Digital Comics as a Medium for Instilling Character Values: A Speech Act Study on "Pak Guru Inyong"

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the forms and types of speech acts in the digital comic Pak Guru Inyong and how its language strategies effectively internalize character values in readers. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using pragmatic discourse analysis, applying Searle's speech act theory consists of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Data were drawn from the comic's dialogue and visual elements that reflect values such as responsibility, religiosity, hard work, and empathy. The findings reveal that illocutionary acts, especially expressive, assertive, and directive types dominate in delivering educational messages in subtle yet impactful ways. The combination of visual and linguistic strategies successfully shapes readers' character awareness through humor, reflection, and grounded social critique. This study confirms that comics can serve as communicative, meaningful, and engaging alternative learning media to support character education in the digital age.

Keywords: alternative media; character education; digital comics; language strategy; speech act

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication used to convey specific messages from the speaker. Essentially, language is a system of symbols in the form of sounds (Alek, 2018). As the most common and natural form of communication, language has been estimated to exist for over 50,000 years (Kompas.com, 2011). Over time, language has evolved alongside technological advancements, allowing messages to be enhanced by visual elements such as images. One of the most widely used visual media that incorporates language is comics.

Comics can be defined as visual narratives that include dialogue within sequential illustrations (Gundo, 2024). According to IDN Times, comics are believed to have emerged as early as the 1800s, with one of the most famous being *Boss Tweed* by Thomas Nast (Herdyanto, 2019). Originally functioning as tools for political and social criticism, comics later gained popularity as entertainment media. However, beyond entertainment, comics also serve as vehicles for delivering messages, including propaganda and ideology (Ramdani et al., 2022). The combination of visuals and brief but impactful language allows comics to communicate ideas persuasively across diverse audiences.

Besides serving as tools for propaganda or humor, comics possess strong potential as educational media that creatively transmit moral and educational values. The blend of verbal and visual communication makes comics appealing and effective for various age groups (Nafala, 2022). Historically, comics have conveyed symbolic messages through immersive narratives, making them ideal not only for reflecting social realities but also for promoting character education in a more engaging and humane manner. Comics have become a transformative medium, capable of fostering critical awareness and ethical reflection in alignment with the development of language as a multidimensional communicative tool.

An interesting example is the comic *Pak Guru Inyong*, a digital comic available on the Webtoon platform, written by Anggoro Ihang in 2013 and still ongoing, with over 105 million views. It tells the story of Inyong, a humorous yet insightful honorary teacher at SMP 1 Gumiwang Tercinta. Although classified as a comedy, the comic subtly embeds educational themes and character values in the characters' daily conversations. This makes it a valuable object of study, as it delivers humor while portraying the everyday struggles of an honorary teacher filled with ethical and pedagogical insights.

The comic effectively employs both visual storytelling and verbal interaction to build narrative meaning. Dialogue, presented through speech bubbles and contextual illustrations, mimics real-life conversations which are dynamic, intentional, and filled with communicative acts. The speech acts within the comic are best examined through pragmatic analysis, particularly speech act theory, which studies how utterances convey intentions and elicit responses (Yule, 2018). In this context, the comic becomes a rich source for analyzing illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, exploring how language functions not only to inform but also to instruct, criticize, express emotions, or persuade.

Pragmatic theory divides speech acts into three categories: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary (Septiana et al., 2020). Locutionary acts refer to literal expressions. Illocutionary acts go further to include the speaker's intent consist of assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative (Astri, 2020). Assertive acts affirm facts, directive acts instruct, commissive acts involve promises, expressive acts reflect emotions, and declaratives alter social reality. Meanwhile, perlocutionary acts focus on the impact of speech on the listener's behavior, such as influencing actions or decisions.

In comics, especially *Pak Guru Inyong*, such speech acts are enhanced by situational visuals that help convey educational messages in subtle yet impactful ways. Dialogues between characters often include witty critiques on themes like integrity, patience, or fairness—blended into humorous interactions. Thus, this study explores the types of speech acts used in the comic and how these acts contribute to the educational function of language by shaping values and behaviors through everyday dialogues.

