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# Pragmatic analysis of flexing through impression management in the television series *Suits*

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## Riwayat Artikel

Tanggal pengajuan:  
2025-06-13  
Tanggal diterima:  
2026-02-20  
Tanggal terbit:  
2026-03-31

## Kata kunci :

flexing; impression management; pragmatics; sociolinguistics; *Suits*

## Abstrak

Flexing, commonly understood as showing off material possessions or achievements, has gained prominence in social interactions, particularly among youth. This study examines flexing from a pragmatic perspective, applying Goffman's Impression Management theory to analyze the linguistic strategies employed in the television series *Suits*. Using qualitative descriptive methods, the research identifies various impression management tactics such as ingratiation, intimidation, self-promotion, exemplification, and supplication as manifested in characters' dialogues. The findings reveal that flexing is a complex communicative strategy for constructing and negotiating social identity and status through language rather than merely superficial boasting. This linguistic approach enriches existing literature focusing on psychological and sociological aspects by highlighting language as a performative tool in social hierarchy reproduction. Moreover, the study discusses the educational implications of flexing behaviours in shaping student social dynamics and suggests pedagogical strategies for educators to foster healthier communication environments. Limitations include reliance on fictional media as data sources, warranting further empirical research in real educational contexts. This research contributes to the interdisciplinary understanding of communication, pragmatics, and education in the digital age.

## Abstrak

## Kata Kunci:

flexing; manajemen kesan; pragmatik; serial *Suits*; sociolinguistik

## Analisis pragmatis tentang flexing melalui manajemen tayangan dalam serial televisi *Suits*

Flexing, yang umumnya dipahami sebagai memamerkan harta benda atau pencapaian, telah menjadi hal yang menonjol dalam interaksi sosial, terutama di kalangan anak muda. Penelitian ini mengkaji flexing dari perspektif pragmatis, dengan menerapkan teori manajemen kesan dari Goffman untuk menganalisis strategi linguistik yang digunakan dalam serial televisi *Suits*. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi berbagai taktik manajemen kesan seperti *Ingratiation*, *exemplification*, *Intimidation*, *Self-Promotion*, *Supplication* yang dimanifestasikan dalam dialog para karakter. Temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa flexing merupakan strategi komunikatif yang kompleks untuk membangun dan menegosiasikan identitas dan status sosial melalui bahasa, bukan sekadar membual yang dangkal. Pendekatan linguistik ini memperkaya literatur yang sudah ada yang berfokus pada aspek psikologis dan sosiologis dengan menyoroti bahasa sebagai alat performatif dalam reproduksi hierarki sosial. Selain itu, penelitian ini membahas implikasi pendidikan dari perilaku membual dalam membentuk dinamika sosial siswa dan menyarankan strategi pedagogis bagi para pendidik untuk menumbuhkan lingkungan komunikasi yang lebih sehat. Keterbatasan, termasuk ketergantungan pada media fiksi sebagai sumber data, menjamin penelitian empiris lebih lanjut dalam konteks pendidikan yang nyata. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman interdisipliner tentang komunikasi, pragmatik, dan pendidikan di era digital.

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## 1 Introduction

The song “*No Flex Zone*” by Rae Sremmurd can be interpreted as articulating a social ideal in which individuals are encouraged to engage in authentic self-expression without resorting to performative displays of status. In contemporary digital discourse, particularly within social media environments, the term “flexing” has emerged as a salient form of slang denoting acts of conspicuous self-presentation, typically involving the exhibition of wealth, success, or social capital. From a sociolinguistic perspective, such practices are often associated with inauthenticity, as individuals may exaggerate, fabricate, or strategically construct aspects of their identities in order to conform to dominant societal norms and expectations. Moreover, “flexing” can be conceptualized as a performative phenomenon in which individuals negotiate identity through the manipulation of appearances, thereby seeking recognition, legitimacy, and validation within a broader social framework. The word *flexing* comes from the English word, which means to show off (Yuli Edi Z et al, 2023).

