

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a description of Content-Based Instruction (CBI), and explains the need for CBI in literature-based ESL reading classes. The chapter further gives a description of the theoretical framework of this study. Then the CBI models and principles related to this study, as well as relevant studies on reading literature and CBI in ESL classes are discussed. Finally the theoretical and empirical concerns relating to CBI is described as well.

2.1 What is Content-Based Instruction (CBI)?

CBI is a second language instructional approach where thematic or academic content is integrated into language teaching activities. (Brinton et al and Wesche, 1989), related specifically to concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills. Any discussion on content driven syllabus involves understanding the notion of content. ‘Content’ itself is given a variety of definition. Crandall and Tucker (1990) defined it as “academic subject matter”. On the other hand, Chaput (1993: 150) defined content relating to topics or materials

which contribute to the students' understanding of language in general, at the same time, "the target language in particular". While Genesee (1994: 3) suggested that content may not be necessarily 'academic' it might include "any topic, theme or non-language issue of interest or importance to the learners". Whereas Met (1999: 150) proposed that 'content' in content-based programmes represents material that was cognitively engaging and demanding for the learners and it was material that extended beyond the target language or target culture.

According to Krashen (1982), students can acquire the subject matter with comprehensible input, and simultaneously increase their language skills. In order to achieve the goal of language skills improvement, Krashen stated that the focus of teaching should be on the authentic and meaningful input, not on the grammatical form.

For this reason, CBI has been given much attention at secondary and higher level learning as students need to have acquired a level of proficiency to carry out instructions. Krashen's (1982, 1985) claim about language instruction provided theoretical support for a communicative-based syllabus. He proposed that ESL instruction is most effective when it is based upon meaning rather than form, implying that the most effective way to acquire the vocabulary and grammar of a language is when it is integrated into the communication of understandable and meaningful information. Grabe and Stoller (1997) stated that in content-based classes students would have more opportunities to use the content knowledge and expertise they bring to class, which they activate, as they have prior knowledge, that lead to increased learning of language and content material.

According to Tedick et al. (2001), CBI could be conceptualized along a continuum between content-driven syllabus and language-driven syllabus. In a content-driven syllabus, content is taught in second language, content learning is the priority and language learning would be secondary. The content objectives are determined by the course goals or curriculum while the teachers are to select language objectives and evaluate students on content mastery. In language-driven, content would be used to learn second language which is a priority while content learning is incidental. Language objectives are determined by second language goals or curriculum and students are evaluated on content to be integrated, and on language skills and proficiency. Although the continuum provided approaches that would be content or language driven, yet students' learning of content is of greater importance especially in classes that used Communicative Language Teaching Method in second language teaching and learning.

According to Dickey (2004), it is interesting to note how Hutchinson and Waters (1984: 110) related CBI with more traditional forms of instruction:

In content-based approach, the focus was on exploiting the information conveyed by a text. In a language-based approach which is of a traditional form of instruction, the text was used as a source for language exercises.

In relation to Hutchinson and Waters it is understood that the main focus of CBI for students is on acquiring information through the second language or target language content, at the same time developing their academic language skills through the process of learning. The main goal is to enable students to transfer the academic language skills to other academic courses or subjects of their second language.

However despite the differences in defining 'content' yet the definition related to a common phenomenon is that students are engaged in some way with content using a non-native

language. In more recent times, CBI has been commonly perceived as a flexible operational framework for language instruction with application options available for different contexts and pedagogical needs. In other words CBI is necessarily context-specific. Any subject matter related to the students' own academic curriculum in primary, secondary or tertiary education, could be the content in CBI. Both content and language is given much importance in CBI as such, language which is to be the immediate object of study, is seen as a means to explore various themes or content-areas. Content is considered a support for language practice and communication among students in class. Moreover, natural language acquisition occurs in context and CBI provides a context for meaningful communication to occur (Curtain and Pesola 1994).

Cummin's (1981) notion of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) which is in contrast with Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), showed that it was necessary for students to learn content while they were developing CALP as there was not enough time to separate content learning and language. Postponing content instruction while more advanced academic language was seen to be not only impractical but also would ignore students' needs, interests and cognitive levels. Therefore, at upper primary level, content learning of a text was vital while students were learning the second language, English.

Yaden (1985) suggested that children's comments and questions increased and became more interpretive and evaluative when they had listened to repeated readings of the same story. In this way in CBI classes activities based on a single storybook gave opportunities to students to read a story repeatedly to solve a task. As such students use language as repeatedly as a means

for learning and gathering new information, confront various interpretations and description over a single topic or theme while equally acquiring their target language whether knowingly or unknowingly towards further enhancing their second language acquisition.

