



# Character Formation through Traditional Acehese Rhymes: A Stylistic Analysis of Moral Meaning

Jesika Lolo Karina Manik<sup>1\*</sup>, Rosmawaty Harahap<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author: [jesikamanik081@gmail.com](mailto:jesikamanik081@gmail.com)

## Abstract

Traditional literary forms have long served as culturally embedded means of transmitting ethical values and shaping collective character. In Acehese society, traditional rhymes constitute an important yet underexamined literary practice through which moral orientations are communicated indirectly via aesthetic and linguistic form. While previous studies have highlighted the educational or thematic value of such rhymes, limited attention has been paid to the role of stylistic features in mediating character formation within specific cultural contexts. This study aims to examine how traditional Acehese rhymes encode and transmit moral values through their stylistic organization, and to identify the implications of these mechanisms for understanding character formation in Aceh. The study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in stylistic analysis. Data consists of selected traditional Acehese rhymes sourced from culturally authoritative compilations. The analysis focuses on diction, figurative language, imagery, rhyme patterns, and meaning construction, using an interpretive framework informed by contemporary stylistics and applied linguistics. The findings reveal that moral values such as humility, respect for elders, moral consistency, and social responsibility are embedded systematically in linguistic and aesthetic structures rather than conveyed through explicit moral instruction. Figurative language and imagery drawn from every day and ecological experience function as key mediators of ethical understanding, while regular rhyme patterns enhance memorability and communal circulation. These stylistic elements together form an integrated moral ecosystem that supports character formation within Acehese cultural life. The study contributes to Aceh Studies by demonstrating how traditional literature operates as a living moral resource. It also offers interdisciplinary insights relevant to character education, cultural sustainability, and the role of local knowledge in contemporary society.

**Keywords:** Aceh Studies, Traditional Rhymes, Stylistics, Character Formation, Local Wisdom

## Introduction

Traditional literary forms have long functioned as more than aesthetic artifacts. Across cultures, they operate as socially embedded mechanisms for transmitting ethical norms, communal values, and culturally situated knowledge systems. In recent years, scholars across the humanities and social sciences have increasingly emphasized the role of local literary traditions in sustaining moral frameworks within communities facing rapid sociocultural change (Giovanelli & Harrison, 2022; Miranda et al., 2025). This renewed interest reflects a broader scholarly movement that



foregrounds local knowledge as a legitimate source of theory building and applied insight, particularly within interdisciplinary research contexts.

In Indonesia, traditional poetic forms such as pantun occupy a distinctive position within the cultural ecology of many regions. Pantun are not merely oral or written expressions of creativity but serve as a culturally sanctioned medium through which advice, social critique, and moral instruction are conveyed indirectly yet persuasively (Wardana, 2021). Recent educational research demonstrates that traditional literature can function as an effective vehicle for character formation by enabling learners to internalize values through narrative, metaphor, and aesthetic experience rather than through overt didactic instruction (Miranda et al., 2025; Yania et al., 2025). These findings have contributed to a growing consensus that literature rooted in local wisdom offers pedagogical and societal benefits that contemporary educational models often overlook.

Within this broader landscape, Aceh represents a particularly significant site of inquiry. Acehnese society is characterized by strong cultural continuity, a rich oral literary heritage, and a historical emphasis on moral and communal responsibility. Traditional rhymes circulating within Acehnese communities reflect localized ethical orientations shaped by religious teachings, social hierarchy, and collective memory. As recent studies on Acehnese pantun demonstrate, these poetic forms encode values related to humility, respect for elders, social responsibility, and moral restraint, often through symbolic language and culturally specific imagery (Nurhaliza et al., 2024). However, despite this recognized cultural importance, Acehnese traditional rhymes remain underexplored within interdisciplinary academic discussions that connect literary form, stylistic structure, and character formation.

