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Implementation of HOTS-Oriented Short Story Learning Assessment from a Feminist Perspective

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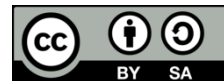
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ABSTRACT

The development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) has become a central objective in contemporary language and literature education, particularly in short story learning, which requires students to interpret meanings, evaluate values, and reflect on social realities represented in literary texts. However, assessment practices in literature learning often remain focused on lower-order cognitive skills and have not fully accommodated critical perspectives that encourage deeper analysis. This study aims to describe the implementation of HOTS-oriented short story assessment in Indonesian language learning by integrating a feminist perspective as a framework for critical literary analysis. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach conducted in a vocational high school context. Data were collected through document analysis, classroom observation, and the examination of students' assignments related to short story learning activities. The findings indicate that HOTS-based assessment tasks, such as analytical questions, evaluative responses, and reflective writing, encourage students to develop interpretative, critical, and reflective thinking when engaging with literary texts. Students were able to analyze narrative conflicts, evaluate gender relations represented in the stories, and connect textual meanings with broader social experiences. The integration of a feminist perspective in literary assessment adds a dimension that promotes critical awareness of social and gender issues while strengthening higher-order thinking processes. This study contributes to the development of literary learning assessment by demonstrating that integrating HOTS and feminist perspectives can support more contextual, critical, and meaningful practices of literature learning.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Literature learning, particularly the short story genre, plays a strategic role in the Indonesian Language curriculum. This is grounded in the dual function of literature as a

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1 medium for cultivating social sensitivity, internalizing ethical values, and sharpening students' critical and higher-order thinking capacities [1], [2]. As a literary text, the short story facilitates students' engagement with complex human experiences through representations of characters, conflicts, and values that reflect everyday social realities [3], [4]. In this regard, pedagogical approaches to short stories should not be reduced to mere identification of intrinsic elements. However, they should be oriented toward deep interpretation, comprehensive analysis, value evaluation, and meaningful thematic reflection as part of the development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS).

6 The development of the 21st-century educational paradigm positions higher-order thinking abilities as essential competencies to be fostered across all subjects, including Indonesian Language. Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) encompass the abilities to analyze, evaluate, and create, enabling students to understand, process, interpret, and critically use information in diverse contexts [5], [6]. In the context of language and literature learning, HOTS serves as a crucial foundation because students' interaction with literary texts requires complex cognitive processes, such as interpreting implicit meanings, assessing values and ideas, and reflecting on social realities represented in the text [7], [8].

9 However, literary learning practices in schools continue to face fundamental challenges, particularly in assessment [9], [10], [11]. Literary assessment often relies on conventional written tests that demand single, memorization-based responses, such as identifying narrative elements or factual [12], [13]. Such assessment models do not fully accommodate the demands of HOTS, as they inadequately measure the complexity of students' thinking processes in interpreting literary meaning, evaluating values, and constructing critical arguments. In fact, as noted in *The Application of Critical Thinking to Short Story Analysis: An Experiment on a New Teaching Process*, students can meaningfully engage in and enjoy critical thinking processes through short story analysis [14].

14 This condition indicates a mismatch between the inherently open, interpretive, and contextual nature of literature and assessment practices that remain oriented toward lower-order thinking skills. Literature does not offer a single meaning measurable in binary terms (right–wrong); rather, it opens space for diverse, argumentative, and reflective interpretations [15], [16]. Therefore, literature learning requires HOTS-oriented assessment capable of evaluating students' abilities to analyze texts, assess value and idea relations, and produce critical and creative responses.

10 Within this context, HOTS-oriented assessment becomes highly relevant in short story learning. Ansari [17] and Astuti [18] explain that HOTS assessment enables teachers to evaluate students' higher-order thinking through tasks that require in-depth analysis, critical evaluation, and idea generation, such as analyzing conflicts and characters, assessing social values in stories, writing critical responses, and composing argument-based personal reflections. Thus, assessment functions not only as a tool for measuring learning outcomes but also as an integral component of the literary learning process, encouraging high-level cognitive engagement and contextual meaning-making [19].