In addition, Goodman (1986) stated that language was not learned from a part to the whole, but the whole to the part, as all language functions were interrelated. In a way, meant that students needed to learn a second language as a whole or holistically, and not through identifying form or function in order to increase their language ability. After reading a whole storybook, content- based activities such as graphic organizers or mind mapping derived from the content of the same storybook read could most likely help students to obtain information in a comprehensible context. This enables them further to detect and organize information obtained from a written text although read as a whole and not part by part. This could develop student's own reading and understanding of the language. In this way the lesson with the support of CBI activities could be understood, remembered and applied at a continuum at any level of educational or curriculum demands.

Crandall (1992) emphasized that increased attention to academic language learning contributes to content learning, and encourages development of thinking and study skills. In language learning the study skills involves the four language skills that are Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. It is the Reading Skill (3.0) (see Appendix 3.7) together with the sub-reading skills that is listed in the Children's Literature Component which are expected to contribute to second language learning through the introduction of Children's Literature at primary level. The Reading skills and the sub-reading skills which are outlined in the Literature

Programme derives from the English Language Primary School Syllabus or KBSR. These skills are skills needed for successful academic language learning and academic achievement such as UPSR at the end of primary education.

Rosebery et al. (1992), explained that in content-based classes, instruction could take the form of task-based activities, hence, students would learn by carrying out specific tasks or projects: for example, `doing science` and not just reading about it. By using, task-based activities over a content read as a whole could enhance learning of specific aspects of a content and target language, naturally, communicatively, meaningfully in risk-free environment. Eskey (1997) explained that the nature of language has changed from seeing language as a system to generate grammatical sentences to a means of communication and performing language tasks, to a tool used to explore content, create new meanings and construct knowledge. Therefore, by the integration of both content learning outcomes and language learning outcomes various activities that involved communicative tasks involving any or all of the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing probably could be designed or planned for second language students by teachers or language instructors. In addition, Dupuy (2000: 207) pointed out that:

“ ..small group work, team learning, jigsaw reading, and peer editing were among the many techniques CBI called on to provide students with ample opportunities to interact, share ideas, test hypotheses, and construct knowledge in a low-risk forum”.

August (2004) claimed that, CBI did not explore a wide range of subjects, the approach was narrow rather than broad and was characterized by the use of many source materials related to a single topic. Due to students working on single or same topic content such as a storybook in a class they tend to gain important academic skills through learning a subject matter through a particular content, repeatedly. Hence, this familiarity gained through the text with repeated

readings as one of the features of CBI help students or enabled them to deal with the text on various levels and various forms.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

CBI could be based on several theories as CBI is seen as an approach whereby it is considered by many researchers as an effective and realistic teaching and learning method in terms of combining language and content learning. (Krahnke, as cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 204) defined CBI as “the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught”. Krahnke’s definition fully supported Krashen’s theory of second language acquisition and its great influence on CBI.

Krashen’s (1985), explanation about the difference between learning and acquisition of which even if, both terms are used to describe second language skill development yet he claims that acquisition is more closely related to the process of first language development, while learning is often the case for second language development. Thus, Krashen believes that learning a second language should be similar to acquisition if it is to be effective and the focus of acquisition would be on meaning rather than form. His theory of Input Hypothesis which is largely similar to Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development or ZPD, posed the concept represented by $i+l$; where i represents the “distance between actual language development” and

i+l represents “the potential language development” (Richard-Amato, 1996: 42). According to Krashen, the learner is unable to reach *i+l* stage without the assistance of others. For example, if a learner was found to be struggling in the language classroom, the other learners or another learner (peer) could provide the comprehensible language in a meaningful context and this would assist learners to lower their affective filter.

Long (1996), taking up in a sense where Krashen left off, he posited in which came to be called the `Interaction Hypothesis` that comprehensible input is the result of modified interaction. Long’s view is that interaction and input are two major players in the process of acquisition. Conversation and other interactive communication are according to him in second language classes are the basis for the development to linguistic rules. According to Long, modified interaction where classrooms are concerned came through teacher intervention to promote interaction by modified approaches or methods in learning. These approaches ideally, should focus on student-centred rather than teacher-centred learning.

CBI has the influence of Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory of Learning in the second language classes. Language and culture is seen as central to human development in a pragmatic way through negotiation of meaning via communication that comes by between teacher and students, and peer to peer interaction. Furthermore, Vygotskian concepts of negotiation as in ZPD such as private speech which were internally directed speech as problem-solving and rehearsing strategies and students’ appropriation of learning tasks were important notions in second language learning. Thus teacher-students interaction, peer to peer interaction, student-

content interaction, different student's ability level interaction, and tasks with cognitive intervention and integration, are all necessary as ingredients that supports CBI in ESL classes.

