always judging whatever is done or planned or dreams by children without appreciating it at all. The impact of toxic parenting can influence on children's self-esteem, friendship even romantic relationships when children become adults (Dunham et al., 2011).

One form of communication delivered by parents to their children can be messages of support. The messages include praise, encouragement, expressing affection, offering help, etc. These messages can produce a variety of positive things, such as increasing children's self-confidence, making children more obedient to their parents, and reducing problems in behavior. In linguistics, these messages are usually studied within a pragmatic scope. In relation to linguistics, language that contains messages of support is identical to expressive speech acts. Yule (2006) defines speech acts as actions initiated by utterances. Then, the expressive speech act is defined by Yule as a type of speech act that intends to express the speaker's mood. The mood can be happiness, trouble, pleasure, hatred, or misery. In this study only focuses on expressive speech that serves to provide messages of support to children. The following are examples of expressive speech acts that support children:

Speaker	: Father
Speech	: <i>Okay, well, that's smart.</i>
Context	: the father praised his son who had taken the initiative to think carefully about his wish as a birthday present so that the child would not make the wrong choice.

This example is an expressive utterance in the form of both praise and approval conveyed by a father to his son (Duncan, 2009; Yule, 2006). The speech serves to provide a positive assessment (Wolfson & Judd, 1983). This is indicated by the use of words that contain a positive semantic meaning such as 'smart'.

Research on expressive speech acts has been carried out by previous researchers. As has been done by Putri et al., (2021) regarding teacher's expressive speech act in Indonesian learning process; Rahayu, (2020) regarding types of speech act and its politeness in mother and child conversation; Saputra (2020) regarding the types and functions of speech acts by students aged 3-5 years; Holtseva (2020) regarding the speech act of gratitude in the speeches of country representatives at the UN Security Council meeting. Furthermore, several researchers have also discussed the relationship between parenting and language, such as (Kurniawan, 2023b) who discuss the usage of controlling language from paternal perspective;

Heidlage et al., (2020) regarding the effects of parent's language interventions on child linguistic outcomes; Madigan et al. (2019) regarding observations of parental measures and children's language; and Ellis & Sims (2022) discuss the relationship between parents' linguistic identity and their family's language policies, on the impact of their beliefs. Research on the relationship between parenting and linguistic has been discussed by (Kurniawan, 2023a). In the study, the term "Parentinguistic" is introduced which stands for Parenting Linguistic. It discusses parenting communication styles specifically in expressive speech act. The current research wants to continue the discussion about parenting and linguistics in the scope of parenting supportive messages. Hopefully, the discussion and research on the topic can be deepen and especially to be applied in everyday life.

The gap in this study is the intention of using expressive acts aimed at supporting children. To prove the existence of a gap in this study, there are two formulations that are applied. First, how the usage of expressive speech acts that contain supportive messages. Second, what is the purpose of the support message used. In answering the problem formulation, the first question is answered by elaborating the theory from Yule (2006) about expressive speech acts and Duncan (2009) about support messages. Thus, the collected data is in the form of expressive speech acts which are only specific to messages of support. The support message can be in the form of praise, approval, and encouragement. Then, to answer the second question about the purpose of the support message, Wolfson & Judd (1983) theory of compliments is used. Wolfson & Judd (1983) divide it into seven: strengthening solidarity, maintaining relationships, smoothing criticism, expressing admiration and approval, providing motivation, expressing positive judgments, and strengthening children. Messages of support conveyed by parents can mean: strengthening solidarity, maintaining relationships, expressing admiration and approval, providing motivation, expressing positive judgments, and strengthening children.

2. Literature Review

Pragmatics is a study that discusses the context of a speaker's speech. Initially, the study of the context of an utterance was considered unimportant because it could not be discussed linguistically (Subroto, 2011). In practice, the meaning of the expression is not always based on the literal meaning, but also must consider the context. Example; where the speaker and the hearer are talking, what is the position of the speaker and the speech partner, what is their situation, etc. The term pragmatic originally referred to the division of syntactic branches by Chales Morris (Levinson 1991). As time goes by, pragmatic studies are growing and the discussion is getting deeper. As previously studied by (Austin, 1962; Leech, 1983; Searle, 1969). Then emerged the divisions of pragmatics, such as deixis, implicature, speech acts, politeness, etc. This study only focuses on the discussion of speech acts. Speech acts are utterances that can lead to actions. Speech acts themselves are classified into 5 types according to their general function by Yule (2006) namely: (a) declarations or utterances that can change circumstances; (b) representative or utterances that function to affirm, conclude, and state facts; (c) directives or utterances to instruct others; (d) commissive or utterances that make speakers promise to do something in the future; (e) expressive or speech that intends to express the speaker's feelings.

