



**B. ED TESL (HONS)  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
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**A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTEMPORARY CHILDREN  
LITERATURE INTENSIVE READING PROGRAM AS COMPARED TO THE  
EXTENSIVE READING PROGRAM IN ENHANCING READING SKILLS  
AMONG THE ELEMENTARY ESL LEARNERS IN SK BOBAK, BAU.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Contemporary Children Literature is an intensive reading program which was introduced recently to the ESL learners at the elementary level in all Malaysian schools. It is intended to supplement the existing extensive reading programs but this time its application in the language classroom is given more emphasis. The incorporation of the language component into the English Language syllabus was adopted as one of the strategy to arrest the declining standard of English proficiency among the students. The use of literary texts as a language learning strategy especially in the enhancement of reading skills is deemed more desirable and appropriate as such texts are able to provide reading materials that are both aesthetic and authentic in nature. This study attempts to determine the effectiveness of this program as compared to the commonly adopted extensive reading program by conducting an experiment on a group of elementary pupils who are currently immersed in the program. The data derived from the study can be used later to shed some insights on the prevailing issues that surround the teaching and learning of literature at the elementary level.*

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Contemporary Children's literature is defined as "the material created for and widely read, viewed and heard by children, that has an imaginative element." PPK, (2004). It is a relatively new language approach that was introduced by the Malaysian Education Ministry to the elementary ESL learners. Basically, it consists of components like fiction, non-fiction, folktales, biography and poems but at the introductory stage at the moment, only the non-fiction component or short stories are prescribed to the readers.

The program, in actual fact, is an intensive reading program which is made compulsory for the elementary ESL learners in every school in Malaysia. Every pupil, beginning with the Year 4 level would be provided with three contemporary children's literary books and they are required to deal with them at a rate of one book per a three months period until the end of the year. The three books which are prescribed for the National Schools are "The Humble Prince", "Everyone is Good at Something" and "Coral Bay Surprise".

The program was launched in 2004, when the Cabinet, in realizing the importance of the English language in the present era of ICT and globalization and its desire to see the general population being competent in the language has decided that Children's Contemporary Literature be taught in all primary schools beginning with the Year 4 level and later on expanded to the Year 5 and Year 6 levels consecutively. The implementation of the program invariably serves to provide an early exposure of literary texts to the elementary ESL learners and also to form the basic foundation of literature studies in schools. In implementing the program, it is hoped that the pupils will develop an understanding of other societies, cultures, values and traditions; therefore providing facilitative effects for the

*(Note : PPK – Curriculum Development Centre)*

## CHAPTER 2 : REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### 2.1 The Theoretical Foundation of SLA

The theoretical aspects of reading as discussed invariably are preludes to the attainment of language proficiency. But, how do learners acquire competency in the second language? In presenting his theoretical views on the acquisition of SLA through the '*Natural Approach*', Krashen (1983) categorically emphasized on the "five hypotheses" which are related to language learning. The most fundamental of all the hypotheses presented is the *acquisition-learning distinction*. Acquisition, as he subsumed, simply refers to 'picking it up' or "the developing ability in a language by using it in natural, communicative situations".

In another related study on Second Language Acquisition, he claims that language acquisition is a *subconscious process*; language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are using the language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication. Children are said to subconsciously acquire their first language and probably second languages as well. Adults too, acquire languages but differ from the ways as employed by children. All these are done as it appears that language acquisition is the central, most important means for gaining linguistic skills. Besides that, language is acquired through *implicit learning, informal learning and natural learning*. However, learning is more inclined towards 'knowing the rules or having a conscious knowledge about grammar'.

Recent research, according to (Krashen, 1993, p.18) reveals that formal language learning does not permit the development of communicative ability. Such perception would certainly undermine the policy of language learning as adopted by our educational system that incorporates communicative language learning in the classroom.