22 As a literary genre, the short story offers significant pedagogical advantages in supporting HOTS-oriented learning [20], [21]. Its concise yet meaningful structure allows students to explore social issues more intensively and reflectively. Nugroho and Qomariyah

[22] note that short stories function not only as aesthetic texts but also as media for internalizing values, forming identity, and understanding social relations. Through the dynamics of characters, conflicts, and social settings represented in narratives, students are encouraged to develop analytical and evaluative skills regarding human experiences [23].

In line with the demand to strengthen HOTS in Indonesian Language learning, literature instruction is expected to develop higher-level cognitive skills and students' critical awareness of social issues relevant to real-life contexts. The critical education literature emphasizes that HOTS development should ideally be integrated with values and social issues to ensure contextual and reflective thinking [24], [25]. [26], Furthermore, [27] state that literary texts serve as strategic vehicles for connecting analysis, evaluation, and reflection with social issues such as justice, identity, and power relations. Therefore, the development of HOTS-oriented short story assessment must involve selecting texts and approaches that enable students to build critical awareness through argumentative interpretive processes.

Specifically, short stories that feature feminist themes offer a rich context for HOTS development because they present critical perspectives on gender relations, women's positions, and power structures within society [28], [29]. Tyson [30] conceptualizes feminism in literary studies as an analytical approach that seeks to uncover how literary texts represent women's experiences, gender inequality, and mechanisms of cultural and symbolic domination. The feminist perspective is thus adapted as a critical reading framework encouraging students to understand literary texts reflectively and contextually, particularly regarding gender equality and social values [31], [32]. However, this pedagogical potential cannot be fully realized if literature learning is not accompanied by an assessment that measures students' higher-order thinking abilities.

Previous studies indicate that short story assessment at the senior high school/vocational high school level has been widely implemented, particularly in appreciation and text production aspects. Santoso et al. [33] developed short-story assessment instruments that evaluate learning processes and outcomes, while Rezeki [34] and Sumardani et al. [35] designed assessment tools aligned with learning indicators. Several studies also affirm that HOTS-demanding assessments effectively measure higher-order thinking skills and support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum [36]. However, these studies have generally not explicitly positioned HOTS within short story learning that incorporates critical perspectives, such as feminism. This suggests that research on the implementation of HOTS-oriented short story assessment integrated with a feminist perspective remains limited and is not systematically described. This study offers novelty by describing the implementation of HOTS-oriented short story assessment from a feminist perspective to evaluate students' interpretive, critical, and reflective abilities in relation to literary texts.

Based on this gap, this study aims to describe the implementation of HOTS-oriented short story learning assessment from a feminist perspective. Specifically, it focuses on two aspects: (1) identifying the forms of HOTS-oriented assessment used in short story learning, and (2) analyzing their alignment with the development of students' interpretive and critical thinking skills. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the discourse on HOTS-

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oriented and critically framed literary assessment. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a reference for Indonesian Language teachers in designing literary assessments aligned with HOTS demands and the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.

2. METHOD

This study employed a descriptive research design with an implementative orientation to examine the implementation of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)-oriented short story assessment integrated with a feminist perspective in Indonesian language learning. Descriptive research was selected because it allows researchers to systematically describe educational phenomena as they occur in authentic contexts without manipulating variables [37]. The implementative design was used to explore how assessment practices operate within real classroom learning activities [38]. A qualitative approach was adopted since the research focused on understanding learning processes, assessment characteristics, and students' responses to assessment tasks through in-depth interpretation [37], [39].