Several previous studies on the Pak Guru Inyong comic have made significant contributions to uncovering linguistic, pragmatic, and character-related aspects. Nurlatifa and Suhardi (2019) examined implicature functions and identified eleven types of speech acts, demonstrating the comic's potential as a medium for conveying social and educational messages. Nurcahyani et al. (2018) focused more on character portrayal and educational values, such as honesty and responsibility, as well as the potential of the comic as instructional material in schools. Artha et al. (2019) explored politeness strategies and their violations in character dialogues using Leech's politeness theory. Meanwhile, Marjan et al. (2021) analyzed the use of satirical language styles, ranging from cynicism to antiphrasis, which function to focus meaning and influence readers. Although these four studies highlight different aspects, they all agree that Pak Guru Inyong serves as a powerful medium for delivering moral and social messages.

However, these studies have yet to integrate speech act analysis with the educational function and internalization of character values in a holistic way through both linguistic and visual approaches in digital media. The present study, titled Digital Comics as a Medium for Instilling Character Values: A Speech Act Study on "Pak Guru Inyong", offers novelty by combining speech act theory (locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts) with the identification of character values within the context of digital comic dialogue and visual narration. This study not only describes the forms of language or character content but also analyzes how language functions (speech acts) are strategically employed to shape readers' character awareness. Theoretically, this research enriches pragmatic studies in digital media, and practically, it provides a reference for educators and content developers to utilize comics as an engaging and communicative tool for character education.

This study fills that gap by combining speech act theory with character education analysis, identifying how informal and humorous speech in comics communicates values such as integrity, empathy, and resilience without being didactic. This integrated approach offers a fresh perspective on narrative communication in educational media. It also contributes practical insights for educators and content creators by demonstrating how comics can serve as effective alternative media for delivering moral and academic messages in a light yet meaningful way.

This research aims to analyze the types of speech acts (locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary) present in the comic *Pak Guru Inyong* and how they function to internalize educational values and character-building messages in readers. The study contributes to the field of pragmatics and media linguistics by exploring how visual-verbal communication in comics functions as a vehicle for value transmission, expanding the application of speech act theory to multimodal texts. This study offers insights for educators, media practitioners, and curriculum developers on how to utilize comics as engaging educational tools to foster character education, especially among students in a digital age.

METHOD

In general, this section describes how the study conducted. The subject matter of this section is: (1) the study design; (2) the sample population or subject of the research; (3) data collection techniques and instrument development; (4) and data analysis techniques. Please use descriptive paragraphs.

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, as it aims to uncover and describe the linguistic and visual strategies in the comic "Pak Guru Inyong" that effectively internalize character values in its readers. This approach allows the researcher to explore the meanings embedded in utterances and illustrations in a deep, contextual, and interpretive manner, in line with the principles of character education.

The method used in this study is qualitative discourse analysis, focusing on the use of language within social and educational contexts. This method is highly relevant for examining how language functions to convey moral and social values through the comic medium. In this context, comics are positioned not merely as entertainment media but also as alternative learning tools capable of delivering educational messages effectively.

The data in this study consists of verbal utterances or dialogues found in "Pak Guru Inyong" as well as the visual elements accompanying those utterances. In addition, the social context portrayed in the comic is also analyzed to reinforce the interpretation. The primary data source is the comic itself, both in print and digital versions, supported by documents and scholarly literature on character education and communication strategies in visual media.

Data collection was conducted using documentation techniques, by recording all

dialogues and utterances in the comic that potentially reflect character values. This process was supported by observational and note-taking techniques, where the researcher closely examined each episode and documented both verbal and visual expressions relevant to the study. The data were then coded and classified according to episode, type of speech act, and the character values conveyed.

The collected data were analyzed through several stages, beginning with the identification of utterances containing educational values, the classification of speech act forms and types based on Searle's (1979) theory, and the analysis of character values referring to the framework established by Kemendiknas (2010). Furthermore, visual illustrations were analyzed to understand how expressions, settings, and gestures of the characters support the transmission of values through language.