This study revealed the use of expressive speech acts in conveying messages of parental support to children. Expressive speech acts can be conveyed to express happiness, sadness,

pride, and difficulties. So that the search for expressive speech acts is only limited to utterances that contain praise, approval, and encouragement (Duncan, 2009). Praise is a speech act that is conveyed either explicitly or implicitly by a speaker who is positive for something that is found in another person (Holmes, 1986). Then, approval is defined as an expression that shows support or agreement for the proposition or belief expressed by the speech partner. One of the concepts of encouragement is defined by Adlerian (1959) in (Watts & Ergüner-Tekinalp, 2017) as the concept of emphasizing value, dignity, and views so that they are optimistic that every human being has the ability, and the freedom to make or decide an action.

Someone who expresses a compliment must be based on an event. Wolfson & Judd (1983) formulates the various goals of people in expressing praise: (a) strengthen solidarity, this can happen because praise makes speakers and speech partners equal even though in real situation there are differences between them; (b) maintaining relationships, these goals prevent misunderstandings and minimize differences between the speech partner and the speaker; (c) express admiration and approval, this message is often expressed by people who have different social positions such as superiors and subordinates, parents and children, teachers and students, etc; (d) provide motivation, this is because motivation is a universal language that is effective in raising one's spirits; (e) expressing a positive assessment, this compliment can be in the form of admiration for a person's appearance (physical, possession) or skill; (f) to provide subtle criticism, this message is intended to maintain the harmony of the relationship between the speakers so it would not hurt speech partner (Wolfson & Judd, 1983).

3. Research Methodology

This study applies a descriptive qualitative method because the data obtained is described textually. The data in this study are textual in the utterances of parents to children which contain messages of support. The data in this study were collected using a listening and note-taking technique derived from four films with the theme of parenting. The four films are; Pursuit of Happiness (2006), The Help (2011), Wonder (2017), and Instant Family (2018). The four films were chosen because they have different backgrounds so that it can know the various messages of support and its intentions as shown in the table below.

Table 3.1 List of Movie Selected

NO	MOVIE	MAIN STORY
1	Pursuit of Happiness (2006)	Parenting from the paternal side
2	The Help (2011)	The child-care of a black nanny to a white employer's child
3	Wonder (2017)	Parental care for children with disabilities
4	Instant Family (2018)	Parental care for adopted children

After the data is collected, the researcher categorizes the data into types of expressive speech acts that contain messages of support according to Yule (2006) which are elaborated by the theory of Duncan (2009). After the data is categorized, the researcher analyzes what the messages mean according to Wolfson & Judd (1983). This study applies an analytical technique introduced by Spradley (2016). There are 4 stages of analyzing techniques: domain

analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and finding cultural themes. The first stage is domain analysis; Yule's pragmatic is applied to sort out which are included in expressive speech acts. After the data is obtained, then the taxonomy analysis stage takes a role in separating whether the expressive speech act contains a message of support according to Duncan (2009). The next step is to implement Wolfson & Judd (1983) to show what the message of support means. The next stage is componential analysis. At this stage, the findings from the domain and analysis stages are presented in table form to show this relationship. The last stage is finding cultural theme. At this stage, the types and intent of support messages are analyzed to draw conclusions about dominant data or submissive data.

4. Findings

The search for messages of support was obtained from several films with the theme of parents and children. These support messages include; praise, approval, and encouragement (Duncan, 2009). From the three support messages, it is further examined about their intended use. According to Wolfson & Judd (1983), the intent of using messages of support can aim; strengthen solidarity, maintain relationships, express admiration and approval, provide motivation, express positive judgments, to provide subtle criticism.

