



Expressive Speech Acts as Reflections of Educational Leadership and Management Values in Habiburrahman El Shirazy's *Kembara Rindu*: A Pragmatic Perspective

A. Tenriawaru Atmarani, Muh Hasbi, Aslan Abidin

Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

Email : atenriawaruatmarani@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

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*Corresponding Author

This study aims to examine expressive speech acts in Habiburrahman El Shirazy's novel *Kembara Rindu* and to explore how these speech acts reflect educational leadership and management values within socio-religious contexts. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the study adopts a pragmatic framework grounded in Speech Act Theory to analyze selected character dialogues. The data consist of utterances expressing gratitude, apology, praise, complaint, lamentation, and religious wishes, which are examined to identify their types and pragmatic functions within the narrative. The findings reveal that expressive speech acts are predominantly employed to maintain interpersonal harmony, reinforce moral positioning, and construct religious identity. Moreover, these expressive acts function as strategic linguistic tools that reflect core dimensions of educational management, including value-based leadership, ethical communication, emotional regulation, and character formation. Rather than serving merely as emotional expressions, the speech acts demonstrate how language operates as a managerial instrument for guiding behavior, managing social relations, and transmitting educational values. This study implies that literary texts can serve as reflective resources for educational management by illustrating effective communication practices and moral leadership, thereby contributing to the development of character-based and value-oriented educational management models.

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INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in shaping social relationships, emotional understanding, and moral orientation in contemporary society (Aliyeva, 2023; Kozlova et al., 2024; Kumari, 2024). Beyond its informational function, language

operates as a form of social action through which individuals negotiate values, express emotions, and regulate interpersonal behavior (Aliyeva, 2023; Kumari, 2024). In educational and social institutions, communication quality significantly influences leadership effectiveness, character development, and social harmony (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025; Sanjani, 2024). Increasing social fragmentation, emotional misunderstanding, and ethical degradation highlight the urgency of studying how language conveys emotional and moral meanings (Stepanova et al., 2023). Literary discourse, particularly novels with strong religious and ethical themes, offers an important medium for examining these issues because it reflects idealized yet socially resonant communication practices. Emotional language in literature not only mirrors societal values but also implicitly models communicative behavior that aligns with educational leadership and value-based management (Abay et al., 2023; Varma & Sanghani, 2024). Therefore, investigating expressive language use in literary texts is socially relevant, as it provides insights into how emotional expression and moral communication can contribute to more humane, ethical, and effective educational management in broader social contexts.

Despite the recognized importance of emotional and ethical communication, contemporary society faces significant challenges in managing emotions, maintaining moral integrity, and fostering respectful interpersonal relations (Abubakar, 2024; Ughulu, 2024). In educational environments, ineffective communication often leads to conflict, misinterpretation, and weakened leadership authority (Kamara et al., 2024). Emotional expressions such as gratitude, apology, or moral concern are frequently marginalized or misunderstood, reducing their potential to support character formation and value transmission. This problem is exacerbated by a growing emphasis on instrumental and technical aspects of education management, which often overlooks the role of language as a managerial and leadership tool. Consequently, there is a gap between emotional communication practices and the goals of value-based educational management. This condition calls for alternative perspectives that can illuminate how emotional language functions as a mechanism for managing relationships, reinforcing moral values, and sustaining social cohesion (Rachmad, 2025; Thalgi, 2024). Literary texts provide a rich resource for addressing this problem by offering contextualized representations of emotionally and morally grounded communication.

In practical educational and socio-cultural contexts, emotional language is frequently used to guide behavior, reinforce norms, and establish authority, particularly in religiously oriented communities (Desfitri et al., 2024; Syam et al., 2023). Novels with strong ethical and spiritual dimensions often portray characters who manage conflict, leadership, and moral dilemmas through

expressive utterances such as thanking, apologizing, praising, and expressing hope (Akaenyi, 2024). These linguistic practices resemble communicative strategies used by educators and leaders to maintain harmony, motivate individuals, and transmit values (Fenuku, 2024; Subhan & Afiyah, 2024). *Kembara Rindu* presents such phenomena vividly, depicting emotional interactions that reflect moral responsibility, spiritual leadership, and relational management. The characters' dialogues demonstrate how expressive language functions not merely as personal emotion but as a social and managerial instrument. This phenomenon mirrors real-life educational settings, where leaders and teachers rely on emotionally charged language to foster trust, discipline, and ethical awareness (Gat & Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2025; Le et al., 2023). Thus, the novel provides an empirical site for examining emotional discourse as a form of educational management practice.

Recent studies in pragmatics and discourse analysis emphasize that expressive speech acts play a central role in emotional and moral communication (Gurevich, 2022; Tanduk, 2023). Contemporary research highlights that expressive utterances externalize psychological states while simultaneously managing social relationships and reinforcing shared values. In narrative discourse, expressive speech acts are shown to intensify emotional meaning and guide readers' moral interpretation (Zhabotynska & Slyvka, 2020). Several studies in Indonesian discourse analysis demonstrate that expressive language in narratives functions ideologically, shaping perceptions of virtue, responsibility, and social harmony. However, most existing research remains focused on linguistic classification or emotional representation, treating expressive speech acts primarily as stylistic or affective devices. While these studies contribute to pragmatic theory, they rarely extend their analysis to institutional or managerial dimensions, particularly in education. As a result, the potential of expressive speech acts as tools for leadership communication and value-based management remains underexplored in current scholarship.