The validity of the data was ensured through persistent observation, peer discussions for meaning verification, and consistent coding and interpretation. To strengthen the findings, triangulation techniques were applied—both methodological triangulation by comparing verbal and visual meanings, and source triangulation by relating findings from the comic to relevant theories of character education and discourse analysis.

Overall, this research was carried out in sequential stages, beginning with a literature review, followed by data collection from the comic, data reduction and classification, in-depth analysis, and the formulation of conclusions and research reporting. Through this method, the study is expected to contribute to the use of comics as an effective alternative learning medium in fostering educational awareness and character development among students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Forms and Types of Speech Acts in Pak Guru Inyong Comic for Delivering Educational Messages

The comic Pak Guru Inyong utilizes various forms and types of speech acts as strategies to convey educational values in subtle yet impactful ways. By combining everyday conversational language with visual narrative elements, each utterance made by the characters carries not only surface meaning but also embedded messages that reflect character values such as responsibility, empathy, honesty, and reflection. This section presents the analysis of 20 selected utterances, categorized based on their form of speech act, type of illocution, and their communicative function, particularly in terms of educational intent.

The analysis below shows that illocutionary speech acts dominate, particularly expressive, assertive, and directive types. These are used to express feelings, provide information, offer guidance, or prompt actions that reinforce character education. Perlocutionary acts also appear in some episodes, aimed at encouraging reflection or eliciting emotional responses. Each utterance serves not only to advance the plot or dialogue but also to instill values aligned with character-building goals in educational settings.

No.	Episode	Utterance	Form of Speech Act	Type of Speech Act	Function of the Utterance
1	Eps 1	Inyong ingin jadi orang kaya	Illocution	Expressive	Expressing personal hope
2	Eps 1	Begitulah hidup... terkadang keinginan memang tidak sejalan...	Perlocution	Assertive	Inviting readers to reflect

3	Eps 2	Kalau begitu Anda mengajar komputer, bahasa inggris, dan seni rupa	Illocution	Directive	Giving an assignment order
4	Eps 2	Mulai minggu depan Anda bisa mengajar...	Illocution	Commissive	Assiging a task
5	Eps 3	Dia jomblo....	Illocution	Expressive	Joke/sarcasm
6	Eps 3	Pacarnya orang mana pak?	Illocution	Assertive	Asking (humorous/informative)
7	Eps 4	Malam ini pergantian tahun... Coba buat harapan ah...	Illocution	Directive	Encouraging to make New Year's resolutions
8	Eps 4	Ya Tuhan... Jadikanlah tahun 2017...	Illocution	Expressive	Expression of hope and social criticism
9	Eps 4	Ini kan baru jam 6, papah.	Illocution	Assertive	Providing time information
10	Eps 5	Mentang-mentang senior...	Illocution	Expressive	Criticism of seniority
11	Eps 5	Saran saya sih mending tolak saja pak...	Illocution	Directive	Giving a suggestion
12	Eps 5	Sudah jadi tugas saya...	Illocution	Assertive	Affirming professional responsibility
13	Eps 5	Begini pak... Kalau tiap jumat...	Illocution	Commissive	Requesting help
14	Eps 7	Sebelum memulai pelajaran... marilah kita berdoa...	Perlocution	Directive	Directing a religious act
15	Eps 7	Tuhan... Dimanapun kau menempatkan inyong...	Illocution	Expressive	Expression of gratitude and acceptance
16	Eps 7	Anu... Ini... Mogok bu...	Illocution	Assertive	Providing an explanation
17	Eps 7	Lain kali kalau mogok lagi kirim pesan ke line saya saja ya?	Illocution	Commissive	Providing an explanation
18	Eps 8	Kepalanya itu malah mirip hasil persilangan...	Illocution	Expressive	Humorous sarcasm
19	Eps 8	Kalau guru honorer selalu jutek soalnya gajinya sedikit	Illocution	Expressive	Sarcastic remark

		hahaha...			
20	Eps 8	Kesimpulannya, perbedaan antara guru pns dengan honorer adalah...	Illocution	Assertive	Summarizing a factual difference

This data reveals how speech acts are used not only for narrative purposes but also as tools for communicative learning, embedding character-building messages into accessible, relatable everyday expressions. The diversity in types and functions shows that comics can serve as powerful educational media, especially when aimed at shaping moral reasoning and social awareness in young readers.