The Cambridge dictionary defines flexing as showing off something that a person has or has achieved in a way that others find unpleasant (Masruri, 2024). Showing off is a phenomenon that shows off one's wealth (Nurhayat & Noorrizki, 2022). A similar point was put forward by Putri (2023) that behavioural flexing can be a performance flair when a particular person or group is trying to satisfy their need for recognition and social status. Flexing behaviour refers to a person's habits displayed or that particular achievement, wealth, lifestyle, or property with the purpose of the miner (Putri et al, 2024). Another research Hafan (2023) explains that in practice, flexing is often seen through social media uploads of photos of written goods, luxury trips, academic or career achievements, to a lifestyle that looks "perfect". Behind that, showing off isn't flexing; It also deals with the psychological need to be seen, appreciated, and acknowledged for its existence in a competitive social space.

On the other hand, showing off has two sides. It can be a form of expression and motivation for others (Prasetyo et al, 2024). Therefore, if overdone, *flexing* can trigger social comparisons, envy, pressure to look successful, and build pseudo-standards of happiness. As a result, social interaction can go from authenticity to appearance, where self-worth is measured not by who a person really is, but by what he or she manages to display (Uyun, 2025; Ajidin & Wahidah, 2023; Hayati & Romziana 2025). This tendency to flaunt money can come from a variety of sources. While some people may find it difficult to understand social bonds properly, others may want recognition or want to be valued (Octamadian, 2024; Saifudin, 2024).

The study of flexing intersects with the field of pragmatics, a branch of linguistics that investigates the relationship between language and its context (Haryono et al, 2024). A similar thing was written by Pratiwi (2024) and Andini et al. (2026) that pragmatics focuses on the speaker's use of language in social interactions and how context influences the interpretation of meaning. One of the special categories in pragmatics that is in harmony with *flexing* is expressive speech. Joya et al. (2024). Therefore, Sukma et al. (2025) state that expressive speech is a speech act used by the speaker to convey their psychological state or emotional response to a situation. In the case of flexing, the act of speech serves to communicate a person's social status, wealth, achievements, or power. This act of speech often occurs both in face-to-face communication and through media, such as in movies or social media platforms, where characters use language to establish their identity and demonstrate their superiority.

Goffman's understanding of impression management theory becomes relevant. Goffman's impression management theory, outlined in his work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), describes how individuals actively manage how they are perceived by others, especially in social settings. Impression management focuses on how people present themselves on the "front stage",

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carefully controlling the image they project to the audience (or others) to maintain a desired social identity. The front stage represents the public persona that individuals display to convey a certain impression, while the back stage is where they are free from social expectations and can act more naturally. In the case of *flexing*, this concept becomes especially relevant because individuals use verbal flexing to manage how others perceive their social status, wealth, or achievements.

Furthermore, *flexing* is the front stage, where individuals intentionally regulate how others perceive themselves. In movies, characters like Harvey Specter in *Suits* often use *flexing* to assert dominance or demonstrate their success. "I don't care, I just want to win" is strategically designed to project confidence and power, in line with Goffman's idea of Impression Management. The character displays a public identity that is considered superior and unshakable. Impression management is crucial in understanding the dynamics of *flexing* because it explains why individuals engage in this act of self-presentation. People engage in flexing to maintain or improve their social identity. The desire to influence the way others perceive them can be both conscious and subconscious efforts. *The flexing* used in *Suits* embodies Goffman's Impression Management, where characters shape their identities and manage how others perceive them.

Numerous researchers have conducted previous research on flexing by Claurena et al. (2023), Iswantara (2021), Juanda (2022), Octamadian and Sari (2024). In his study, Liza et al. (2025) looked at flexing from a social psychology perspective, emphasizing how young people use these activities for social recognition and identity exploration. The study highlights that *flexing* is a way to validate one's social standing and increase one's confidence in social situations, as well as show off one's possessions. On the other hand, Claurena et al. (2023) studied flexing from a sociological perspective: the emphasis on how these behaviours shape consumer culture and the social norms of urban society. According to this study, flexing can increase social pressure to project a certain ideal image while triggering social competition dynamics that change consumption habits.

Research Iswantara (2021) focuses on the interplay between internal motives and external influences in shaping flexing behaviour. Using qualitative methods, Iswantara identified several driving elements, including the need for approval, a sense of superiority, and the impact of social media as the main medium for self-expression. These results show that *flexing* has complex psychological and social components and not just surface behavior. However, the economic impact of the flexing phenomenon was found by Juanda (2022), especially regarding consumer behavior and personal financial management. The study emphasizes how maintaining a social image through flexing can lead to an uncontrollable increase in spending, which can ultimately harm the finances of the perpetrators. This study is important because it offers a realistic view of the economic impact of this seemingly glamorous behavior. Finally, a new study of the work. The other research, Octamadian and Sari (2024), provides a modern cultural perspective on Flexing. They have this tendency with the rise of social media and digital technologies taking over public spaces. According to the study, Flexing is a new platform for negotiating social identity and status and expressing a digital culture that represents individuality and materialism.

