LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE:
REAL LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES IN AN ESL ADULT CLASSROOM

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Children’s Literature)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 2009

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Abstract

A linear view of second language acquisition (SLA) process is still dominant in adult ESL classes where linguistically-based meaning-making at a sentence level is the focus of instruction and learners are regarded as passive information processors. These classrooms often presuppose the separation of language and social context as well as of language competence and language performance.

The thesis reports on a three-month long descriptive case study of an ESL class at a private language institute in Canada with international advanced-level adult learners employing literature-based second language (L2) instruction (LBLI). Based on the findings of the study, this study intended to suggest pedagogical implications to extend its feasibility as an alternative L2 teaching paradigm in light of Johnson’s (2004) new model of SLA, namely “dialogical approach” based on Vygotsky’s Sociocultural theory and Bakhtin’s Literary theory.

The study aimed to investigate 1) the nature of teaching practices of the instruction, and 2) students’ learning experiences with such instruction in an effort to contribute to the further scholarly discussion of “how” literature is being and can/should be incorporated for the development of L2. Data was collected through weekly class observations, interviews with the instructor as well as three voluntary students, questionnaires with the whole class, and analysis of written documents.

Findings reveal that the essence of Johnson’s SLA model (2004) was evident in this particular class with LBLI where both language learning and language use co-occurred in interactive practices with literature that served not only as a sociocultural resource for language as speech, but also as a source for evoking meaningful interactions. The study also highlights that this content-rich instruction fostered contextualized, real, not just realistic language experiences encompassing the genuine negotiation of meaning while promoting students’ sense of independence as language users. Together with implications for curriculum developers, policy makers, teacher educators, and students, the thesis concludes with pedagogical implications for its successful implementation in various ESL and EFL contexts by discussing different facets of L2 pedagogy, including text selection criteria, classroom discourse, participation structures, students’ and teachers’ roles, extended reading activities, and other preliminary pedagogical issues.
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Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis has been a great journey which broadens my views towards learning, teaching, and researching. I would not have been able to come to this point without support from so many wonderful individuals around me.

First, I would like to express my true gratitude to the students and teacher who welcomed me into their classroom to make this research possible. I am also deeply grateful to my former supervisor, Dr. Ronald Jobe for his warm-hearted support from the very beginning of my graduate study at UBC even after his retirement. My heartfelt gratitude goes to my current supervisor, Dr. Marlene Asselin, for her encouraging words and careful guidance throughout this journey. I would like to thank my committee members, Drs. Stephen Carey and Judith Saltman, for their thought-provoking and poignant advice to my thesis. Also, my sincere thanks goes out to my colleagues and friends who have spent countless hours of their precious time for invaluable suggestions and helpful feedback. They include Jean Kim, Mi-Young Kim, and Professor Lill Rodman. Lastly, I am overwhelmed with appreciation to my parents for their unconditional support and love, to my sister and brother in-law for always being there cheering for me, and to my loving wife, Yukiko, for always believing in me and being the best life-time company walking together while sharing all the joy and hardship with me.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 My Journey of Reading English

Conversations about literature with a reader response focus center around the student and encourage the student to draw on his or her language, culture and life experiences as a basis for language and literacy learning rather than on the text itself. (Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 1997, p. 39)

On one winter afternoon, I was sitting in a classroom at a university in Vancouver, Canada. It was the first day of the term. The course was about teaching children’s literature in an elementary classroom. At that time, I did not realize what a rich learning experience with language and literature I was going to have in the course over the following 13 weeks. Also, I would not have thought that such learning experiences with the course would serve as an eye-opener to the world of language and literature and lead me to the pursuit of graduate studies for my master’s thesis on the topic of the feasibility of the learning and teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) incorporating literature.

Looking back on the learning journey in the course, I literally had a great time. I enjoyed reading numerous pieces of English children’s literature including short stories, picture books, novels, poems, and informational books. I often found myself immersed in intimate transactions with stories. Some of the titles that invited me to the joy of reading included *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2002), *Love You Forever* (Munsch, 1986), *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, (O’Dell, 1960),
Number the Stars (Lowry, 1989) to name a few. In fact, I was somewhat surprised at myself because I used to be rather a reluctant reader of English texts when I was in Korea. I had read some literary texts in English mainly presented in the English textbook during my high school and classical English literature at a university for a bachelor’s degree in English language and literature, but I was not highly engaged with reading English texts. I viewed reading English as an academic activity which required a close careful analysis of isolated sentences or passages for comprehension. In the following excerpt, Cho and Krashen (2001) further explain a possible reason for my reluctance to read in English:

Most often cited reasons for this reluctance is the observation that reading in English is difficult and dull. EFL students have this impression because their English experience has been limited to textbooks and difficult passages read in preparation for examinations. (p. 170)

The reading experiences that I had in this children’s literature course were different from my previous ones. The main differences lie in two respects: the purpose of reading and types of texts. First, the reading experiences in Korea involved more word by word decoding as well as syntactic or semantic analysis for the purpose of studies for an exam (Cho & Krashen, 1994; Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 1997). In contrast, the experiences in this children’s literature course invited me to approach English literature to enjoy reading. In essence, it was primarily reading for pleasure. With regard to the types of literary texts, what I read during the course was a range of literature written for children and young adults which were presented in the form of authentic
books, whereas the texts that I read in the EFL context were either short excerpts from original literary pieces or simplified stories such as a folktale presented in the English textbook during my secondary school days and classical English literature such as that of Shakespeare or Chaucer during my university days. I assume that the nature of the texts including different reading levels, enjoyment, genres, and presentation format of literature could have played a role in the different outcomes of my whole English reading experience. This is in line with what Krashen (2004) argued. He asserted that more engaging reading experiences in English can be attributable to a combination of pleasurable and comprehensible texts.

In addition, another prominent feature of the children’s literature course was the opportunities to respond to literature individually in writing or orally in groups. All the class members were granted ample opportunities to talk about their readings in groups or to the whole class. Different points of view were exchanged and shared. As an ESL speaker, it was challenging at times to get across what I had to say about my readings in the target language. However, the urgency that I had to use English to exchange meanings invited me to become a more active reader and English user. After all, English was treated not only as a subject to study, but also as an object to exchange meanings with one another. It was an enjoyable, engaging experience talking about books with other readers in class.

Furthermore, although the course was not a language course for ESL learners (it was an
undergraduate credit course for pre-service teachers), I, as an ESL speaker, felt that I linguistically benefited from the course where I was engaged with a number of novels, poems, and stories. It was inspiring that I was actually enjoying authentic literary texts in English. The whole reading experience gave a boost to my sense of confidence that I was able to read English texts and discuss them with other classmates whose English was their first language (L1). In addition to this sense of confidence, another linguistic benefit from the reading experiences was that I learned that the English language started making more sense to me when it was used to create meanings in the context of stories where the language was used by certain characters in a certain situation at a certain time in a particular culture. I often had to ponder thematic meanings of the words as well as their literal meaning to fully understand characters. I could see the usage of certain words and phrases in particular contexts. The language was not the focus of the course. However, I felt that my English somehow benefited from the engagement with literature over the term.

In addition, I was also impressed by the quality and quantity of literature for young people. Despite the fact that it is originally written for young readers, my classmates and I often agreed on its high literary quality, relevant themes, diverse cultural representations, beautiful illustrations, and high quality rhetoric at its finest. I was also amazed at its wide range of topics or themes, including the holocaust, history, realism, fantasy, relationships, folk tales, and
multiculturalism, etc. The entire period of 13 weeks was filled with laughter and tears. It changed my stereotyped views that literature for young people should be condescending. Another eye opening moment about children’s literature was when I visited a main local library. One whole floor of the library was packed with a countless number of books for young people. It was inspiring to learn that a rich resource of language and literature exists to welcome all the readers. After visits to the library, one question kept arising: “This can be a wonderful resource for language learning. What if language educators make use of this in teaching ESL?”

This question lingered in my mind as I grew as an ESL learner and educator. I looked back on my L2 learning experiences. Unfortunately, I didn’t benefit from literature. It was largely grammar-based English learning at a sentence level with an emphasis on reading comprehension. I had a chance to experience literature at an undergraduate level, but the focus was on learning to critique classical literary texts rather than on language. I also had an opportunity to work on English in an ESL setting in Canada by taking intensive English programs in a private ESL institute in Canada. While more emphasis was placed on communication and production, it was similar to my EFL experiences in Korea in that the main learning materials were textbooks. However, this is not to say that I do not appreciate or value such ESL/EFL learning experiences. I gained a great amount of grammatical knowledge and some reading comprehension skills. However, the difficulty that I had to face was that I often failed to produce messages efficiently
and appropriately according to the sociocultural and institutional context of communication. It was like I had plenty of individual bricks, but I was not sure how to put them together in a particular environment to build a house. When I came to Canada, I was having trouble articulating what I had to say in the target language by drawing on my linguistic knowledge. It was challenging to associate language and context. My linguistic knowledge that was often confined to the literal meanings of words at a sentence level was not sufficient for me to hold control in my hands when communicating with others or interpreting meanings in a written text.

It was literature that helped me to see how language and context are interwoven. Language in the texts started to mean more to me. The English language sounded just more plausible. Also, I felt that vocabulary tended to stay longer in my memory when it was associated with certain characters and contexts of the stories. The positive learning experiences with literature reinforced my assumption that ESL/EFL learners could benefit from literature, a rich resource of language presented at its finest at a range of levels to accommodate different needs, interests, and levels of L2 learners. Based on my ESL/EFL learning experiences, I began wondering why literature was not actively introduced into language classrooms. What does the existing literature say about the benefits of using literature for L2 learning? How much literature is being used in the L2 classrooms and how is it used? What do ESL/EFL teachers think about the incorporation of literature in their language classrooms? How would ESL/EFL learners view
their learning experiences with learning L2 with/through literature? Why don’t ESL/EFL teachers use literature more actively in the classrooms?

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The review of the existing literature on L2 learning through literary texts has demonstrated that literature can play a positive role in L2 learning (See Allen, 1989; Cho, Ahn, & Krashen, 2005; Coonrod & Hughes, 1994; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Ghosn, 2002; Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002; Hall, 2005; Hess, 2006; Kim, 2004; Kramsch, 1993; Langer, 1997; Reid, 2002). However, a majority of these studies looked into the beneficial effects of using literature on the L2 development for younger ESL learners. Little scholarly attention has been paid to the role of literature in L2 classrooms for adult learners. Also, while many studies advocated for the feasibility of literature in L2 classrooms, they called for more empirical research to explore the instructional question of ‘how’ literature can be used in support of the L2 development (Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Custodio & Sutton, 1998; Hall, 2005; Kim, 2004; Krashen, 2004; James, 2003; Paran, 2006; Yuksel, 2009). In particular, Paran (2006) asserted that more “descriptive research” studies examining diverse learning contexts are needed to address the question of ‘how’ (p. 9). Furthermore, Paran (2006) stressed, “researchers need to address the issue of what participants feel to be the advantage of the learning…this question needs to be addressed directly through investigating the learners’ attitudes” (p. 10). Considering what the existing research suggests and
based on my previous ESL/EFL learning experiences, the present study aims to provide a
documentation of a particular ESL class incorporating literature in the form of thick descriptions
in order to answer the following research questions that guided this study: 1) What is the nature
of teaching practices of literature-based L2 instruction in an adult ESL classroom? And secondly,
what are the students’ learning experiences with such instruction?

Originally, the aim of the study was to investigate an adult ESL classroom employing
literature for young people as the key teaching material. This had to do with an eye-opening
inspiration gained through my personal literary and linguistic experiences with the children’s
literature course that I had taken. I was curious to find scholarly inquiries with regard to the use
of literature for young people in an adult L2 classroom. However, after the failure to find a class
which extensively uses children’s or adolescent literature for adult ESL learners, the original
scholarly inquiries had to be modified to look into an adult ESL class using literature in general,
instead of only literature for young people. Countless hours and days were committed to the
search for a class to meet the original aim of this study. I searched more than 20 private ESL
institutes in Vancouver and I learned that the use of children’s or adolescent literature was scarce
(even literature in general was not being used widely): According to the course content on the
websites of the private schools, a majority of the classes placed an emphasis on improving
general communicative skills or enhancing standardized test scores such as TOEFL and major
teaching materials advertised were commercial ESL textbooks. Only a few classes were found to adopt literature into a curriculum either as partial or central learning material. Hence, I came to the point where I had to make a realistic decision to expand the definition of literature from that for young people to that in general.

1.3 Overview of the Thesis

The thesis consists of a total of five chapters. The next chapter will review the existing literature to explore what the research studies say about the benefits of learning ESL or EFL through/with literature in four different respects: linguistic, academic, cultural, and affective benefits. First, the chapter will begin with the definition and elements of literature-based instruction (LBI) as well as a theoretical basis for literature-based L2 instruction (LBLI). The remainder of the chapter will provide a review of literature concerning the ESL/EFL learning contexts for young learners ranging from primary to secondary students, followed by the section on the research studies dealing with adult ESL/EFL learning settings. The chapter will also present a rationale for employing children’s or adolescent literature for adult ESL learners. The chapter will end with a research gap and guiding research questions.

Chapter 3 will discuss the qualitative descriptive case study methodology that this study has undertaken. The chapter will present a rationale for the methodology, a description of data collection procedures and data analysis. The research site and participants will also be illustrated.
Chapter 4 will present findings of the study in the form of a thick description of the class in response to the research questions: 1) the nature of teaching practices of LBLI in an adult ESL classroom and 2) the students’ learning experiences with the instruction. An overview of what was happening in the class over 12 weeks will be chronicled and the nature of the class will be explored in terms of class activities, course materials, language skills, and classroom interactions. Next, eight recurrent themes that emerged with regard to the students’ learning experiences will be presented. They include language use and learning, student-centered learning, collaborative interaction, a teacher’s participant role, active vocabulary learning, response-oriented learning, experiencing speech genres and discourse practices, and pleasurable learning. The chapter will also provide a summary of students’ reactions to the instruction by synthesizing students’ comments and feedback.

Lastly, the thesis will conclude with Chapter 5, which summarizes and further discusses the findings of the study to suggest pedagogical implications for using literature in adult L2 classrooms. Ultimately, such implications are an effort to contribute to the growing database of scholarly research on the topic by tackling the “how” question. In addition, implications for policy makers, publishers, teacher educators, and students will be presented. The chapter will close the thesis by discussing limitations of the study and research implications.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE-BASED INSTRUCTION WITH SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

2.1 Introduction

Rather than a straightforward grammatical or functional syllabus, we should think of a contextual syllabus, one through which learners gradually acquire not only the ability to produce and understand the forms of the language but the capacity to reflect on how the choice of these forms in spoken and written discourse both defines and is determined by personal relationships, social situations, and cultural presuppositions (Kramsch, 1996, p. 4).

Students learn best when they are engaged in full activities instead of exercises: activities that they themselves find meaningful (Langer, 1997, p. 607).

Our lives are filled with a series of stories. It is one universal speech genre that has roots deep in the lives of human beings across the world and beyond time. Story exists and is transmitted in every language and every part of the world (Maclean, 1990). Butler (2006) stated that “narrative is in fact one of the most fundamental uses of language known to humans” (p. 19). Cullinan (1992) added, “The story form is cultural and universal. Stories help us to remember by providing meaningful frameworks. Stories make events memorable” (p. 427). For its universality, this common human speech genre has been a natural and integral part of human language learning experiences. Hence, stories may serve as a natural bridge between languages and cultures, and exposure to and experience with literature including narratives can be a natural path to second language (L2) learning. Therefore, this chapter will investigate whether and how L2
instruction with literature can bring meaningful, authentic-language-rich L2 teaching to language classrooms.

2.2 Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this literature review is to shed light on the existing literature pertaining to the role of literature-based instruction (LBI) as an alternative L2 teaching paradigm. The chapter will attempt to answer the following guiding questions:

1) What is the definition of LBI? Also, what are its elements?

2) Previous research informs us that LBI is still new to adult English as a second language (ESL)/English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, whereas it has been widely adopted for younger L2 learners. Why has LBI not found its place in adult L2 classrooms?

3) Why LBI for L2 learning? What is the theoretical basis for integrating literature and language?

4) Do younger ESL learners benefit from the instruction? If so, what does research say about its benefits in terms of learners’ language, sociocultural awareness, academic literacy and critical thinking skills, and affective/attitudinal growth?

5) Can LBI also help adult ESL learners in their English language development? What does the existing research say about this?

6) Adult learners with limited L2 proficiency often find literature for adults too challenging. Can literature for young people (i.e., children’s and adolescent literature) help those adult learners?
What rationale exists for the use of children’s or adolescent literature for adult L2 learners?

2.3 Definition and Elements of Literature-Based Instruction

LBI was originally initiated with the purpose of literacy development in first language (L1) (Huck, 2004; Sorensen & Lehman, 1995). The underlying rationale was that students should be engaged with authentic texts for teaching and learning instead of basal readers or textbooks, and they should be given ample opportunities to explore and create meanings and language in the text (Allen, 1994; Cullinan, 1992; Custodio & Sutton, 1998; Turnell & Jacobs, 1989). LBI originally often encompasses the following elements: the use of natural text, discussion and collaboration with others on books, reading aloud, sustained silent reading, teacher modeling as a reader, emphasis on changing attitudes, self selection of reading materials, meaning orientation, process writing and other output activities around literature (Turnell & Jacobs, 1989).

