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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SHORT STORY-BASED LEARNING AT THE INDONESIAN EDUCATION AND LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAMS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN MADIUN REGENCY, INDONESIA: AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY

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Bambang Eko Hari Cahyono. This study aims to describe short stories-based learning conditions in the selected research settings. Through this study, the researchers highlight the advantages and disadvantages of implementing short stories-based learning performed by the lecturers. This study applied a qualitative descriptive approach, and the result shows that the weight of the course of Indonesian literature in the curriculum is compared proportionally to a total number of credits taken by college students. Lecturers of Indonesian literature course have shown good competence and most of the college students are more interested in learning Indonesian language, but only a few of them are interested in learning Indonesian literature. Learning short stories does not stand alone as a subject because it is closely connected to the appreciation of *Fiction Prose* and *Creative Writing* focusing on the lecturers and the theoretical bases as well.

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Introduction:-

The teaching of literature at college or university can be viewed from two points of view, namely the teaching of literature and teaching literature. The teaching of literature deals with theories of teaching literature. The courses are based on the assumption that students can appreciate the literary work after mastering a number of rules, concepts, theses, and generalizations about the definition, nature, type, and literary history. That is why the teaching of this model always starts with the teaching of theories before the students are introduced to understand literary work that merely contains theories. If students are introduced to literature, they only learn the titles of literary works and the names of the authors. Teaching literature means appreciating literary works, so students should immediately be introduced and familiarized with every literary work. This teaching is not so concerned about theories of literary works. Then the theories are given after the students are familiar with the literature that they appreciate fully.

In terms of the study of literature at college or university, learning the short stories needs a serious attention. It is based on the fact and investigators' observation that the teaching of short stories for the majority of lecturers are still oriented on theoretical learning, and less encouraging the growth of creativity in students. According to Suwignyo (2004: 59-60), learning the short story must involve a mental activity to (1) understand and enjoy short stories, (2) to put a high value on how short story writers are awarded, (3) to be sensitive to the values of the short stories, and (4) to appreciate the short stories reading critically.

To achieve the learning of short stories involves a mental activity and a distance against which a short story needs to be avoided. In contrast, an activity dealing with short stories needs to be undertaken continuously and sincerely, so students have an understanding, appreciation, sensitivity to the critical thinking. Thus, a work of fiction will be used as a part of life for the students who are expected to meet their spiritual needs.

At a more advanced level, learning short stories must also be able to engage students in a variety of creative processes, such as writing poetry, short stories, and essays that can also form creative thinking. According to Mahmudi and Sumarmo (2011: 216), the success of individuals, among other things, is determined by their creativity in solving problems. Creative individuals see problems as challenges that must be faced rather than be avoided. Creative people also see a problem from different perspectives which enable them to obtain a variety of alternative solutions.

Referring to the description, researchers conducted a research on an explorative study of short stories learning at the Indonesian education and literature study programs in Madiun Regency, East Java, Indonesia. The research was conducted in five higher education institutions (LPTK) that have Study Programs of Indonesian Language and Literature in Madiun Regency, namely (1) PGRI Teachers Training College of Madiun, (2) Widya Mandala Catholic University of Madiun, (3) PGRI College of Education in Ponorogo, (4) PGRI College of Education in Ngawi, and (5) PGRI College of Education in Pacitan.

Several studies on short stories have been widely applied in various countries. Khatib and Mehrgan (2012) examine how critical thinking skills in TEFL students are built through the provision of some short stories to read. The results show that short stories can build critical thinking skills. Therefore, the study of short stories shall be included in the educational curriculum.

Pardede (2011) examines how short stories can help learners learn languages. Pardede's research proves that short stories can improve the four language skills, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking. The study also focuses on the EFL learning by making an effective use of the short stories. In his research, Pathan (2012) reveals that short stories are very helpful in learning. This is because behind a short story is a real story with a rich language and creative and funny things that contain courage. This study involves that the use of short stories using a very effective approach and recommendations. Even in Libya, short stories have become an important part of tasks and discussions.