New research investigates the application of illocutionary acts in the interview of a Formula One driver, specifically Carlos Sainz, and analyzes the role of impression management strategies in shaping the projected public image. The results indicate that language in interviews not only conveys information but also acts as a strategic tool for shaping particular perceptions, such as professionalism, confidence, and credibility. The research illustrates that those various illocutionary acts, namely representatives, directives, and expressives, are intentionally utilized to bolster impression management strategies. Consequently, interviews can be perceived as performative settings wherein individuals actively construct and negotiate their social identity through intentional linguistic selections (Lisna, 2026).

Based on the review of existing literature, inconsistencies remain in studies that examine the phenomenon of flexing from a practical or linguistic perspective. Most previous research has focused on the sociocultural and psychological aspects of flexing, without adequately addressing how language is used and how meaning is created in communication. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating flexing through a practical framework. It seeks to offer a new understanding of how flexing is realized and interpreted in language practices. Specifically, this research looks at the phenomenon of flexing in the television series *Suits*. Additionally, this study analyses the types of flexing used by the characters through the lens of impression management theory to identify how flexing strategies are created and expressed in the characters' dialogues in the series.

## 2 Method

This research is included in descriptive research because it describes the nature of the object to be studied. The researcher explains and interprets the data to find the grand concept of the phenomenon that will be found in this study. Descriptive aims to describe and summarize various conditions, situations, or phenomena of existing social reality. This reality has characteristics, dispositions, properties, models, signs, or descriptions of certain situations, conditions, or phenomena (Bungin, 2009).

The qualitative descriptive method used in this study aims to obtain and understand information about the types of flexion and speech events used when performing flexion speech. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with multiple case study methods that focus on the analysis of the linguistic phenomenon flexion. The qualitative method used is constructivism, which argues that social reality is constructed subjectively through human interaction and needs to be understood from the perspective of the actor Creswell (1994). Research data were obtained from audiovisual sources: the film *Suits* (2011). The researcher made observations by watching a film and transcribing all speech that contained elements of flexing as primary linguistic data. Data was collected through document analysis techniques on speech transcripts made from the film. The purposive sampling technique selects speech that explicitly represents the phenomenon of flexing.

## 3 Findings

The researchers obtained the results of the study after conducting a series of data tests by examining the film series *Suits* from the perspective of Goffman.

**Table 1: Types of Flexing**  
**[Sumber: Olah data Peneliti 2025]**

Jenis Flexing		Jumlah
<b>Front Stage</b>	Ingratiation	11
	Intimidation	27
	Self-Promotion	45
	Exemplification	15
	Supplication (request)	4
<b>Back Stage</b>	Ingratiation	2
	Intimidation	0
	Self-promotion	0
	Exemplification	0
	Supplication (request)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		106

Flexing wealth as an action that someone does to others is a common thing, whether intentional or not. However, some types of wealth showing off are actually done for specific purposes, such as gaining profit or even bringing others down. Often, showing off wealth is considered a form of



arrogance or showing off to others about what they have. However, when viewed holistically, showing off wealth can be a form of impact management in social interactions. This is especially the case in the film series *Suits*, which raises the theme of legal dramas, providing a new view of showing off wealth in a broader context, namely, when the characters use the capital they have as material to gain recognition and trust. There are several dimensions in impression management that are often referred to as image management. This is done to create the impression of others in accordance with the initial purpose of showing off wealth. Erving Goffman mentioned several things, such as putting on a face, bullying, self-promotion, setting an example, and asking for help as a form of self-image. These dimensions are also found in the *Suits* film series, both by the main character and the supporting characters. One of the hallmarks of the Flexing phenomenon in the *Suits* series is the use of language to suppress the social status and economic class of the characters.