The basic principle of LBI for L2 springs from that of L1 education. There is as yet no clear definition of LBI for L2 learning, making its definition still fluid and inclusive. Within the context of the present study, literature-based L2 instruction (LBLI) can be defined as: an L2 instruction with a curriculum built around literature in various forms (e.g., print, audio/video/electronic files) and genres (e.g., fiction, non-fiction, poetry, short stories, documentaries, diaries, essays, etc.) and written for different readers (e.g., literature for young people and for adults). In essence, students are engaged in both the input and output process (i.e.,
reading, discussing, responding orally or in writing to various genres of literature) (Custodio & Sutton, 1998; Kim, 2004). A wide range of reflective and collaborative language activities will necessarily be entailed. There can be incidental moments of teaching grammar and vocabulary in the context of the text (Elley, 1997). Formal grammar instruction may partially be integrated in context. However, LBLI is primarily a meaning-oriented approach (Rosenkjar, 2006), and constantly evokes questions and provokes thoughts among students before, while, and after reading, rather than simply providing answers for students as done in many traditional language teaching settings (Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Gordon, Zaleski & Goodman 2006). Thematic units can naturally be created in conjunction with any subject matter and in connection with other media such as film or newspapers. More importantly, LBLI can create opportunities for L2 learners to both learn and use language for meaning as literature can serve as both a resource of language and a source of discussion and interaction. Ideally, it can involve a balance between meaning and form, literal interpretation and thematic interpretation, efferent reading and aesthetic reading, and implicit learning through experiential involvement and explicit teaching on linguistic features (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002; Lazar, 1992; Lin, 2006).

At the heart of LBI lies a very influential reading theory, namely, reader response theory developed by Rosenblatt (1938, 1978). The underlying principle is that, when reading, readers and texts are engaged in a transaction, through which readers actively create a new meaning from
the text as they draw upon their own situations, feelings, experiences, preoccupations, and views.

The same text can mean and appeal differently to each individual as reader response theory takes into account the affective sides of reading. In other words, it emphasizes personal intimate engagement with the text. Rosenblatt (1978) and Kramsch (1993) stated that there are two stances taken by a reader according to the purpose of reading: efferent reading (i.e. deals with and decodes forms and information in text) and aesthetic reading (i.e. focuses on the lived-through experience of reading). Reader response theory calls for aesthetic reading to also be an integral part of students’ reading processes in order to maximize the personal engagement with literature and language.

Some researchers argue that reader response theory can and should also play an important role in LBI for L2 learning (Elliott, 1990; Langer, 1997; Shanahan, 1997; Tutas, 2006). Langer (1997) stated that “second language learners use their knowledge of their first language and culture as well as their second to help them understand and communicate” (p. 607). Given that, with the reader response approach, LBLI can, thus, maximize the opportunity for improving L2, drawing upon their knowledge and experiences in both L1 and L2.

Furthermore, another reason for incorporating reader response theory with LBLI is the fact that multiple, rich interactions can naturally be yielded in a response-oriented classroom between students and teachers, students and students, and students and texts while experiencing
Genuinely meaning-filled discussions, both oral and written, can be facilitated throughout the lessons. Moreover, not only a practical but also affective side of human communication (which is often overlooked in education) can be reinforced through a multitude of opportunities for aesthetically responding to readings. Students are invited to personally connect themselves to language, which may enable it to remain longer in their minds compared to when the class focuses only on practical sides of language.

2.4 Overlooked Literature-Based L2 Instruction (LBLI)

Using literature is not a new idea to L2 teachers and learners around the world (Gilroy & Parkinson, 1997; Hall, 2005; Kim, 2004; Paran, 2006). It is common to find literary texts in the language textbook. Teachers sometimes bring a piece of poetry or a part of personal essays to the classroom. English language tests often contain excerpts from narratives.

However, the problem lies in the way literature is dealt with in class. For instance, 1) literature is not introduced in a complete piece as an authentic language text; 2) it is used primarily only for low level literal interpretation exercises; and 3) it is not read, but rather studied or analyzed. In short, it is not often seen as a text of meaning, but rather as a mere example of linguistic codes.

This limited, traditional view on using literature has prevailed in ESL and particularly in EFL contexts (Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 1997; Custodio & Sutton, 1998; Huck, 2004; James, 2003;
Kramsch, 1993; Krashen 2004; Minkoff, 2006; Tutas, 2006). Thus, students do not have a chance to meaningfully experience language through personal engagement and are often limited to studying language printed in texts through low level literal questions and linguistic analysis. According to Langer (1997), “they (L2 students) are often given short passages and fill in exercises meant to develop their English skills before being provided with context that permits them to use those skills in interesting and meaningful ways” (p. 613). In turn, such reading experience can have a negative impact on students’ attitude to and confidence in reading authentic materials, and may often lead to reluctance in reading in English for pleasure (Cho & Krashen, 1994, 2001; Kim & Krashen, 1997); i.e., students retain an assumption that reading in English, especially longer passages, is a boring and difficult process, and they do not view reading as part of their natural language experiences, but instead as a routine word-by-word decoding process.

Not only was LBI overlooked in L2 classrooms, but also little scholarly attention was given to LBLI. Paran (2006) argued that the discussion about the use of literature for language learning was scarce, and its importance and impacts were overlooked. Only a small number of articles on the topic were published in TESOL Quarterly and surprisingly, none since 2000. Moreover, in many cases, English language teacher training programs did not pay much attention to the discussion of the role of literature or the implementation of LBLI in their teaching.
2.5 Theoretical Basis to LBLI

The following theoretical underpinnings serve as the basis to LBLI: Krashen’s reading hypothesis and the whole language and content-based approach; and Marysia Johnson’s (2004) alternative model of SLA, namely, the dialogical approach.

2.5.1 Authentic Reading of Authentic Texts

Krashen (2004) posited in his book entitled *The Power of Reading* that free voluntary reading (FVR) can be a vehicle for SLA by virtue of the fact that it can provide comprehensible input in a low affective filter, which is believed to be one of the indispensable conditions for acquiring language according to Krashen (1985). Extensive FVR allows readers to experience and understand messages and meanings in a pleasurable way, which will be likely to lead to implicit learning of language.

Of Krashen’s strong arguments, the underlying principle is that authentic reading experiences facilitate real (not just realistic) language experiences in which language is viewed at a discourse level, and not limited to the sentence level. When language is only dealt with at the sentence level, which is often the case of many EFL instructions, students would not experience language authentically (Kramsch, 1993). According to Krashen, these authentic language experiences are conducive to abilities to read between the lines (i.e., getting the literal meaning
of a word as well as its social meanings, different nuances of the meanings, and its grammatical properties). In addition, quality authentic reading entails multiple moments when readers encounter and absorb a variety of writing conventions and styles containing different linguistic features. Smith (as cited in Krashen, 2004) asserted,

To learn to write for newspapers, you must read newspapers. Textbooks about them will not suffice. For magazines, browse through magazines rather than through correspondence courses on magazine writing. To write poetry, read it (p. 19).

Yet, in many classrooms, this has not been the case. This idea of encouraging learners to read various writing styles is in parallel with Bakhtin’s literary theory which emphasizes the encounters with a multitude of speech genres orally and in writing. This will be further discussed later in this section.

2.5.2 Whole Language and Content-Based Approach

LBI for L2 learning is underpinned by two of the most influential L2 teaching movements since the 1980s: namely, the whole language approach (Clark, 1994; Cullinan, 1992; Goodman, 1989) and content-based instruction (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994; Mohan 1986).

Fundamentally, the whole language approach advocates that “language is learned not from the part to the whole but from the whole to the part and that all language skills including reading interrelate” (Custodio & Sutton, 1998, p. 19). With respect to content-based instruction, the aim is to establish a learning environment where language and content are taught simultaneously in a target language that will lead to comprehension and production with genuinely meaningful
language use to gain content knowledge. The two approaches share common ground in language learning principles in that they both include student-centered, meaning-oriented, contextual, and language-skills-integrated learning. These common tenors also constitute the principles of LBLI in the sense that literature can be the content while language is used for meaning around literature and treated from whole to parts. Hence, as one form of application of these two movements, LBLI has found its place in the curriculum for ESL learners, especially at kindergarten through secondary levels (Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 1997; Hadaway, Vardell & Young, 2002).

2.5.3 **Johnson’s Dialogical Approach to Second Language Acquisition**

Lastly, but most importantly, Johnson’s (2004) holistic view of SLA presents a strong theoretical framework for incorporating LBI into L2 classrooms. LBLI can serve as one of the forms of application of an alternative approach to SLA proposed by Johnson, namely the “dialogical approach.” The model underlines the view that learning of language and social contexts cannot be separated as they are in a dialogical relationship in which language creates social contexts and social contexts create language.

According to Johnson (2004), traditional SLA models have a linear view of SLA (i.e., input through intake to production). Also, language is viewed only as an abstract system of linguistic rules and structures. As a result, an L2 learner’s goal is considered as attaining
language competence by the mastery of linguistic knowledge (i.e., language learning) that will subsequently lead to successful language performance (i.e., language use). In essence, it presupposes an idealized and homogenous language use context where SLA is seen as a linear mental process. In many cases, the focus of adult-level L2 instruction is primarily on linguistically-based-meaning-making while treating a learner as a passive information processor.

Consequently, Johnson has proposed an alternative approach to SLA based on Vygotsky’s Sociocultural theory (SCT) and Bakhtin’s Literary theory in which language is viewed as speech embedded in a multitude of sociocultural and institutional contexts. In this framework, language and social context are in a dialectical relationship, as are language competence and language performance. Moreover, SLA is regarded as a social issue, and social aspects of meaning-making through interaction are taken into account. Therefore, exposure to various speech genres and discursive practices associated with a variety of social contexts is emphasized. The essence of this new model can be manifested in LBLI where both language learning (i.e., language competence) and language use (i.e., language performance) can naturally and simultaneously occur in interactive practices around literature that can serve not only as a sociocultural resource for language as speech, but also as a source for evoking genuinely meaningful interactions among the learners.

Specifically, according to Johnson’s (2004) practical classroom implications, the
following rationale have been drawn for integrating LBLI into ESL/EFL classrooms:

1) L2 classrooms should reflect the outside world and foster active participation in the target language. Thus, it is vital to bring authentic language texts into the classroom.

2) Language learning and language use should co-occur. Language performance is not the result of language competence, but rather, they complement each other in a dialectical way. LBLI yields collaborative interactions and knowledge building interactions in which both language learning and language use take place simultaneously.

3) Given that language should be viewed not only as an abstract system of linguistic rules and structures but also as speech genres associated with a variety of sociocultural contexts, exposure to various discursive practices and speech genres is essential in the process of language learning. According to Bakhtin, speech genres can include everyday conversations, stories, narratives, letters, academic essays, scientific documents, poems, diaries, and others both orally and in writing. LBLI can facilitate the exposure to various speech genres in various forms.

4) Language should be taught at a discourse or utterance level rather than being limited to the sentence level. Sentence-level learning often confines L2 learners to literal meanings of language. They should experience its full meaning in connection with sociocultural contexts. Language as speech in association with local contexts should be taken into account. LBLI can possibly expand language learning from sentence-level to utterance-level.
5) Language learners should become active participants in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). In contrast to an L2 classroom with a linear view of SLA where a learner is viewed as a passive information processor, LBLI can promote active participation from learners as they are invited to create meaning through interaction with the text, peers, and teachers.

6) The ultimate goal of learning and teaching is to move learners from, in Vygotsky’s terms, an other-regulatory stage to a self-regulatory stage. With appropriate assistance, learners gradually move towards a more independent stage where they can handle performing a task on their own. They should be given opportunities to learn to move to a self-regulatory stage. Hence, at the heart of the learning process should be students. Yet, the reality is that it is teachers or textbooks that hold the control in a classroom. In LBLI, instead of passively receiving answers from teachers or textbooks, students can likely be engaged in active meaning search as they infer, explore, discuss, and share meanings in context. As a result, their voices can be heard and respected, resulting in a progression toward the self-regulatory stage.

2.6  Benefits of LBLI

The remainder of the chapter synthesizes the existing literature on the benefits of LBLI for younger learners from kindergarten to the secondary level as well as adult learners. The present review of the literature reveals that a significant amount of research exists in relation to younger learners, whereas little has been done for adult L2 learners. The following section on
younger learners is divided into four categories in terms of the found benefits of LBLI: linguistic, cultural, academic, and affective benefits, followed by a discussion with reference to LBLI for adult L2 learners. The section closes with a rationale for incorporating literature for/about young people (i.e., children’s or adolescent literature) into adult L2 classes.

2.6.1 Part A: LBLI for Younger Learners

2.6.1.1 Linguistic Benefits

Literature can be a rich language resource. It is filled with vocabulary, various linguistic features, structures, writing conventions and functions while presenting language at its finest in different genres and forms (Povey, 1979).

Given that, L2 instruction with literature has vast potential for language development, allowing L2 learners to experience and become more aware of the ways that language operates to construct meaning in the context of a complete text (Allen, 1989; Beers, 1998; Bushman & Haas, 2001; Coonrod & Hughes, 1994; Ghosn, 1997, 2002; Krashen, 2004; Maclean, 1990; Minkoff, 2006; Moe, 1989; Mlandu & Bester, 1997; Watts, 1999). Allen (1989) affirmed this through his research, which observed a 10-year-old ESL boy. This boy with limited English proficiency struggled comprehending the teacher’s instruction and the textbook due to its density of information and specialized vocabulary. However, when he was engaged with language in a story, he began to take on the role as an active participant. The boy demonstrated a greater
understanding of the textual input and an expressive ability to articulate his reactions to the story when he was asked to reconstruct the story. Allen concluded that this engagement was possible due to the characteristics of narratives such as a universal, predictable story structure (i.e. introduction, development, climax, and conclusion), patterned language, illustrations supporting meanings, and cohesive uninterrupted chunks of language. Because of this, especially for beginners, L2 instruction with literary text can better facilitate more manageable learning in an unfamiliar language than with textbooks that are context-reduced and information-dense. This was further evidenced by Chien (2000), who presented a case study that examined how predictable stories helped EFL kindergarteners in Taiwan. Findings of her study reveal that stories were viewed positively by the learners and motivated them to read more.

In addition to the predictable nature, illustrations presented in picture books are also found to be beneficial for young language learners (Astorga, 1999; Lemmer, 1989; Maclean, 1990; Mlandu & Bester, 1997; Salminen, 1998). L2 learners even at their beginning level start to make connections between texts and illustrations and recognize patterns while listening to stories and looking at the illustrations. The positive impact of exposure to picture books on language development is also recognized for older L2 learners. Mundy and Hadaway (1999) noted that the relatively short text and visual nature of informational picture books, along with their associated writing and discussion activities, assisted secondary ESL students in understanding the concepts.
and building their vocabulary.

A body of research supports that LBLI can be as effective as or even better than traditional L2 courses for language and literacy development. Turnell and Jacobs (1989) reviewed over 14 studies that examined the effects of LBI or the whole language approach and confirmed a promising role that LBI can play in an L2 classroom. Morrow (1992) investigated the impact of LBLI on minority children’s literacy development and found a correlation between regular exposure to literature and the development of sophisticated language structures and vocabulary as well as reading skills. The effects of LBLI were also strongly echoed by Elley and Mangubhai (1983) who compared three different types of reading instruction (i.e., sustained-silent reading, shared reading, and textbook-based reading) at elementary schools in Fiji. Three hundred and eighty students in the experimental group received reading materials (i.e., 250 highly interesting story books in English) and one of two reading instructions (i.e., shared-reading or sustained-silent reading instruction), whereas the control group with 234 students was traditionally taught in a structured English program. The students were tested after eight months and twenty months on reading and listening comprehension respectively, and the results revealed that the two experimental groups with LBLI demonstrated greater progress in reading and listening skills. Another study by Elley (1991) also supports these earlier findings. A total of 3,000 elementary ESL students in Singapore divided into two groups (i.e. traditionally-taught,
audio-lingual English group and LBLI group) were observed for one to three years, and the results revealed that the LBLI group outperformed the other group in overall English language skills, both receptive and expressive skills.

It is important to note that it is not only receptive language skills but also productive skills that LBLI accelerated. Vast multitudes of interactions among teachers, students, and texts are suggested to be responsible for this linguistic benefit in communication and production skills (Akaya, 2005; Krashen, 2004).

2.6.1.2 Benefits in Academic Language

Cummins (1979) noted that it could take five to seven years to acquire academic language, whereas one to two years would be needed for conversational language. Chamot and O’Malley (1994) provided an explanation. They illustrated that high academic language proficiency demands both 1) abilities in academic language functions such as explaining, describing, and classifying; and 2) higher order thinking skills such as analysing, synthesizing, and evaluating. L2 learners face the challenge to perform these language functions and skills in a language they are still unfamiliar with. Swain (as cited in Collier, 1989) stressed that high L2 proficiency requires abilities to use language alone for comprehending, learning, and conceptualizing, and explaining concepts across different subjects. Needless to say, achieving adequate academic language could be a challenging task for many L2 learners.
In response, Mohan (1986) suggested that language and content should be integrated to help struggling L2 learners with both academic literacy and language skills. Similarly, Chamot and O’malley (1994) called for reading in content areas to foster both language and content indispensable for academic language skills; “content area reading is a vehicle for developing a range of academic language skills” (p. 102). Likewise, Ghosn (2002) suggested, “through the use of concrete reference and comprehensible information linked by literary selections, language minority students can develop concepts and content knowledge even at the beginning level” (p. 321). The following explores how LBLI can serve not only as a bridge to connect language and content but also as a springboard for acquiring academic literacy and language skills for young L2 learners.