The study was conducted during the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at SMKN 1 Cipanas. The participants consisted of eleventh-grade students enrolled in three vocational programs: Hospitality, Computer and Network Engineering (TKJ), and Office Management and Business Services (MPLB). A total of 36 students participated in the study. The class was selected purposively based on several criteria: (1) the class had already received short story learning materials within the Indonesian Language subject, (2) the learning objectives emphasized the development of higher-order thinking skills, and (3) the teacher was willing to implement the HOTS-oriented assessment instrument developed in this study. In addition to students, the Indonesian Language teacher and related learning documents were included as data sources to provide contextual information regarding the learning process.

Data were collected through document analysis, classroom observation, and the analysis of students' assignments. Document analysis was conducted to examine the structure and characteristics of the assessment instruments and scoring rubrics used in short story learning. Classroom observation was conducted to monitor how assessment activities were implemented during the learning process. Students' assignments, including text analysis responses, evaluative answers, and reflective writing, were collected to examine the development of interpretative and critical thinking skills [40]. The use of multiple data collection techniques enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of HOTS-oriented assessment practices [41].

The primary research instrument was a HOTS-oriented short story assessment comprising analytical tasks, critical response questions, and reflective writing activities. The instrument was designed based on HOTS characteristics, emphasizing analytical, evaluative, and creative thinking in literary learning [38]. Before being implemented in the classroom, the instrument underwent expert validation involving one academic in Indonesian Language Education and two Indonesian Language teachers as practitioners. The validation process assessed the relevance of the content, clarity of the assessment indicators, applicability of the instrument in classroom settings, and alignment with learning objectives [42].

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Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative, interactive model comprising several stages. First, the collected data were subjected to data reduction, which involved selecting and organizing relevant information from observations, documents, and students' assignments. Second, the data were coded, and key statements and patterns related to students' interpretative, critical, and reflective responses were identified. Third, the coded data were grouped into categories representing forms of HOTS-oriented assessment implementation and types of student responses. Finally, the categorized data were analyzed to understand how the assessment activities contributed to students' higher-order thinking in short story learning. The findings were then presented through data display and conclusion drawing to provide a coherent explanation of the research results [38].

To ensure data validity and research credibility, several strategies were employed. Expert validation was used to ensure the appropriateness of the assessment instrument, while triangulation of techniques was applied by comparing information from observations, documents, and students' work. These procedures helped strengthen the reliability and trustworthiness of the qualitative findings. Ethical considerations were also taken into account throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the school administration and the Indonesian Language teacher. Students were informed of the research's purpose, and their participation was voluntary. To protect participants' privacy, students' identities were kept anonymous in all research documentation and reporting. These ethical measures were implemented to ensure that the research process respected participants' rights and adhered to the principles of academic research ethics.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

Prior to its implementation in classroom learning, the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) oriented short story assessment instrument underwent expert validation involving one academic in Indonesian Language Education and two practitioners (vocational high school Indonesian Language teachers). This validation aimed to ensure the instrument's feasibility in terms of conceptual soundness, pedagogical relevance, and practical applicability in authentic learning contexts.

The validation results from the academic indicated that, conceptually, the assessment instrument was aligned with the objectives of literature learning and the HOTS framework. The academic noted that the assessment indicators reflected higher-order thinking skills, particularly in the domains of analysis, evaluation, and reflection on literary texts. Furthermore, integrating a feminist perspective into the learning tasks was considered a critical approach that enriched students' interpretations of short stories. However, the academic recommended clarifying the operational formulation of indicators and refining the assessment rubric to more proportionally differentiate students' levels of achievement.

Meanwhile, validation results from the practitioners indicated that the instrument was feasible and applicable for short story learning in vocational high school contexts. The practitioners considered the task formats, such as character analysis, conflict evaluation, and critical response writing, appropriate for students across different vocational programs and

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conducive to allowing students to express their understanding more openly. The instrument was also viewed as functioning not only as an evaluation tool but also as a means to encourage active student engagement in the learning process. Nevertheless, practitioners suggested simplifying instruction wording and adjusting task contexts to better align with vocational students' everyday experiences.