Harvey Spectre, for example, often uses very precise words in his dialogues, choosing phrases that indicate his intelligence and elite status. This is seen in his dialogue, which gives the impression that his interlocutor creates linguistic tension between characters who are at a lower position in the social hierarchy, such as Mike Ross, who comes from a simpler background. Harvey's statements, such as "I don't play with chance, I play with the person" or "you understand or not", are not only expressions of power but also a form of linguistic performance that creates an image of himself as a non-competitive figure in the complex world of law and social life. Phrases like these have a deeper meaning because Harvey considers himself smarter, more competent, and more entitled than anyone else.

The flexing strategy found based on the Pragmatic analysis of flexing through impression management in the television series *Suits* is as follows.

### 3.1 Ingratiation

Flexing is often identified with arrogance in a directive way. However, more than that, flexing can occur through several things whose context looks positive. Flexing in this way actually provides an opportunity for someone to be liked by others. This method is done to show that the flexing actor has a very high value, but in an indirect way so that the person who hears it can accept the greatness on display without feeling cornered. This method affects the listener psychologically so that the perpetrator can take advantage of the perpetrator, such as improving social status, gaining recognition, or even influencing the opinions of others. So, the focus of this behavior is not to please others but to show off power, possession, and ability in an exclusive way. In this strategy, there are several possible behaviors such as praise giving, opinion conformity (adjusting opinions), self-presentation (self-appearance), or even favor doing (making profits).

### 3.2 Praise giving

Praise behaviour can be a strategy to manipulate other people's thoughts so that they feel happy and respond positively. On the other hand, when a positive response is given, the flexing perpetrator can immediately get a benefit in the form of recognition that is directly proportional to the praise conveyed. The following are examples of praise giving that occurs in the *Suits* film series.

*"The 2011 Tesla Roadster Sport. Offered only to our most exclusive members."*

A flexing event occurs in the dialogue when a marketing team offers Harvey Specter a luxury car. The car has a fantastic price that many people can't have. The car's marketing team told Harvey that the car would only be sold to the most exclusive members. In the context of this dialogue, the most exclusive member is Harvey. This statement visibly seems to give the impression that Harvey is being praised as a very great person and has so much money that he becomes their most exclusive member.

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But on the other hand, the statement carries another meaning, namely the car they sell is the most luxurious car that only deserves to be owned by someone who has the highest social class. This indicates that they are showing off their ability to provide rare items that cannot be obtained anywhere else and by just anyone. Thus, they can show that the quality of their sales is very credible and exclusive. The marketing team's statement was not shown to Harvey to make him happy but to show Harvey that only they could provide the most exclusive product. Indirectly, its listeners validate that they are the company most capable of providing the best products with limited offers to people of the high social class. However, his listeners do not mind validating this because from the beginning, they already feel that they have received praise. Furthermore, the one who receives the most profit is actually the car seller, unknowingly by Harvey.

### 3.3 Self-presentation (penampilan diri)

One way people often flex is through self-promotion or self-appearance. They can assert their position by showing off their appearance to others, making them feel impressed or even inferior. The following are examples of self-promotion behavior in the *Suits* film series.

*Lisa: Lebih dekat ya? Bisbol*

*Harvey: Attorney. I closed situation.*

Harvey did the Flexing incident to Lisa while they were playing baseball. Lisa asks if Harvey is a closer. Although closer often refers to the meaning of a competent lawyer, Lisa asks if Harvey is a closer or a closing part of the baseball team. But hearing that, Harvey replied that the closer in question was a lawyer. The flexing event occurred when Harvey stated that he was closing a problematic situation, which meant he not only presented himself as a lawyer but exaggerated his ability to close matters. Harvey meant this to reply to Lisa's ridicule, who said she was the baseball cover team. By declaring that he is the closing of the case, Harvey means not only refuting the ridicule but also showing off his above-average ability to solve problems. He emphasized that he is not just a lawyer, meaning he can win or lose a case. With these words, Harvey affirmed that he is the most reliable lawyer in closing cases satisfactorily

This flexing event is not only done to show off the ability to Lisa. Harvey flexed to show Lisa her extraordinary abilities so that Lisa would be impressed and believe in them. On the other hand, this can also make Lisa feel that Harvey cannot be bullied with ridicule but must be respected because he is competent and can resist when Lisa ridicules him. When someone gets resistance, the feeling of superiority will begin to decrease, especially if the resistance is done very well. Therefore, Harvey's strategy in resisting Lisa's ridicule effectively builds an image of his greatness and stops Lisa's courage to mock him later on. Furthermore, Flexing also happens from Mike to Robert.