Research indicates the feasibility of the use of literature (both fiction and non-fiction) to teach both academic language and content knowledge for young L2 learners (Conrad & Hughes, 1994; Mundy, 1996; Neal & Moore, 1991-92; Reid, 2002). Through the integration of language and content, and through a medium of literature selected according to its relevance and students’ reading proficiency, subject matters such as social studies (e.g., Guzzeti, Kowalinski, & McGowan, 1992; Seda, Ligouri, & Seda, 1999), science (e.g., Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002), or history (e.g., Custodio & Sutton (1998; Greenlaw, Shepperson, & Nistler, 1992) can be taught to L2 learners in a more comprehensible and accessible way. Hence, L2 students can develop
both content knowledge and language, thereby facilitating an easier and faster immersion into mainstream classes.

For example, Custodio and Sutton (1998) illustrated a history curriculum for two secondary ESL classes built around literature: a middle school ESL sheltered class incorporating historical fiction such as *Children of the River* by Crew or *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Taylor as sources for teaching both language skills and American history and culture; and a high school class employing a theme-based unit built around adolescent literature such as *New Kids in Town*, a collection of 11 autobiographical accounts of new immigrant teenagers in the States. Students in both classes demonstrated a close engagement with the books introduced and their language development was witnessed. Despite the absence of empirical evidence and voices from the students presented in the study, they affirmed that LBLI could benefit secondary students with limited English proficiency in content knowledge and language.

Non-fiction or informational books also received recognition for their role in an ESL classroom. Freeman (1991) supported the use of informational books to develop students’ expository writing in the sense that it could serve as a framework for helping students understand the process, language, and functions of report writing. In particular, informational books can effectively be adopted to act as a powerful medium to develop science report writing skills, while simultaneously expanding students’ knowledge and vocabulary in science. Mundy and Hadaway
(1999) observed a successful incorporation of informational books into content instruction on the
topic of “weather”. They concluded that: 1) informational books can be a natural connection to
the intimidating content textbook because they use the same type of expository writing as a
textbook; and 2) the colourful and reader-friendly nature of informational books can appeal to L2
learners. In essence, LBLI can present L2 classes with countless moments when academic
language and skills can be indirectly and influentially used, taught, and fostered across various
subjects.

In addition, LBLI can enhance L2 learners’ critical thinking skills, which are another
necessary component of academic success (Erkaya, 2005; Butler, 2006; Cox & Boyd-Batstone,
1997; Howie, 1993). Erkaya (2005), by referring to Bloom’s taxonomy of the cognitive domain
(1956), illustrated that LBI promotes six thinking skills in the cognitive domain (i.e., knowledge,
comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). Around literature as a medium
of all language activities, students will be encouraged to perform different thinking skills.
According to Erkaya (2005), while reading, discussing, and responding to literature, students will
encounter incidental moments in which they need to comprehend, infer, be judgemental,
summarize, analyse, or evaluate. Cox and Boyd-Batstone (1997) echoed that, “exploring
aesthetic readings of children’s literature is an inclusive process that invites diverse
understandings and divergent thinking” (p. 125). Yet, there is a need for more empirical studies to
explore the relationship between LBLI and critical thinking development. However, the feasibility of LBLI for the development of critical thinking for L2 learners appears to be promising.

2.6.1.3 Cultural Benefits

Literature carries with it the strong undercurrent of the time and place in which it was written. (Shanahan, 1997, p. 167)

Learning a new language involves understanding of the target cultures (Kramsch, 1993). However, it is a challenging, multi-layered process to nurture cultural knowledge and awareness which are implicit by their very nature. Commercial language textbooks may not be sufficient for growth in cultural sensitivity. Literature can possibly fill this gap. Literature entails a resource for not only language but also culture and our lives (Kramsch, 1993; Paran, 2006). A piece of literature is created by a wordsmith in a particular culture and at a particular time in a society. It reflects particular social and personal values, people and their lives, and culture. McNicholls (2006) stressed that literature is “a reflection of sociocultural construction of reality.” Rich cultural information is embedded in literature. Therefore, engagement with literature can provide L2 learners with opportunities to implicitly and influentially promote their understanding and awareness of the culture and the people in the target language.

Although, due to the implicit nature of culture, there may be no empirical study that
measured the gains in cultural awareness achieved through LBLI, a clear consensus seems to exist among language educators that L2 learners can benefit culturally from LBLI (e.g., Erkaya, 2005; Henning, 1993; Kramsch, 1993; Paran, 2006). For instance, Maclean (1990) suggested that literature can help young newcomers adapt to a new country in their long process of acculturation. An L2 curriculum with literature, a rich representation of cultural information, may offer endless possibilities for fostering cultural sensitivity.

2.6.1.4 Affective Benefits

As reading and responding to literature foster language and intellect, there are other important benefits that L2 learners obtain. Literature evokes our emotions (Kramsch, 1993; Rosenblatt, 1978). Being fully engaged with reading, readers can be immersed into the world that lies beyond the words. However, the affective side of reading literature is not often acknowledged when we refer to classrooms, particularly to L2 classrooms. The research evidence suggests that engaging in reading experience with this rich resource of language can change students’ attitude toward reading English texts, increase their confidence in handling longer passages, and help them become life-time readers in a language they will have to continue learning.

Reading literature can add pleasure to the language learning process, which is, in turn, likely to affect attitudes toward reading. Indeed, most L2 learners, especially in EFL contexts, do
not seem to consider reading in English as pleasurable. That may partially be because of the ways that literature was used and reading was done. Excerpts taken from literature were decoded in word-by-word interpretations to study grammar rules and structures in preparation for exams. Reading literature in an unfamiliar language was often viewed as boring and simply a difficult academic activity. Such reading experiences were witnessed by a number of scholars (Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 1997; Krashen, 2004; Paran, 2006). However, reading literature can be pleasurable when readers are invited to have transactions with texts as reader response theory advocates.

With emphasis on the transaction between the readers and the texts, LBLI could facilitate such enjoyment in reading that will positively affect readers’ attitudes towards reading in English. This is important because positive attitudes to reading may result in extended reading and language learning outside the classroom. Moreover, it can nurture their confidence in dealing with more complicated text and input. For instance, Cho, Ahn, and Krashen (2005) found that 37 EFL elementary students who participated in a 16-week long reading course demonstrated an increase in their confidence and interest in reading English texts. Also, according to Turnell and Jacobs (1989), language instruction employing literature made a positive impact on L2 learners’ attitudes to reading because they taught not only how to read but also wanting to read: “the affectivity of literature-based whole language programs gives meaning and pleasure to the
process” (p. 477). This positive attitudinal change is likely to lead to more independent reading which can be beneficial for their language acquisition (Cho & Krashen, 2001; Constantino, 1995; Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 1997; Elley, 1991; Kim & Krashen, 2000; Pilgreen & Krashen, 1993).

Furthermore, LBLI can invite personal engagement with language. Despite the fact that language transfers not only information and thoughts but also emotions from one mind to another, L2 instructions tend to focus primarily on the practical side of language: for example, having students memorize communicative dialogues with the sole focus on functional aspects of language to transfer information. However, as Shanahan (1997) asserted, “it is quite clear that language has roots deep in the affective dimension of the human experience” (p. 169). Further, Shanahan argued that SLA theory and teaching should attend to affective sides of language and culture together with practical aspects of them. Hess (2006) also stressed the importance of emotional involvement in the learning process, and agreed that LBLI can easily draw emotions into learning a language.

2.6.2 Part B: LBLI with Adult Learners

2.6.2.1 Feasibility of LBLI for Adult L2 Learners

As previous research revealed that LBLI can benefit younger L2 learners in various respects (i.e., linguistically, culturally, cognitively, academically, and affectively), it can be anticipated that adult ESL learners can also benefit from it (Meloni, 1994; Vandrick, 1997).
However, LBLI has not found its place in the adult L2 learning class context, particularly in private ESL/EFL school settings (James, 2003; Paran, 2006). Although the communicative approach places emphasis on meaning and interaction, adult L2 classes are often dominated by decontextualized cloze exercises, sentence-level literal reading interpretation, superficial information gab activities, decontextualized grammar lessons, and vocabulary memorization (Krashen, 2004; Paran, 2006). Consequently, it often lacks authentic communication for meaning and genuinely meaningful language use. However, a review of the literature indicates that there have been some attempts to implement LBLI for adults in both ESL and EFL contexts. The following illustrates those alternative, innovative instructional attempts in order to suggest research implications to fill any existing gap in the literature.


In Cho and Krashen’s study (2001), Korean teachers of EFL in a short-term teacher training program demonstrated significant changes in their attitudes toward reading in English
after a single self-selected reading experience with more than 400 children’s books. Among the 86 teachers, over 95% indicated in the questionnaire and post-activity journal that they found the activity enjoyable. Moreover, they expressed motivation to read more in English and to use recreational English reading in their own classes for their students because they believed that it would help increase both interest and confidence in English reading. Although the study did not present long-term impacts of such reading experiences, the results of the study support the idea that providing interesting and comprehensible reading materials could create positive reading experiences for adults.

Butler (2006) conducted a case study of a language program that he implemented at the University of North West in South Africa for first-year university students. The program called ‘English 100’ was the combination of language and literature. Eighty-six percent of the sample among a total of 114 students supported the program in the questionnaire, in which they stated that their grammar, vocabulary, and general language skills were improved through the program. Although empirical evidence on the students’ improvement in language was not presented, the students’ positive reaction to the program was a clear indication that the integration of language and literature can “complement and contribute to the acquisition of practical language skills” (p. 24) for adult learners.

Furthermore, Hess (2006) chronicled how L2 instruction with literature inspired adult
ESL learners to actively participate in their language learning process. A thorough description of her adult ESL reading class at a university in the U.S provided her unique approach, namely, ‘the parallel life approach’, using a short story, *Eveline*, by James Joyce. Through this approach, students were invited to move from their lives to the life of the text, and back to their lives by responding orally and in writing to the story through various language activities involving all four language skills. Both intensive and extensive reading were demanded to attend to both the content and language components. However, in spite of its vivid description of the class, the study did not present students’ reactions to the course so as to help understand the students’ perceptions about their learning experiences.

Cho and Krashen (1994) examined how reading light literature that is interesting and comprehensible for adult ESL learners could benefit them linguistically and how they responded to such reading experiences. Four ESL immigrants were individually asked to read for pleasure *The Sweet Valley High* series over a few months. This series is written for grade two to grade six level students. According to the vocabulary test at the end, a significant gain of vocabulary was witnessed. Moreover, all participants reported in their journals that they felt more competent and confident in their speaking and listening skills as a result of exposure to colloquial language embedded in the stories. Also, it is important to note that there was a high level of enjoyment involved in the English text reading process on the part of all four participants. This study
implies the feasibility of using light literature, including children’s books, as an engaging and comprehensible language source to help even adult learners with their language development.

Similarly, McGraw and Tomlinson (1997) examined whether the collection of children’s and adolescent literature with the theme of children and war could successfully be used as learning material in the adult EFL classes in France. They also investigated how willingly these mature, college-level adults would accept and actively respond to literature written about and for young readers. Their study presents a compelling result. The students were enthusiastically engaged with the books and were highly motivated to respond to the literature through writing and group oral debates. Similar findings were evidenced by Casey and Williams (2001), who concluded from their study looking at the adult ESL book club that reading literature for pleasure generates genuine group discussions in which the readers have low anxiety to speak in an unfamiliar language and use new vocabulary that they have learned from the book. Furthermore, the study informs us that adults can also be deeply engaged with children’s books if the story is related to them.

Paran (2006) introduced a few studies in his edited collection of articles that shed light on the feasibility of adding literature, particularly children’s literature, to a language teacher education program (e.g., Gordon, Zaleski, & Goodman; McNicholls; Martin). McNicholls’s study (2006), in particular, explained how children’s literature served not only as learning
material for adult non-native English teacher trainees to improve their English abilities but also as teaching material for them to adopt into their future primary-level EFL classes. Teacher trainees in McNicholl’s study claimed their support of the role of literature in language learning and teaching in the questionnaire: 8.2 out of 10 on the question about the improvement in fluency in reading and listening; 8.4 out of 10 on whether the course input was a stimulus for their spoken and written English; and 8.9 out of 10 in response to the question on the role of children’s literature in teaching EFL at a primary level.

A quantitative experimental study about the effects of LBLI for adult learners in Canada was undertaken by James (2003). This study deserves attention as it is the only study in the research literature that investigated an ESL class using LBLI for adults in a private ESL school setting. In his study, ESL acquisition rates of two eight-week ESL intermediate classes were compared: 1) a class with literature in a variety of media and genre (an experimental group) and 2) a class of a standard content-reduced, grammar-based textbook approach (a control group). The findings reveal that students in both groups attained approximately 1% improvement in language skills per 1,000 minute of instruction. The results indicate that content-enriched language instruction using literature can also be as effective as the current communicative grammar-based instruction in achieving an improvement in language proficiency according to standardized English tests. In other words, LBLI could be another option for L2 learning. In
addition to its effects on ESL acquisition rates, there were other advantages that LBLI offered. They include: 1) a high rate of attendance and enthusiasm of the students in the experimental group observed by the third person observer implied a higher level of engagement and positive experience with the instruction; 2) the experimental group made high improvements on average in communicative competence among all the students, which revealed that almost all individuals in the experimental group played as more active participants in their learning process; 3) culturally informed and stylistic sides of language were experienced by the experimental group through engagement with literature. However, a bias toward the course with LBLI could possibly exist since the LBLI class was the researcher’s own class. Also, the students’ voices about the instruction were missing. With their voices, the study could have been more convincing.

2.6.2.2 Children’s Literature for Adult L2 Learners

Despite the high literacy and language skills in their L1, it is often observed that adults at a beginning and/or intermediate ESL proficiency level have difficulties in comprehending literature written for adults in English. This could be due to its inherent characteristics such as complex plots or text structures, technical vocabulary, themes and issues demanding high cognitive skills, and deeply embedded cultural metaphor (Smallwood, 1992). Such incomprehensible reading experience may result in feelings of being overwhelmed and intimidation in their language learning process. It could inhibit acquiring a new language rather
than fostering it. The pleasure of reading and learning may not occur without comprehension, and for this reason, reading texts should be comprehensible (Krashen, 1985, 2004).

In comparison, literature for young people can be more accessible and comprehensible for all language levels (Silverman, 1990; Smallwood, 1992, 1998) as it can accommodate all language levels from beginners to advanced and a wide range of readers.

The idea of comprehensible input theory (Krashen, 1985) and zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) strengthen the claim about the suitability of such literature for adult L2 classes. In his theory, Krashen argued that SLA takes place when receiving comprehensible input that is a little beyond the learner’s current level of competence. In the learning process, the learner moves from ‘I’ (i.e., the current level) to ‘I + 1’ (the next level) by understanding messages that contain this ‘I + 1.’ Along with comprehensible input, Krashen proposed another condition for SLA: the low affective filter, which is defined as “a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition” (Krashen, 1985, p. 2). He suggested that the affective filter is best lowered when the focus is on message and meaning. In other words, when we read for meaning, speak for meaning, and are engaged in a meaningful and purposeful context, we are so absorbed in meaning that our affective filter will be naturally lowered. In this respect, literature for young people can serve as a resource of language that provides a range of comprehensible input for adult ESL learners with
the low affective filter. Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) indicated that the learner consumes the new
information through social interaction and scaffolding when it is within the learner’s
developmental level. Literature for adults in many cases demands a far higher level that most
intermediate proficient adult learners may not possess, which will likely result in less
comprehensible input and little or less development. It should be noted that exposure to language
input is vital for language development, but if the exposure does not entail comprehensible input,
then the effect of the exposure will not be as influential as it could be (Krashen, 1985).
Meaningful, contextualized, and comprehensible exposure is dispensable yet not sufficient for
SLA. In other words, the quantity of exposure to language is important, but the quality of it is
more responsible for the language learners’ success in the process of language development.
Quality input should contain ‘I + 1’ which is not incomprehensible or far too complex in
structure and meaning, and should also have the appropriate level of vocabulary. Given that,
literature for/about young people featuring rich authentic language sources presented in a wide
range of comprehensible format and level (Kindergarten to G12 level) could facilitate language
learning for adult ESL learners, particularly at a beginner or intermediate level.

2.7 Summary

Cox and Boyd-Batstone (1997) addressed the importance of student’s voice in their L2
process. They argued that “in both the literal and figurative sense, student’s voice is the goal in
L2 instruction” (P. 41). We speak and write in language to voice ourselves, drawing on our feelings, thoughts, and experiences. However, L2 learners, especially adult learners, ironically often lose their voices in the L2 development process. Figuratively and literally, we see many cases where the teacher or the textbook created by a commercial publisher have stronger voices in the language class as students become passive learners trying to get an answer from them. LBLI can create an environment which invites students to speak up and where their voices are heard, which will lead them to gain both confidence and competence in learning a language.