Overall, both academics and practitioners agreed that the assessment instrument met the principles of HOTS-oriented assessment and demonstrated strong applicability in short story learning. Differences in feedback were complementary: the academic emphasized conceptual clarity and indicator precision, while the practitioners focused on technical practicality and classroom implementation. A recapitulation of the validation results by the academic and practitioners is presented in Table 1, illustrating the assessment aspects, validators' evaluation tendencies, and recommended revisions for instrument improvement.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Instrument Validation Results by Academic and Practitioners

| Assessed Aspect | Academic | Practitioner | Follow-Up Action |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Alignment of indicators with HOTS | Indicators reflect analysis, evaluation, and reflection skills | Indicators are easy to understand and relevant to learning | Retained |
| Clarity of indicator formulation | Wording needs refinement to be more operational | Sufficiently clear for classroom use | Revision of indicator wording |
| Appropriateness of assessment rubric | Greater differentiation of achievement levels is needed | Rubric supports student assessment | Refinement of rubric descriptors |
| Relevance of task context | Context needs a stronger conceptual emphasis | Context is close to vocational students' experiences | Context adjustment |
| Instrument applicability | Pedagogically feasible | Feasible and realistic to implement | Retained |

After obtaining the expert validation results, the assessment instrument was revised in a limited manner in accordance with the validators' suggestions, particularly regarding the wording of indicators, the refinement of the scoring rubric, and adjustments to task contexts. The revised instrument was then implemented in the HOTS-oriented short story learning assessment from a feminist perspective at SMKN 1 Cipanas.

The findings indicate that an HOTS-oriented short story assessment from a feminist perspective was achieved through task formats that required students to demonstrate analytical, evaluative, and critical-reflective abilities with literary texts. The assessment focused on students' capacity to interpret meaning, critique social relations, and reflect on the values embedded in short stories.

The HOTS-based assessment forms included analytical, evaluative, and reflective questions related to the text. The implementation results show that the assessment was directly integrated into the learning process and conducted continuously, from text comprehension and analysis to critical reflection. The implementation involved eleventh-grade students from the Hospitality, Computer and Network Engineering (TKJ), and Office Management and Business Services (MPLB) programs. Initially, students were provided with a short story addressing issues of gender relations and women's positions within

specific social contexts. The teacher facilitated reading activities and preliminary discussions to help students understand the story's context and central issues.

HOTS assessment was applied through analytical and evaluative tasks requiring students to identify the main conflict, examine character traits, and relate story events to a feminist perspective. Observational findings indicate that students actively participated in expressing opinions and arguments, both orally and in writing. They demonstrated the ability to interpret meaning, question power relations, and critically evaluate characters' attitudes. In the reflective stage, students were asked to compose critical responses to the story's message. Their work revealed diverse perspectives and arguments, reflecting the characteristics of HOTS-oriented assessment. Most students were able to connect issues in the story to their own experiences or surrounding social realities, while others articulated reflective views on gender justice and women's roles in everyday life.

The implementation results also show that the revised scoring rubric, improved based on academic and practitioner feedback, assisted teachers in assessing both learning processes and outcomes more objectively. Teachers evaluated the accuracy of responses, the quality of argumentation, the depth of analysis, and the coherence of reflection. Thus, the assessment functioned both as a tool for mapping students' thinking abilities and as feedback for instructional improvement. Overall, the implementation of HOTS-oriented short story assessment from a feminist perspective was successful and applicable across vocational programs. It encouraged students to think critically, interpretively, and reflectively about literary texts, reinforcing literature learning as a strategic space for developing higher-order thinking skills through appropriate assessment design.

3.2. Discussion

The implementation of HOTS-oriented short story assessment from a feminist perspective positions literary assessment not only as a measure of cognitive achievement but also as a space for developing students' critical awareness of the social realities represented in texts. The findings demonstrate the use of a feminist perspective as a framework for analysis and evaluation, particularly when students were required to interpret female characters, gender power relations, and social conflicts within short stories. Through this approach, assessment moved beyond structural analysis toward ideological interpretation and value reflection.