Discussion

Educational Values in Character Dialogues from the Comic "Pak Guru Inyong"

This section is also a major part of the research articles and is also usually the longest part of an article. Discussion of the research presented in this section are the result. The process of data analysis such as statistical calculations or other processes for the achievement of its research. Please present the discussion narratively.

The following is an analysis and discussion of educational values based on the characters' utterances in the comic "Pak Guru Inyong", examined through the lens of character education principles as outlined by Kemendiknas (2010). Each utterance reflects moral and social values that align with character development in educational contexts.

The first utterance, "Inyong ingin jadi orang kaya" ("I want to be rich"), contains values of motivation and aspiration. The corresponding educational value is hard work, as it reflects a desire to improve one's life through ambition. This is essential in character education because students need to be encouraged to pursue their futures with determination. The following utterance, "Begitulah hidup... terkadang keinginan memang tidak sejalan..." ("That's life… sometimes desires don't align"), conveys a sense of self-reflection. This promotes values of religiosity and humility, encouraging learners to accept reality and remain resilient.

In the utterance "Kalau begitu Anda mengajar komputer..." ("Then you'll teach computer class..."), the value of responsibility emerges, emphasizing the importance of discipline and commitment even outside one's area of expertise. Similarly, "Minggu depan Anda bisa mengajar..." ("Next week, you can start teaching...") reflects professionalism, underlining the educational values of responsibility and hard work, and the trust placed on a teacher's role.

Several utterances convey values of social humor and openness, such as "Dia jomblo..." ("He's single...") and "Pacarnya orang mana, Pak?" ("Where is your partner from, sir?"). These reflect communicativeness, friendliness, and curiosity, which are important in fostering healthy classroom interactions. The utterance "Coba buat harapan ah..." ("Let's make some wishes...") expresses optimism, encouraging students to have future aspirations and develop self-improvement goals.

Religious values are strongly expressed in prayers, as seen in "Ya Tuhan... jadikan tahun 2017..." ("Dear God... please make 2017..."), which demonstrates deep faith and social concern, especially regarding the condition of honorary teachers. On the other hand, a statement like "Ini baru jam 6, papah." ("It's only 6 o'clock, dad.") teaches time discipline, highlighting the importance of time management and punctuality.

Utterances such as "Mentang-mentang senior..." ("Just because you're a senior...") and "Saran saya sih mending tolak saja pak..." ("My suggestion is to reject it, sir...") convey social criticism and courage to express opinions. These represent democratic character

education and encourage equality and justice. Meanwhile, "Sudah jadi tugas saya..." ("It's already my duty...") reflects integrity and dedication, highlighting professional responsibility and sincerity.

The statement "Kalau tiap Jumat..." ("If every Friday...") presents the value of collaboration, representing teamwork and communication. The expression "Marilah kita berdoa..." ("Let us pray...") is a clear example of promoting religiosity within the school environment.

The phrase "Tuhan, di manapun Kau menempatkan inyong..." ("God, wherever You place me...") contains the value of surrender (tawakal), indicating self-acceptance and willingness to carry out duties. Meanwhile, in "Mogok bu..." ("It broke down, ma'am"), the character shows honesty by giving a straightforward reason for being late, without fabricating excuses.

The utterance "Kirim pesan ke line saya ya?" ("Next time, send me a message on Line, okay?") reflects empathy, a form of social care that provides a practical solution among fellow teachers. In "Kepalanya mirip hasil persilangan..." ("His head looks like a crossbreed result..."), humor is used to express criticism, carrying communicative value and delivering feedback in a soft, humorous way. The sarcastic statement "Guru honorer selalu jutek..." ("Honorary teachers are always grumpy...") illustrates social sarcasm, functioning as a protest against structural inequality in the education system.