Contemporary stylistics offers a promising analytical framework for addressing this gap. Modern stylistics conceptualizes literary meaning as emerging from systematic linguistic choices rather than subjective interpretation alone. Drawing on developments in applied linguistics and cognitive approaches, stylistics enables researchers to examine how specific textual features, such as diction, imagery, rhythm, and figurative language, shape readers' moral and emotional interpretations in replicable and theoretically grounded ways (Giovanelli & Harrison, 2022). Recent pedagogical stylistics research further suggests that stylistic awareness enhances ethical sensitivity and reflective engagement with texts, particularly when literature functions as a medium for value transmission (Dine & Guerroudj, 2025). These insights indicate that stylistic analysis can serve as a bridge between literary scholarship and applied concerns such as education, cultural sustainability, and community development.

Although the intersection of literature and character education has received growing scholarly attention, existing studies exhibit several limitations when viewed from the perspective of Aceh Studies. First, much of the literature on pantun and character education in Indonesia remains pedagogically oriented, focusing primarily on classroom practices or curriculum design without sufficiently engaging with the linguistic mechanisms through which moral meanings are constructed (Wardana, 2021; Noviadi et al., 2023). As a result, the aesthetic and stylistic dimensions of traditional rhymes are often treated as secondary to their educational function, rather than as constitutive elements of moral communication.

Second, research on Acehnese pantun has largely concentrated on thematic classification, social function, or genre description. While such studies provide valuable documentation of cultural heritage, they rarely interrogate how stylistic features operate as cognitive and ethical cues within the text. Recent qualitative studies in Aceh have identified satire, advice, and social criticism as dominant functions of pantun, yet they stop short of explaining how linguistic choices enable these functions to shape individual character and social behavior (Nurhaliza et al., 2024). This limitation reflects a broader tendency in regional literary studies to prioritize content over form, thereby overlooking the analytical potential of stylistics.

Third, interdisciplinary engagement remains limited. Although Aceh Studies explicitly welcomes contributions from the humanities, social sciences, and applied fields, few studies successfully integrate literary analysis with broader discussions of community relevance, institutional application, or cultural ecosystems. In the context of accelerating modernization and global media influence, there is a pressing need to examine how traditional literary forms continue to mediate moral values within Acehnese communities and how these forms might

inform culturally grounded approaches to character education and social development (Dartini et al., 2025).

Finally, recent scholarship on local wisdom and character formation emphasizes the importance of contextual specificity. Studies conducted in different Indonesian regions demonstrate that local cultural narratives cannot be treated as interchangeable, as their moral frameworks are shaped by distinct historical, religious, and social configurations (Yania et al., 2025). Despite this recognition, Acehese traditional rhymes are rarely examined as a unique moral ecosystem with implications that extend beyond regional boundaries. This absence represents a missed opportunity to contribute Aceh-based insights to wider interdisciplinary discussions on literature, ethics, and education.

In response to these gaps, the present study adopts a stylistic approach to examine traditional rhymes circulating within Acehese cultural contexts and to investigate their role in character formation. By integrating literary stylistics with perspectives from applied linguistics and character education, this study positions Aceh not merely as a research setting but as a source of knowledge that contributes to broader scientific and humanistic inquiry.

Specifically, this study aims to analyze how stylistic features in selected traditional rhymes encode moral values central to Acehese social life. Attention is given to linguistic elements such as diction, imagery, rhyme patterns, and figurative language, as these features function as carriers of ethical meaning and cultural orientation. Through qualitative textual analysis, the study seeks to demonstrate how aesthetic form and moral content interact to produce interpretations that resonate with communal norms and individual character development.

The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it advances Aceh Studies by providing a linguistically grounded analysis of traditional rhymes that highlight their role within Aceh's moral and cultural ecosystem. Second, it contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship by illustrating how stylistic analysis can inform discussions of character formation, community values, and culturally responsive education. Third, it offers transferable insights for scholars and practitioners working in other cultural contexts where traditional literature plays a role in shaping ethical awareness and social cohesion.

By foregrounding the stylistic dynamics of Acehese traditional rhymes, this study aligns with the Aceh, which emphasize interdisciplinary research that advances knowledge relevant to Acehese communities while offering broader scientific and societal implications. In doing so, the study underscores the continued relevance of traditional literary forms as living resources for understanding the relationship between language, culture, and character in contemporary society.