Brier & Lebbin (2004) state that a short story is a learning tool that has a big influence because of its potential to stimulate students' imagination and it is effective to improve students' understanding. The short story is able to explain things that are still abstract and elusive to be more modest, memory support, encourage teaching and learning situation to be fun, and is able to minimize the time used in teaching and learning. This study describes the achievements that have been obtained in terms of delivering lectures in developing language skills by using short stories. Through the mindset and attitudes conducted by figures contained in the short stories, the inability of students' proficiency in understanding literacy will be known further. The achievement was obtained because a short story has four characteristics that make it as a medium to convey proficiency, namely understanding, memory, exciting system, and effectiveness.

Research Method:-

This study was conducted in more than five months. The research selected settings were: (1) The Study Program of Indonesian Language and Literature (FPBS) of IKIP PGRI Madiun, (2) The Study Program of Indonesian Language and Literature of Catholic University of Widya Mandala Madiun, (3) The Study Program of Indonesian Language and Literature of PGRI College of Education (STKIP) in Ponorogo, (4) The Study Program of Indonesian Language and Literature of PGRI College of Education (STKIP) in Pacitan, and (5) The Study Program of Indonesian Language and Literature at PGRI College of Education (STKIP) in Ngawi.

The purpose of this study is to obtain a comprehensive description of the learning conditions of short stories. The researchers used a qualitative descriptive approach by putting more emphasis on research observations of the interactions between students and lecturers in the implementation of learning short stories in the research setting. Moreover, the researchers also conducted an analysis of the documents related to the research problems.

The data in this study deal with information related to the implementation of the learning conditions of short stories. Types of data sources used are: (1) the informants (10 key informants), namely five lecturers of the *Study of Fiction Prose* course and five students who were taking that course, (2) the events or learning activities of short stories in the classroom, and (3) documents or records that form the curriculum along with the devices, materials used by lecturers, assignments, exam questions, the results of the evaluation, the data of track-recording lecturers, and other

pertinent documents. According to the characteristics and types of data required, data collection techniques used consist of (1) documentation, (2) observation of passive roles, and (3) in-depth interviews.

The data analysis of research data is based on an interactive model (Miles and Huberman, 1992: 16-20; Sutopo, 2002: 95-96; Faisal, 2003: 68-71), which is implemented in two stages, namely at the time or during ongoing data collection and after data collection. Moreover, data analysis in this research is done through the third flow of activities that take place simultaneously, namely (1) data reduction, (2) presentation of data, and (3) drawing conclusion/verification.

The techniques to check the validity of the data in this study may vary, namely (1) extending the participation of researchers, so that the interaction between the researchers and the informants can take place more intensively, (2) making observations diligently and carefully, so that the data obtained may reflect social phenomena as they are, (3) performing a triangulation of data sources, which is done by comparing the observations with interviews and comparing the results of interviews with the contents of the documents used as a source of research data, and (4) examining the findings through discussion groups (a focus group discussion).

Research Results:-

Based on the analysis of the documents in the curriculum, this study reveals that courses are programmed around 145-154 credits that must be taken by students to complete their higher education at the undergraduate level 1. From 145-154 programmed credits, the average literary subjects were given a share of 21.4 credits (14.25%). Thus, the weight of literary subjects in the curriculum is proportionally compared to the overall number of credits that must be taken by students. That is, there is a balance of the number of credits for the development of professional competence of literature lecturers along with other competencies.

Through the analysis of syllabus documents and Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), lecturers found that learning short stories does not stand alone as a subject, but it is just a part of the *Study and Appreciation of Fiction Prose* and *Creative Writing* courses. Short stories are averagely taught for 2-4 times within 14-16 lectures planned by lecturers. This is understandable because the short story is only a subset of fiction prose that has extensive materials.

The data obtained in this study show a number of faculties that have Indonesian Language Education and Literature Study Programs at public and private teacher training colleges (LPTK) or universities in Madiun (a Regional Coordinator) are inadequate considerably. That faculty ratio prevails that students are also very good, and it is under 45 as required by the Director General of Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia. The study programs also have emphasized the specifications of lecturers to support literary subjects based on the educational backgrounds and the intensity in the field of literature.