Finally, "Perbedaan antara guru PNS dan honorer adalah..." ("The difference between civil servant and honorary teachers is...") reflects critical thinking and reflection, encouraging learners to develop analytical reasoning and formulate conclusions based on observation and experience.

These utterances in "Pak Guru Inyong" embody diverse educational values such as religiosity, cooperation, empathy, honesty, responsibility, reflection, and courage to speak up—all of which are highly relevant to reinforcing character education among learners in today's era.

Internalization of Character Values through Language Strategies in the Comic "Pak Guru Inyong"

Pak Guru Inyong is a visual comic work that not only entertains but also conveys strong educational messages. Based on the analysis of twenty speech data entries, it is evident that the language strategies employed in this comic are highly effective in internalizing character values in its readers. These strategies are realized through deliberate word choice, tone of speech, use of social context, as well as the delivery of humor and reflection—reaching both the affective and cognitive dimensions of the audience.

First, personal and reflective language strategies are used to express the hopes, struggles, and emotions of the main character, such as in the utterances "Inyong ingin jadi orang kaya" ("I want to be rich") or "Begitulah hidup... terkadang keinginan memang tidak sejalan..." ("That's life… sometimes our wishes don't come true"). The language is simple yet resonates with universal human experiences, thus evoking empathy and self-awareness about values like hard work, hope, and acceptance.

Second, the comic also utilizes directive and commissive speech strategies within the context of professionalism and teacher responsibility. Utterances like "Mulai minggu depan Anda bisa mengajar..." ("You can start teaching next week...") and "Kalau begitu Anda mengajar komputer, bahasa Inggris, dan seni rupa" ("Then you'll teach computer, English, and art") implicitly instill values of discipline, flexibility, and dedication. Readers are invited to understand the social reality of honorary teachers who continue to work passionately despite limitations.

The use of humor and social satire is another major strength of the comic. Utterances such as "Dia jomblo..." ("He's single..."), "Kepalanya itu mirip hasil persilangan..." ("His head looks like a crossbreed..."), and "Kalau guru honorer selalu jutek..." ("Honorary teachers are always grumpy...") contain subtle social critiques wrapped in humor. These humorous statements serve not only to entertain but also to voice criticisms of the education system, social inequality, and the disparity between civil servant and honorary teachers. This style of language effectively conveys values like honesty, justice, and equality without sounding didactic.

Moreover, the use of religious and spiritual language is strongly emphasized in the comic. Utterances like "Marilah kita berdoa..." ("Let us pray..."), "Tuhan... Dimanapun Kau menempatkan inyong..." ("God, wherever You place me..."), and "Ya Tuhan... Jadikanlah tahun 2017..." ("Dear God... Please make 2017...") reflect the internalization of values such as religiosity, surrender (tawakal), and gratitude. This strategy shows that spiritual language is not limited to formal worship but can be embedded in daily life and teaching professions, thereby reinforcing the reader's religious character.

Equally important, the comic also employs empathetic and communicative language strategies to foster solidarity and social care. For instance, in the utterance "Lain kali kalau mogok lagi kirim pesan ke line saya saja ya?" ("Next time if it breaks down again, just message me on Line, okay?"), readers witness interpersonal interaction that reflects empathy, concern, and mutual support among teachers.

In conclusion, the language strategies in Pak Guru Inyong combine the power of expressive, directive, and assertive speech acts within relatable contexts rich in social values. By utilizing humor, irony, emotional expression, and linguistic simplicity, the comic successfully conveys character messages indirectly yet memorably. These strategies contribute to character formation—especially for students and educators—through lessons in responsibility, honesty, religiosity, perseverance, and social awareness within everyday situations.