4.1 Support messages

4.1.1 Message of support: Praise

Praise is a speech act that is conveyed either explicitly or implicitly by a speaker who is positive for something that is found in another person (Holmes, 1986). Here are some expressions that contain messages of support in the form of praise from various films.

- 1) *How did you get so smart?*
- 2) *Oh, my goodness. You made such a good impression on when we met you, we wanted to get to know you a bit more.*
- 3) *That was incredible.*
- 4) *You is kind, you is smart, you is important.*
- 5) *This dress is just precious on you.*

These examples are messages of support in the form of praise, because they contain positive words for someone. The context in example (1) is in the *film Pursuit of Happyness* (2006), when the father praised his son's intelligence in concluding his father's statement about the difference between the words "possibly" and "probably". The speaker uses the word "smart" because the word has a positive connotation which means good capability in thinking.

Example (2) is found in the film *Instant Family* (2018). Context when Ellie and Pete visit their prospective adopted child's house. Ellie exchanged pleasantries praising Lizzi which made Ellie and Pete curious and interested in adopting her. The speaker uses the phrase "good impression" because when Ellie and Pete first met Lizzi, they were impressed by the way Lizzi interacted with them.

The utterance (3) comes from the movie *Wonder* (2017). This expression was conveyed by the father to his daughter, Olivia, for her stunning drama performance. The use of the word "incredible" has a clear positive meaning which means that the father does not believe that his daughter plays the drama as the main character very well, considering that Olivia's parents rarely pay attention to her because they only focus on Auggie's treatment.

Praise (4) is in the film *The Help* (2011). This expression was conveyed by a nanny to her employer's child who was still a toddler. The speaker uses three words at once that contain positive meanings in the form of "kind", "smart", and "important".

Example (5) is in the movie *The Help* (2011). The context of these words is the mother praising her daughter, Skeeter, who is trying on a dress to wear for a date. Even though the word "precious" refers to the dress used, the phrase also compliments Skeeter because the dress is only suitable for her.

4.1.2 Support message: Approval

Approval is an expression that shows support or approval for a proposition or convincing expressed by the speech partner (Holmes, 1986). The following is an example of a support message in the form of consent:

- 1) *Okay, well, that's smart.*
- 2) *All right. That's good.*
- 3) *Yes, thank you. Chop that rosemary. What did you say you were...?*

The examples above are messages of support showing approval of the proposition made by the speech partner. In expressions (1) and (2) sourced from the film *Pursuit of Happyness* (2006). The context is that the father praises his son for taking the initiative to think carefully about his wishes as a birthday present so that the child will not make the wrong choice. Even though this expression is in the form of praise, it also means that the father allows his son to do whatever he wants.

Furthermore, example (3) is taken from the film *Wonder* (2017) which has context when Olivia offers to help her mother who is cooking. Her mother responded with words of gratitude which were meant to appreciate Olivia's initiative and allow her to help out with the cooking.

4.1.3 Message of support: Encouragement

Encouragement is a behavior to strengthen mentally and physically (Kurokawa, 2001).

- 1) *Second. You're gonna feel like you're all alone, Auggie, but you're not.*
- 2) *It will be fine*
- 3) *Well, I know it's hard, but you have to understand that he probably feels badly about himself. And when someone acts small, you just have to be the bigger person, all right?*

Examples (1), (2), and (3) are sourced from the movie *Wonder* (2017). Example (1) tells the story of when his father advised Auggie to go to school on his first day. This expression was expressed as a message of support for Auggie so that he doesn't have to worry about his days at school, considering that Auggie has a disorder that makes his face look different compared to other children in general.

Speech (2) occurs when Auggie is looking around his school before his first day of admission. Auggie will be accompanied by other children to go around getting to know his school. Having never interacted with a child his age before, Auggie worries that something bad is going to happen. However, his mother calmed him down by advising him.

Phrase (3) tells when Auggie tells his first impression of meeting his classmate. The friend that Auggie told about belittled him by assuming he didn't know anything because he was

only homeschooled. There, his mother encouraged him not to be discouraged by his friend's bullying.