## Methods

This study employed qualitative research design grounded in textual and interpretative analysis. A qualitative approach was selected because the research aims to examine how moral and character values are embedded and communicated through linguistic and stylistic features of traditional rhymes within a specific cultural context. Rather than quantifying frequencies or testing variables, the study sought to generate an in-depth understanding of meaning construction, value transmission, and cultural significance embedded in traditional literary texts. The design was therefore interpretive and descriptive in nature, allowing for close engagement with the textual data while remaining sensitive to the sociocultural context of Aceh.

The methodological orientation was interdisciplinary, integrating principles from stylistics, applied linguistics, and cultural studies. This integration enabled the analysis of language as both an aesthetic structure and a social practice that mediates moral norms within Acehese communities. Such a design is consistent with contemporary qualitative research in literary linguistics and aligns with interdisciplinary expectations in Aceh studies.

The primary data consisted of traditional rhymes that are culturally recognized and commonly circulated within Acehese communities. The rhymes selected for analysis are representative of traditional forms used for moral advice, social reflection, and character guidance. These texts were sourced from documented collections of traditional rhymes, community-based literary compilations, and culturally authoritative secondary sources that preserve orally transmitted pantun in written form. Selection focuses on rhymes that are

thematically associated with values such as humility, respect for elders, ethical conduct, and social responsibility. Secondary data were drawn from recent scholarly publications relevant to stylistics, traditional literature, character education, and Aceh Studies. These sources provided theoretical grounding and contextual support for interpreting the linguistic features and cultural meanings of the rhymes.

Data collection was conducted through document-based qualitative methods. Traditional rhymes were carefully identified, compiled, and transcribed into a standardized textual format to ensure consistency during analysis. Only rhymes that clearly reflected traditional usage and moral orientation were included. To maintain cultural validity, the selection process considered the historical circulation of the rhymes and their relevance within Acehese cultural practices. The supporting literature was collected through systematic searches of academic databases, prioritizing peer reviewed journal articles published within the last six years. This ensured theoretical relevance and alignment with contemporary scholarly discussions.

The primary research instrument was the researcher themselves, as is customary in qualitative literary analysis. To guide interpretation and ensure analytical rigor, a stylistic analysis framework was developed based on established principles of modern stylistics. The framework included analytic categories such as diction, imagery, rhyme patterns, figurative language, and conveyed meaning. These categories functioned as conceptual tools rather than rigid coding schemes, allowing flexibility while maintaining analytical consistency. An analytic protocol was prepared to document observations systematically during the analysis process. This protocol facilitated transparency, traceability of interpretations, and reflexive engagement with the data.

The data collection process followed several sequential steps. First, relevant traditional rhymes were identified and verified for authenticity and cultural relevance. Second, the texts were transcribed and reviewed to ensure linguistic clarity and fidelity to their original expressions. Third, each rhyme was read repeatedly in order to gain contextual familiarity and to identify initial stylistic features.

Following this familiarization stage, the rhymes were examined using the stylistic framework. Notes were recorded for each analytic category, focusing on how specific linguistic choices contributed to meaning construction and moral emphasis. Throughout this process, interpretations were continuously cross-checked against cultural context and theoretical references to avoid anachronistic or culturally detached readings.

In qualitative research, measurement does not involve numerical indicators but rather analytical depth, coherence, and interpretive validity. In this study, analytical focus functioned as the equivalent of measurement. The prominence and function of stylistic elements were assessed through their consistency, salience, and interpretive significance across the selected rhymes.

Moral and character values were identified based on recurring themes, symbolic expressions, and evaluative language embedded within the texts. Attention was given to how stylistic features reinforced or intensified these values rather than merely identifying their presence. This approach ensured that analysis remained grounded in linguistic evidence rather than impressionistic interpretation.