Theoretically, integrating feminism into literary assessment aligns with Brookhart's [40] view of feminist literary criticism as an effort to uncover representations of women's experiences, gender inequality, and cultural domination within texts. When operationalized in assessment, this perspective encourages evaluative and reflective analysis, core components of HOTS. Feminism thus functions not only as a literary analytical lens but also as a pedagogical strategy for activating higher-order thinking.

The findings are consistent with the HOTS theory in assessment. Wiggins and McTighe [19] assert that HOTS assessment requires open-ended tasks that demand argument-based evaluation and critical reflection. In literary learning contexts, this is particularly relevant because literary texts are inherently interpretative and do not provide

singular meanings. The implemented assessment allowed students to construct meaning through argumentation rather than selecting right or wrong answers.

The results also align with Wiggins and McTighe's [19] perspective that assessment should reveal students' ability to apply knowledge in meaningful contexts. The HOTS-oriented short story assessment enabled students to connect literary texts with social experiences and real-life realities, serving as a bridge between textual understanding and the development of higher-order thinking.

Compared to previous studies, this research both reinforces and extends existing findings. While earlier research has highlighted the effectiveness of HOTS-based assessment in Indonesian language learning, particularly in reading and writing skills, few studies have specifically focused on HOTS assessment in literary learning, especially short stories. This study demonstrates that HOTS-oriented short story assessment can be implemented systematically and aligned with the characteristics of literary texts. Unlike conventional assessments that measure factual recall, this approach positions students as active meaning makers who evaluate values and reflect on social messages. It confirms the literature's strong potential as a medium for developing higher-order thinking when supported by an appropriate, contextually relevant assessment design.

Integration of Feminist Perspective in Literary Assessment

The feminist perspective was substantively integrated into the indicators and tasks of the HOTS-oriented short story assessment. This integration is reflected in assessment indicators that required students to identify representations of women, analyze gender power relations, and evaluate social inequalities presented in the stories. Assessment was therefore not ideologically neutral but directed toward fostering students' critical sensitivity to social issues embedded in literary texts.

Instrument validation by academics and practitioners ensured the approach's feasibility and shaped the characteristics of HOTS-oriented short story assessment from a feminist perspective. These characteristics are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics of HOTS-Oriented Short Story Learning Assessment from a Feminist Perspective

| Assessment Aspect | Assessment Characteristics | HOTS Orientation | Feminist Perspective |
|--------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Assessment focus | Analysis of meaning, values, and textual messages | Analysis and evaluation | Critique of gender relations and power |
| Task format | Critical responses, written reflections, and argumentative discussions | Evaluation and reflection | Awareness of women's positions in the text |
| Student role | Active interpreter and evaluator of social values in the text | Critical and reflective thinking | Sensitivity to gender inequality |
| Role of assessment | An integral part of the learning process | Strengthening HOTS | Critical literacy and social empathy |
| Learning context | Situations close to vocational students' experiences | Knowledge transfer | Contextual relevance |

The interpretation of these findings aligns with Tyson's (2015) view that feminist literary criticism focuses on texts that represent women's experiences and the structures of

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gender domination in society. When a feminist perspective serves as the foundation for constructing assessment indicators, students are encouraged to move beyond formal analysis to critical reading that considers the text's social and ideological contexts. In the context of HOTS assessment, this approach strengthens evaluative and reflective dimensions, as emphasized in HOTS theory, which positions value analysis and argument-based judgment as core components of higher-order thinking [40].