*Harvey: I had him read your corporate lease last week. Ask him anything.*

*Robert: That's a 300-page document. Okay, what are the terms?*

*Mike: 35,000 square feet at 19 West 57th \$80 a foot expires in six months with an option to extend exercisable in 30 days."*

Mike mentioned what was written on page 300 to Robert. He showed his extraordinary ability to memorize, which impressed Robert and made him believe he had extraordinary intelligence. He explained the page's contents in detail so that Robert, initially sceptical of the young and new Mike, became more confident that he had above-average abilities. Mike's flexing was done to show off how smart he was and to change Robert's negative outlook and give complete trust to the firm. In addition, the flexing done by Mike also affected Robert's outlook in a way that didn't seem evil. Mike explained everything Robert wanted so that it gave him the satisfaction of getting a very competent young lawyer. This builds a beneficial relationship with Mike so that he will be more trusted by Robert in

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the future. Therefore, the flexing strategy carried out by Mike has an impact that is by the initial goal. This also happens in the next dialogue

Robert: *Who signs the lease?*

Mike: *You did*

Robert: *What's my middle name*

Mike: *The letter L*

Robert: *What happens when the event company no longer exists*

Mike: *That wasn't in the lease*

Robert: *How can, you be sure?*

Mike: *Because the lease I read wasn't 300 pages, it was 364 I can tell you what's on any one of the pages but I can't tell you that. That's how I can be sure.*

Robert: *Excellent"*

This dialogue shows that Mike is very intelligent in front of Robert so at the end of the dialogue, Robert expresses his admiration for Mike. This shows that the way Mike impresses Robert with his intelligence is very successful. Mike's ability to answer question after question accurately, even when Robert's question is wrong, shows that nothing can escape Mike's memory. This is done without offending Robert, but instead, it shows how trustworthy Mike's memory is that no one, including Robert, can defeat him. This situation is very advantageous for Mike. He and his firm gained trust. On the other hand, Robert, who was impressed because he was given a very great lawyer, gave his trust after Mike showed off his greatness. This method seems more subtle so that the flexing user can benefit without having to make other parties feel offended and be forced to provide validation to the flexing perpetrator. Therefore, Mike's actions are very appropriate when he wants to gain an advantage by showing off his abilities to the manipulated person.

### 3.4 Exemplification

Giving examples when doing flexing can be fairly effective strategy to make the listener feel confident that the flexing is truly successful. This strategy aims to create a perception of honesty, morality, and integrity. With statements accompanied by examples, people will consider the individual more competent, credible, and experienced. Thus, the individual will gain more trust and admiration from others so that they will reap more benefits in the future. In the *Suits* film series, there is some data related to flexing by including examples of success through inspirational stories as stated in the dialogue below.

Harvey: *"Look, you were giving me shit this morning because I come and go when I want to. You know why I can do that? Because when I got here, I dominated. They thought I worked a hundred hours a day. Now, no matter what time I get in, nobody questions my ability to get the job done. Get it through your head. First impressions last. If you start behind the eight ball, you'll never get in front."*

Harvey: *"Dengar tadi, pagi kau membuatku meleset karena aku datang dan pergi sesukaku. Kau tahu kenapa aku bisa melakukan itu? Karena saat aku datang ke sini, aku mendominasi. Mereka mengira aku bekerja seratus jam sehari. Sekarang, tidak peduli jam berapa aku datang, tidak ada yang melebihi kemampuanku untuk menyelesaikan pekerjaan. Pahami ini. Kesan pertama itu penting. Jika kau memulai dari posisi yang buruk, kau tidak akan pernah bisa unggul."*

Harvey shows off his success today is because since he first worked at Pearson-Hardman is his ability to be the best since young. He said that the key to his success today is his hard work beyond people his age. He said this to Mike as his assistant when he was angry. Harvey's statement shows

that he shows off his success to Mike who is just starting his career by giving examples of what he went through to be successful like today. Similar data is also found in the following dialogue.