The results of interviews, the study of documents, observation in the classroom, and questionnaires indicate that the lecturers of Indonesian Language Education and Literature Study Programs at public and private teacher training colleges (LPTK) or universities in Madiun (a Regional Coordinator) have a good competence and are worth supporting the literature course. The lecturers also have a very good track-record in the field of literature and authorship.

These data supported by the results of questionnaires about the competence of lecturers show that of the 270 students surveyed, 104 students (38, 52%) stated that lecturers have a very good competence, 141 students (52.22%) stated that lecturers have great competence and only 25 students (9.26%) states that the competence of lecturers is pretty good. Students' opinions about the competence of lecturers in teaching literary subjects can be seen in chart 1 below.

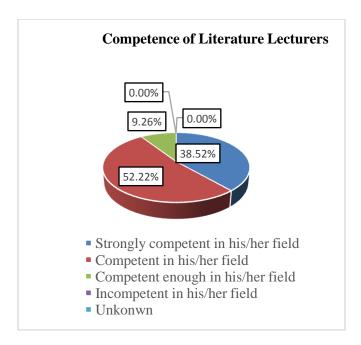


Chart 1. Questionnaire Results of Literature Lecturers' Competence

The observation of the literature learning activities, especially in teaching the short stories dealing with the subject of learning assessment and appreciation of *Fiction Prose and Creative Writing* shows that most of the lecturers have very good knowledge about literature, short stories, and creative writing activities. In teaching, they are able to give examples of Indonesian short stories and a variety of techniques to write short stories very well, although overall they are theoretically learning.

The specialization of disciplines is concerned with the teaching of courses, and most students are interested in the field of teaching language and literature. From the data collected, 75.55% of students are interested in the field of teaching language and literature, and only 10.74% of them are interested in the field of literature. The results of questionnaire analysis also show that the low interest of students to take the literary field is caused by the views of students that teaching literature is not important for everyday's life (45.18%), it is difficult to study literature (34.82%), literature is regarded as "the world's" weirdness (11.11%), and literature will only give birth to artists who sound ragged, shaggy and dirty (8.89%).

Short stories appreciation learning is considered very important for several reasons. First, the short story has the most effective and efficient teaching materials selected as literature. Short story presents an interesting panorama with style, character, conflict, themes and viewpoints compiled by the author. Short story can be read from the beginning to the end in a short time, and the reader can feel the effects of a single author. In fact, learning the short story can be used as the best introduction to the analysis of literature and creative writing for students, since most students can identify the elements of short stories easily. Second, a survey about students at universities where this research was undertaken shows that as many as 61.48% of the students like the stories, and only 21.85% who like poetry, 15.19% like the novel, and 1.48% like drama. The description of the survey results can clearly be seen in chart 2 below.

Literary Readings Students Strongly Like

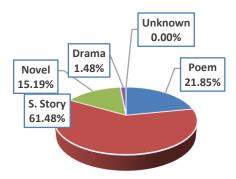


Chart 2. Questionnaire Results of Literary Readings that Students Strongly Like

According to students, short stories have the most interesting stories to teach. Almost all of the students are more easily directed to read the short stories. In short, short stories are more neutral than the poems and novels. Not all students like poetry, because on average they do not have a good understanding of the poetry; and the novel would be difficult to provide a novel form of teaching materials in large quantities. As teaching materials, short stories are easy to get; for example, they are taken from a short story column of Sunday's *Kompas* Newspaper that is good enough. Students are more interested in reading short stories than a novel for reading short stories can be done quickly.

The observation on the learning of short stories made by a lecturer shows some findings. First, the study focuses only on the short story and the lecturers are theoretical. In a study of short stories, more lecturers speak in front of students. In addition, there is also a marked decline in the quality of teaching short stories. The conditions, for example, deal with students' inability to manage the acquisition of learning to communicate and short stories learning encourage the growth of creativity in the students themselves.

Second, almost all of the lecturers were observed when they were teaching short stories in a very mechanical study, starting with a theory briefing on the definition of short stories, short stories characteristics, and elements of the builders of short stories, then proceeding to the task of analyzing short stories. There are no intense discussions on the tasks that the students did. In addition, the study also found that in the short stories there are no professors who use the learning model that develops students' creativity aspect.