2.8 Research Implications

There is a scarcity of research evidence with regard to LBLI for adult L2 learners. However, as presented in this paper, there exists research evidence that does show important findings that L2 learning through instruction employing literature, including children’s or adolescent literature, can be effective for adult L2 learners. For example, there are studies on reading literature and increasing vocabulary (e.g., Casey & Williams, 1994; Cho & Krashen, 1994); reading skill development and LBLI (e.g., Gorsuch, 2004; Martino & Block, 1992; Meloni, 1994; Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass, 2004); and L2 learning with literature and students’ attitudes to instruction with literature for young people (e.g., Cho & Krashen, 2001; Mcgraw & Tomlinson, 1997), to name a few. The review of the existing literature informs us that, in comparison to research pertaining to younger learners, more research examining LBLI in the
context of adult ESL learning is needed. Furthermore, much of the research is limited to first-year university English courses or literature major courses (e.g., Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass, Gorsuch, 2004; Butler, 2006; Yuksel, 2009), ESL/EFL teacher education courses (McNicholl, 2006), and individual ESL learners (e.g., Cho & Krashen, 1994). Little attention has been given to private adult ESL/EFL classes, although millions of adult learners in both the ESL and EFL contexts rely on these private language school settings. Based on this review, only a few studies (e.g., Hess, 2006; James, 2003; Kim, 2004) seem to exist in relation to adult L2 classrooms with LBLI at a private language institute. Specifically, Kim’s study (2004) explored the nature of interaction during literary discussions among adult ESL learners in groups in an ESL classroom with LBLI. The other two studies were conducted in the researchers’ own classes with greater emphasis on teachers’ perspectives and experiences, but not on students’ perceptions and their learning experiences. Thus, more empirical studies are called for to explore both the nature of teaching practices of LBLI in an adult L2 classroom at a private language school setting and students’ reactions to and their learning experiences with LBLI. In other words, more documentation of what is happening in an adult L2 classroom with LBLI particularly at a private institute setting is required. Such documentation can contribute to addressing the ultimate question of how literary texts can and should be used for L2 development (Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Paran, 2006; Yuksel, 2009). In particular, after reviewing research on LBLI in language classrooms in his book
*Literature in Language Teaching and Learning*, Paran (2006) called for more descriptive research that would look into various L2 classrooms (i.e., ESL, EFL, private, public, young learners, adults, etc) with LBLI. Thus, it is imperative to investigate how and how much literature is being used particularly in an adult ESL classroom in a private language school setting and how LBLI affects students and is viewed by them in their learning process. The present study, therefore, aims to explore the following research questions:

1) What is the nature of teaching practices of literature-based L2 instruction in an adult ESL classroom at a private language institute?

2) What are the students’ learning experiences with such instruction?
Chapter 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

This study used a qualitative descriptive case study research method in an effort to achieve a rigorous documentation of an adult ESL classroom with literature-based second language (L2) instruction (LBLI). The purpose of the study was to investigate the feasibility of such instruction in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom with adult learners and how literary texts are being and can be used in L2 classrooms for the development of an L2. By employing multiple data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, weekly class observations, and written documents, the study aimed to answer the following research questions:

(A) What is the nature of teaching practices of literature-based L2 instruction in an adult ESL classroom at a private language institute?

(B) What are the students’ learning experiences with such instruction?

This chapter addresses the methodological issues germane to the present study to answer these two research questions. First, the rationale for adopting a qualitative descriptive case study approach is discussed. Next, the descriptions of the research site, the class, and the participants follow. The chapter ends by discussing data collection and data analysis procedures.
3.2 Rationale for the Research Methodology

The study used a qualitative approach in the methodology of a case study with aims to provide a holistic description and explanation of the case (Merriam, 1998), which is an adult ESL classroom with LBLI at a private language institute in North America. Specifically, a descriptive case study was employed. According to Merriam (1998), a descriptive case study can be effective when investigating innovative practices or a phenomenon of education where little research has been done. In this sense, a descriptive case study approach was suitable for the present study. That is because of the scarcity of empirical studies on L2 instruction incorporating literature, authentic texts, as a key teaching material in adult ESL classrooms, particularly in private language school settings. Such a scarcity calls for further investigation to examine the feasibility of the implementation of LBLI in L2 learning. Furthermore, more research is needed to document “how” literature is and should be used (Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Donato & Brooks, 2004; Gilroy & Parkinson, 1997; Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002; Hall, 2005; Hanauer, 2001; Kim, 2004; Lazar, 1992; Paran, 2006). A descriptive case study contributes to future studies by presenting the information to form the basis of a database on the topic of LBLI with adult L2 learners (Hall, 2005: Paran, 2006).

In addition, a qualitative approach was taken since generalization was not a fundamental purpose of the study. Hypothesis testing was not the aim of this study. Instead, insight, discovery,
and interpretation with regard to LBLI for adult ESL learners were at the heart of the study (Merriam, 1998).

According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), a case study is defined as “The in-depth study of one or more instances of a phenomenon in its real life context that reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (p. 447). In this respect, the present study aimed to “uncover the interaction of significant factors and characteristics of the phenomenon” (Merriam, 1998, p. 29) of LBLI, by 1) attaining contextual understanding of the culture of an example of the phenomenon, which was a particular adult ESL classroom employing LBLI and by 2) gaining insights into the insiders’ point of view (i.e., the perspectives of the students and the instructor in the classroom) and the process of their construction of meaning. According to Merriam (1998), a qualitative case study is, by its nature, “particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic” (p. 29). The present study attempted to serve these foundational reasons of the qualitative case study. The study focuses on a case of an adult ESL course that reveals a particular phenomenon of LBLI (i.e., particularistic) to provide a “thick rich description” of the course (i.e., descriptive), that will lead to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon for both the researcher and the readers (i.e., heuristic).

Stake (2003) defined two types of case study such as: (1) the intrinsic case study (i.e. focuses on the particularity or intrinsic nature of one particular case by producing a “thick
description”) and (2) the instrumental case study (i.e. it explains broader issues by gaining insights of a more generalized nature in using the case). However, Winston (2006) points out that these two types of case study are not independent and lots of case study research has a combination of these two characteristics. Similarly, the present study attempted to understand the particularity and complexities of the class as a single case while also seeking to explain broader issues of a more generalized nature of the case by gaining insights. Moreover, another reason for employing a case study method was that, since this study explores how and why literature is used in the class and how students respond to such instruction, case study methodology was effective to answer these “How” and “Why” questions, for its inherent characteristics, that are: (1) explanatory, (2) descriptive, and (3) exploratory (Yin, 2003; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Another aim of this descriptive case study was to investigate the process of the course. Sandra (cited in Merriam, 1998) advocated, “Case studies help us to understand processes of events, projects and programs and to discover context characteristics that will shed light on an issue or object” (p. 33).

After all, Winston (2006) stated that the intention of a case study is to deepen our understanding by concentrating on depth rather than breadth. In line with this claim, case study methodology was chosen because the underlying purpose of this study was not to make a generalization by focusing on breadth, but rather fundamentally to attain a rich understanding of L2 teaching practices with the use of literature by examining a particular ESL classroom with
adult learners in North America.

3.3 Sampling

3.3.1 Sampling Procedure

The case investigated in this study was an ESL class for adults with LBLI. The class was selected through purposeful sampling (Bryman, 2004; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). This purposeful sampling was chosen in an effort to select “the sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61) for discovering and gaining deeper insights about the phenomenon.

The selection of the research site was based on the criteria that 1) it should be an ESL private school for adults and 2) the school should have a class with a curriculum centered on literature. In addition to these criteria, two other factors came into play in the selection of a research site. They included: 1) typicality (i.e., the site has a class that reflects a typical instance of the phenomenon of LBLI) and 2) convenience (i.e., the site is accessible, available, research-friendly, and conveniently located). Based on the criteria, a private ESL institute in Western Canada was selected. For gaining entry into the site, an initial contact letter (See Appendix A) asking for permission to conduct the study was sent via e-mail to the academic director of the institute. Upon successful entry, with assistance from the director, an announcement about the study was made to the teachers at the institute to call for voluntary participation from an instructor. Necessary explanations and clarifications about the study were provided to all
instructors who showed interest via e-mail and through an oral presentation at the institute. Finally, an instructor agreed to participate in the study. In initial contact with the instructor and students, the researcher made attempts to be presented as trustful and professional, yet approachable and friendly. Such attempts were important in order to evoke more cooperative attitudes from the participants for the success of the research (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

Within the case of the class, interview participation was called for and a total of three students were further selected. These voluntary sample participants were expected to provide further insights and perceptions of the participants with regard to their learning experiences with the instruction. They were asked to have interviews to reflect on their learning experiences in the course. Their writing assignments for the course were also copied and gathered for further analysis. The process of recruiting interview participants was carried out in the first week of the term with an instructor’s introduction to the study after the instructor’s agreement on the study through the human consent form (See Appendix B). With permission by the instructor, the researcher further explained the nature and goals of the study and presented the human consent forms (See Appendix C and D) that would ensure protection of participants’ privacy and rights.

3.3.2 Research Site

The course under study was an advanced-level adult ESL course that ran for 12 weeks from January 2008 to March 2008. The course is part of the intensive English language program
offered at a well-established private language institute located in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The program was composed of two streams of courses: academic and non-academic courses. Each stream had six proficiency levels (i.e., low beginner to high advanced) and offered various types of courses with a focus on different language skills and content.

Over 300 international adult students on average enrolled in this three-month-long intensive English program in each term. The majority of the student population at the institute participated in the program to improve general English language skills while learning a new culture in a foreign country. Among those, some students, especially in academic courses, intended to pursue further studies at a university level in an English speaking institute. Most of the students were international students in their 20’s and 30’s. All the courses in the program enrolled a maximum of 16 students.

3.3.3 Participants

3.3.3.1 The Class

The class is one of two high advanced reading courses (i.e., academic and non-academic) in the intensive ESL program at the institute. The fundamental difference between these two streams of reading courses lies in the types of reading material. One uses mainly academic articles and the other non-academic, literary texts such as short stories, novels, and poems. The class under study was an advanced-level non-academic reading course. The course aimed at
refining reading skills and exploring nuances of advanced vocabulary. In addition, reading various literary works for critical interpretation was another major teaching aim. Overall, the course was composed of three major learning components, including: reading and exploring literary texts, experiencing and building language through literary texts, and appreciation of literature (See Appendix K for specific course objectives).

Each class ran for 100 minutes four days a week. While the major focus of the instruction was on the development of reading skills, the class integrated all four language skills. They had to read, talk, and respond orally and in writing to their readings throughout the course.

3.3.3.2 The Students

The class was composed of 16 adult learners. At the time of research, six students had just graduated from high school and the rest were college students or had obtained a bachelor’s degree. The majority of the students were in their late teens or early 20’s. Their nationality varied: seven Chinese, four Koreans, two Mexicans, one French-Canadian, one Japanese, and one Thai. Most of them had less than or just a little over one year of residency in an English-speaking country. The students’ reading proficiency was highly advanced. However, each individual possessed different levels in speaking and writing skills: some were more fluent than others. A few desired to enter a university in North America while others planned to stay for a short-term (6 to 12 months) for the purpose of the enhancement of their English abilities for a
better career opportunity as well as overseas experience.

According to the pre-study e-mail questionnaire, many of them were found to be reluctant readers and also did not have extensive reading experiences in either their first language (L1) or L2. Six out of 15 stated that they did not even favour reading in L1. Among those who read in L1, novels and newspapers were found to be the most common genres, while magazine, essays, academic articles were also mentioned. Similarly, eight respondents noted that they read little or no texts in English. For those who read in English, novels and newspapers were chosen as their favorite genres.

3.3.3.3 The Teacher

The teacher of this course possessed over 35 years of teaching experience in ESL and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). She began her teaching career in an EFL context in the 1970’s when language teaching materials were relatively scarce. In the interview, she indicated that these conditions attributed to shaping her beliefs in teaching to students’ needs as she had to develop most of her own teaching materials.

We didn’t have materials available. So we developed the philosophy of really teaching to students’ needs and developing our own materials. And I still have that a lot. (Teacher, first interview, January 8, 2008)

She emphasized the significance of student-centeredness in a language classroom, defining it not just as getting students to work in pairs and groups on a task, but more importantly,
as designing the course content to students’ needs and levels. She said that she had retained this belief throughout her teaching career and continued to accomplish her beliefs in this course.

It was her second term to teach this particular course after a successful term with a different group of students in the previous year. She advocated some benefits of L2 instruction with literary texts throughout the term and explained her beliefs in the first interview:

In an ESL class the problem we are always facing is how to bring the real world to our class. It’s an artificial class… But you get a story and the story is about people if it is well written. We can get situations that students can identify with. And it can be a stimulus. It can give them information. (Teacher, first interview, January 8, 2008)

By bringing literature into the class, she believed that students could get one step closer to more real and authentic language experiences. In addition, she said that she tried to place much emphasis on fostering students’ independence as language users, especially for advanced level students. She stressed that students with higher proficiency have to be prepared to perform as language users outside the class and are capable of this. Thus, it was her projection that the course with these advanced-level students would need to increasingly involve more of students’ independent learning throughout the term.

3.4 Data Sources

Data source triangulation was attempted by employing multiple sources of data such as weekly observations, field notes, two e-mail questionnaires to the whole class, a total of two
face-to-face interviews with three selected students, and written documents (i.e. course syllabus, class handouts, and writing assignments of the three selected students being interviewed). As Bryman (2004) and Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) argue, the use of multiple sources of data provided a comprehensive perspective and holistic insights into both the potentials and the challenges of L2 instruction using literature as a context for L2 learning.

3.4.1 Observation

The class was observed twice a week on a regular basis over 12 weeks and digitally audio-taped. Primarily, observation was conducted in an attempt to obtain a “first-hand account of the phenomenon of interest” (Merriam, 1998, p. 94) and complement a second-hand account of the phenomenon drawn from other sources of data used in the study such as interviews and written documents. According to Merriam (1998), observation is undertaken for the reasons including: 1) to observe routines and understand the context; 2) to “substantiate the findings” (p. 95); 3) to “provide specific instances and behaviours that can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews” (p. 95).

The researcher took the position as an observer-as-participant (Gold, 1958). He attempted to minimize the effects due to the researcher’s presence in the class by building a trusting relationship with the participants while keeping the position primarily as an observer. During observation, the researcher took a seat at the back of the classroom in one corner.
However, in the event when the researcher’s participation was called for and it did not appear to interfere with a natural flow of the lesson, he was allowed to participate in some of the class activities (e.g. group discussion or assisting the instructor in operating a class activity).

Observation concentrated on the learning environment, activities, and interactions among the teacher and the students. Field notes were taken during and right after each class. Also, the researcher took further field notes by listening to the recordings of the classes. Field notes recorded an overall picture of what was happening during the class by describing class activities, atmosphere, some significant oral interaction among the teacher and the students, any recurrent themes of the classes, and the minutes of each activity. After all, field notes were carried out with the desire that such documents would enable more of an in-depth, thick, and richer description of the phenomena under study.

3.4.2 E-mail Questionnaires

All students who consented to participate in the study were required to respond to two e-mail questionnaires i.e., pre-study and post-study questionnaire (see Appendix E and F). The students were requested to e-mail back with their response to the researcher within several days after they received each questionnaire. The pre-study structured questionnaire seeking biographical information and personal language learning history was carried out during the first week of the term. Similarly, upon completion of the course, the post-study questionnaire was e-
mailed out to all participating students asking for their reflections on the course and their learning experiences in the course.

### 3.4.3 Interviews

A total of two interviews with each of the three selected students were conducted to grasp an in-depth understanding of the participants’ learning experiences, learning progress, and reactions to the course (See Appendix G and H). As Patton (cited in Merriam, 1998) asserted, this interview method is expected to allow the researcher to “enter into the other person’s perspective” (p. 71).

Selected participants met with the researcher individually for a 30-minute session interview for a total of two times: a mid-term interview in the sixth week of the term and a post-term interview in the last week of the term. Interviews were conducted in a quiet, private place and time for interviews was scheduled at each participant’s convenience. The interviews were semi-structured in format. Thus, the order and the wording of the questions were flexible, although interviews were based on a list of topics in the interview guiding question sheet. This enabled the researcher to respond to the emerging perspectives and ideas of the respondents at hand (Merriam, 1998).

In addition, the teacher of the course was interviewed in a similar format for a 50-minute interview session for a total of two times: 1) a pre-study interview (See Appendix I) before the
term to ask about her belief in teaching and learning L2, personal history as a language teacher, and the teaching goals, and 2) a post-study interview (See Appendix J) after the term primarily to reflect on the course by highlighting successes and challenges of the course. Post interview notes were taken immediately after each interview, and the interviews were transcribed within one or two days, which allowed the researcher to create “immediate familiarity with data” (Merriam, 1998, p. 87).

3.4.4 Written Documents

Other data was collected through participants’ writing assignments and a course outline, based on the assumption that these written documents might include and reflect the participants’ perspectives and insights (Merriam, 1998; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Upon approval by the three selected interview participants through the human consent form and agreement by the teacher on the researcher’s access to their writing assignments, the three participants’ writing assignments were gathered monthly, copied, and kept for further analysis. Additionally, any course handouts and course syllabus were also gathered upon permission from the teacher to enrich the researcher’s understanding of practices in the classroom.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis took place simultaneously in light of the emergent and dynamic nature of the qualitative research (Bryman, 2004; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). In
particular, interpretational analysis (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007) was adopted, through which case study data is examined closely in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns that can be used to explain and describe the population and the phenomenon being studied.