Content came with language and language came with content which again was based on two more main theories of language that could be related to this study on the basis that:

- 1) language is text and discourse-based
- 2) language is purposeful

In CBI, first of all, language teaching was focused on how information and meaning from meaningful content were utilized in discourse or texts, not in single sentences. All activities involved the target language skills, which were not separated from each other. Students in CBI were supposed to read and respond orally or write in summary, things they had read or written. Grammar was considered a component of all language skills, as it was not separated from language learning in any situation. And finally, the use of language was for a certain purpose, and the most important purpose of language was to communicate meaning. Therefore language included the main purpose which was communication via cooperation. Communicative and cooperative learning was found to be consistent with the goals of CBI and was readily incorporated into CBI. Cooperative learning required that students worked together typically in small groups of four or six to carry out a range of tasks and learn information with a purpose to promote peer group support and instruction which derives from Vygotsky's Learning Theory.

The foundation of CBI is based on some practical issues. One issue and the theoretical importance of CBI is that, through CBI, learners could interact with authentic, contextualized and linguistically challenging materials in a communicative and academic context (Richard and

Rodgers, 2001). In Malaysian ESL classes, one of the concerns is to give students comprehensible input. ESL teachers especially in Malaysian reading classes had to ponder over how they could communicate with the students in the target language. This was practical and needed to be looked into, especially in ESL reading classes that supported a communicative-based syllabus in second language learning. In relation to the issue mentioned above, Stryker and Leaver (cited in Richards and Rodgers 2001), suggested that teachers use the following examples; modifications that make the content more understandable: modification included simplification (e.g., use of short clauses), well-formedness (e.g., using few deviations from standard usage), explicitness (e.g., speaking with non-reduced pronunciation), regularization (e.g., use of canonical word order), and redundancy (e.g., highlighting important materials through simultaneous use of several linguistic mechanism).

Interaction and communication alone may not encourage or enhance second language learning in CBI. As CBI largely comes along with problem solving interactive task-based activities, several stages of learning are involved. It is believed that learning is accumulated and developed in several stages: First, the cognitive stage, whereby the learners or students are developing their language skills through the required tasks. Next, the association stage whereby learners have improved more and have strengthened their skills, but still need support to accomplish the tasks given. Last of all, the autonomous stage whereby the learners are able to perform the tasks automatically and autonomously meaning they become independent learners. These stages are related to Cognitive Theory of Anderson (1993), which provides strong basis for examining complex skill development as such CBI is a reasonable feature for academic language learning and a strong learning theory for instruction which integrates attention to

content and language. This theory also, maintains the idea that students progress in their learning through the stages mentioned and that students require extensive practise and feedback, as well as instruction in the use of various strategies (Kasper, 2005).

In addition, to the above mentioned theories, Richard and Rodgers (2001) introduced another view on learning that led to additional underlying to the principles of CBI. According to them, second language was learnt most successfully when the information which was being acquired was perceived as interesting, useful and leading to a desired goal. Kow (2002) noted that children's books are multifunctional and they help children to expand their imagination and to acquire literacy. Some content areas might be more useful as a basis for language learning than others. Students, especially learned best when instructions based on the content addressed their own needs and interest.

The theories discussed above provided the rational for the use of CBI in the ESL reading classes. These theories are also the foundation to this study that relates to CBI and its effectiveness to bring about the understanding in both aesthetic and language aspects among the students in the reading ESL classes based on prescribed text, read.

2.3 Relevant Models in Content-Based Instruction

Davidson and Williams (2001) suggested that diverse models exist in CBI and comes under different forms and in different theoretical orientations adopted by various programme

developers and practitioners, hence it is definitely not easy to describe CBI with precision. Yet where literature-based reading ESL classes were concerned, there were two models to be taken into consideration which could bring about effective results. The models are:

- 1) Theme-based Model.
- 2) Adjunct Model

The Theme-based model is the most well received CBI model in public school setting (Brown, 2004; Crandall, 1993). In this model, selected topics provide the content for students to learn (Brinton et al., 1989). From the selected topics or themes, ESL teachers need to come up or extract language activities which are to follow naturally from the content material. As for the theme related topics, second language learners are exposed to a series of related learning strategies, which are critical in academic learning. For example teachers could select theme of a text read and have students engaged in variety of activities. Activities such as comparing and contrasting characters from content, grouping words from content which are similes or metaphors or relate words such as adjectives that explain a character in the story or text read could be selected. With these kinds of circumstances provoked in the reading classes, students would be encouraged to be familiar with the content and the meaning of either topic or theme.

Davies (2003) further supports that theme-based CBI is the best teaching approach for combining language learning and content learning. There are diverse ways to design thematic units or instructions based on student's interest or background or based on the mainstream

curriculum (Brown et al., 2004). Students need to be activated through interesting and enjoyable activities related to content, which were according to their ability.