Data analysis was conducted through qualitative stylistic analysis combined with thematic interpretation. The analysis proceeded in three main stages. First, each rhyme was analyzed at the linguistic level to identify stylistic features such as word choice, imagery, rhyme structure, and figurative expressions. Second, these features were interpreted in relation to their semantic and pragmatic effects, focusing on how they direct moral understanding and ethical reflection.

In the third stage, findings were synthesized across texts to identify broader patterns of moral representation and character orientation within Acehese traditional rhymes. This cross-textual synthesis enabled the identification of shared stylistic strategies and value frameworks that characterize the tradition as a whole. The analysis maintained an iterative process, moving between text, context, and theory to refine interpretations and ensure analytical coherence.

To enhance trustworthiness, interpretations were continually compared with relevant scholarly literature and with established understandings of Acehese cultural values. Reflexivity was practiced throughout the analysis, acknowledging the researcher's interpretive role while grounding claims in textual evidence.

## Findings

The stylistic analysis of traditional rhymes examined in this study reveals that moral and character values in Acehnese cultural contexts are not conveyed through explicit moral instruction but are embedded systematically in linguistic and aesthetic structures. Across the data, five dominant stylistic dimensions emerged as central to value construction, namely diction, figurative language, imagery, rhyme patterns, and evaluative meaning. These dimensions operate together to shape ethical interpretation and character orientation within Acehnese communities.

One prominent finding concerns the deliberate use of familiar and culturally grounded diction to communicate moral expectations. The rhymes consistently employ lexical items drawn from daily life, such as references to family relations, agriculture, and the natural environment. Words denoting stages of life, such as youth and old age, are frequently juxtaposed to underscore continuity of moral responsibility across generations.

For example, in one rhyme, lexical choices referring to guidance from elders are paired with terms associated with life progression, conveying the idea that moral teachings should remain constant throughout the human lifespan. Rather than presenting abstract ethical concepts, the diction enables readers or listeners to associate moral conduct with lived experience. This aligns with recent findings in applied literary studies showing that value internalization is more effective when moral language is embedded in familiar semantic fields (Wardana, 2021).

The repetition of evaluative adjectives, particularly those denoting goodness, restraint, and propriety, further reinforces communal norms. These words are not used evaluatively in isolation but are embedded within parallel syntactic structures, which enhances their mnemonic quality and reinforces their normative force.

Figurative expressions, particularly metaphors and personification, function as a key mechanism for ethical communication. Rather than stating moral expectations directly, the rhymes employ symbolic representations that invite reflection. In one instance, agricultural imagery depicts rice bending as it grows heavier, symbolizing humility acquired through knowledge and experience. This metaphor resonates strongly in agrarian Acehnese contexts where rice cultivation is both an economic activity and a cultural symbol.

Personification is also used to assign moral qualities to non-human entities, making abstract values more accessible. When natural elements are described as acting or feeling, moral ideals become observable behaviors rather than abstract prescriptions. Such figurative strategies support the interpretation that traditional rhymes function as indirect moral pedagogy, consistent with findings in recent folklore and education research in Southeast Asia (Manggau et al., 2025).

The prevalence of hyperbolic expressions further intensifies moral salience. Exaggeration in these cases does not distort meaning but emphasizes the consequences of moral neglect or ethical failure, thereby strengthening affective engagement.

Visual and sensory imagery emerged as a recurrent feature that enhances moral comprehension. The rhymes frequently evoke images of movement, growth, or decline, such as flowing water or ripening crops. These images create a concrete mental representation through which ethical concepts are apprehended intuitively.

For instance, imagery depicting water receding or flowing toward an edge function symbolically to represent life transitions and moral direction. Such imagery allows values to be experienced rather than merely understood conceptually. This supports contemporary stylistic research suggesting that ethical interpretation is shaped significantly by sensory and experiential cues embedded in language (Giovannelli & Harrison, 2022).

Notably, imagery related to familial interaction, especially parental guidance, consistently carries positive moral valuation. Visual scenes involving listening, following, or observing elders are presented as harmonious and desirable, reinforcing respect for intergenerational authority as a foundational character trait in Acehnese society.