Interview transcripts, written documents, and questionnaires were analysed for the participants’ perspectives. On the other hand, field notes from the observations were examined to seek a first hand account of the nature of the classroom culture. These field notes provided a richer description of the teaching practices in the class while they also served to clarify and/or verify some of the participants’ perspectives. Overall, the entire course of the data analysis focused on coding and highlighting any recurrent themes related to the nature of the classroom practices, students’ learning process, and their responses and attitudes toward language instruction using literature.

As Leed (cited in Merriam, 1998) suggested, data were managed in three phases: 1) “data preparation” (i.e. entering data to prepare a data base), 2) “data identification: (i.e. placing data into “analytically meaningful and easily locatable segments”), and 3) “data manipulation” (i.e. searching for, categorizing, retrieving, and reorganizing data). Recurring patterns out of “case study database” (Yin, 1994) were searched for and grouped to construct categories of recurrent themes. The researcher had to make numerous visits to the database of the study including field notes, transcripts of the interviews with the three students and the teacher, two questionnaires,
and written documents (e.g., reading materials, course syllabus, writing assignments) to explore
the recurrent themes pertaining to the nature of teaching practices of LBLI in this particular class
and the students’ learning experiences. Some quantitative findings of the study gathered through
the post-study questionnaire were also searched and analysed. These quantitative findings were
particularly related to students’ feedback on the course and their reading experiences: for
example, how did students rate the course? And what were their most and least favorite reading
texts?, etc. Together with these quantitative results, students’ reflections on their learning
experiences gathered through the questionnaires and interviews were carefully reviewed over a
number of times in order to suggest pedagogical implications for L2 practitioners. The
construction of categories was a reflective process to understand “behaviours, issues, and
context” with respect to the case: an adult ESL class with LBLI.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

To increase the authenticity and trustworthiness of the findings, a description of how data
were gathered was provided in sufficient detail (Firestone, 1987). Moreover, to ensure validity
and reliability, the entire process of the research was reviewed and verified ethically prior to data
collection, and complied with ethics guidelines throughout the research: for example, the
informed consent form was signed by the participants and the participation was entirely voluntary.
In addition, the internal validity, reliability, and external validity were enhanced through the
following strategies suggested by Merriam (1998):

3.6.1 Internal Validity

Various types of strategies guided the entire process of the study to ensure that the findings capture what was true in reality. First, multiple data source triangulation was attempted: observation, interviews, questionnaire, and written documents. Secondly, an attempt was made to clarify the researcher biases on the topic by explaining the theoretical orientation and assumptions of the researcher at the outset of the study.

3.6.2 Reliability

As the findings of qualitative case study research cannot be replicated due to the particularistic nature of each phenomenon, reliability can be strengthened by considering the extent to which the results are consistent with data gathered (Merriam, 1998). Throughout the entire process of the study, the researcher made every effort to follow three strategies to enhance reliability suggested by Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), including: 1) explaining [the] theoretical background, the researcher’s position, study participants and the sampling procedure, the sociocultural context of the case; 2) triangulating data collection method; and 3) describing in detail the procedure of data collection and analysis and how conclusions were drawn.

3.6.3 External Validity (Generalizability)

As opposed to quantitative research where generalizability of the findings is desired, a
qualitative case study does not intend to arrive at findings that can be applied across all other cases and situations. Given the particularity and the complex context of a case, “reader/user generalizability” (Wilson, cited in Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007) or “user generalization” (Merriam, 1998) can be employed, which reflects the “responsibility of each reader or user of case study research to determine the applicability of the findings in their own situation” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 477). Thus, it is essential to present a rich thick description: details of the context of the case as well as of the procedures of data collection and analysis to an extent that readers or users of case study research can determine whether the findings are relevant and applicable to their situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher attempted to increase the user generalizability through a rich thick description, so that the results of this study in relation to LBLI and L2 learning could be valid and useful to other researchers and practitioners.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has addressed the research methodological issues pertaining to the present study. After the rationale for employing a qualitative descriptive case study approach was provided, the chapter described the research site, the class, and the participants (i.e., the instructor and students). The remainder of the chapter discussed data collection procedures as well as the data sources used in the study (i.e., semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, class observations, and written documents). Lastly, the chapter ended by discussing the approach taken
to data analysis and the issues related to reliability and validity. The next chapter presents the
detailed overview of this 12-week-long course under investigation to help readers with their
understanding of the case, followed by the findings of the study in response to the research
questions.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will revisit the Second Language (L2) class under study to discuss and respond to the two research questions that guided this study: 1) What is the nature of teaching practices of literature-based L2 instruction (LBLI) in an adult ESL classroom at a private language institute?; and 2) What are the students’ learning experiences with such instruction?

In response to the questions, this section documents the class under study. The chapter begins with a description of text materials used in this class, followed by an overview of the 12-week-long course in a thick description. Then, the following section illustrates categories of recurrent themes that have emerged from the data sources in describing and synthesizing the teaching/learning practices in the class. The teacher’s and students’ comments are also presented throughout the discussion to reflect participants’ perspectives and perceptions. The remainder of the chapter reports on the both qualitative and quantitative findings of the post-study questionnaire with regard to students’ reflections on their learning experiences with the instruction.

4.2 Course Material

The texts of the class under study came from two main sources: 1) the course textbook
selected by the school and 2) short stories and a novel selected by the teacher. First, the textbook is a collection of short stories and poems entitled *Styles and Substances*. This is a commercial ESL textbook tailored for advanced ESL learners. It encompasses vocabulary exercises, discussion questions, and a writing component to instruct how to write a literary essay. The texts in the book represent the 19th to 21st centuries.

The other major source was from the teacher’s own selection of short stories, poems, newspaper articles, and a book review. Her choice was based on her previous teaching experiences. In other words, she tried to select what had worked for other students in her previous teaching. Another selection criterion was appropriateness and relevance. In particular, she emphasized the length and the themes of the text. She mentioned that the text should be long enough, but manageable, and also the topic of the story needs to be something these young readers can identify with (e.g., stories about relationships in families, with friends, and in society).

Also, she added a novel, *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes, which is a best seller read by both adolescents and adults in North America. It is frequently on the BC Education Ministry recommended reading list for secondary students. Over the period of twelve weeks, the class read a total of 30 pieces of literature, including 17 short stories, 9 poems, 2 newspaper articles, 1 drama, and 1 novel. The table below lists the readings used in the course.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Just Good Friends</td>
<td>Jeffrey Archer</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Tell-Tale Heart</td>
<td>Edgar Allan Poe</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud</td>
<td>William Wordsworth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Lady or the Tiger</td>
<td>Frank Stockton</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The New Food</td>
<td>Stephen Leacock</td>
<td>SS</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>Margaret Atwood</td>
<td>SS</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Old Habits Die Hard</td>
<td>Makeda Silvera</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hills Like White Elephants</td>
<td>Ernest Hemingway</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Luncheon</td>
<td>W. S. Maugham</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fooling Big Brothers Is Easier than Advertised</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Europe Ponders the Meaning of Life</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Penny in the Dust</td>
<td>Ernest Buckler</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>All the Years of Her Life</td>
<td>Morley Callaghan</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge</td>
<td>Ambrose Bierce</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Poems (Poetry presentation)</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>P</td>
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<td>7</td>
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### 4.3 The Course at a Glance

The course ran for 12 weeks from January to March in 2008. The following section chronicles a weekly sketch of the course during the period. The table below summarizes an overview of the course content.
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Week 1

The term began on Wednesday after proficiency assessment and orientation, which took place over the first two days of the week. An introduction to the course was made. In an attempt to set a direction for the course, the first two classes were conducted to demonstrate the focus of the instruction: discussing the reading in groups, practicing inferencing during discussion, the significance of active vocabulary learning, and understanding of denotation and connotation of words.

Students read a short story entitled *Just Good Friends*, and discussed the story in groups based on teacher-prepared inferencing questions after each divided section of the story. This provided the teacher with opportunities to diagnose how capable students were of handling group discussions in the target language. A writing assignment followed the class discussion for the teacher to obtain students’ writing samples.

The remainder of the class focused on tips on vocabulary study as well as denotation and connotation. The teacher emphasized the significance of ‘active vocabulary’, in which an ability to use a word is stressed, as opposed to ‘passive vocabulary’, which is confined to recognizing words and understanding their meaning. In other words, the emphasis was on understanding full aspects of words, including form, grammatical patterns, meaning in context, collocation, frequency, and appropriateness, to name a few. Additionally, students’ attention was brought to
differences between denotation and connotation in order to inform them that it is essential to understand both of them to get the complete meaning of the text. After an explanation from the teacher, the students worked on exercises on connotation and denotation.

**Week 2**

The class discussed the role of context clues and figurative language. These were emphasized as this class was for advanced-level students who were expected to develop an ability to infer the meaning of words from context. This was an attempt to increase students’ awareness about a close link between language and context. An exercise on context clues in a newspaper article entitled *Europe Ponders* and one on figurative language were assigned for practice.

The teacher instructed on response journals, a major component of the course assignments. The students were told to submit five entries of response journals on their chosen literary pieces throughout the course. A sample journal was provided for reference. The teacher encouraged students not to limit their journal to a summary, but to extend it to a personal response to the reading, by making reference to the text and drawing upon their personal experiences.

A group discussion was carried out on the story from the textbook entitled *The Tell-Tale Heart*. The discussion was based on a list of questions in the textbook. The discussion lasted over
an hour so that each group had ample time for discussion. The discussion ended with a vocabulary review exercise where paraphrasing sentences containing new vocabulary was required. It offered the students an opportunity to foster their understanding of the meaning and function of words in context and to promote paraphrasing skills needed for academic writing. Additionally, they read and discussed a poem called *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* in the course textbook.

**Week 3**

The teacher informed students of a novel presentation project commencing in week seven. The novel chosen for the project was *Flowers for Algernon*. Students were asked to form a group of four for the project in which each group member would be in charge of a quarter of the novel and lead a group discussion each week over the period of four weeks. A copy of the 311-page-long novel was distributed to each individual.

Noticing the students’ concerned look regarding the length of the novel written in the target language, the teacher made an attempt to encourage them by saying the following: “This book was done in one session by my intermediate-level reading class, so you are a very good class, so don’t be afraid of this book. The 600-level class did it in the summer and they did it really well and had a good time” (Class, January 2008). The teacher continued by briefly explaining about the protagonist in the book, Charlie, who has a less developed mental ability.
She pointed out that the story was written in the first person and that the character’s cognitive challenge was reflected in the form of errors in spelling and punctuation, particularly in the beginning of the story before he underwent brain surgery. For example, the word “tight” is spelled “tite.” This interested these ESL students as they could empathize with Charlie’s linguistic challenges. Further, to enhance students’ interest, the teacher mentioned that the book had been a best-seller and read by both adults and young adults:

This book is still very popular both for adults and adolescents. One reason I chose this book is that it is often used by high school students or young adults. They would be reading something like this. That’s about your level of English. You want to be at the level where you can be ready to do a university program, so this book will be suitable for you. (The teacher, class, January, 2008)

With regard to weekly readings, the class read and discussed the short story The Lady or the Tiger. The discussion was based on the two sections of the questions in the textbook: Reading comprehension composed of questions to check readers’ general understanding of the text and wrap-up activities which require personal opinions or response to the story. During the discussion groups, the teacher circulated to offer assistance.

The rest of the class time was spent on reviewing vocabulary from the story: First, each group worked on a vocabulary exercise consisting of multiple-choice questions to select the appropriate meaning of a word out of all the possible meanings of the word. Thus, the exercise encouraged them to infer the proper meaning within the context of where each word was used in
the story. They carried out the exercise orally in groups. The whole class checked the answers
together with the teacher. After that, they reviewed the vocabulary through group discussion
based on the questions encompassing new vocabulary items, inviting them to use the new
vocabulary in a natural language use setting where a meaningful exchange of ideas was likely to
be yielded. As an example, a new word “barbaric” was used in the question: “Give an example of
a barbaric custom in your country.” Throughout the discussion, much laughter and vibrant
exchanges of ideas were heard from the groups.

As a second component of the vocabulary review exercise, the students were given a
handout on a paraphrasing exercise where they had to orally restate in their own words the
sentences containing a couple of new words. The teacher stressed the idea of “using” the
vocabulary. She drove students to practice manipulating words using different forms of the words.
She stated that “through these vocabulary review exercises, I want to get them to talk and relate it
to something real…I try to stress use at this level” (First interview, January 2008). It is worth
noting that all the activities were carried out in groups and that most of these advanced-level
students were able to handle group discussions on their own.

On Wednesday, after the vocabulary quiz on *The Tell-Tale Heart*, which they read in the
previous week, each group presented to the whole class the results of the paraphrasing exercise
carried out the day before. On the last day of the week, the class engaged in a jigsaw activity in
which each student shared his or her short story chosen from three short stories in the textbook with two other group members who read a different story. Each student was responsible for summarizing their story and explaining new vocabulary to their group. The classroom was filled with an actively carried-out oral exchange of the stories full of questions and explanations elicited in each group. Afterwards, each group tackled discussion questions listed in the textbook about the three short stories. The teacher’s intervention was minimized throughout the discussion. She facilitated a site for exchanging ideas in the target language in groups and attempted to go off the stage. At times, she posed some questions to extend the flow of the discussion, but mostly she presented herself as a listener to the groups. This was in line with her pedagogical aim to shift control to the students to maximize the opportunities for using the target language for these advanced-level students. To the researcher sitting on one corner of the classroom, it looked to be students who were at the centre of this language experience.

**Week 4**

The teacher wrote “cultural literacy” on the board and asked for its definition. After a few attempts by some students, the teacher explained that “cultural literacy means that you have got enough knowledge of your culture,” and she continued, “a newspaper article is a good place to discover this because newspaper and magazine articles from better quality journals assume that you have knowledge” (Class, January, 2008). She reminded the students that language,
context, and culture are all connected. To exemplify, the class examined a newspaper article entitled *Fooling Big Brother Is Easier than Advertised* and the teacher illustrated the point that in a newspaper article it is necessary for readers to have background sociocultural knowledge and use context in order to understand the meaning of words. The teacher further said that “the writer does not explain the words, he assumes that you have the background to know that” (Class, January 2008). This activity was a reminder to the students that it is essential to view language in association with context and culture.

Another portion of the class was devoted to considering how authors use language to create the mood, atmosphere, and tone of the text. She noted that “The language used by an author -- the choice of words, word order, length of sentences, and sentence types -- can all contribute to mood, atmosphere, and tone” (Handout, January 29, p. 4). In groups, students were asked to investigate how the language contributed to these literary elements in the selected passages from the previously-read stories (i.e., *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Lady or the Tiger*). Students paid attention to not only the language but also punctuation which serves as a means of showing emotions and feelings in the written literary texts. The activity appeared to be challenging as they had showed trouble presenting supporting evidence from the passages to illustrate the connection between the language and the literary elements.

As for weekly readings, the class read two short stories: *Hills like White Elephants* from
the textbook and *The Luncheon* selected by the teacher. Each literary discussion ran for over an hour. The discussions took on different types of questions. In contrast to the discussion on *Hills like White Elephants* based on reading comprehension questions presented in the textbook, the discussion on *The Luncheon* followed the teacher-constructed prediction questions listed after each section of the story. After silently reading divided sections of *The Luncheon*, each individual took turns leading the discussion. The students were encouraged to give evidence from the text to support their opinions. Attentive-silent reading and lively discussion full of laughter and vibrant verbal exchange were clear indicators of a high engagement with this humorous contemporary story. The teacher’s intervention was minimal during the discussion as each group independently took control of their discussion. As a wrap-up activity for the reading, the students did in-class writing for 20 minutes about the two characters in *The Luncheon* to explore how the author developed readers’ sympathy for one character in a biased way. This was followed by a routine group discussion for vocabulary review.

Finally, a vocabulary quiz on the previous story, *The Lady or the Tiger*, was conducted in two parts: 1) completing a sentence including one of the new words and 2) paraphrasing. The next day, the teacher’s paraphrase was shown on the overhead projector. The teacher wrapped up the week by giving a reading assignment for the following week. The assigned text was *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*, which was divided into four sections. Each individual was
responsible for one section. He or she would need to lead a group discussion on his or her
assigned part while teaching new vocabulary to the group. Below is the teacher’s instruction for
the assignment that demonstrated one of the teacher’s major pedagogical goals: guiding each
individual student to be an active reader and participant.

Your task is to be ready with the answers to these questions you are going to ask your
group members… Find the evidence to support your answer. When you explain the
vocabulary, try to do as I do for you. Locate the word in the text, so you get the meaning
from the context. Give the part of speech and give one other part of speech. Give a
meaning that fits that context because if you look in the dictionary you will find lots of
meanings but we don’t want all of them. Find out if the word has a positive or negative
connotation. (The teacher, class, January 31, 2008)

Week 5

Students got into their groups and began discussions on the teacher-prepared questions
which each member was responsible for in regard to a short story from the textbook, *An
Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*. The story was about a man executed during the American civil
war. The story was filled with vivid descriptions. In groups of four, everyone took turns
explaining unfamiliar vocabulary by giving the location of the words, their meaning in context,
part of speech, and other forms of the words. They also summarized their section and led the
discussion of the questions. Everyone in the class was actively engaged with the discussion as
they interacted with their group members. The classroom was literally filled with students’ voices
exchanging ideas. Overall, the discussion turned out to be successful in the sense that it evoked
noticeably active interactions among the students. However, some students appeared to lose their focus and enthusiasm towards the end. One possible reason could be that the one-hour discussion on the single text might have failed to maintain students’ interest.