4.2 Purpose of Support Messages

In conveying messages of support, there are seven objectives according to Wolfson & Judd (1983). These goals are: strengthening solidarity, maintaining relationships, softening criticism, expressing admiration and approval, providing motivation, expressing positive judgments, and strengthening children. Here are the findings of some of the support message objectives:

4.2.1 Solidarity

Compliments can be likened to a "social lubricant" to bring people together (Wolfson & Judd, 1983). Holmes (1986) argues that praise can heal gaps that may be caused by violations so that the relationship between the speaker and the hearer can improve again. As in the following datum example.

You is kind, you is smart, you is important.

The datum is taken from the film *The Help* (2011). The phrase was uttered by a black nanny to her white employer's child. The message of support was expressed to eliminate the gap that occurred between the two people.

4.2.2 Maintain a relationship

Praise also has a specific social purpose, namely to show respect and closeness (Watts, 2003). The following is an example of a message of support aimed at maintaining a relationship.

That's right, we're here and we love you.

The expression is in the movie *Instant Family* (2018), which has a context when Lizzi, a child who has to be separated from her biological mother because she is caught in a criminal case, is about to be adopted by her prospective adoptive parents. When her mother was released, the court decided for Lizzi to live with her mother, but Lizzi's biological mother refused, much to her disappointment. These words were conveyed by Ellie and Pete, her future adoptive parents, to show that they care about Lizzi and maintain the relationship that had previously been built so that Lizzi was willing to live with them.

4.2.3 Express admiration and approval

Apart from being an attempt to build or maintain relationships, praise can also be conveyed to express admiration and approval (Wolfson & Manes, 1980). As in the following datum example:

Okay, well, that's smart.

This expression comes from the film *Pursuit of Happyness* (2006) in the context when the father praises his son for taking the initiative to think carefully about his wish as a birthday present so that the child will not make the wrong choice. Even though these utterances contain positive words that are praising, these utterances also aim to agree with the wishes of the child.

4.2.4 Giving motivation

Messages of support can be conveyed as motivation because they can reinforce the desired behavior (Wolfson & Manes, 1980). As in the following expression:

Well, I know it's hard, but you have to understand that he probably feels badly about himself. And when someone acts small, you just have to be the bigger person, all right?

The phrase tells when Auggie tells his first impression of meeting his classmate. The friend that Auggie told about belittled him by assuming he didn't know anything because he was only homeschooled. His Mother encouraged him not to be discouraged by his friend's bullying. It is hoped that Auggie will grow into a person who has a strong mentality.

4.2.5 Express positive judgments

Messages of this type of support are usually conveyed by using adjectives or verbs that contain positive semantic aspects. Like the words nice (adj), good (adj), like (v), love (v), etc. as in the following expression:

That was incredible.

The phrase is taken from the film *Wonder* (2017) when a father compliments his daughter Olivia's play performance. The speaker uses the word "incredible" which contains a positive semantic load, which means it is so amazing that it cannot be trusted.

4.2.6 Strengthen children

This message of support is usually done when something is feared will happen or has already happened.

Second. You're gonna feel like you're all alone, Auggie, but you're not.

The example is taken from the film *Wonder* (2017) when Auggie is about to enter school for the first time. Because of Auggie's disfigured face, he is afraid that people will shun him and so he would not have any friends. Auggie's father strengthens him mentally to believe more that he is not alone.

5. Discussion

Research on the relationship between the use of language and messages of support for children is very interesting to do because it is rarely discussed. This research aims to reveal the pattern of using messages of support to children and what the messages of support mean. As explained in the findings chapter, the messages conveyed by parents to children have different forms and purposes. As Duncan (2009) has stated, messages of support include praise, approval, and encouragement. Thus, the problem that arises in this study is whether the form of support messages conveyed by parents is appropriate to the context.

Messages of support that are praising the majority are used to maintain the relationship between speakers and speech partners. With praise, the well-being of both the expresser and the recipient will increase (Zhao & Epley, 2021). The praise is used to appreciate the speech partner who has understood the situation and condition of the speaker. This is in line with Holmes (1986) definition that praise aims to convey something positive about something that is found in other people.

For messages of support that intend to give approval, most of them are conveyed to praise the child's initiative in easing the parents' thoughts or work. As revealed by Wolfson & Manes (1980) that the use of praise in agreement as a form of positive reinforcement.