The analysis also indicates that regular rhyme patterns contribute to the internalization of moral messages. Consistent end rhymes create rhythmic predictability, which enhances recall and oral transmission. This phonological structuring is not merely aesthetic but serves a social function by supporting longevity and circulation of the rhymes.

Across the corpus, alternating rhyme schemes are predominant, creating balance and symmetry that mirror the moral equilibrium advocated in the content of the rhymes. The pairing of lines with parallel moral implications demonstrates how form and meaning interact. Studies in pedagogical stylistics have shown that rhythmic and phonological patterns strengthen ethical resonance by facilitating repetition and communal recitation (Dine & Guerroudj, 2025).

The findings confirm that rhyme functions as a mnemonic device that reinforces moral norms within communal settings. This is particularly significant in Aceh, where oral performance remains an important means of cultural transmission.

At the interpretive level, the combined stylistic features converge to communicate a set of core character values. These include humility, respect for elders, moral consistency, and self-restraint. Importantly, these values are not presented as isolated traits but as interconnected dispositions that guide individual behavior within the social collective.

Humility emerges as the most prominently articulated value. It is conveyed through metaphors of growth and subordination, such as lowering when filled, which emphasize that moral maturity entails modesty rather than self-assertion. Respect for elders is articulated through narrative positioning, where advice from older figures is framed as essential for moral survival both in worldly life and beyond.

The analysis further reveals an emphasis on moral continuity. Several rhymes explicitly contrast youth and old age, underscoring the expectation that ethical behavior should remain stable over time. This reinforces a communal ethic that values consistency and long-term moral orientation over situational morality.

These findings resonate with recent research on local wisdom and character education, which emphasizes that traditional narratives often encode moral ecosystems rather than fragmented ethical lessons (Miranda et al., 2025; Yania et al., 2025). In the context of Aceh Studies, this suggests that traditional rhymes function as cultural infrastructure supporting ethical continuity in times of social change.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that traditional Acehnese rhymes operate as culturally embedded instruments of character formation. Their stylistic features enable moral values to be internalized through aesthetic engagement rather than explicit instruction. This reinforces the view that literary traditions in Aceh play an active role in sustaining communal ethics and social cohesion.

By documenting how linguistic form mediates moral meaning, the findings contribute to interdisciplinary Aceh Studies by linking humanities-based analysis with concerns relevant to education, community life, and cultural sustainability. Moreover, the stylistic mechanisms identified here offer transferable insights for other contexts in which traditional literature functions as a vehicle of moral transmission.

## Discussion

This study sets out to examine how traditional Acehnese rhymes function as culturally embedded mechanisms of character formation through their stylistic organization. By employing a detailed stylistic analysis, the study addressed the research question concerning how linguistic form and aesthetic structure encode moral values within the Acehnese cultural context. The findings demonstrate that character values are not transmitted through explicit moral instruction but are systematically embedded in diction, figurative language, imagery, and sound patterning. This section discusses these findings in relation to existing literature, highlights their significance and unexpected dimensions, and considers their implications for Aceh Studies and broader interdisciplinary scholarship.

The findings clearly show that stylistic elements in traditional rhymes act as primary vehicles for ethical meaning construction. This directly responds to the research objective of identifying how form contributes to character formation rather than merely conveying content. The stylistic choices observed in the data confirm that moral orientation in traditional Acehnese literature operates through indirect, symbolic, and affective pathways. Language is not used to instruct but to shape perception, emotional response, and ethical intuition.

This finding aligns with contemporary stylistics scholarship, which emphasizes that literary meaning emerges from patterned linguistic choices that shape readers moral and cognitive

engagement with texts (Giovanelli & Harrison, 2022). In the Acehnese context, moral meaning does not reside in isolated words or themes but in the orchestration of stylistic features that guide interpretation over time.

One of the most significant findings concerns the use of everyday diction as a strategy for moral naturalization. Rather than introducing ethical values as abstract ideals, the rhymes situate them within ordinary experiences, such as family relations, aging, and agricultural life. This supports prior educational research indicating that values are more effectively internalized when embedded within familiar semantic domains (Wardana, 2021; Miranda et al., 2025).