Discussion of two other short stories occupied the class time on Thursday. They were modern realistic short stories chosen by the teacher from an outside source: *Penny in the Dust* and *All the Years of Her Life*. According to the teacher, they were selected for two reasons: first, she believed that the pieces would work well for this class because she experienced success in using them previously with a similar group of students; secondly, the theme of the parent-child relationship that is common in the two stories was relevant to this group of young students. The literary discussion was undertaken in a jigsaw format. The class was divided into two groups to explore their given story. The teacher called for a volunteer to lead the discussion in groups, but nobody stepped forward, so a student in each group with the earliest birthday was appointed as the leader. Each group went through the questions created by the teacher about each story. She circulated through the classroom encouraging the students to support their opinions with reference to the text. The discussion appeared to be not as energetic in comparison to other previous group discussions done in smaller groups. The students somehow showed passive attitudes toward giving opinions and expressing agreement/disagreement. Unfamiliar faces in a seemingly threatening bigger group might have been a factor for such an uneasy discussion.
Moreover, in part, some did not appear to be equipped with English language registers for
discussion such as agreement or disagreement. However, this uneasy atmosphere during the
discussion changed when the students were paired up with members from the other group. In
pairs, everyone vibrantly exchanged an oral summary of their story and put their heads together
to find common features of the two stories in terms of their themes. The students were asked to
write a one-page essay to compare and contrast the two stories.

**Week 6**

The week centered around a poetry presentation in which the students in pairs read an
assigned poem and presented their interpretation of the poem to the whole class. A total of eight
poems were presented. After reviewing the handout on marking criteria for the presentation,
some time was allocated to the presentation preparation in class, which offered ample
opportunities for meaningful language use in interaction with a partner. The teacher moved
around the pairs to provide guidance, encouraging them to engage with the poem and reflect on
it: “Read it and think about it.” (Teacher, class, Feb 12, 2008) Each pair paid particular attention
to personal interpretation of and response to the poem as well as the linguistic features, including
the sound of the language, word choice, and rhythm, to name a few.

Before beginning their presentation, the students were asked to find any poem in their
respective L1 and share it with the class orally by reading it and explaining the meaning of the
poem. Five students volunteered to present their chosen poem of L1, including ones in Thai, Korean, Chinese, and French. It gave the students not only a sense of universal poetic linguistic features such as rhythm, sounds, or rhymes, but also awareness of a global multilingual community in the classroom. As Thursday was a midterm break, Wednesday and the following Monday in Week 7 were devoted entirely to the presentations.

Each pair took approximately 20 minutes for their presentation. The presentation consisted of several components, including: reading the poem aloud, personal interpretation of the lines, personal response to an overall theme, significant linguistic features, vocabulary, and question and answer with the audience. Some groups also provided the social or historical background of their poem to the class. For example, one group who presented a poem by Robert Frost talked about the Cold War in which the poem was written. Another group commented on how their poet’s background as an immigrant to Canada and an ESL speaker was closely linked with the main theme of the poem. Each student in the pairs took turns presenting their parts and the audience was highly attentive to the presenters. However, the audience looked passive in asking questions of presenters. As a result, the teacher had to intervene and model asking questions. The researcher capitalized on this passive discussion time to participate in the class by asking a few questions of some presenters.

Throughout the presentation, the teacher kept calling for evidence from presenters to
substantiate their opinions with reference to the text. It was challenging to some pairs, but a few managed to argue by making reference to the text. For instance, one pair presenting a poem about the farewell of a couple explained that rhymes with the sound of “ow” as in “slow” or “snow” contributed to the static and quiet mood of the poem. The class ended with announcements about the following week, including the novel presentation commencing in week 7, submission of a reading response journal entry, and a sight reading exercise in lieu of a midterm exam.

Week 7

The last two pairs delivered their poetry presentations. A vocabulary quiz on *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* was conducted which consisted of three parts: 1) filling-in-the-blank of a given story using a list of new words; 2) composing a grammatically correct sentence by using two new words given; and 3) paraphrasing given sentences. The quiz was not only to assess students’ understanding of the meaning of the words but also to reinforce the acquisition of the words through manipulating and using them in context.

As to weekly readings, a short story in the textbook named *The Veldt* was discussed. Prior to the discussion, the whole class spent about 20 minutes going through a list of new vocabulary with the teacher in front providing different shades of words including a definition of words, example sentences, different parts of speech, and synonyms. As for the discussion, each student was assigned to one of four sections of the story with a list of questions prepared by the
teacher. Students in groups interacted with one another, following a leader who was in charge of his or her section. Each participant proceeded with their section by asking questions of their group members and seeking answers with reference to the text. After over an hour of discussion, a handout with a paraphrasing exercise for the purpose of vocabulary review was distributed. This time, students had to orally restate the given sentences with partners in their own words using new vocabulary from the list provided earlier.

It was the first week of the novel presentation project. *Flowers for Algernon* is a story about a 32-year-old mentally-challenged man who gets an experimental operation to become more intelligent. The book was divided into four sections, approximately 70 pages each. Before the presentation, as a warm-up discussion, the whole class took a few minutes to ponder the idea of “labeling people” as Charlie in the book was labeled as “mentally-retarded,” “slow,” or “dumb.” The class suggested that labeling people forced us to fix our ideas about people and even stereotype them. As the researcher is a visually-challenged person, the teacher invited him to share his experiences and views in relation to labeling for those with limited or no sight. The researcher willingly talked to the students about his perceptions of different labels such as “visually-impaired” and “visually-challenged,” as well as their connotations.

The first four students embarked on their presentation in their respective groups. Each presenter first gave a brief summary of the story. Then, they led the discussion by asking
questions. It is worth noting that it was students themselves who prepared questions for discussion, whereas previous discussions were based on questions from the teacher or the textbook. The teacher quietly circulated among the groups to mark students’ performances. Each group was vigorously involved in the discussion. This presentation was different from previous group discussions in that the control was completely in the hands of the students as presenters themselves prepared questions and led the discussion.

**Week 8**

The class practiced incorporating quotations using William Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 18.” The focus of the instruction was not on analyzing the sonnet, but on using the sonnet to practice utilizing quotations effectively in writing. Students in groups discussed the prepared questions on each line of the poem and wrote a brief analysis of the poem, incorporating three or more quotations from the poem. This exercise was implemented because part of the teacher’s teaching aims for these advanced-level students was that they should be able to articulate their opinions orally and in writing and give evidence to justify their arguments by making reference to the text.

Two class readings were assigned and discussed in groups. They included a one-act play from the textbook entitled *Trifles* and a short story from an outside source, *A Summer’s Reading*. The discussion of *Trifles* was based on a combination of teacher-prepared questions and those from the textbook. The text was divided into four sections, and after going over vocabulary with
the teacher, each student in a group led a discussion on the basis of the questions related to their section. Similarly, the class explored the story *A Summer’s Reading* through group discussion on the questions provided by the teacher, followed by a vocabulary review exercise on the story.

After the whole class went over the vocabulary quiz on *The Veldt* and the vocabulary review exercise on *A Summer’s Reading*, the week ended with a novel presentation by the second group covering the second 70 pages of the novel. Like the previous week, presenters shared their own questions about the reading after a brief oral summary of the story. As they got into their second group discussion on the novel, the class looked more self-directed and engaged as they became more familiar with the characters and the flow of the story. In fact, all the groups ended up having one of the most lively discussions during the term. When she came to the researcher at the end of the class, the teacher noted that she was impressed with the students’ highly engaged interactions.

**Week 9**

As a weekly reading, a short story entitled *The Yellow Sweater* from the textbook was chosen. As this was a more contemporary story with a rich descriptive text, the teacher generated and handed out to the students a more extensive list of vocabulary than the vocabulary lists from other readings. Before jumping into a group discussion, the class went over the vocabulary list with 40 new words from the story as the teacher presented them with possibly full facets of each
Students were all attentive to the teacher’s explanation and often asked questions to clarify the connotation and usage of the words. The excerpts below demonstrate how the teacher explained new vocabulary in different respects and how actively students began to question various shades of language. What should be noted here is that such students’ questions about different aspects of words were not witnessed in the beginning of the term.

Teacher: Clutter or clutter up. Clutter alone can be a noun or also a verb. It means to put too many things in a place, so it’s messy or untidy. Is your room cluttered? Do you have everything put away in a closet or drawers? Or is everything sitting on the floor, on the table, on the chair? Nothing is neat and tidy. So that’s “cluttered up.” It’s got a negative connotation. It is cluttered up, so it is messy, untidy, or confused.

Student 1: Can it also be used figuratively?
Teacher: I guess so. It can be. You can say “Don’t clutter up your brain with all of this information. Just focus on the key points.”

Teacher: Our next word is “unveil.” Veil is to cover something and unveil is to uncover something. It means to reveal or disclose. For example, the Olympic Committee is going to unveil their plans for the opening ceremony. In a literal sense, sometimes we really unveil it: we have a statue covered with something and nobody can see it, and then you can say we are going to unveil it today.

Student 2: How about its connotation?
Teacher: Unveil? Mmm, I think it’s positive, revealing something, showing it. Or neutral, sometimes when you reveal something, we can’t say whether it’s positive or negative.
Student 2: But you reveal some secrets?
Teacher: Yeah, but I think “Unveil” is more positive. You’ve been preparing something and now we are going to show you what it is. But in the story, I don’t think it’s necessarily positive, but I would say it’s usually positive.

Following a look at the vocabulary with the teacher, the students formed into their usual group for a group discussion on the story. Each member in the group had to lead the discussion.
on one section of questions from the textbook. Although the students became quiet toward the end of the class after an hour of discussion, overall, most groups carried out a considerably active exchange of answers and ideas, with the exception of one group with only two members as a result of the absence of two other members; this group was not actively participating and did not show a sign of interest in the discussion. To reinforce the acquisition of vocabulary for students, the class reviewed new vocabulary items through vocabulary review exercises which consisted of four different types (i.e., paraphrasing the sentences with one or two new words, filling in the blanks with a word from the list, replacing bolded words with an item from the list, and finishing the incomplete sentences containing a new word). It was an opportunity for students to review vocabulary by manipulating it in connection with other words surrounding the new word. Also, the teacher used the story to practice incorporating evidence in analyzing the language or meaning by using direct quotations from the text or paraphrasing longer passages. The teacher provided a couple of examples of referencing and engaged the class with them.

In preparation for the final reading exam taking place two weeks later, the class had another practice exam with a similar format (e.g., answering questions about reading passages and paraphrasing) individually, which was followed by sharing their answers orally in their group while giving reasons for their answers. Then, the third novel presentation followed. Due to the absence of two students in one of the four groups, two students in that group took part in other
groups’ presentations. The presenter began by giving a short summary of their section and went
into the discussion by asking their prepared questions. Since it was the third day for presentations,
all the groups looked to be quite at ease and under control as if they knew what to do. All the
groups were having productive discussions.

**Week 10**

Students had a routine weekly visit to the computer lab and the final vocabulary quiz on
*The Yellow Sweater* in which students had to use the given vocabulary item in order to comment
on or respond to a given sentence. The rationale was to assess if students understood new words
and were also able to use them correctly and creatively. For example, they had to use the word
“clutter” to comment on the sentence “Bob looked in vain for the document he thought he had
left on his desk.”

The weekly reading was *Five-Fourteen*, a short story that the teacher brought in. The
short story was divided into several sections with a group of questions after each section.
Everyone in each group silently read one section and participated in discussing the assigned
questions pertaining to the section. The questions were a combination of comprehension
questions and prediction questions. Some examples of the questions were: “What could the
woman be? Does Blake already know her?”, and “What kind of feeling do you get after reading
this first paragraph?” Subsequently, to follow up with the story, students were engaged in
completing a summary exercise by filling in missing words in the summary written by the teacher without looking back at the story. That would lead the students to recognize and realize and use some new words from the story in context. This was done orally in groups.

The final novel presentation was carried out. The last four students got into their respective group and initiated a discussion by giving a brief summary and posing their own questions. Overall, the discussions were productive. However, in comparison to the previous three novel presentations, the discussion was not as intense or fierce and the active participation of the students was less salient. One possible interpretation is that it was their fourth time to discuss the same novel and it was likely that not much carrying power was left with the students. Furthermore, the group dynamics could have been a factor. This is a complex matter and will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The students would have to submit a literary essay and the teacher explained it with reference to page 303 of the textbook. The students worked on the exercise about the literary essay on the same page. The class explored the introduction of an example essay to examine its typical structure.

Afterwards, the class had a group discussion of the two stories which they read before: A Summer’s Reading and All the Years of Her Life. They discussed the introduction part of a sample literary essay on the handout that compared them. After that, the teacher led the class discussion
The teacher undertook this discussion in an effort to help the students in writing a literary essay to show how they can compare and contrast multiple stories to write a literary essay. The teacher tried to give directions in writing a good literary essay by talking about what each section (i.e., introduction, body, and conclusion) in the essay can and should include. She stressed keys to writing a good literary essay: 1) read and understand the text carefully; 2) make a clear thesis statement; 3) support your opinions with reference to the text; and 4) careful paraphrasing and quotations. Particularly, she emphasized the importance of providing evidence to show where the answers came from with reference to the text. She shared her own experience as a first year university student when she failed the course because of lack of evidence in her writing. She further said that “having an opinion is not enough. You have to find good evidence to help your reader judge your opinion or follow along with your opinion” (Class, March 2008).

**Week 11**

The class had another in-class silent reading of *The Use of Force* which was divided into sections followed by a few questions. This four-page-long short story was about tension and conflict between a doctor and a family with their young daughter who resisted the doctor who was trying to open her mouth for a medical examination. After the teacher led a warm-up whole class discussion to kindle students’ interest in the story by having them ponder the question,
“who do we allow to use force,” the class went over the new vocabulary items with the teacher.

Then, the students discussed the story in groups. The class ended with a whole class discussion to share their opinions with other groups. Some of the questions included: “Is the child an opponent or a victim?,” “Is the doctor cruel or conscientious?” and “Are the child’s parents responsible or negligent?”

As there was no class on Thursday due to the final exam period of the program, Wednesday of the week was practically the final class of the course. It was used for a final vocabulary review session covering the entire term. The vocabulary review exercise consisted of four different parts: 1) filling in missing words in the sentence; 2) finding a synonym of the underlined word in the sentence; 3) paraphrasing the sentence using the given words; and 4) restating the sentence using a different form of the underlined words. After students worked on the exercise with partners, the whole class reviewed the answers with the teacher.

**Week 12**

Although the course technically finished on the Thursday of the week, practically, the course was already over in the previous week. After the Monday with no class for a holiday, the remainder of the week was taken up with the final exam, the teacher-student consultation, and the farewell ceremony.
4.4 What is the Nature of the Instruction?

In order to respond to the first research question pertaining to the nature of LBLI in an adult ESL classroom in Canada, this class under study will be described in terms of assignments, activities, language skills, and interaction. In particular, the following section examines what was happening in this particular adult ESL class with regard to its incorporation of literature in its course content for the purpose of L2 development. At the outset, it needs to be made clear that it is not the aim of this study to suggest one ideal, fixed, prescribed application of literature-based instruction, but to present a sketch of one particular ESL class in a private adult language learning setting in North America in light of the fact that every class is embedded in a particular sociocultural context. The documentation of this particular class is an effort to contribute to the empirical research on L2 classes with LBLI.

4.4.1 Assignments

Students were required to submit assignments categorized into three types according to the modes of language: reading, speaking, and writing. One major requirement was reading assignments. The students had to read one or two four-to-eight-page-long short stories weekly outside the classroom, a few poems, and a novel over a 12-week term. Students were expected to be prepared for a literary discussion of the readings in groups in class.

With respect to writing assignments, students submitted a total of five entries of reading
response journals, a written summary of the pair poetry presentation, a short essay comparing and contrasting two short stories with the theme of parent-child relationship, and a literary essay on the novel. Lastly, two presentations were required: a pair poetry presentation to the whole class and a novel presentation in groups of four. For the poetry presentation, each pair presented their analysis of and response to their given poem, touching on thematic, linguistic, and literary aspects of the poem. On the other hand, for the novel presentation that ran over four weeks, each individual in a group of four was assigned to one section of the novel and was responsible for leading a discussion in their group on their own prepared questions. Consequently, all the assignments invited students to be exposed to and engaged them with various literary texts as a resource of language and a source for meaningful interaction.

4.4.2 Activities

Literary discussion in small groups on the readings was at the core of the entire teaching practice in the course. Most of the discussions were based on questions either in the textbook or prepared by the teacher with the exception of the novel presentation where students themselves constructed their own questions. Out of 400 minutes of the weekly class time, 180 minutes on average were devoted to oral discussion in groups. The rest of the class time was filled with weekly vocabulary quizzes or practice reading exams, presentations, vocabulary exercises, and in-class reading and writing. The figure below illustrates the class activities and their proportion.
in the course.