Besides the Theme-based Model, the Adjunct Model rather emphasized the importance of the concurrently teaching academic subject matter and foreign language skills (Brinton et al., 1989). This model is used at higher level education but in recent years since CBI is becoming a priority in many second or foreign language classes in many countries, there have been no boundaries to its application as a flexible framework to any level of second language education. In consideration of this model ESL teachers or instructors are required to design various teaching activities that combined all the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. With activities, that combine all the four language skills it is believed that students' literacy, oral development and thinking skills could be enhanced positively.

Both the above mentioned models could be positively integrated to bring benefits in literature-based ESL reading classes. Davidson and Williams (cited in Mohan et al., 2001: 57), defined integrated language and content teaching as a

heuristic label for diverse group of curriculum approaches which shared a concern facilitating language learning, broadly defined, through varied systematic linking of particular subject matter and language in the context of language activities

As such, these models could help, especially the language minority students by providing more opportunities within them to explore prior knowledge and at the same time increase their motivation in second language acquisition.

A fundamental argument in favour of CBI was that language learning occurred in context, and that was considered to be consistent with Krashen's Input Hypothesis while fostering learner motivation and also adding to the learner's knowledge of the subject matter area (Krueger and Ryan, 1993: 9). Therefore, the use of CBI could most probably be effective in the second language classes through the choice of models chosen for a specific group of students, centred around specific authentic materials selected with authentic tasks suitable within, and a little beyond the students prior knowledge.

2.4 Pedagogical Reasons

CBI is considered to be pedagogically sound apart from it being not only theoretically justified. Hence, there were several reasons, for the need to integrate CBI into the second language teaching pedagogy. The following explanations were not an attempt to provide a comprehensive list but were to show multiple benefits of CBI in ESL instruction for English learners by Brown (2007):

- 1) The fact that students were learning authentic content can be highly motivating, especially for older students who would appreciate the fact that what they were learning in ESL class was relevant to their academic success

and would make them better prepared to handle class work in the mainstream (Wiesen, 2001).

- 2) The reading included in CBI would help students acquire technical vocabulary unique to content areas, as well as the grammar used in academic language (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994).
- 3) Content-area reading and class discussions would provide background knowledge that English learners often lacked in content areas, and that knowledge would make mainstream classes more comprehensible (Brown, 2004).
- 4) The content in content-based ESL instruction was cognitively demanding, and the higher-order thinking and problem-solving of content-based ESL instruction would result in cognitive growth which would be an additional benefit beyond linguistic development (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994).

2.5 CBI Principles

Brinton (2003) listed ten learner centred CBI principles of which five can be applied for literature-based ESL reading classes and they were as follows:

- 1) The content-based curriculum removed the arbitrary distinction between language and content.
- 2) It reflected the interests and needs of the learners, taking into account the eventual uses the learners would make of the second or foreign language.

- 3) It provided pedagogical accommodation to learner proficiency level skills.
- 4) It holds sustained content as necessary for providing an authentic, meaningful context for students to acquire language.
- 5) It supplemented exposure to input through language-enhanced instruction (e.g., skill-based instruction and consciousness) raising about issues of grammar, lexis, style and register.

2.6 Why a need for CBI in Literature - Based Reading Classes ?

It was through Cummins (1981) that CBI came to a highlight at elementary level. How students benefited through collaborating CBI and literature in second or foreign language classroom had been listed by Brinton et al, (1989). For example, Brinton explained that students could gain knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and paragraph structure, interactive communication skills and styles of writing, and since CBI extensively used authentic language and texts (in the target language) it was appropriate to the needs of specific groups of students. Both Stryker and Leaver (1997) further explained that, the integration of CBI with literature such as a single text would enhance second language students understanding of both language and literature.

In the 1980's, Abulhaija (1987) further supported that language and literature cannot be separated and that both language and literature had something to offer in the development of well rounded students. In the reading classes literature that is being explored of its content could

promote correctness in speech and writing. It could encourage students to read for enjoyment as well as improve reading and comprehension, and expose student to idiomatic language and to foreign cultural context.

Erkaya (2005) stated that by integrating literature in the curricula, students could learn the four skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing effectively because of the literary, cultural, higher-order thinking, and motivational benefits. Erkaya's statement could be supported on the reason, as to why, Children's Literature had been introduced into the KBSR English syllabus at Upper Primary Level in Malaysian schools nationwide. Malaysian classes usually consist of students who spoke one different language as a first language, be fluent in more than one language, then spoke dialects of the mainstream language and had different varied range of reading levels. What more when CBI has the influence of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning? In the second language classes such as in Malaysian classes, both language and culture is seen as central to human development in a pragmatic way. The negotiation of meaning via communication using the second language between teachers, students and peers of different background could bring about motivational benefits in the understanding of both the aesthetic and language aspects of a literary text.