Encouragement in the form of messages of support is conveyed to strengthen the mentality of the speech partner. Wolfson & Manes (1980) also revealed that encouragement can make speech partners do the same thing consistently.

In conveying a message of support, there must be a purpose of its own. Wolfson & Judd (1983) divides it into seven: strengthening solidarity, maintaining relationships, smoothing criticism, expressing admiration and approval, providing motivation, expressing positive judgments, and strengthening children. The seven purposes intends to refine criticism and modify sarcasm, none were found in this study.

One drawback of Duncan (2009) and Wolfson & Judd (1983) theory is the lack of explanation of how messages of support should be conveyed. Because in reality, messages of support must be adjusted according to the portion, as medicine must be given according to the dose (Henderlong & Lepper, 2002). This is justified because not all messages of support are positive and beneficial for children (Brummelman et al., 2016). In their research, it was concluded that children tend to receive praise or motivation that is simple and not exaggerated. Exaggerated praise or motivation can actually become a moral burden for children because in the next business, they have to produce something that is on par with before, or even better. This is equivalent to indirectly also not preparing for failure. Even though failure is also a gift that can teach its own lessons to children.

The four films that have been studied, each have its own characteristics. The different backgrounds in the films influence the delivery of messages of support and their goals. For example, in the film *Pursuit of Happyness* which has the theme of parenting done by the father himself because of the economic situation that is being down. In the film, the character of the son, Christopher, is sensitive to his father's condition, so messages of support are conveyed more to express positive judgments to children. Next in the movie *Instant Family* with the theme of the relationship between parents and adopted children, the use of messages of support is more often used to strengthen solidarity to strengthen relationships and reduce awkwardness. Wonder about a child who has an abnormality on his face, so the messages of support conveyed by parents are more aimed at encouraging children to become more confident individuals, and mentally strengthening them so they don't get discouraged easily when they receive negative comments. Next in the movie *The Help* with the theme of a black American maid taking care of her white employer's children, the use of messages of support was expressed to strengthen solidarity even though in the film's time setting the gap between blacks and whites was still very wide. In addition to strengthening solidarity, messages of support were also expressed to express positive judgments because in the film it is told that black children are rarely cared for by their parents and more often cared for by their caregivers.

Even though the research in this film has different sources with different backgrounds, they all show that parenting support messages play a role in parent-child communication. Its main role is to strengthen solidarity and maintain harmony between speakers. So that the language aspect must be considered by parents. Because this research has the theme of Parenting and Linguistics, this research is called Parenting linguistics or can be abbreviated

as "Parentinguistics". The hope is that this term can inspire other researchers to deepen the study, considering that the scope of parenting and linguistics is very broad.

6. Conclusion

In order to create a good relationship between parents and children, the communication aspect must be prioritized because it is the key to the success of any relationship. One form of communication between parents and children can be messages of support. Support messages contain praise, approval, or encouragement that aim to increase children's self-confidence, make them more obedient to their parents, and reduce behavior problems. In this study, two questions were raised: how is the message of support conveyed by parents to children? and what is the purpose of parental support messages to children?

To obtain data related to messages of support, four films with the theme of parenting to children were used. The four films are: *Pursuit of Happiness* (2006), *The Help* (2011), *Wonder* (2017), and *Instant Family* (2018). To answer these questions, the theory from Duncan (2007) regarding messages of support and Wolfson (1983) regarding the intent of messages of support is used. There are three forms of parental support messages to children, namely: praise, approval, and encouragement. All three forms of messages of support are found in every film studied. From each message of support conveyed, it turns out that it has its own intent and purpose. The delivery of messages of support is also influenced by the background of speakers and speech partners. For example, in movies *Pursuit of Happiness* which tells of a father who raises his child alone with a deprived economic situation, a message of support is conveyed to appreciate the child who wants to understand his father's condition.

It is hoped that this research can bring benefits both theoretically and practically. Hopefully, further research on the correlation of language with parents can be further developed. Practically, I hope this research can inspire parents to be more considerate of using everyday language with their children. Given the research that has been done, messages of support cannot be separated from the daily communication between parents and children because messages of support have a great influence on children's cognitive development.

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