What is particularly important here is the absence of moral absolutism in the lexical choices. The rhymes do not rely on religious injunctions or formal moral terminology, despite Aceh's strong religious identity. Instead, ethical guidance is framed as common sense knowledge rooted in daily experience. This subtlety suggests that character formation in Acehnese literary traditions operates through cultural intimacy rather than authority, which contradicts assumptions that moral education in religious societies necessarily relies on prescriptive discourse.

These findings nuance previous research on Acehnese literature that has emphasized religious content as the dominant moral driver (Iqbal, 2019). While religion remains an implicit backdrop, the stylistic data indicates that moral authority is conveyed through shared cultural knowledge rather than doctrinal language.

The pervasive use of metaphor, personification, and hyperbole emerged as another central finding. These figurative strategies enable moral abstraction to be processed cognitively and emotionally. For instance, metaphors drawn from rice cultivation dramatize humility not as submission but as a natural outcome of growth and fullness. This type of figurative reasoning aligns with cognitive stylistics research suggesting that ethical concepts are often grasped through embodied and experiential metaphors rather than propositional logic (Giovanelli & Harrison, 2022).

An interesting and somewhat unexpected outcome is the dominance of positive figurative imagery over negative moral exemplars. While some traditions rely on cautionary tales and punishment-oriented narratives, the Acehnese rhymes analyzed here overwhelmingly frame moral conduct through affirmative imagery. This finding contrasts with studies of satire in Acehnese pantun that highlight social criticism and ridicule as dominant functions (Nurhaliza et al., 2024). The present study suggests that when the communicative goal is character formation rather than social regulation, figurative language tends to emphasize moral aspiration rather than deviance.

This distinction indicates that Acehnese pantun are polyvalent genres whose moral orientation shifts according to communicative context. Such flexibility has not been sufficiently theorized in prior research, which often treats pantun functions as static.

The findings also reveal the centrality of sensory and visual imagery in moral internalization. Ethical values are repeatedly tied to images of movement, growth, and balance. These images create affective engagement that precedes conscious moral reasoning. This supports recent pedagogical research showing that affective resonance is a key mechanism in value internalization through narrative and literature (Miranda et al., 2025).

From an Aceh Studies perspective, the emphasis on natural imagery is particularly significant. Aceh's cultural history is intertwined with agrarian practices and environmental rhythms. By grounding moral values in ecological metaphors, traditional rhymes reinforce an ethical worldview that situates human behavior within a broader moral ecosystem. This resonates with interdisciplinary scholarship that views local literature as a component of socio-ecological resilience rather than mere cultural expression (Yania et al., 2025).

An unexpected aspect here is that imagery related to punishment, disaster, or conflict is minimal, despite Aceh's history of social and political struggle. This absence suggests a deliberate cultural choice to emphasize moral continuity and harmony in literary traditions intended for everyday transmission and education.

The role of rhyme patterns in reinforcing character values extends beyond aesthetics. Regular sound patterning facilitates memorability and oral circulation, which in turn ensures that moral messages remain active within the community. This finding supports pedagogical stylistics

research highlighting the importance of rhythm and repetition in ethical literacy (Dine & Guerroudj, 2025).

What is notable in the Acehnese context is how phonological symmetry mirrors moral equilibrium. The balance created by alternating rhyme schemes reflects the ethical balance advocated in the content of the rhymes. This convergence of form and value supports structuralist arguments that aesthetic order in traditional literature often functions as an implicit moral model.

This observation partially contradicts studies that treat rhyme as a neutral or decorative feature in pantun analysis (Sunarsih & Zufahita, 2022). The present findings demonstrate that rhyme serves a communicative function closely tied to moral pedagogy.

The convergence of stylistic features across the rhymes reveals a coherent moral ecosystem centered on humility, respect for elders, consistency of conduct, and social responsibility. These values are not presented as isolated traits but as interdependent dispositions. For instance, humility is consistently linked to knowledge, maturity, and intergenerational learning.