*Mike: "And she just called me for dinner. What is so funny?"*

*Harvey: "Watson, Klyman, Gallo, Goldberg, and Specter."*

*Mike: "Why are you naming .... The last five seniors partner"*

*Harvey: "Everyone of us was taken to dinner by Jessica as a first-year. And now, she's taking you, which means this is a good thing. Exactly."*

Harvey mentions the names of five people who have succeeded in becoming senior partners at the Pearson-Hardman law firm including himself. This statement shows that he is one of the few people who are successful today. This was said by Harvey when Mike admitted that he got a dinner invitation from Jessica in his first year of work. According to Harvey, this is a good sign because everyone who is currently a senior partner, as a sign of their success in their career at Pearson-Hardman, got a dinner invitation with Jessica in their first year of work. This shows that Mike will soon be as successful as he is in the future. Related data exemplifying success as a means of flexing is also found in the following dialogue.

*Katrina: "Missing an appearance is different from looking like a buffon in open court"*

*Louis: I gave you a way out, so don't come crying to me*

*Katrina: "Rapist, murderer, these are the kinds of people I'm used to dealing with. And you know where they are? Spending the rest of their lives realizing that I wasn't just a pretty face."*

*Katrina: "Tidak hadir dalam konferensi berbeda dengan terlihat seperti badut di pengadilan terbuka"*

*Louis: Aku sudah memberi jalan keluar, jadi jangan datang menangis.*

*Katrina: "Pemerksa, pembunuh, orang-orang seperti inilah yang biasa saya hadapi. Dan tahukah Anda di mana mereka sekarang? Menghabiskan sisa hidup mereka, mereka menyadari bahwa mereka bukan hanya sekadar wajah cantik."*

Katrina shows off all the things she has achieved as a young lawyer when Louis taunts her. She gives examples of some of the great things she has overcome to illustrate that she is a great young lawyer, so Louis does not deserve to insult her. According to her, everyone who belittled her, like the prisoners she defeated, initially mocked her for being incompetent and only relied on her beauty. However, according to Katrina, they were languishing in prison, thinking that she was not only beautiful but also competent. This was expressed to Louis, who was languishing in prison due to Katrina's lawsuit. This shows that she dominates the situation by exemplifying that she has had greater success. So, putting Louis in prison is an easy thing with her abilities.

### 3.5 Request (Supplication)

Requesting is often considered a self-defeating thing, so that others think that the requester is a subordinate and helpless party. However, in the context of self-image formation, requesting can be used in the context of asking for sympathy so that people will support it. This sympathy can be used to gain recognition. This greatly utilizes the psychological approach so that the listener feels like helping. Thus, individuals can do flexing so that others believe in their greatness and then help them do something. In the *Suits* film series, there is some data related to flexing through a covert request for support in the following dialogue.

*Mike: " You give me this and I will works as hard as it takes to school those Harvard douches and become the best lawyer you have ever seen."*

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*Mike: "Jika kau memberikan ini padaku, aku akan bekerja sekeras mungkin untuk mengajari para mahasiswa Harvard yang sombong itu dan menjadi pengacara terbaik yang pernah kau lihat."*

Mike is stating his determination to work hard to prove himself better than Harvard graduates and become the best lawyer Harvey has ever seen. Mike is highlighting himself as a very ambitious, dedicated, and potential individual. He seems to be asking for support from Harvey and humbles himself by stating that Harvey is the one who gave him this job opportunity. Thus, he seems like a helpless person if not for Harvey's help. But on the other hand, he also shows his ambition to succeed, and this proves that he is an individual who deserves to be appreciated and respected. This is a form of flexing because he wants to show that he is a special individual. Mike successfully asserts that he is a very ambitious, dedicated individual and has great potential to become the best lawyer. He is trying to convince others that he deserves the opportunity requested. Data related to the request is also found in the following dialogue.

*Harvey: "So all we need to do is find a legal way to get at that money."*

*Mike: Yeah, so do you want me to go tell Daniel how proud you are of me or do we do that together later? Have, like, a group thing?*

*Harvey: "I'll give him a goodnews"*

*Harvey: "Jadi yang perlu kita lakukan hanyalah mencari cara legal untuk mendapatkan uang itu."*

*Mike: Ya, jadi kamu mau aku memberi tahu Daniel betapa bangganya kamu padaku, atau kita melakukannya bersama-sama nanti? Seperti acara kelompok?*

*Harvey: "Aku akan menyampaikan kabar baik kepadanya"*

Mike seems to be asking Harvey to praise himself in front of Daniel because he is unable to do it alone without Harvey's help. But on the other hand, this statement is a flexing from Mike to Harvey that he has solved a complex problem, so that according to him, Harvey should automatically praise him in front of Daniel. This shows that Mike is actually begging Harvey while showing off his prowess.

