STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING ENGLISH LITERARY WORK THROUGH CRITICAL COMMENT AT THE ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM AT SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

A THESIS BY

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FACULTY OF TEACHER AND EDUCATION

UNIVERSITAS SRIWIJAYA

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INDRALAYA 2024

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DECLARATION

I, undersigned

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Certify that thesis entitled "Students' Perception Towards Understanding English Literary Work Through Critical Comment At The English Education Study Program At Sriwijaya University" is my own work and did not have any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethics and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, deserve to face court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang, 2024

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DEDICATION AND MOTTOS

This whole thesis I dedicated to:

My parents, Nusirwan and Zumaro who always siding me all the time by constantly motivating and praying for me. My siblings, Muhammad Syaferi and Annisatul Farha. These four are my supporters who always encouraging me to keep in line and reminding me that this thesis need to be done.

Motto:

“Nothing in life comes easy. Everything comes with a sacrifice.”

-Rihanna-

“And do not lose heart or grieve, for you will have the upper hand if you are true believers."

(Q.S Ali 'Imran Ayat 139)

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The writer

Nuzuliatin Nisa Utami

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to determine students' perceptions towards literary English work through critical comments in Sriwijaya University, academic year 2023/2024, in Indralaya class, The researcher used a questionnaire in forms of close-ended and open-ended questionnaire and employed qualitative descriptive analysis to analyse the obtained data. The collected data will be processed using SPSS software to obtain the valid result. This research participants consist of 60 students from the English Language Program at Indralaya class, Sriwijaya University. Based on findings, this study explores students' perceptions and approaches to understanding literature. The findings reveal that students primarily focus on character and plot when analyzing literature. They identify poetry as the most challenging genre to comprehend. Despite these challenges, students demonstrate effective strategies for uncovering deeper meanings through close reading and critical discussion, supplemented by online research and expert consultations when necessary. Additionally, the study highlights students' affirmative responses to the role of literature in fostering social harmony, tolerance, and awareness, addressing the second research question. These insights underscore the importance of literature in promoting broader social values and critical thinking skills. Second, based on these results, students provided affirmative answers, indicating that reading literature can promote social harmony, tolerance, and awareness in all contexts. In conclusion, it can be seen that literature bring so much positive impact to student inside or in outside of the classroom.

Keyword: *Perception, Understanding, Literary Work, Social*

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the background of research, the problem of research, the objective of research, and the significance of research.

1.1 Background of Research

Literature is a communication medium that language uses to transfer information through communities nationwide. From an educational perspective, literature is written works considered to have artistic, conceptual, or cultural value. Literature is also used as a form of recognition through the structure of language that goes beyond mere utilitarian communications, intended to evoke emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual responses in the reader or enjoyer. In English literature, literary works often emphasize various genres, acts, and forms but are not limited to fiction, poetry, drama, and essays.

For this reason, society pays so much attention and looks for its uses. Literature exists as a medium for study and as a representation of human experiences, thoughts, and emotions; therefore, it must be essential in developing into a human being. Because of the many benefits that literature can bring to humans, Muhammed (2023) strongly agrees that studying literature enhances a learner's ability to utilize their imagination effectively, thereby improving their overall cognitive proficiency in any possible way. In other words, the essentials of literature have influenced all aspects of the country, especially in education. Previous research has discovered that literature has a fascinating effect on improving students' English performance (Byram, 2019). It presents an extensive array of language, conversation, and written expression, and also enhances students' creative knowledge about other cultures and values, fostering creative solutions (Gunawan, 2020).

Most people also assumed that literature was crucial for educational purposes. Literature acts as a facilitator for culture, language, and critical thinking (Osorio, 2018). Students are proficient in critical thinking in the classroom or everyday life because students who are proficient in language and writing skills can express themselves better and more confidently (John C. Bean, 2021). Although language is acquired through literature (factual and fictional) and one-sided or biased cultural impressions, students must play an important role. In reality, students who are not motivated to know literary work, perform poorly in interpreting a literary work, and those who do not have sufficient preparation will find it difficult in a multicultural student group (Richard

Beach, 2020). Therefore, literary works are there to bridge the gap in educational backgrounds by focusing on skills or reaching further and more complex than that because literature not only improves language skills but also sharpens the intellect, creating space for self-reflection and cultural comparison.

