

PRAGMALINGUISTIC FEATURES OF MOTHER SPEECH

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**Abstract.** A number of pragmalinguistic characteristics seen in maternal speech acts are essential to the language development of children. According to research, a mother's speech patterns and purposes can have a big impact on a child's expressive syntax and receptive vocabulary. In particular, children's language outcomes are negatively correlated with their mothers' pragmatic language challenges (1). Additionally, infants' non-linguistic behavioral feedback frequently influences how mothers adapt their speech. This implies that moms might improve communication efficacy by modifying their speech patterns in response to their child's reactions (3)(4). The connection between mother pragmatics and child language development has also been investigated in research on children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and non-ASD language delays, emphasizing the role that maternal communication styles play in developing language abilities (5).

**Key words.** pragmalinguistic properties, research, ability, expressive syntax, speech

**Annotatsiya.** Onaning nutq harakatlarida ko'rilgan bir qator pragmalingvistik xususiyatlar bolalarning tilini rivojlantirish uchun juda muhimdir. Tadqiqotlarga ko'ra, onaning nutq naqshlari va maqsadlari bolaning ekspressiv sintaksisiga va retseptiv lug'atiga katta ta'sir ko'rsatishi mumkin. Xususan, bolalarning til natijalari onalarining pragmatik til muammolari bilan salbiy bog'liqdir (1). Bundan tashqari, chaqaloqlarning lingvistik bo'lmagan xulq-atvori ko'pincha onalar nutqini qanday moslashtirishga ta'sir qiladi. Bu shuni anglatadiki, onalar bolaning reaksiyalariga javoban nutq shakllarini o'zgartirish orqali aloqa samaradorligini oshirishi mumkin (3)(4). Ona pragmatikasi va bolalar tilini rivojlantirish o'rtasidagi bog'liqlik, shuningdek, autizm spektrining buzilishi (ASD) va asd bo'lmagan til kechikishlari bo'lgan bolalar bo'yicha tadqiqotlarda o'rganilib, onaning muloqot uslublari til qobiliyatlarini rivojlantirishda rolini ta'kidlaydi (5).

**Kalit so'zlar.** pragmalingvistik xususiyatlar, tadqiqot, qobiliyat, ekspressiv sintaksis, nutq.

### 1.Introduction

Maternal speech acts exhibit various pragmalinguistic features that play a crucial role in child language development. Research indicates that the types and functions of a mother's speech can significantly influence a child's receptive vocabulary and expressive syntax skills. Specifically, maternal pragmatic language difficulties are linked to poorer language outcomes in children (1).

Additionally, the adjustment of maternal speech is often influenced by non-linguistic behavioral feedback from infants. This suggests that mothers adapt their speech patterns based on their child's responses, which can enhance communication effectiveness (3)(4). In studies focusing on children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and non-ASD



Date: 27<sup>th</sup> March-2025

language delays, the relationship between maternal pragmatics and child language development has also been explored, highlighting the importance of maternal communication styles in fostering language skills (5).

Overall, the pragmalinguistic features of mother speech encompass various speech acts and adjustments that are vital for supporting language acquisition in children.

Pragmatic language is the appropriate use of communication in social situations, involving the ability to use language for different purposes, adjust language based on the listener or context, and follow the rules of conversation. Research has shown that a mother's pragmatic language abilities can significantly impact the language development of her children, particularly those with conditions like autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or language delays.

One key study (5) examined the relationship between maternal pragmatic language and child language outcomes in 20 mother-child dyads, with 10 children having ASD and 10 having non-ASD language delays. The researchers found that lower rates of maternal pragmatic violations were associated with higher expressive language scores in children with ASD, and higher receptive language scores for children with non-ASD language delays. Additionally, within the ASD dyads, maternal pragmatic violations were negatively related to mothers' use of linguistic expansions, suggesting that a mother's pragmatic style can indirectly impact a child's language development through the types of facilitative language strategies the mother employs.

This aligns with other research (3)(4) showing that characteristics of parent language, such as quantity, quality, and contingency of child-directed input, are key to promoting optimal language learning in children. However, a parent's natural pragmatic language style may influence these facilitative language behaviors. For example, a mother with pragmatic language difficulties may struggle to adjust her language appropriately for her child's needs, provide enough contextual information, or maintain a coherent conversational flow - all of which could negatively impact the child's language development.

Beyond the direct effects on child language, pragmatic language difficulties in mothers with the fragile X mental retardation 1 (FMR1) premutation have also been linked to poorer receptive vocabulary and expressive syntax skills in their children with fragile X syndrome (1). This suggests that maternal pragmatic language is an important component of the broader language-learning environment for children with certain genetic conditions.