This integrative character model aligns with scholarship on local wisdom-based education, which emphasizes holistic rather than fragmentary moral development (Dartini et al., 2025). However, the present study extends this literature by showing how such integration is achieved linguistically rather than institutionally.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings support the hypothesis that traditional literature functions as a self-regulating moral system. Instead of relying on external enforcement, ethical norms are reinforced through repeated aesthetic exposure, emotional resonance, and communal memory.

The findings have several implications for Aceh Studies. First, they demonstrate that traditional rhymes are not static cultural artifacts but active instruments of moral socialization. This positions Acehnese literature as a resource for understanding contemporary community ethics rather than merely historical identity.

Second, the study contributes to interdisciplinary research by illustrating how stylistic analysis can bridge humanities, education, and social sciences. The insights gained here are relevant not only for literary scholars but also for educators, cultural practitioners, and policymakers interested in culturally grounded character formation.

However, caution is required in generalizing these findings. The study focuses on a limited set of traditional rhymes and prioritizes interpretive depth over breadth. While the stylistic patterns identified are consistent across the data, further research involving a larger corpus and comparative regional analysis would strengthen generalizability.

Future studies could explore how contemporary adaptations of pantun, including digital or educational formats, maintain or transform these stylistic mechanisms. Comparative research between Acehnese rhymes and those from other Indonesian regions would also help clarify the specificity and transferability of the moral ecosystem identified here.

Additionally, interdisciplinary collaboration with cognitive linguistics and educational psychology could provide empirical insights into how audiences process and internalize stylistically encoded moral values.

## Conclusion

This study has examined traditional Acehnese rhymes as culturally embedded instruments of character formation by focusing on the role of stylistic features in shaping moral meaning. Through a qualitative stylistic analysis, the study demonstrated that ethical values in these rhymes are not communicated through direct instruction but are woven into linguistic choices, figurative expressions, imagery, and sound patterning. The findings show that diction grounded in everyday experience, metaphors drawn from nature and agrarian life, carefully structured imagery, and regular rhyme patterns work together to guide moral perception and emotional engagement. These stylistic strategies enable values such as humility, respect for elders, moral consistency, and social responsibility to be internalized as part of ordinary cultural experience rather than received as external prescriptions.

The study also highlights those traditional rhymes that function as an integrated moral ecosystem. Ethical values are presented as interconnected dispositions that regulate individual

behavior within the collective, reinforcing continuity across generations. This integrative pattern underscores the importance of aesthetic form in sustaining communal ethics, particularly within societies where oral and poetic traditions remain active mediums of cultural transmission. From the perspective of Aceh Studies, these findings reaffirm the role of traditional literature as a living cultural resource that continues to shape community norms and character orientations in contemporary Acehnese society.

The implications of this study are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship by demonstrating how stylistic analysis can link literary form, moral cognition, and cultural context in a systematic and replicable manner. It also responds to calls within humanities and social sciences to recognize local knowledge systems as sources of broader analytical insight. Practically, the findings suggest that traditional rhymes can inform culturally responsive approaches to character education and community development, offering alternatives to standardized moral instruction that may lack local resonance.

At the same time, the conclusions drawn here should be interpreted with due caution. The analysis is based on a limited selection of rhymes and emphasizes depth of interpretation over representativeness. Further research involving larger corpora, comparative regional studies, or engagement with contemporary adaptations of traditional rhymes would enhance understanding of how these stylistic mechanisms operate across contexts and generations.

In closing, this study affirms that traditional Acehnese rhymes are not merely remnants of cultural heritage but dynamic linguistic practices that continue to shape ethical understanding and character formation. By revealing the subtle yet powerful role of stylistic form in moral communication, the study underscores the enduring relevance of Acehnese literary traditions as sources of knowledge that connect language, culture, and human values within and beyond Aceh.

### **Ethics approval**

Not required.

### **Competing interests**

All the authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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### **Underlying data**

Derived data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author on request.

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