Once second language students had the understanding of target language culture, it was in a way possible for their attitude towards learning of second or foreign language to change. Earlier studies pointed out that reading children's literature influenced children's attitude towards reading and increased their knowledge of the world and text patterns (Morrow and Gambrell 2000). Although the second language or foreign culture is being introduced in the

form of a text, it might be complex at the beginning stage for the students to understand the content of both the aesthetic and language aspects. CBI which is based on Cognitive Learning Theory, leads students through its several stages from cognitive to association and finally to the autonomous stage where they students in the reading ESL classes become independent readers of their own.

Students who were given the opportunity to confront the same context with particular characters, lives and culture, over time, literature provided natural opportunities for them to contribute their own personal experiences to the schemata they tend to develop through reading a particular text. Reading of text could increase student's inter-textual connections and according to Dickinson and Keebler (1989), storybook reading style could vary. Martinez and Teale (1993) suggested that the style does vary along three axes, focus of teacher talk, information shared during reading, and strategies used by the teacher. In literature-based ESL reading classes CBI provides possibilities for the three axes as mentioned by Martinez and Teale (1993). Discussion and instructions from the teacher based on the content of a storybook, information shared during reading and allowing students to refer and gather information from the text being read through task-based activities are strategies that could allow for student's inter-textual connections through CBI.

Furthermore, Lin (2004) suggested that through reading stories, students not only got involved when they were reading, but also linked their personal experiences to the contents. In a way students became familiar with the characters and foreign cultural context as they dealt more and more through the content and the language they were exposed to through a literary text. Yet

at times, between the goals established for students according to curriculum and syllabus demands, there seemed to be a gap for these goals to be accomplished. There was always an awareness of the continual tension or pull between language and content learning outcomes among second language teachers especially in the Malaysian classes while activities were designed and developed and then these activities were taught and carried out by students. In relation to such matters it would be proper to relate to Brinton et al. (1989), who proposed that to effectively teach academic subject matter as foreign language skills, ESL teachers should collaborate CBI and literature study.

Custodio and Sutton (1998) pointed out that literature is a valuable language tool and could help language students explore prior knowledge, and promote literacy development. It is a known fact too that literature is rich with idiomatic language and cultural context. In late seventies, Dawes (1979), stated that reading can be one of the most painless and pleasurable ways of familiarizing oneself with a foreign language. What more if literature teaching is combined with CBI making it feasible to students in the ESL reading classes to acquire the target language rather painlessly and effectively in the early years of primary education? CBI with its pedagogical strategies, principles and its choice of diverse models to choose from may provide answers to some difficulties faced by students in the literature-based ESL reading classes who are exposed to literary texts of different language and culture.

2.7 Relevant Studies on Reading Literature.

With the characteristics of a content and literature-based instructional reading programme, it was possible for ESL students at upper primary level in Malaysian classes to have greater opportunity to sustain understanding of both literary and language aspects of a particular prescribed literary text, introduced to them. Few studies involving CBI were found at secondary rather than primary level in Malaysia. The reason could be due to the introduction of Children's Contemporary Literature in 2004 at upper primary level, as a non-tested component did not encourage many studies to be done as it was not a subject of its own but introduced as a reading component in the English Language syllabus.

Interest in research on Children's Literature took place in many countries during 1980's and 1990's. Literature grew during this time which came to be known as the literature-based movement. Children's books were published, to be made available to the students in elementary classrooms. According to Galda et al. (2001), Lehr's (1988) study indicated that in the classroom the use of quality children's literature help increase the possibility of the students being able to identify literary elements, such as theme. Students reading literature were also found to have increased the likelihood of using literary elements in their writing (Dressel, 1990; Lancia, 1997) besides being able to use literary registers in their discussion and retelling (Hade, 1988). Gavelek et al. (2000) produced a comprehensive discussion of the use of literature in the classroom. What they found is, research done on literary instruction in the 1980's and 1990's mostly focused on children's ability to recognize literary elements and to use these elements in their classroom discussion and writing in relation to a storybook being read.

Over the years, studies (McGinley and Kamberelis 1996; Mohoney et al., 1997) have sought to describe how literature influenced the attitude and value of its readers. Their studies embedded in a social-constructivist notion of reading in classrooms, reaching beyond the realm of reader response, social issues and being thoroughly grounded in the classroom. According to Galda et al. (2001), this reflects the ever-increasing awareness of the complexity of understanding readers, the text they read and, the contexts in which they read them.