Interestingly, research on mother-infant interactions has found that maternal speech is influenced by non-linguistic behavioral 'feedback' from infants (3)(10). This indicates a bidirectional relationship, where the infant's cues and responses shape the mother's pragmatic language use, which in turn impacts the child's language development.

In terms of the specific pragmatic language features exhibited by mothers, studies have highlighted several key areas (12):

- Using language for different communicative purposes (e.g., greeting, informing, demanding, stating, requesting)



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- Adjusting language based on the listener or situation (e.g., talking to a teacher vs. a baby)

- Following rules of conversation (e.g., taking turns, introducing new topics, staying on topic, rewording when misunderstood)

- Understanding and using nonverbal signals (e.g., facial expressions, eye contact, personal space)

Mothers with pragmatic language difficulties may struggle in one or more of these areas, which can then impact their child's ability to learn language and navigate social interactions.

In conclusion, research has demonstrated the important role of maternal pragmatic language in shaping the language-learning environment and outcomes for children, particularly those with developmental conditions like ASD and fragile X syndrome. By understanding the specific pragmalinguistic features of mother speech, researchers and clinicians can better identify areas for intervention and develop more targeted, family-centered approaches to promoting language development in at-risk populations. (1)(5)

Maternal speech significantly influences a child's language development through several key mechanisms.

#### **Quantity and Quality of Speech**

Research indicates that the amount and type of speech mothers engage in with their infants can shape language acquisition. Higher quantities of speech and rich, varied vocabulary enhance children's language skills. When mothers speak frequently and use diverse language forms, children are more likely to develop larger vocabularies and better grammatical skills.

#### **Interaction and Responsiveness**

Responsive maternal speech, characterized by immediate feedback and turn-taking during conversations, fosters language learning. When mothers respond to their child's vocalizations and speech, it encourages further attempts at communication, reinforcing the child's understanding of language as a tool for interaction.

#### **Emotional Tone and Context**

The emotional tone of maternal speech also plays a critical role. Positive, engaging speech that includes varied intonations can attract a child's attention and promote learning. Mothers who use a warm, animated style create a supportive environment that encourages exploration of language.

#### **Modeling Language Use**

Mothers serve as primary language models for their children. By demonstrating proper pronunciation, grammar, and usage in context, they provide essential examples for children to imitate. This modeling is crucial for developing both spoken language skills and comprehension.

#### **Socioeconomic Factors**

Socioeconomic status can influence maternal speech patterns, impacting language development. Families with higher socioeconomic status often provide more enriched



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language environments, which can lead to disparities in language skills among children from different backgrounds.

Overall, maternal speech is a vital component of early language development, where both the quantity and quality of interactions significantly shape children's linguistic abilities.

Parents can significantly improve their speech to support their child's language development through several effective strategies:

1. **\*\*Model Clear Speech\*\***: Speak clearly and at a moderate pace, ensuring that each word is pronounced correctly. This helps children recognize and imitate sounds more effectively (20).

2. **\*\*Use Repetition\*\***: Reinforce learning by repeating words and phrases. This repetition aids children in becoming familiar with sounds, meanings, and sentence structures, which is crucial for their language recall (20).

3. **Engage in Back-and-Forth Conversations**  
: Encourage active participation by allowing your child time to respond. This practice fosters a natural flow of conversation and helps them understand the dynamics of communication (12).

4. **Narrate Activities**: Talk about what you are doing during everyday activities, such as cooking or cleaning. This contextualizes language and helps your child learn new vocabulary in meaningful situations (18).

5. **Encourage Choices**: Provide opportunities for your child to make choices, such as asking, "Would you like an apple or a banana?" This engages them and promotes the use of language to express preferences (17).

6. **Use Gestures and Non-Verbal Cues**: Incorporate gestures and facial expressions into your communication. This helps convey meaning and supports children in understanding language beyond words (1)(17).

7. **Read Together**: Engage in reading activities with your child. Discuss pictures and stories, and ask open-ended questions to stimulate their thinking and language use (1)(19).

8. **Respond to All Forms of Communication**: Acknowledge not just verbal communication but also gestures, facial expressions, and sounds. This validation encourages children to express themselves in various ways (17).

9. **Limit Distractions**: When engaging with your child, minimize background noise and distractions. This allows them to focus on your speech and improves their listening skills (17).

10. **Be Patient**: Give your child ample time to articulate their thoughts and respond to your questions. Children often need extra time to process and formulate their responses (17).

By implementing these strategies, parents can create a language-rich environment that fosters their child's speech and language development effectively.



Date: 27<sup>th</sup> March-2025

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