#### 4 Discussion

The phenomenon of flexing in social communication, as explained in this study through a pragmatic approach and management impression theory Goffman (1959), shows that showing off is a complex and multidimensional communication strategy. Showing off is not just a small act of self-expression, but also a structured effort to build, maintain, and manage social identity through the strategic use of language. These findings confirm that language is a performative tool in creating and reproducing social hierarchies that are relevant to various social contexts, including the educational environment. Previous literature that focused on the phenomenon of showing off, such as the study by Putra, T.A. (2024). As for Claurena et al. (2023), Iswantara (2021) explains in his research that most have examined the psychological and sociological aspects of this behavior, highlighting the appearance of social recognition, the dynamics of consumerism, and the influence of social media. Juanda (2022) expands its scope by discussing the economic meaning of showy behavior, especially in consumptive behavior and personal financial management. Despite their richness, these studies tend to ignore in-depth analysis of the role of language as an essential means of social impressions in flexing.

This research fills this gap by applying pragmatic analysis, particularly impression tactics (Jones & Pittman, 1982), to explore how flexing is realized through speech in the context of dialogue in the *Suits* series. This approach shows that verbal communication is central to social identity formation and status negotiation, an essential but under-appreciated dimension in previous flexing studies. These findings make a significant theoretical contribution, expanding educational and pragmatic

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communication literature by integrating previously understudied linguistic dimensions. From an educational perspective, the understanding of flexing and the impression of management has essential relevance. In the academic environment, especially among students and students, this phenomenon can affect social dynamics, interaction between students, and the formation of school culture. As Rosyada and Ramadhianti (2019) stated, effective communication management and understanding of social impression strategies can help educators build a conducive learning environment and develop positive character in students. By recognizing flexing patterns, educators can intervene so that excessive show-off behavior does not undermine social harmony and learning focus.

The main limitation of this study lies in the data's source, which is fictional media, so the results need to be interpreted with caution if applied to a real context. To address this, follow-up studies are recommended to use empirical methods that examine flexing directly in formal education settings, considering diverse sociocultural variables. A mixed qualitative and quantitative approach will also strengthen the validity and generalization of the findings. Overall, this study opens up a new critical and innovative perspective in educational communication by placing language as the center of analysis in flexing. Thus, this research not only enriches the study of pragmatism and social communication but also provides practical implications for developing educational interventions sensitive to social dynamics and communication culture in the digital age.

## 5 Conclusion

This study concludes that flexing is a complex communication strategy that utilizes language as a management impression tool to construct and manage social identity, as described by Goffman's theory (1959) and Jones & Pittman's (1982) impression tactics. Through a pragmatic analysis of dialogue in the *Suits* series, it is found that flexing is not just a material show-off but a strategic means of negotiating social status and power that has far-reaching implications in modern social interactions. The main contribution of this research lies in integrating pragmatic linguistic approaches into the study of flexing, enriching the literature on educational and social communication by clarifying how language plays an active role in constructing social identity in the academic and popular culture environment. This research also underscores the importance of understanding flexing for educators in managing students' social dynamics and creating a healthy and inclusive learning environment.

The limitations of data sourced from fictional media require further research with empirical methods in a formal education environment to generalize the findings more widely. Future studies are suggested to explore flexing in diverse sociocultural contexts and use blended approaches to enhance validity and practical relevance. Thus, this research provides a strong conceptual and empirical foundation for developing educational communication interventions that are responsive to contemporary social phenomena while paving the way for interdisciplinary research linking linguistics, social psychology, and education in the digital age.

## Disclosure Statement

The author(s) claim there is no conflict of interest

## Acknowledgment (optional)

The author would like to thank Prof. Drs. Mangatur Nababan, M.Ed., M.A., Ph. D for guiding the researcher, which enabled the author to conduct this study. I would also like to thank my friends in the Master of Translation Linguistics program who have helped me in data collection and data analysis.

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