It was Rosenblatt (1978, 1991), who identified two stances reading a text, aesthetic (more lexical, such as plot, theme or idioms, etc) and efferent (more of syntactic or grammar such as tenses, verbs, nouns, etc). She believed when individuals reading a text they shift along a continuum from the aesthetic to the efferent stances. Rosenblatt's key idea was 'aesthetic reading', which she related to an irreducibly personal experience in an active 'transaction' with a literary work in which 'evoked' experientially out of a 'text and the teacher's role was to assist in this event to facilitate the exploration of personal meanings. Henceforth, she quoted key ideas which were, the literary reading event, whereby the special meaning, and more particularly, the submerged associations that words and images had for the individual reader would largely determine what the work communicated with the reader. The reader then, brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment and a particular physical condition. There and many other elements in a never-to-be duplicated combination would determine the readers' response to the peculiar contribution to the text (Rosenblatt, 1938: 30-1).

According to Rosenblatt, someone else could read a text efferently to a reader, and paraphrase but no one could read aesthetically to someone else, a text. The decision lies in the reader's own understanding of the text read aesthetically. She further emphasized that aesthetic reading came through much encouragement so that young readers could develop confidence in their own responses through discovery. Importantly, what was needed for readers was to discover through re-readings and re-thinking and the need for discussions with other readers through mistakes and hesitations. The closer attention to the surface of the text and deeper processing of the language had been naturally of great interest to second and foreign language educators (Doughty and Williams, 1998).

Discussion of content was probably the gateway for students to respond to what they had read with peers. At the same time discussion alone cannot stand on its own as it needed to be planned and carried in the form of classroom activities in order for students to construct meaning. When discussions were unaided, untrained, and unarmed students might sit alone and ponder the meaning of their text (Wollman and Bonilla, 1994). Thus discussions or reading depended on the content which was the subject matter of a text read in classroom on whom, what and how it could be fully utilized in the ESL classes. Previously, Lightbown (1992) noted that English learners in French school demonstrated significant gains in oral communication compared to the control group which did not receive any formal language instruction and they read books in different topics.

Moreover, August (2004) highlighted that literature facilitated CBI. According to her, when ESL students did not have well developed academic and linguistic skills, literature was an

effective way to bridge the language-knowledge gap and it could provide essential facts, ideas and vocabulary, making it possible for students to understand the materials they read. Regarding how students should read the reading materials, extensive research and theory supported the use of read-alouds of children's literature. The rationale was, it would have prepared students to develop literacy skills, interest in reading, language development, reading achievement, and provide opportunities for social interaction (Galda and Cullinan, 1991).

According to Kim (2004) activities in which students engaged were likely to promote second language acquisition in the light of meaningful extended discussion and focus on forms for language. All of which was possible from literature discussion. Shang (2006), on the other hand, highlighted the effectiveness of using CBI in the ESL literature curriculum and further emphasised the use of collaborative content-based literature to be used as a tool to comprehend the subject matter in school. Yet, how books were read, what was read and how students were being made aware of the richness and value of the effectiveness of both literary and language aspects within the content of a particular text were not given much focus.

Research in recent years put more emphasis on context that supported children's engagement with literature in relation to what it is read and discussed, besides teacher's beliefs about reading and learning. The scope of research in children's literature had been enlarged so much so that it had now become an integral part of many reading programmes. As such, several studies had been conducted tracing back to the introduction of the Class Readers Programme (CRP) implemented at secondary level in Malaysian schools. These studies were related to the class readers and literature component introduced at secondary level.

In Malaysia, Kamalanathan (1999) did a study based on the problems faced by teachers and students in rural secondary school with CRP. A study of text topics that motivated classroom reading in English was conducted by Fu (2000). Manickavasagar (2004) conducted a study on teachers' perception towards creative teaching of English Literature in the ESL classroom. A case study was conducted by Jayarajah (2003) on the use of literature texts to enhance thinking skills in an ESL classroom while Paramerswari (2003) did a study on problems faced by Form One students related to the Literary Component in the KBSM, English Syllabus. Although these studies related to literary texts, teaching methods and teacher's perception at secondary level, yet none involved the study of CBI with literature. Ratnawati Asraf and Ismail Ahmad (2003), with their `Guided Extensive Reading Program` introduced extensive reading in three rural secondary schools in Malaysia, aimed at motivating students to read extensively. This programme helped students to read extensively in English. It also helped them to overcome their problems in understanding the texts. This was to increase students' proficiency in the language. Though their study involved the reading programme using standard reading materials, yet the study did not look into further understanding of the texts among students in the areas of content and language, which is central to CBI. Yet Kow (2007) in her study analysed some issues in reference to the teaching and learning of Children's Literature in Malaysia, did look at the role of the teachers and the English Language textbook with reference to the teaching and the functions of children's literature. Even though she discussed about literature and content at primary level yet she did not relate Children's Literature with the use of CBI.