In light of previous feminist literary studies and critical pedagogy practices, this research demonstrates a more operational orientation in the assessment domain. Previously, feminist approaches in literary learning were more commonly applied in text selection or instructional strategies, while assessment mechanisms remained dominated by conventional instruments that required single responses. **The findings of this study indicate that a feminist perspective is not only relevant at the instructional level but can also be systematically integrated into assessment design, ensuring that evaluation becomes part of a continuous critical reading process.**

The implementation of a feminist perspective in short story assessment strengthens students' critical literacy. Assessment tasks requiring analysis of values, character attitudes, and ideological content encourage students to engage in reflective reading and connect texts to broader social contexts. In this framework, critical literacy extends beyond textual comprehension to include the ability to evaluate ideological positions and consider their implications for social realities. This orientation aligns with 21st-century competency frameworks that position value-based reflection and social awareness as integral to higher-order thinking.

Development of Students' Interpretative, Critical, and Reflective Abilities

The use of HOTS-oriented short story assessment directly influences students' interpretative abilities. Assignments requiring analysis of meaning, evaluation of character attitudes, and interpretation of social conflicts provide opportunities for students to construct interpretations independently. Such assessment activities encourage students not only to understand texts literally but also to construct meaning through argumentation and perspectives relevant to social contexts. In literature learning, interpretative ability develops when students are given space to interpret texts openly and argumentatively, in line with the polysemic nature of literary texts.

The impact of implementing HOTS-oriented short story assessment on students' abilities can be examined through interpretative, critical, and reflective achievements, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The Impact of HOTS Assessment Implementation on Students' Abilities

| Ability | Indication of Development | Form of Assessment |
|----------------|--|---------------------------|
| Interpretative | Students can interpret the meaning and message of the text | Written critical response |
| Critical | Students present text-based arguments | Discussion and evaluation |
| Reflective | Students connect the text to social realities | Personal reflection |

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Table 3 shows that HOTS-oriented, contextual assessment encourages students to develop interpretative skills, critical argumentation, and social reflection regarding literary texts. In addition to strengthening interpretative abilities, HOTS-based assessment also fosters students' reflective and critical reasoning. Assessment tasks that require students to evaluate values, conflicts, and power relations in short stories facilitate evaluative and reflective thinking processes. Through these activities, students are trained to construct text-based arguments while reflecting on the relevance of literary messages to their social experiences. This process reflects the principles of HOTS assessment, which positions reflection and evaluation as the core of higher-order thinking [19], [40].

The findings demonstrate alignment between HOTS-oriented literary assessment and the development of critical literacy. Students' reflections on literary texts extend beyond plot comprehension to include the social and ideological values embedded within them. Critical reading skills develop through assessments that connect texts to real-life contexts, allowing literature to serve as a meaningful and contextual learning medium. This orientation aligns with the 21st-century competency framework, which places social awareness and value-based reflection as integral components of higher-order thinking.

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This study broadens the scope of HOTS research, which generally emphasizes problem-solving, data analysis, and logical argumentation, by highlighting the potential of literature, particularly short stories, as a medium for developing HOTS through interpretation, reflection, and value evaluation. Thus, literature learning should not be positioned at the margins of HOTS discourse; rather, it possesses distinctive characteristics that enrich the concept of higher-order thinking.

Synergy of Conceptual and Practical Perspectives

The validation results of the assessment instrument by academics and practitioners demonstrate the strategic roles of both parties in ensuring the quality of HOTS-oriented short story assessment. Academics strengthened conceptual aspects, such as alignment between indicators and learning objectives, coherence with the HOTS framework, and clarity of assessment constructs. Meanwhile, practitioners emphasized classroom applicability, including clarity of instructions, task feasibility for students, and practicality within authentic learning contexts. The combination of these perspectives resulted in an assessment instrument that is not only theoretically valid but also pedagogically applicable.

The interpretation of the validation results underscores the importance of collaboration between academics and practitioners in developing learning assessments. Instruments developed solely from a theoretical perspective may be difficult to implement in classrooms, while those based solely on practical experience may lack conceptual rigor. Collaboration enables dialogue between theory and practice, ensuring that assessment instruments represent HOTS demands while accommodating students' characteristics and school contexts. In literary learning, such synergy is crucial given the interpretative and contextual nature of literary texts.