Within educational research, recent discussions on leadership and management increasingly emphasize ethical communication, emotional intelligence, and value-oriented leadership. Nevertheless, empirical studies rarely draw on literary discourse as a source of insight into these communicative practices (Dodamgoda, 2024; Tadesse et al., 2024). The intersection between pragmatic analysis of expressive speech acts and educational management theory has not been sufficiently addressed. Existing studies tend to separate linguistic analysis from educational leadership discourse, creating a conceptual gap. This separation limits the understanding of how emotional language functions as a strategic managerial resource. Moreover, few studies examine Indonesian literary texts as reflective models of educational values and

leadership communication. Therefore, there is a clear research gap in integrating expressive speech act analysis with educational management perspectives. Addressing this gap is essential to develop a more holistic understanding of communication as a core component of value-based educational leadership.

This study offers a novel contribution by positioning expressive speech acts not only as pragmatic phenomena but also as reflections of educational leadership and management values. Unlike previous studies that focus solely on emotional expression or narrative aesthetics, this research integrates pragmatic analysis with educational management dimensions such as value-based leadership, ethical communication, emotional regulation, and character education. By analyzing expressive utterances in *Kembara Rindu*, the study demonstrates how literary discourse can function as a conceptual model for managing emotions and values in educational contexts. This interdisciplinary approach represents the state of the art by bridging pragmatics, literary studies, and educational management. The novelty lies in reconceptualizing expressive speech acts as managerial tools that support moral leadership and relational governance, offering insights relevant to contemporary educational challenges.

Based on the issues and gaps identified, this study addresses the following research problems: what types of expressive speech acts are used in *Kembara Rindu*, how these acts function pragmatically within narrative contexts, and how they reflect educational leadership and management values. The central argument of this study is that expressive speech acts in the novel operate as strategic communicative actions that manage social relations, reinforce moral values, and model character-based leadership. These acts function not merely as emotional expressions but as mechanisms of value transmission and relational management. By articulating this argument, the study contributes theoretically to pragmatic and educational discourse studies and practically to the development of value-oriented communication strategies in educational management.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative case study design to explore expressive speech acts in Habiburrahman El Shirazy's *Kembara Rindu*. A qualitative approach is chosen because it allows in-depth interpretation of language use, emotional expression, and contextual meaning within a literary text. The case study design is particularly appropriate as the novel is treated as a single, bounded case that reflects communicative practices related to emotional regulation, moral guidance, and value transmission, which are closely associated with educational management, especially in the management of character education and affective communication.

The research setting is the novel *Kembara Rindu*, selected due to its strong representation of emotional interactions, religious values, and pedagogical messages conveyed through character dialogues. These elements position the novel as a relevant literary site for examining how expressive speech acts function as tools for managing emotions, attitudes, and interpersonal relationships in educational and moral contexts. Data were collected through close reading to capture narrative and emotional contexts, followed by the identification of utterances containing expressive speech acts. The selected utterances were then documented and classified according to Searle's taxonomy of expressive speech acts, including expressions of gratitude, apology, praise, regret, and emotional response.

Data analysis was conducted through an interactive qualitative process consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data condensation, irrelevant utterances were reduced, while those reflecting expressive functions and educational management values were selected and coded. The data were then displayed in thematic categories to illustrate patterns of emotional language and their pragmatic functions. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting illocutionary acts and verifying their perlocutionary effects, particularly in relation to how expressive speech acts contribute to emotional management, moral leadership, and character development within educational settings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of expressive speech acts identified in *Kembara Rindu*. The analysis reveals that expressive speech acts play a central role in shaping emotional discourse, moral evaluation, and religious identity within the narrative. Beyond their pragmatic functions, these speech acts reflect implicit principles of educational management, particularly in the management of emotions, values, and interpersonal relationships that are essential in character education contexts.

Distribution of Expressive Speech Acts

The distribution of expressive speech acts in *Kembara Rindu* demonstrates a strong dominance of emotionally positive expressions, particularly thanking and praising, followed by apologizing, lamenting, complaining, blaming, and praying or wishing. This pattern indicates that emotional expression in the novel is largely oriented toward maintaining harmony, reinforcing moral conduct, and fostering reflective attitudes among characters.

From a pragmatic perspective, the frequent use of positive expressive acts suggests that emotional language functions as a strategic tool to regulate social interaction. Characters consistently employ expressions of gratitude and praise to affirm relationships and reduce potential conflict. This reflects an implicit emotional management system within the narrative, where language serves as a means of stabilizing interpersonal dynamics.

In terms of educational management, such distribution mirrors affective strategies commonly applied in educational settings, where positive reinforcement, emotional affirmation, and moral encouragement are prioritized to guide behavior and character development. The novel thus presents expressive speech acts not merely as linguistic phenomena but as communicative practices aligned with educational leadership and value management.