Third, the ability to read, the appreciation of literary work, and the learning interest of students toward literature are still low. Students' reading ability is limited to understanding literally and not understanding appreciatively. Students are not interested in reading a short story and there is no dynamic interaction between students and short stories they read.

In addition, there are also some constraints derived from lecturers. The observations on the course lecturers of *Fiction Prose and Creative Writing* show (1) less creativity in selecting a learning model of short stories, (2) lack of creativity in selecting learning materials, (3) no steps to plan, manage, and evaluate the learning activities of short stories effectively and optimally, and (4) lack of ability to "excite" the creativity of students during learning short stories.

Learning conditions of short stories are theoretically supported by the results of a survey of students, which show 91.85% of the students state that learning short stories are theoretical, and only 8.15% say that there is no theoretical way of teaching faculty or directly introduce students to the literary work reading.

Discussion:-

The results show that the weight of literature courses in the curriculum has been proportionally compared to the overall number of credits that must be taken by students. The proportion of this kind considers ideal because there is a balance between a number of credits for the development of professional competence of literature lecturers and other competencies. However, it remains necessary to restructure the curriculum by rearranging the contents of the curriculum, so that learning outcomes for each literature course are clear and they do not overlap. Evidence from the field suggests that the quality of learning in literature is still low when compared with the field of language and linguistic skills. The lecturers treat the learning of literature as "a stepchild" caused by their knowledge of the literary material that has not been good. Lecturers have to understand that learning literature is very important for the students' life.

The learning objectives of literature are that the learner are able to enjoy, understand, and utilize the literary works to develop personality, expanding horizons of life, as well as increase their knowledge and proficiency. According to Gani (1998: 15), the main objective of teaching literature is to give students the chance to gain experience with the ultimate objective of literature capable of appreciating literature. Thus, it is clear how urgent is the teaching of literature to achieve the national education goals.

However, the teaching of literature in schools and in colleges is unable to meet its objectives and functions fully. Teaching literature merely means meeting the curriculum targets and do not swoop down on the literature appreciation of serious problems. Teaching literature until now has not touched the substance and capability of carrying out its primary mission, namely to provide a composition of experience (appreciation and expression) for the students. As a result, reports in various studies and discussions in various seminars reveal that the achievement of objectives of teaching literature considers far from expectations.

In college studies, learning appreciation of the short stories does not stand alone as a subject, but it is just a part of the *Study and Appreciation of Fiction Prose* and *Creative Writing* courses. Learning short stories has allocated 2-4 times within 14-16 planned lectures. The material within short stories is only a subset of fiction prose extensively. Supposedly, learning the short stories can be done more importantly, or otherwise it can even be a stand-alone course.

The observation of short stories learning managed by a lecturer shows some findings. For example, the study of short stories focuses only on the lecturers and theories. Almost all of the lecturers apply the short stories learning very mechanically. The ability to read, the appreciation of literary work, and the students' interest to study literature are still low. Students' reading ability is limited to a literal understanding and it does not lead to an appreciative understanding. Students are not interested in reading short stories and no dynamic interaction occurred between students and short stories that they read.

The results are in line with Atmazaki's opinion (2005: 6) that relate to the most common problem in the study of literature since it has not been able to open students' mind toward the literary appeal. If you just memorize the author's name, the title of the work, and the period of literature alone, it is not enough to attract students' interest. It simply specifies the elements of the intrinsic and extrinsic literary works, without associating with the students' experience. If you just read a poem or rhyme, you have not been able to determine the increasing level of students' creativity. A poet, Agus R. Sarjono (2001: 16) says that there has been disorientation in teaching literature at school. It discloses that the failure of teaching literature at schools is caused by the teachers' errors that have broken the underlying nature of teaching literature.

To that end, the teaching of literature can be carried out by setting purposes and functions that have been formulated. There needs to be a paradigm shift, which emphasizes that the teaching of literature is not just memorizing the various definitions of terms in literature or identifying a number of characters, themes, background, and the flow in a story, but the estuary on gaining the knowledge and experience of literature (Wirajaya, 2005: 85) is also important to consider.