2.8 Relevant Studies on CBI in ESL classes

A search for literature review on the use of CBI in the Malaysian ESL reading classes at primary level yielded no results. There were no studies done at Primary level literature-based ESL reading classes concerning a prescribed text read with students' involvement. However a few studies were found related to CBI in Malaysian ESL classes. Mohamed Shah (2003) highlighted the importance of CBI in ESL Malaysian classrooms and its importance in second language acquisition yet the study focused on teacher's speech to determine whether classrooms provided a context for language learning from the point of view of negative feedback and form-focused instruction. He proposed more studies to be done in the Malaysian education context to determine the effectiveness of CBI to gain better understanding of CBI and second language acquisition. Together, Thang and Pramaraanee (2006) conducted a study based on Malaysian secondary school students' perception of the environmental contents in English Language classes at secondary level. Their findings revealed that students seemed to be of the opinion that they gained more content knowledge than English Language skills.

However the following studies on CBI carried out in other countries related to second language acquisition were discussed further to give an idea of their effectiveness to the students of second language classes. Pally (1997) suggested that ESL learners especially adults benefited from sustained content study or studying of an area over time. She examined students' discussion and writing in three courses, of which one was on language acquisition and her

findings revealed that sustained content study helped ESL students identify central points and methodology of a range of questions, materials and evaluated them and further organised persuasive responses in English.

Another relevant study that related to researcher's use of CBI and related to test scores, was, a case study by Papai (2000). CBI was used in order to teach English to develop literacy at a middle school in northeast of Philadelphia for a four month period. The subjects chosen were students with intermediate English proficiency. They needed to be able to read, write and understand academic texts as well as other varied genres with interest through subject areas such as novels, play and poems. Reinforcement of content area knowledge through thematic units were used. At the same time focus was equally on English Language competencies in all four language skills and reading was the significant component of each of the thematic unit formed the basis for all the other activities. The students through the use of CBI had developed literacy abilities which were beyond the required reading and writing abilities and academic achievements. Equally their grades in all content areas increased gradually and consistently over the course of the school year from mostly C's and D's to B's and C's even A's in the same or certain subjects.

Crawford's (2001) study which was based on the researcher's teaching of CBI, taught low-level first year students of English proficiency using a graded reader and a movie as the source of content. Instead of using classic work of literature or a title written for second language students, he chose the thriller 'Jurassic Park' together with movie based on the title of the book. Activities were related to the readers during class time and from the teacher's observation, in this course, the students were attentive to the content of the text and showed good

class attendance. Although they were found to be receptive at class level as students they were rather reluctant to answer before their own classmates and within their small groups. These students welcomed the use of novels to study over the usual English text books in class.

2.9 Theoretical and Empirical Concerns

Referring to Krashen's (1982) much stipulated condition for second language acquisition through 'Comprehensible Input Hypothesis,' Lightbown and Spada (1990), based on their descriptive communicative programmes in Canada, found that students in classes with the integration of CBI with respect to language learning, developed high levels of fluency and communicative ability in their target language, but they still had problems with linguistic accuracy and complexity.

Several problems were also pointed out by Swain (1991). She suggested that not all content teaching were necessarily good language teaching and pointed out several problems. She opined, since the focus in CBI classes were meaning oriented, if students are to actually acquire a second language by 'going for meaning' they would have to focus on the form of the utterance to express the meaning. The focus on meaning might leave students with inconsistent and possibly unsystematic information about grammatical features of their target language. She believes that the language input and output might be functionally restricted as the linguistic item of focus was dependent on the content-focus. This contradicted with the assumption that language learning would have been enhanced where CBI was concerned.

Pica (1995) further added that though communication and content learning made important contribution as activities for language use, they cannot also be seen as processes for language learning. Concern from Pica (1995) was that the activities carried out in the classrooms might not be enough or sufficient to achieve the level of structural and sociolinguistic accuracy required for the learners' communicative competence. As the key individuals for ensuring success typically were the instructors in CBI classes, "the outcomes depended upon the details of its implementation" (Weshe and Skehan, 2002: 227).

Before Pica, Widdowson and Gales (1979) also gave importance to interaction between writer and reader. They regarded reading not as a reaction to a text but instead as a dynamic interaction between writer and readers mediated through a text. Reading as interaction presupposes that a reader was willing to interact with a particular text, and for this reason, the motivational factors involved in reading assume critical importance and therefore, by developing reading proficiency, in the ESL reading classes, literature probably could contribute to students' academic objectives.

Yet several more common arguments against literature were found to be interesting and needed to be taken into consideration for this study. One of the arguments was that the study of literature would not adequately help students fulfil their academic goals. Apart from the two above mentioned arguments one more argument is the use of literature with a particular cultural perspective could pose difficulties for the reader at a conceptual level.