**Figure 4.1 Class Activities**

![Pie chart showing types of activities]

**4.4.3 Language Skills**

All four language skills (i.e., reading, listening, writing, and speaking) were integrated throughout the course. Students read the texts, and interpreted, reflected on, discussed orally, and responded in writing to the texts. Overall, the class provided a whole language experience in which all language skills were integrated (Tunnel & Jacobs, 1989).
In addition, the entire process of reading and discussing literary texts may have contributed to the promotion of a range of thinking skills, including higher order (i.e., analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) and lower order thinking skills (i.e., knowledge, comprehension, and application) proposed by Bloom et al. (1956). According to them, different learning activities involve and foster different levels of thinking skills. Different activities centered around the reading and discussion of literature in the class was found to create opportunities for the reinforcement of many of these thinking skills. Throughout the course, students were engaged in various activities related to different levels of thinking skills in the process of reading and discussing literary texts involving a range of intellectual behaviours including: discussing, summarizing, describing, comparing and contrasting, analyzing, inferencing, predicting, referencing, interpreting, synthesizing, and evaluating. The contribution of LBLI to fostering
thinking skills was also advocated by previous research (Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Gajdusek, 1988; Oster, 1989).

4.4.4 Interaction

As Vygotsky (1978) argued, social interaction is believed to be central to the learning process, and interaction is considered as one of the essential elements that is conducive to the acquisition of an L2 (Ariza & Hancock, 2003; Ellis, 2000; Johnson, 2004; Gass, 1997; Long, 1996; Mackey, 1999; Swain & Lapkin, 2002). Comprehensible input and comprehensible output can be yielded from and also yield meaningful interaction (Gass, 1997; Long, 1996; Pica, 1994; Swain, 1995). As Wells (1999) argued that the quality of interaction can impact students’ learning, the question is, then, how meaningful quality interaction can be created in an L2 classroom. A number of scholars suggest that meaningful interaction is dialogical in nature (Cazden, 2001; Johnson, 2004; Nystrand, 1997; Skidmore, 2000; Wells, 1999). Dialogic interactions involve authenticity and responsiveness (Kim, 2004) or joint construction of meaning (Cazden, 2001; Johnson, 2004; Gibbons, 2004). Given that, did interactions in this class under investigation have any indications of dialogic interaction?

Interaction in this class was realized in three types: learner-learner, learner-instructor, and learner-text. These interactions are typical in L2 classrooms. Among those, learner-teacher interaction is often predominant (Cazden, 2001; Nystrand et al., 2003; Yuksel, 2009). What also
needs to be noted is that such interactions, particularly the learner-teacher interaction, are linear in nature: it typically comes in the sequence of Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) in which learners are treated as passive respondents while the instructor holds the control by initiating and ending the conversation (Markee, 1995; Nystrand et al., 2003; Ohta & Nakaone, 2004). Similarly, the learner-learner interactions in pairs or groups also fail to be dialogic at times; they are often confined to superficial information gap activities that are passive and prescribed in nature. This is not to say that these types of communicative activities should not be valued in L2 learning. Rather, it is to say that it becomes problematic when there are insufficient opportunities for genuinely meaningful interactions among learners, instructor, and texts, particularly at advanced levels.

The class under study demonstrated a somewhat different series of interactions. That is, the proportion of teacher-fronted interactions was less in this class, and the teacher’s intervention was minimal. On average, it occupied approximately 15% of the total class hours (i.e., 15 minutes of the 100 minute class). The rest of the class time was dense with learner-learner and learner-text interaction. More than half of the class was allocated for group discussions filled with learner-learner interactions through the exchange of ideas.

Additionally, the interactions between students and texts were different from those in L2 classes using non-authentic materials such as textbooks which often serve as a linguistic resource.
to transmit linguistic knowledge in a linear manner. As suggested by reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978), readers were invited to create meaning in transaction with the literary texts as they personally responded to the texts.

Overall, most interactions during the class were dialogical in nature as they served to negotiate meaning in a two-way or dialectic manner among students, the instructor, and the texts. Such dialogical interactions in which students and teachers are positioned as participants in the learning process and where knowledge is co-constructed rather than transmitted” (Gibbons, 2004, p 196) may result in second language acquisition (Gibbons, 2004; Kim, 2004; Paran, 2006). As Long (1996) explained, modified interaction yielded through negotiation of meaning makes input more comprehensible, which is a necessary condition for second language acquisition. Similarly, Swain (2001) also argued that it is interaction full of pushed or stretched language through negotiation of meaning that is conducive to second language development.

Additionally, the data gathered from observations of classroom discourse suggest that a typical classroom interactional structure of teacher-centered IRF was less prominent in this classroom. This IRF pattern was rather student-centered and extended further as the teacher and students stretched interactions by responding back to each other. Gibbons (2004) stated that such extended IRF exchange is more conducive to L2 development because “collaborative and jointly constructed stretches of dialogue” (p.210) can elevate the quantity and quality of meaning.
negotiation, which in turn creates a venue for L2 students to make more attempts to communicate with one another. Quantitative evidence of students’ improvement in the target language was not gathered because it was beyond the scope of this present study. However, one can argue that the dialogical nature of interactions that naturally occurred in this class may have contributed to students’ L2 development based on their own perception noted in the questionnaires and interviews. These qualitative data will be presented and further discussed later in this chapter.

Such collaborative and jointly constructed stretches of dialogues were prevalent throughout the class. For example, during the novel presentations in groups of four, students collaboratively negotiated and constructed meanings by initiating, responding, and giving feedback in interaction. What should be noted here is the fact that feedback was not an ending point of interaction; rather, it worked as a bridge to a more extended interaction. Consequently, students’ voices were heard more often in the class than in traditional adult L2 classes where either the voice of the teacher or textbook was often dominant (Cox and Boyd-Batstone, 1997; Yuksel, 2009).
4.5 What Are Students’ Learning Experiences?

The following section highlights recurrent themes that emerged throughout the course in relation to students’ learning experiences in this particular adult ESL classroom where literature played an important role as language learning material. To substantiate these themes, comments gathered from two e-mail questionnaires given to all the students (i.e., the pre-study and post-study questionnaire), two semi-structured interviews with three students, and two interviews with the teacher will be presented. On the basis of over 2,000 minutes of class observation over 12 weeks, over 100 pages of field notes, questionnaires, and over 50 pages of interview transcripts, and other written documents, a number of salient features are explored to highlight the students’ language learning experiences in the class. They have been grouped into eight categories of recurrent, prominent themes as illustrated in the figure below:
4.5.1 Language Learning through Language Use

It is language use mediating language learning. It is cognitive activity and it is social activity. (Swain, 2000, p. 97)

The class continuously created numerous opportunities which required the target language to be used to exchange and negotiate meaning among all participants in the class. Literary discussions in a small group allowed them to use language meaningfully in the immediate situations. According to Kim (2004), who investigated literature circles in an adult ESL classroom, L2 classes facilitating language use for meaning led L2 learners to real language experience because interaction among the students carried authenticity and responsiveness,
which are regarded as two essential social qualities of human interaction. Similarly, the class in the present study appeared to serve as a venue where language competence (i.e., linguistic knowledge) and language performance (i.e., language use) co-occurred and were interwoven, which would be conducive to the development of L2 (Johnson, 2004; Morrow, 1981).

At the outset of the course, the teacher aimed to establish a learning environment in which students would use and manipulate language as they engaged in the process of discussing literary texts. Her pedagogical aim was realized through LBLI where literary texts served two significant roles: 1) a resource of language and 2) a source for evoking meaningful interaction. In this class, language was not just a linguistic code to be learned but also a social means to be used to convey and negotiate meaning. This was evident when students engaged in small group discussions to talk about what they had read. The focus was placed on meaning rather than form. In particular, in novel presentations, each member in a group was responsible for one section of the novel and led the group discussion on their section. Students were frequently invited to position themselves in the situations of the characters by relating themselves to the story and drawing on their own experiences and thoughts. These personally engaging discussions stimulated multiple opportunities for language use involving authenticity and responsiveness, two essential elements of social interaction witnessed in adult ESL learners’ literary discussions found in the study by Kim (2004). Likewise, other small group discussions on short stories
evoked similar real language experiences, which were carefully facilitated by the teacher throughout the course. Below is the teacher’s comment on how literary discussions could create a site for authentic and responsive interaction when students discussed *The Lady or the Tiger*, a short story dealing with the theme of making a decision:

> You know the story that we are reading on Tuesday, *The Lady or the Tiger*, it’s a fictional fantastic story, but students could say if you have ever had a dilemma. They can put themselves into it, if you have ever had to make a choice between two difficult things. You know and they could talk about it. So it’s giving them something that they can relate to and that they can talk about and think about. That’s not just cut and dried. (The teacher, interview, January 2008)

> These group discussions which included numerous opportunities for using language were viewed favorably by most students as well. Ten out of 14 students indicated that it was the literary discussion that they favoured the most as an enjoyable part of the course. As an example, Monique, an interviewed student, describes her positive perceptions towards this in the following:

> Speaking with people is interesting. Sharing ideas with people is interesting. I enjoyed speaking with people like, “What do you think of that?” “Do you know what this word means?” and sharing our knowledge. (Monique, interview, March 2008)

### 4.5.2 Active Vocabulary Learning

I stress that we have to use these words because, why are we reading? We are going to talk about it and write about it. So we have to be able to use the words. Just knowing the definition won’t be enough. It might help us to understand what we are reading, but then
we have to talk about or write about it. So there is a lot of paraphrasing at this level. (The teacher, interview, March 2008)

Another prominent feature of the course was a significant emphasis placed on active vocabulary learning. A number of research studies echoed the contributing impact of reading on vocabulary development (Burt, Peyton, & Adams, 2003; Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002; Krashen, 2004; Smallwood, 1994; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000). Also, in this class, as literature served as a resource of language, extensive reading experiences provided students with opportunities to expand vocabulary in context: i.e., they experienced new words, attempted to understand different aspects of the words, and practiced using or manipulating them. Furthermore, this contextualized yet passive vocabulary exposure was extended to more active use which involved a more active role of students as language users. This pattern of vocabulary learning process (i.e., experiencing, understanding, and manipulating) was scattered throughout the course. For example, weekly vocabulary quizzes consisted of paraphrasing or completing a sentence with new vocabulary items rather than passive multiple choice questions seeking a definition of words.

The teacher defined “active vocabulary learning” in two respects. First, students were encouraged to take on a language user’s role to use and manipulate new vocabulary through various tasks including: vocabulary review discussion, paraphrasing exercises, or writing response journals. Reinforcing vocabulary building through active use of language for meaning negotiation is supported by several scholars (De La Fuente, 2002; Ellis & He, 1999; Ellis, Tanaka,
Secondly, it was active vocabulary learning in the sense that students were invited to actively infer the meaning of a word according to its context and interpret it by taking into account different facets of words such as connotation, denotation, figurative use, collocations, and different parts of speech, to name a few. Students began to see the significance of learning different facets of words in accordance with their context. For example, in the interview, Monique and Jan shared their reflections on their vocabulary learning experiences in the class as follows:

In our quiz, we have to paraphrase, so we have to know different part of speech of words. When I don’t know the word, I would look for the definition. If I already know the words, then I look for synonyms or different parts of speech of the word. (Monique, March 2008)

I like the vocabulary part. She always gives part of speech, connotation, or collocation of words. She gives different aspects of vocabulary. She explained, for example, “you can say this in a real life or not.” I enjoy that kind of the usage of words. (Jan, March 2008)

Passive vocabulary learning often occurs at the sentence level or in isolation, where there may be limited information about the usage of words. In this class, however, words were treated at the discourse level in the context of a story. These contextualized words allowed students to identify the different usages of words and infer the meaning of words by considering different aspects of the words. One of the interview participants, Mi-Ju, expressed her appreciation for such learning of the usage of words in context. For example, she recalled an experience where
she learned double comparative expressions while reading the novel. She stated that experiencing the expressions at the discourse level in context expanded her passive vocabulary knowledge to the extent where she understood how they worked at the discourse level as well as how they were used to construct meaning. Mi-Ju further explains:

 Especially while I read Flowers for Algernon, I often saw the expression, “the more, the better” So I can learn more expressions that people use. I actually know a lot of expressions and a lot of grammar. I just know the skill and function. But I don’t know how to use them and how to make sentences. I knew the function of double comparative structure as in the more the better, but I didn’t know how to use it. And I didn’t know in which situations I can use it. But after I read a modern novel, I learned how to make a sentence and how to use the grammar in our daily life. (Mi-Ju, interview, March 2008)

4.5.3 Student-Centered Learning

“Student-centered” is a buzz word in many language classes and there seems to be a consensus among many L2 teachers on making a class more student-centered. However, it is challenging to put this idea into practice. Moreover, the concept of “student-centered” is sometimes misleading. Having students work in groups would not automatically transform L2 classes into being student-centered.

Cox and Boyd-Batstone (1997) stressed that “in both the literal and figurative sense, the student’s voice is the goal of L2 instruction” (p. 41). When students’ voices are heard in the literal and figurative sense, students are able to become the center of an L2 classroom. In order to put students’ voices at the centre, it is important for students to be granted opportunities to
perform authentic tasks where meaning is negotiated among language users. Thus, student-centered learning invites students to be participants rather than passive information processors. This learning context where students are viewed as participants who construct meaning in the class is conducive to L2 learning (Gibbons, 2004). Moreover, opportunities for taking on an active participant’s role are important because, in the long term, it may affect the process of visioning themselves as legitimate language users outside the classroom (Johnson, 2004; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Nonetheless, many adult ESL classes in proficiency-oriented private institute settings often fail to establish such a student-centered learning environment, but creates an environment, where commercial textbooks are the sole language learning materials and native English-speaking teachers’ voices are often treated as the only legitimate voices (Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 1997; James, 2003; Paran, 2006). In contrast, this LBLI class under study centered around students’ voices. The data revealed that this student-voice-oriented learning environment is the result of the following prominent features of the instruction: independent learning and students’ agency.

4.5.3.1 Promoting Independence

Developing students’ independence was one of the teacher’s instructional goals. Throughout the course, she said that she expected this group of advanced-level ESL learners to be capable of being more independent as language users. As Vygotsky (1978) pointed out, [in the
process of expanding the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD, the degree of teacher intervention should be tailored to the needs and level of learners. Given this, for this group of highly-advanced adult learners, more independent learning opportunities with less teacher intervention were called for. Students were expected to get ready to face the real life situations in the target language community upon completion of the program. For this reason, the teacher attempted to bring more opportunities for students to handle tasks on their own in the target language. One good example of such opportunities was the novel presentation. For one hour, in a group of four, each individual was asked to lead a group discussion on his or her assigned responsible section of the novel by asking their own prepared questions or responding to questions from the group members. In the interview, the teacher explained the rationale for the novel presentation as stated below:

That’s why I set up the group discussions on the novel where each one will be a teacher in charge of the group. In group, there could be more questions from group members since it’s less threatening. The group members will ask you questions and comment on what you say, so you have got to be knowledgeable about your section in the book. (The teacher, January 2008)

One distinctive feature of LBLI is that students are more exposed to authentic texts and less to just simplified texts specifically tailored to ESL learners. Reading experience with authentic literary texts can possibly provide a site where students’ sense of independence can thrive. Some ESL students may eventually have to face authentic texts in the target language.
Thus, reading literary works, particularly a lengthy novel, can have a positive impact on students’ ESL learning process because it can contribute to the enhancement of their sense of confidence as language users. Among the students, Mi-Ju and Monique revealed the positive effects of reading a lengthy, authentic text, such as the *Flowers for Algernon*. Both pointed out that, in addition to language skills, it was confidence that they gained from reading the novel. Such increased confidence is important because it can contribute to boosting a sense of independence as a language user. One explanation behind this increased confidence and level of independence could be that the students’ ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) was expanded. That is, the students moved from the stage where they felt unmotivated and not confident in reading English texts to the stage where they felt capable of independently dealing with a lengthy text in the target language. Mi-Ju and Monique shared their increased sense of confidence in the following:

I didn’t know about English literature. Now I know that I am able to read a novel in English. Maybe next time, when I buy a book, I will buy a English book instead of French (her L1) ones. I will practice my English more. (Monique, interview, March 2008)

If I didn’t take this class, maybe I would never try to read a novel in English. Before I read this book, I had some kind of fear because it was hard. I don’t like reading a book even in Korean (L1). I couldn’t imagine I read a book in English. (Mi-Ju, interview, March 2008)

The fact that Monique, a French speaker, was inspired by the reading experiences in the class to wish to read English books instead of French books could be an indication of her
increased confidence and independence as an English language user. A similar positive result was noticed in Mi-Ju, a Korean speaker. She said that she was a reluctant reader in both her L1 and L2, but her learning experiences with the thick novel, *Flowers for Algernon*, made a positive impact on her as a reader and English language user.