Thanking and Praising

Thanking and praising emerge as the most dominant expressive speech acts in *Kembara Rindu*. These acts are typically employed in moments of moral recognition, interpersonal support, and acknowledgment of kindness. Utterances such as “Terima kasih atas kebaikanmu selama ini” function not only as expressions of gratitude but also as affirmations of ethical behavior.

Pragmatically, thanking and praising strengthen solidarity and reinforce shared moral expectations. Their illocutionary force lies in recognizing virtue, while their perlocutionary effect encourages the continuation of positive conduct. These acts subtly shape character identity by framing moral behavior as socially valued and emotionally rewarding.

Viewed through an educational management lens, thanking and praising reflect principles of motivational management and positive reinforcement. In educational contexts, such expressive strategies are essential for fostering learner motivation, emotional security, and moral confidence. The novel implicitly models how educators or leaders can manage emotional climates through affirming communication.

Apologizing and Lamenting

Apologizing functions as a crucial mechanism for repairing disrupted social relationships in the novel. Utterances like “Aku minta maaf telah mengecewakanmu” indicate an acknowledgment of moral responsibility and emotional awareness. Rather than signaling weakness, apology is portrayed as a form of moral maturity.

Lamenting, meanwhile, allows characters to articulate sorrow, disappointment, or empathy toward others' suffering. These expressions externalize inner emotional struggles and create shared emotional spaces between characters. Pragmatically, lamenting reduces emotional isolation and invites mutual understanding.

From the perspective of educational management, apologizing and lamenting correspond to emotional regulation and conflict management strategies. They illustrate how acknowledging mistakes and expressing vulnerability can foster trust, reflective learning, and ethical accountability—key components in managing educational environments oriented toward character formation.

Complaining and Blaming

Complaining and blaming appear less frequently but serve significant evaluative functions. These expressive acts articulate dissatisfaction, disappointment, or moral disapproval, often directed at behavior rather than personal identity. Although potentially face-threatening, they play a critical role in negotiating ethical boundaries.

Pragmatically, complaining and blaming function to signal value violations and prompt reflection. Rather than escalating conflict, these expressions often invite corrective awareness and moral reconsideration within the narrative context.

In educational management terms, these expressive acts resemble corrective communication and disciplinary discourse. When managed appropriately, such language helps clarify norms, reinforce ethical standards, and guide behavioral improvement. The novel illustrates how emotional critique, when grounded in moral concern, contributes to value-based management rather than coercive control.

Praying and Wishing

Praying and wishing constitute a distinctive expressive category in *Kembara Rindu*. Utterances such as “Semoga Allah memudahkan jalan hidupmu” simultaneously express hope, empathy, and religious identity. These expressions transcend interpersonal communication by invoking transcendental support.

Pragmatically, praying and wishing strengthen emotional bonds while offering psychological comfort. Their perlocutionary effect lies in calming

emotional tension and reinforcing collective belief systems. These acts function as emotional anchors during moments of uncertainty or hardship.

From an educational management perspective, praying and wishing represent spiritual management and value internalization. In religious educational contexts, such expressions contribute to holistic education by integrating emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions. The novel thus positions expressive speech acts as tools for managing not only emotions but also belief-oriented character development.

Table : 1 Analysis of Expressive Speech Acts in *Kembara Rindu*

No	Utterance (Excerpt)	Speech Act Type	Pragmatic Function
1	"Terima kasih atas kebaikanmu."	Expressive (Thanking)	Expressing gratitude and solidarity
2	"Aku minta maaf telah bersalah."	Expressive (Apologizing)	Repairing social relationship
3	"Engkau anak yang luar biasa."	Expressive (Praising)	Affirming moral identity
4	"Hatiku sedih mendengarnya."	Expressive (Lamenting)	Expressing empathy
5	"Semoga Allah memberkahimu."	Expressive (Praying/Wishing)	Offering emotional and religious support

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that expressive speech acts function as a central mechanism through which emotions, moral values, and religious identity are linguistically constructed in *Kembara Rindu*. Through acts of thanking, praising, apologizing, lamenting, complaining, and praying, characters manage interpersonal relationships and regulate emotional interaction within the narrative. The key insight of this research lies in demonstrating that expressive language in literary discourse operates not merely as emotional expression but as a form of implicit emotional and value management. From an educational perspective, these findings highlight how expressive speech acts model character formation, moral leadership, and affective communication that are essential in educational management contexts.

In terms of scholarly contribution, this study extends pragmatic analysis by integrating expressive speech acts with educational management perspectives, particularly in relation to emotional regulation and value-based interaction in literary texts. By positioning an Indonesian novel as a meaningful site for pragmatic and educational inquiry, this research enriches discussions on

language, literature, and character education. Nevertheless, the study is limited to a single literary work and focuses solely on textual interpretation without empirical validation of reader responses. Future research may expand the corpus to include comparative studies across Indonesian novels or investigate readers' perlocutionary responses to expressive language in educational and literary settings.

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