According to Moody's (1971: 15-24), the teaching of good literature should be able to carry four things, namely to help students' language skills, improve cultural knowledge, develop creativity and taste, and support the formation of character. Students' language skills, which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing, can be improved, for example, through listening to literary readings, role-plays in the drama, discussions about literature, poetry and

fiction reading, and writing. Teaching literature is also able to improve the cultural knowledge of students through in-depth introduction to human life complete with the cultural context behind them. In a sense, students can develop their skills through the senses, reasoning, affective, social, and religious domains. Teaching good literature is expected to develop a range of personal qualities of the students, develop a keen sense and in the various possibilities of life: pride, happiness, fidelity, and so on. Through the literary work, it is expected that students grow with joy, taste, and sensitivity to make life valuable.

In college, a short story should be taught appreciatively. In addition, it must be problematic as it allows students to experience psychological involvement with the feelings of the author. In this way, the work is meaningful in itself and raises the likelihood of developing students' creativity. The development dimension of creativity through learning short stories in college is possible if the students can immediately get acquainted and enjoy literature as a creative work from different periods and authors. The students should be familiar with the work culture of people worth understanding and rewarding (an appreciation). The introduction is not only fragmentary but also thorough. The depth of meaning in the stories must be examined more than just studying its physical phenomena.

The development dimension of creativity in learning short stories in college aims to make students able to enjoy, understand, and utilize the literary works to develop personality, expanding horizons of life, and to improve the knowledge and language skills. The ultimate objective of the short story-based learning is to achieve the level of development of creativity and to appreciate good literature for students themselves.

Teaching short stories is important to achieve the goal of developing creativity dimensions, namely (1) understanding of the stories should be concerned with meanings, (2) students are given the opportunity to seek and find their own (inquiry) meanings based on the theory of literature studied, (3) the importance of the process, (4) problematic and problem solving, (5) students are encouraged to "re-create", for example, by creating an essay, poetry, short stories, drama, and so forth, (6) the students are encouraged to be able to actualize themselves and (7) required guidance of competent lecturers (Waluyo, 1999: 62-66).

According to Priyatni (2004: 50-51), creative activities in the learning of the short stories is characterized by the presence of the following things. Firstly, their direct personal involvement in reading short stories in an intensive, repetitive and sustainable way. Second, their creative thinking is characterized by the presence of mental activity in connecting things that exist in the text with the knowledge and experience, linking the knowledge and experience contained in the text with anything beyond the relevant text, and exploring activities to earn a full understanding of the text is to be appreciated. Third, creative activities characterized by a reaction and a response to the short story texts are appreciated. Reaction and response are the fruit of understanding short stories.

In the view of Ahmadi (2000: 20), the activities are a complex appreciation of fiction prose hierarchically. Therefore, its achievement requires a very long time and the process is ongoing. To reach the level of appreciation, students need to pass (1) the level enjoyed by the presence of an interest and want to read a work of fiction, (2) the level enjoyed marked by the emergence of a sense of fun, busy reading or listening to a work of fiction followed by the growth of understanding, (3) the level to respond marked by the emergence of a desire to express opinions, either verbally or nonverbally in fictions characterized by the involvement of students in various reading activities of literary work, and (4) the level of marked productivity in generating ideas, both in the form of reviews, critiques of fiction work as well as the creation of a work of fiction.

Conclusion:-

Some conclusions can be drawn further from the research results. First, the weight of literature courses in the curriculum has been proportionally compared to an overall number of credits that must be taken by students. That is why, there is a balance between the number of credits for the development of professional competence of literature lecturers and other competencies. Second, lecturers of literary subjects have a good competence worth supporting literature course. The study program has been doing things related to lecturers who support literary subjects, based on the educational background and intensity in the field of literature specifically. Third, most of the students are more interested in taking subject-related courses through learning language and literature, and only a few are interested in the field of literature. Some of the factors lead to the low interest of students to the literature, the literature is not considered their main needs, and it considers difficult to learn. Fourth, a short story appreciation learning does not stand alone as a subject, but is is just a part of the *Study and Appreciation of Fiction Prose* and *Creative Writing* courses. Fifth, the study of short stories merely focuses on the lecturers and theories.

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