Comics as an Alternative Learning Medium to Build Educational Awareness through Language and Visuals

The comic Pak Guru Inyong serves as a concrete example of an alternative educational medium capable of conveying meaningful messages through a communicative combination of language and visuals. Based on twenty utterances analyzed from the comic, it is evident that the fusion of text and imagery plays a significant role in cultivating character awareness, social values, and religious consciousness among readers—particularly students and teachers.

From a linguistic perspective, the comic employs speech strategies that are natural, communicative, and contextual. The language used is everyday, straightforward, and closely connected to the readers' experiences. This can be seen in utterances such as "Inyong ingin jadi orang kaya" ("I want to be rich") and "Mogok bu..." ("It broke down, Ma'am"), which reflect the main character's honesty, hope, and simplicity. This style of language fosters emotional closeness while encouraging readers to reflect on life values in a natural, non-patronizing manner.

Visually, the comic relies on illustrations to support and enhance its narrative messages. For example, when the main character is shown wearing worn-out clothes or riding a broken motorcycle, the visuals deepen the reader's understanding of his socioeconomic condition, offering a layer of visual empathy that traditional narrative texts may not achieve. These images invite readers to witness and feel real-life challenges—such as inequality, teacher responsibilities, and solidarity—rather than merely imagine them.

Humorous utterances like "Dia jomblo..." ("He's single...") and "Guru honorer selalu

jutek...” (“Honorary teachers are always grumpy...”) are paired with expressive facial gestures and body language in the illustrations. This combination provokes laughter while subtly delivering social critique. Visual humor proves effective in raising awareness of educational issues without making readers feel judged or uncomfortable. In this sense, the comic does more than communicate—it shapes perspective and attitude.

In religious contexts, visual representations such as characters raising their hands in prayer or scenes depicting the New Year transition reinforce the spiritual tone of the dialogue. For instance, the utterance “Tuhan... di manapun Kau menempatkan inyong...” (“God... wherever You place me...”) paired with a hopeful facial expression strengthens the message of surrender (tawakal) and self-acceptance. Such messages become more impactful when delivered multimodally—words and images working together to create complete meaning.

The comic also builds collective awareness through the visual representation of interpersonal interactions: between teacher and student, teacher and fellow teacher, or teacher and principal. For example, when one teacher offers support to another experiencing difficulties, the utterance “Kirim pesan ke line saya ya?” (“Send me a message on Line, okay?”) is accompanied by visuals expressing concern. This represents collaboration and social care, educating readers implicitly through behavior modeling.

Educational awareness in the comic is also constructed through simple but relevant conflicts, such as inequality between civil servant and honorary teachers, economic pressure, workload challenges, and issues of discipline and professionalism. All of these are conveyed through expressive visuals and vivid language, positioning the comic as a reflective and dialogic medium, not merely entertainment.

In summary, Pak Guru Inyong demonstrates that short narrative-based visual media can be highly effective as an educational tool. Its casual language, communicative illustrations, and grounded themes make the comic a powerful medium for character internalization, social value transmission, and the development of educational awareness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of twenty speech data samples from the comic Pak Guru Inyong, it can be concluded that this comic consistently conveys character education values through effective language and visual strategies. The comic utilizes communicative, simple, and contextual language, paired with expressive visual illustrations. This strategy enables readers—especially students and teachers—to naturally understand values such as responsibility, religiosity, empathy, hard work, honesty, and social critique without feeling lectured or moralized.

The comic also proves to be a valuable alternative learning medium, capable of fostering educational awareness through reflective and humorous speech styles, supported by visuals that enhance moral messages. The integration of text and image allows readers not only to receive information cognitively but also to experience it affectively. This affirms that visual media like comics hold great potential for supporting meaningful, contextual, and enjoyable character education.

Significantly, this study demonstrates that popular works such as comics can be used as learning resources in formal education, particularly in character development. It contributes to the fields of language and literature education, educational media development, and value transmission strategies in visual communication. Therefore, the findings of this research are expected to serve as a reference for teachers, researchers, and content developers in utilizing creative media that resonate with students' daily lives as effective and impactful tools for character education.

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