These findings align with assessment validity theory, which views validity as a multidimensional construct related to content relevance and the implications of instrument use in practice. In this context, academic validation contributes to construct and content

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validity, while practitioner validation strengthens consequential validity and instrument usability. Therefore, assessment quality is determined not only by the precision of indicators but also by their impact on students' learning processes.

Furthermore, the validation results highlight the close relationship between instrument quality and HOTS development goals. Instruments that undergo dual validation enable consistent and fair assessment while providing meaningful feedback to students. Such assessment supports the formative function of evaluation, as emphasized by [19], who regard assessment as an integral part of the learning process rather than merely a final measurement tool. In literary learning, HOTS-based feedback plays a crucial role in encouraging students to refine their thinking, sharpen their interpretations, and deepen their reflections.

The involvement of academics and practitioners in this study reinforces the importance of a collaborative approach in developing HOTS-oriented short story assessment. The synergy of conceptual and practical perspectives yields assessment instruments that are valid, reliable, and contextually relevant. These findings strengthen the argument that the quality of literary assessment depends on the engagement of multiple stakeholders and also make methodological contributions to the development of HOTS assessment in schools.

Previous studies generally focused on short story assessment in terms of appreciation or on the development of authentic and HOTS-based instruments in general. This study advances the discourse by simultaneously integrating HOTS orientation and a feminist perspective into the design of short story assessment. This integration positions assessment not only as a tool for measuring higher-order cognitive skills but also as a means of cultivating critical awareness of the social and gender issues represented in literary texts.

Theoretically, this study enriches literary evaluation scholarship by integrating the concept of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) more deeply into appreciation activities. The findings validate that the interpretative and reflective nature of literary texts inherently embodies higher-order thinking processes. Moreover, by positioning feminism as an assessment instrument rather than merely an analytical lens, this research challenges conventional boundaries and frames literary assessment as a value-laden pedagogical practice crucial for fostering students' critical capacity.

At the practical level, Indonesian language teachers can utilize the findings of this study as an operational guide in designing short story learning assessments. The developed assessment model has proven applicable and aligned with the vocational high school (SMK) ecosystem. By emphasizing value evaluation and social reflection, literature is no longer viewed merely as examination material but as a means of achieving more meaningful learning. Therefore, this study not only contributes to academic discourse but also provides practical guidance for implementing literary assessment aligned with national education policy.

4. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the potential of integrating Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) with a feminist perspective in the design of short story learning assessments at vocational high schools. The approach emphasizes literary assessment as a meaningful

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learning process that encourages students to interpret texts critically, evaluate social issues, and reflect on values represented in literary works. By situating literary analysis within broader social and gender contexts, the assessment framework fosters deeper intellectual engagement with literary texts.

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the discourse on literary learning assessment by proposing an integrated framework that combines HOTS orientation with a feminist perspective. This integration expands existing perspectives on literature assessment by positioning critical interpretation, value evaluation, and social reflection as essential components of higher-order thinking in literary learning.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings demonstrate that literary assessment can function not only as an evaluation tool but also as a learning strategy that stimulates interpretative, critical, and reflective thinking. The incorporation of analytical tasks, evaluative responses, and reflective activities shows that assessment can actively support the development of students' critical literacy and social awareness within the learning process.

In terms of implications for Indonesian language teachers, the study provides a practical guide for designing contextual, reflective literary assessments aligned with the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka. Teachers can adopt HOTS-oriented tasks that encourage students to analyze literary texts more deeply while connecting them to real-life social contexts. Through such assessment practices, literature learning can become a space for developing students' analytical thinking, ethical reflection, and social sensitivity.

Nevertheless, this research is limited to a specific school context and a single grade level, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future research is therefore recommended to explore the implementation and effectiveness of HOTS-oriented literary assessments across different educational settings, learning levels, and methodological approaches to strengthen empirical understanding of their impact on students' higher-order thinking development.

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