One of the essential elements for educational development in the 21st century is having critical thinking skills, which require reflective and rational thinking to properly investigate and find solutions to problems (Shukri, 2015). For this reason, many universities worldwide have made developing critical thinking skills a pivotal objective to help students meet the demands of professional and social life. These skills are essential for living effectively in a world constantly changing with social trends and changes because critical thinking stimulates how to see the differences in a comprehensive view. Many experts consider literature an appropriate place to elaborate on critical thinking skills fluently and effectively. Therefore, there is no doubt that critical thinking also produces good critical commenting on a subject with positivity and sound reasoning (Halpern, 2013).

There are good pedagogical reasons for developing thinking skills through literature. Literary media can aid in the development of cognitive abilities in education. However, a rigorous pedagogical framework has hindered this progress. Literature is a complex tapestry of language and narrative, offering diverse opportunities for critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and reflective interpretation. Intrinsic to literary works, it fosters intellectual development and cognitive refinement, encompassing diverse genres and cultural perspectives. This approach helps push the conventional boundaries of rote learning and helps students navigate and grapple with complex ideas, ethical considerations, and the intricacies of human experience (Bland, 2022). Incorporating literature into school curricula can improve student achievement by holistically emphasizing intellectual growth. This allows students to navigate the complexity of contemporary knowledge through analysis and knowledge.

Previous research has found that understanding literary works can stimulate our critical thinking. For example, Rahman, F., & Weda, S. (2018) argue that there is a consensus among students enrolled in the English Department at Hasanuddin University and Makassar State University that literary works in English across various genres not only embody significant social values but also serve as a foundation for fostering societal harmony and promoting tolerance. Likewise, a previous study conducted at a public university in Indonesia using a drama-based English literary work

found that by reading literary works, readers can engage with their personal life experiences shaped by sociocultural values, demonstrating the ability to navigate significance in a text through the reconstruction or modification of their values. This process involves a willingness to reconstruct one's values or compromise regarding a particular value while embracing diversity to avoid erroneous judgments. This is achieved by carefully comparing the values inherent in the text and one's own values (Suarcaya & Prasasti, 2017). However, this study focuses solely on literature on what is written and what students can read and understand. In addition, the researcher used fourth-semester students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, English Education Study Program, Sriwijaya University, who were taking Literature in ELT courses. Finally, the discussion of appreciating English literature through their critical comments in the form of a questionnaire that the researcher presented was ensured to be easily understood and mastered by the respondents.

1.2 Problems of Research

This research was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the fourth-semester students' perceptions towards literary English work through critical comments at Sriwijaya University?

2. How do fourth- semester students perceive English literature in fostering social harmony, tolerance and social awareness?

1.3 Objective of Research

The object of this research is to find out:

1. The fourth-semester students' perceptions towards literary English work through critical comments at Sriwijaya University

2. The fourth-semester students' perceptions of English literature in fostering social harmony, tolerance and social awareness.

1.4 Significance of Research

This research aimed to explore fourth-semester students' perceptions towards literary English work through critical comments and to see their view about English literature in fostering social harmony, tolerance and social awareness to show several constitutions to

lecturers, students and future research. In education, each educator, including lecturers, must continually acquire fresh knowledge, ensuring the perpetuation and advancement of the learning process and the exploration of novel pedagogical approaches. Therefore, these research findings will add some knowledge that will teach their students about English literary work through their perception and opinion on how English literary work impacts their social harmony, tolerance and social awareness. It is essential because it will help students enlighten their appreciation of English literary work, especially in English literary work with critical thinking that involves critical comment. After all, some students do not realize the impact of English literary work in awakening their understanding of social harmony, tolerance and social awareness. Also, this research is expected to help other researchers who foresee English literary work in students' perceptions to facilitate essential particulars while motivating scholars to conduct more exhaustive investigations and augment extant research endeavours.

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