On the other hand where literature was concerned McKay et al., (cited in Sivasubramaniam, 2006: 254-273), proposed that it was necessary to review the arguments against using literature in language teaching and resolved them. The first argument was that the study of literature due to its complex and unique use of language, failed to contribute to teaching grammar, which remains the main goals of language teaching. Instead, this first argument was found to be ill founded. The use of literature, in fact, encouraged language acquisition and expanded students' language awareness for the following reasons

- literature stimulates language acquisition by providing contexts for processing and interpreting new language,
- literature supplements the restricted input of the classroom,
- literary texts exposed students to new language which were rich in multiple levels of meaning,
- literature provided students with a framework sharing their feelings and opinions and finally
- literature could promote an elementary grasp of English to internalize vocabulary and grammar patterns

(Lazar et al., 1993; Collie and Slater 1987; Widdowson., 1975)

Hanauer (2001) listed a few reasons based on empirical study of second language literature-reading that most stylistic research involved the analysis of literary texts, but not how real readers, let alone non-native readers, understood the texts. Hall (2005) stated that there was a need for an approach to literature as discourse or as a social practice from an applied linguistic point of view, which would ask what learners of literature learnt through the discourses in which

they participated, and whether these discourses could be developed more in favour of an interest of the learners. These were the several arguments against using literature in second language teaching no matter in which context it was being taught.

2.10 School and Staff Level Concerns

According to Brown (2004), at school and lesson level, in-service teachers were somehow reluctant to implement CBI in the ESL classes because they were not comfortable with the idea that they had to teach subject-matter. Moreover pre-service teachers were not exposed to effectiveness of CBI and its benefits to the students in the ESL classes, during their years in education programmes. At staff level, the ESL teachers who attended the courses were introduced to creative ways of coming up with activities and materials. This was done to achieve reading objectives and language skills through exploring and the use of the content. Although the activities were content-based yet they were not introduced as CBI or highlighted as CBI activities to the teachers during the courses. Yet, the teachers were encouraged to use the content as a means of exploring the text through pre, while and post reading activities through their own creativity.

2.11 Conclusion

As stated by Dickey (2001), CBI is like a small blanket on a large bed shared by many children, each pulling in their own direction. Either the blanket must stretch to meet all needs, or be torn to shreds. The content-enriched ESL reading classes using a thematic or short-term subject probably could be a great gateway for, especially, ESL students to overcome the problems faced in the reading classes with a prescribed storybook. The prescribed storybook that had been delivered into the hands of both teachers and students in the form of a literary text could be utilized through CBI.

Most empirical findings showed that CBI was indeed more effective than traditional instructions in bringing about understanding among students of the content and language learned through the use of authentic materials and in meaningful situations. However Duenas (2004: 73-96) claims that

The production and execution of a CBI course or programme potentially constitute a most simulating challenge for language teachers, as the materialization of the real academic, cognitive an even personal interest and demands of both lecturers and learners can be accomplished by means of this methodological framework.....teachers as, on most occasions, will have to plan the appropriate curricula, design the syllabus, and fully develop new classroom materials. This endeavour may involve strenuous hours of laborious effort and may spark mixed feelings of enthusiasm, anxiety, and fear of failure, since effectiveness and success can never be entirely guaranteed. Most experienced authors, however, encourage teachers to experiments by creating innovative content-based proposals that better suit the particular needs, concerns an preferences of their learner population. The effort, they agree, is utterly worthwhile.”

Conflicting ideas continuously occupy the field of CBI with literature as the subject matter in the ESL reading classes. Yet, the understanding and contribution of CBI within and beyond the realms of theoretical and empirical concerns might bring about worthwhile changes towards the need for CBI in the reading ESL classes. The benefits of CBI in relation to the pedagogical reasons and principles in a way may help teachers in the application of relevant CBI

models to foster joy for reading and in acquiring the second language in the ESL classes. This might also help struggling students to change their negative perception and attitude towards complexity which they seem to believe exists in second language learning. In such instances with the integration of CBI with literature CBI could provide students with benefits of understanding of the aesthetic and language aspects of a particular text embedded in the foreign cultural context.

Moreover, CBI in literature-based ESL reading classes could encourage comprehensible input through meaningful modified interaction (Long, 1996) between text and the reader making it possible for the focus on student-centered learning. As Dupuy (2000) pointed out CBI could encourage peer collaboration, cooperation in solving tasks through shared evaluation, error identification and correction among peers making it possible for the exchange of knowledge and ideas and interpretation of language and content through fun and enjoyable learning. Such meaningful communication linking content, subject matter, target culture in the context of language activities as defined by Davidson and Williams (cited in Mohan et al., 2001: 57), encouraged through CBI and a prescribed text might provide students with opportunities to become life-long readers and life-long learners as well.