Another factor which may also explain the students’ enhanced sense of independence could be related to the reader response approach (Rosenblatt, 1978), which was featured throughout the course. In this class, students were encouraged to come up with an interpretation of the text as long as they could justify and support it. Consequently, this invitation to students to present their own interpretation of and personal reaction to the texts triggered a sense of legitimacy and respect for his or her voice (Cazden, 2001). This was also supported by Rosenblatt (1995), who suggested that literary discussions situate readers in an environment where they listen to others with understanding and respond in relevant terms. In many classes, it is the teacher or textbooks that provide answers and students passively receive and process those answers. One may argue that this is presumed to be necessary for some learners, particularly at the beginner or intermediate level, to develop their L2. However, for the development of language by expanding their ZPD, it is also critical for learners to receive opportunities to gradually become more independent. In this class, literature encouraged students’ own interpretations and answers, which could in turn contribute to the expansion of their ZPD. The
teacher further explained this in her first interview:

I want to teach students to be more independent; don’t think the right answer only comes from the teacher. Especially in literature, it’s about [a] person bringing their own experience to what they are reading and trying to understanding it partly based on their own experience and partly being open to something new. (The teacher, January 2008)

In particular, based on the data from class observations, among all small group discussions, it was the novel discussion that yielded the most heated negotiation and exchange of opinions within the groups without the teacher’s intervention. The students were completely in control of the discussions in each group. Mi-Ju explained what might have captured students’ interest during the novel discussion in the following:

In the novel presentation, people prepared questions and asked them to others. In this novel presentation, I realized that Asian and South American have different thoughts. Actually, short stories in the textbook have already their answers written because they are usually used books. So I couldn’t hear people’s real answers. But this one doesn’t have an exact answer. We have to explain our own personal thoughts. (Mi-Ju, interview, March 2008)

As Mi-Ju noted above, small group discussions, particularly the novel presentations, called for students’ active role and initiation together with their own responses to literature, which served as a springboard for the enhancement of a sense of independence as language users. In novel presentations, it was students who took control of the topic and the flow of their conversation. This student-controlled discussion facilitated more engaging and meaningful
learning as echoed by Troudi (1994) and Yuksel (2008). Additionally, novel presentations provided a venue for readers’ interpretations to be exchanged. Mi-Ju said that she enjoyed such exchanges of meaning because she could hear others’ genuine voices. Belcher and Hirvela (2000), who investigated LBLI and L2 writing, explained that opportunities for sharing students’ own voices can “empower students to develop their identity as writers” (p. 31). The same can be said for the students in this class under study. Sharing and acknowledging their interpretations about their reading may have strengthened their identity as an independent language user or reader in the target language.

4.5.3.2 Students’ Agency

I mentioned independence and part of that is building confidence. You say to your students, you don’t need the teacher to be the centre of attention. You can learn by talking to your partners in your group. They learn to trust each other. (The teacher, interview, January 2008)

One significant role that students were asked to play was that of a teacher. This teacher role was a springboard to becoming more independent with a sense of responsibility for a successful learning process of not only himself or herself but also of other group members. Thus, opportunities for serving as a teacher resulted in placing students at the centre of their learning process in the class (i.e., student-centered learning).

In particular, during small group discussions on short stories, students were always put
into a position where their active role as a teacher was called for. For example, when reading *The Luncheon*, which was divided into four sections, each student in a group had to lead a discussion on questions after reading each section. In this way, a sense of responsibility was placed on each student’s shoulders to carry out the group discussion. Likewise, such a sense of responsibility was witnessed when half of the class was assigned to the short story *Penny in the Dust*, and the other half to *All the Years of Her Life*. In the next class, students got together with those who read the same story and discussed questions with the guidance of their group leader. Afterwards, students were paired up with one student from the other group to compare and contrast the two stories on the common theme of the parent-teenager relationship. From the beginning of the class to the very last minute, it was the students who were at the core of the interaction while helping one another understand the stories better. Inviting students to play a teacher role was further evidenced during novel presentations in which each individual in the group was responsible for a lengthy one-hour group discussion based on their own prepared questions about his or her assigned section. Class observations and student interviews revealed that those discussions on student-prepared questions were viewed positively by most students as they appeared to be more motivated and attentive to one another. For example, Monique and Jan described their experiences of constructing their own questions as follows:

> It (student-prepared questions) makes a difference. Because we know other student worked hard to find questions and we are like markers as well, people are more
motivated to do it better. Sometimes, some people didn’t read some short stories, so some people couldn’t answer the questions. But all of us had to do this final project and everyone had to read it anyways, people were more prepared. (Monique, interview, March 2008)

It (making questions) was kind of challenging. Which part of the book should I pick and ask about to make sense for the novel? We had to make sure that everyone enjoys the discussion. I needed to choose a specific point or climax. I enjoyed making questions. (Jan, interview, March 2008)

Throughout the term, in addition to students’ role as teachers, a sense of responsibility further reinforced the students’ identity as active participants in the class. The discussion-oriented nature of the course always put students’ voices and participation at the forefront of the class, resulting in more student-centered learning. They read and responded to literary pieces. They spoke and listened to what each had to say about their readings. As they discussed the texts, each individual was encouraged to serve a range of participating role such as presenter, listener, commentator, writer, and negotiator. The following comment by Mi-Ju illustrates her learning experiences as an active reader with regard to preparing for a novel presentation where she had to lead a discussion:

Through novel presentation, I tried to figure out more deeply what the author wanted to say and what I could find more or what this character would do after this or something like that. I was able to be one part of the novel as if I watched characters. (Mi-Ju, interview, March 2008)

A sense of responsibility on students’ shoulders to act as active participants positioned
students in the active engagement with the texts as they read in preparation for the novel presentation as noted by Mi-Ju. In order to lead or participate in the group literary discussions such as the novel presentations, each student was required to be a proactive reader in the transaction between the reader and the text. Subsequently, this active reader role was extended to other participating roles in the process of responding to their reading orally or in writing. In essence, students’ voices and their agency were observed to be at the heart of the entire learning process.

4.5.4 Collaborative Interaction

My approach is to get them working in groups, talking about the literature: for example, in paraphrasing activities, students are working together, talking together, and comparing what they do. It is really to get them to not depend so much on me. It doesn’t mean I am not doing anything. I am trying to set things up so that they will work that way. So more and more when I come and hover over them, they will look at me like “go away. We don’t need you”. (The teacher, interview, January 2008)

Central to students’ learning experiences in this class was dialogical interaction among students which was collaborative and jointly constructed in its nature. Such interactions mostly took place during small group discussions on stories and team project work such as a pair poetry presentation as suggested by Doughty and Pica (1986). Young (1999, cited in Johnson, 2004) stressed the importance of interaction by saying, “the knowledge of language is co-created by all participants in interaction” (p. 95). Further, Johnson (2004) argued that such interactive practices
can help students acquire various “resources of vocabulary, syntax, knowledge of managing turns and topics and rhetorical scripts and skills” (p. 98). This was based on the belief that “the origin of SLA is in locally bound dialogue interactions conducted in a variety of sociocultural and institutional settings” (p. 4).

Over the years, as a result of the movement towards more communicative language teaching, interaction has also received much attention in L2 classrooms. However, it has often been limited to less dialogic or linear interaction, as in teacher-fronted teacher-student interaction or controlled superficial information gap activities in which language is dealt with at a word or sentence level. It is not, however, the intention of this study to claim that such practices do not have value. Rather, the intention is to suggest that, in addition to such learning practices, it is also important for students to be given opportunities to experience socially-based meaning making processes which demand the negotiation of meaning and message among interlocutors through the use of the target language (Johnson, 2004). The data from observation suggest that the class under study often placed students in a situation where they engaged in such interactive practices involving the negotiation of what they had to say about their readings during literary discussions. Consequently, as Johnson (2004) further stressed, the collaborative nature of interaction and dialogues generated in this class during literary discussion contributed to evoking opportunities for both language use and learning.
A poetry presentation was a good example of this collaborative interactive work. Each pair had to work together to explore a poem and present their interpretation and analysis to the class. In preparation for the presentation, two days of class time were devoted to students’ collaborative interaction. The teacher was available to provide necessary assistance to each pair, who was eagerly engaged in discussing the poem. Two hearts and heads were put together in interaction in exploration of the poem. The classroom was filled with questions, comments, and viewpoints. One student remembers her learning experiences as follows:

People will have different ideas about a poem. As I worked with my partner to present the poem, we discussed a lot. I was thinking about something and she was thinking about something. All our ideas could be right, but we don’t know what this word means. We enjoyed the process of finding out the meaning. (Monique, interview, February 2008)

Many students learned to collaborate with others in interaction and to depend on one another in groups to interpret literature better. Group discussions evoked numerous opportunities to combine, compare, and contrast their interpretations in meaningful contexts.

Once, I told my interpretation about literature, my idea was kind of silly, compared to others. So I was thinking that I have got to be quiet and learn from others. One of my group members told me that my English is good, but I felt her ideas are always better than mine. (Jan, interview, February 2008)

I think the novel discussion was the one that people really got into and had a lot of opinions. In our classroom, people are from different countries. We have different way of thinking different view, or different culture. We can learn different ideas. So overall, the novel discussion was interesting. I think all the groups had a very interesting discussion. (Monique, interview, March 2008)
The above comments reflect some of the students’ perceptions in relation to collaborative interaction that took place throughout the term. In this class, the act of reading was extended to a collaborative and interpretive activity. These comments indicate that students recognized the significance of the collaborative nature of learning in the class and took advantage of it.

4.5.5 Teacher’s Role

In this class, the teacher did not appear to play a role as someone who only teaches, but one who facilitates a learning environment where students could freely share their voices with one another. In this respect, the teacher was a listener and an assistant. Jan, an interviewed student, acknowledged the teacher’s attempts to listen to her opinions with understanding in the class:

Even if I interpret wrong, the teacher tried to understand my saying. She accepted my answer. She is nice. She tried to understand me. (Jan, interview, February 2008)

The teacher was viewed as an empathetic and understanding figure, rather than as someone who had prescribed answers in mind. One explanation is that, as literature allows different justifiable interpretations, the teacher’s role as a genuine listener was further reinforced. After all, the teacher was seen not as someone who just provides answers or prevails in the classroom, but rather as someone who was present in the classroom to provide assistance and to be another participant who was genuinely interested in students’ thoughts. With the exception of
the time when a list of vocabulary from stories was explained to the whole class, she was mostly among students rather than in front of them, moving around the groups to listen to them or offer any necessary assistance. At times, her presence was even almost invisible. It was obvious to the researcher that she attempted to minimize her intervention. This could be associated with her belief in the importance of advanced-level students’ growth in independence as language users as discussed earlier in this chapter.

The minimized intervention of the teacher resulted in more student-centered learning as well as increasing students’ responsibility as participants in the classroom to some extent. However, despite such positive impacts of the minimized teacher’s intervention, some students did not appear to follow the teacher’s intended role and instead expected more teacher intervention. Presumably, this may be partly due to different beliefs about the teacher’s role, which is likely to have resulted from the students’ assumptions about the traditional roles of the teacher and students. Similar findings were reported by Yuksel (2009), who suggested that fixed assumptions of the teacher and students about their traditional role may have affected the classroom discourse in his study of a literature discussion EFL class.

In this class in the present study, it is important to note that there was a conflicting view about the teacher’s intervention. On one hand, based on the results of the questionnaire, two-thirds of the class chose group discussions as the most enjoyable aspect of the class. This is an
indication of students’ appreciation for the opportunities to freely share their voices during the class time without much teacher control. On the other hand, the analysis of the questionnaire and interviews with students revealed that it was unfamiliar and challenging for some students to learn to work on their own without teacher intervention during literary discussions. In particular, the conflicting views were witnessed among some students who were more accustomed to teacher-centered learning environments. The followings are examples of such conflicting views noted in the questionnaire:

Too much idling time for normal discussion; hard to concentrate... more active role of teacher is needed. (John, questionnaire, March 2008)

I’d like to say the way to discuss in the class would be changed more efficiently. She was a good teacher but she did not comment all the novels we worked on so far. I’d like to know the exact meaning of the novel and everything as much as I could; however, teacher just looked around each group randomly. As a result, I did not have enough time to ask all questions. (Mi-Ju, interview, March 2008)

Sometimes I needed more teacher’s help to understand the story. (Yuri, questionnaire, March 2008)

Every curriculum and class had to be more systematic by the teacher. (Jean, questionnaire, March 2008)

The negative reactions towards less teacher intervention were parallel to the data from class observations, for these four students. The observational data reveal that these four students at times failed to maintain their active participation in group discussions. Additionally, based on
the questionnaire and interview, some students indicated that more whole class discussion led by the teacher was desired. They believed that while small group discussions were beneficial, teacher-led discussions could have enhanced their understanding of literature even further.

Whenever the teacher teaches a new story, she just makes a group. Everything depends on the group members. But we don’t sometimes know the point or purpose of the story… I mean discussion is good, but at the end of discussion, for 5-10 minutes, if the teacher gives the whole class more information or general information, or pick up important points, that would be good to understand the story better. (Mi-Ju, interview, March 2008)

I like the way that we can work in small groups, but I think the teacher should lead a group discussion including everyone, not always in small groups. We began to know each other and we talk about other things and get bored. But if the teacher leads the whole class discussion and involves everyone, we will wake up. I think we should have more class discussion. (Monique, interview, March 2008)

As noted above, another conflicting view existed in relation to the teacher intervention. Specifically, it was related to participation structures. While a small group participation structure without the teacher intervention was viewed positively, some wanted more whole class participation structure with the teacher intervention. However, the teacher seemed to have a different view towards inclusion of more whole class discussion. In the final interview, the teacher explained her reasons for not including more whole class discussions as follows:

The whole class discussion takes time and it puts people on the spot. So you have to feel that people are ready to do that. It’s not that it’s not valuable. In this class, some people didn’t say much. There wasn’t a lot of response. So you have to weigh that against the small group discussion. It’s just the personalities in that class… Some people who are good in their group didn’t answer in the whole class. Therefore you have to make those
decisions partly on the personalities of the students. (The teacher, March 2008)

Accordingly, it was the teacher’s pedagogical decision not to include a large class discussion based on her diagnosis that some students were not ready to take on whole class engagements. Thus, she believed that small group discussions would be more beneficial to those students. As the teacher noted in her interview above, she believed that it is the teacher’s decision to choose the structure of participation that takes place in the classroom. It was her decision on the “pedagogical and instructional role” (Gibbons, 2004, p 212) that she took in this particular class to maximize students’ participatory rights to the fullest extent. Such decisions can affect the type and quality of classroom discourse (Hall, 1998; Skilton & Meyern, 1993). Further discussion in relation to the participation structure will be presented in the next chapter under the section of instructional implications.

4.5.6 Experiencing Various Speech Genres and Discursive Practices

To acquire the target language is to acquire discursive practices, speech genres, characteristic of a given sociocultural and institutional setting. (Johnson, 2004, p. 179)

In many L2 classes, language is often taught at the sentence level. Consequently, students lose opportunities to experience language as speech in association with sociocultural contexts. In this class under study, language was taught and experienced at a discourse level in the frame of literature.
Johnson (2004) stressed the importance of the “classroom as a sociocultural setting where an active participation in the target language culture is taught, promoted, and cultivated,” one that reflects “as closely as possible outside sociocultural and institutional realities” (p. 180). Thus experiencing different speech genres and discursive practices that reflect that of the target language is important. The class under study established such learning settings where students were exposed to authentic language realities by incorporating authentic language materials of the target language into the classroom. In line with this idea, the teacher explained how her class with literature could bring students one step closer to real language experiences:

The problem in a classroom is that we are not in the real world… Reading stories and talking about what’s going on in them is not that far remote from real life because we do that. So if we are using the right kind of stories, I think we are getting closer to something that is like real life. It is a good way to solve the problem of how we get closer to the real world in an ESL classroom and have a real discussion. (The teacher, interview, March 2008)

In this class, students were invited to a range of speech genres by means of literature. More specifically, course reading materials presented a range of utterances including description, poems, narratives, daily dialogues, diaries, and expository writing as in newspaper articles. Furthermore, they were engaged with different discursive practices such as oral discussion, formal and informal public speeches, writing responses, to name a few. Such extensive experiences with numerous speech genres and discursive practices were one of the distinguishing
features of this class which incorporated authentic materials in the form of literature.

Consequently, students were given opportunities to gain rich language experiences at a discourse level through literature which is culturally and linguistically rich. Then, how did the students perceive their reading experiences with literature? Interviews with students revealed their positive perceptions about experiences with various speech genres at a discourse level. All three interviewed students noted linguistic benefits gained from various, authentic, extensive reading experiences in the following:

You learn something from short stories or a novel. Even grammar. Once my teacher told me that once I read, we can learn vocab or writing styles. When I read, I try to absorb the writing. If I use this word, it needs this punctuation and this grammar structure, something like that. (Jan, interview, February 2008)

Reading was helpful. We need to read. It will give you examples of sentences or phrases and you can mix them to make a good text. You can learn different styles and patterns and see how they are used. (Monique, interview, March 2008)

You can’t talk about reading. However, it definitely helps with writing. The more you read, the more patterns stay in your mind. When you write, you will unconsciously know it makes sense. (Mi-Ju, interview, March 2008)

All three of the above students quoted identified with what extensive reading experiences offered them. The exposure to various complete pieces of literary texts provided them with opportunities to experience a rich resource of language in context at its finest.

Literature presenting various speech genres invited students to various aspects of language,
including vocabulary, expressions, grammar, styles, and patterns. Importantly, as Jan and Monique pointed out, literature also demonstrated how those linguistic aspects were being used in context at a discourse level. Given that, one possible claim can be that LBLI is different from textbook-based L2 instruction in that experiencing language as speech genres in context at a discourse level is more likely to take place, which will in turn be likely to contribute to the development of an L2.

4.5.7 Responding to Literature

Another major component of the course was students’ response to literature. One of the instructional goals was to engage students in an interaction with literature by getting them to respond to the texts, drawing on their personal experiences, feelings, perspectives, and cultural backgrounds. Their responses were offered both orally and in writing.

First, oral responses were presented through three different forms of participation involving different types of questions. They included: 1) small group literary discussions that required students’ responses to literary or comprehension checking questions presented in the book or prepared by the teacher; 2) a formal poetry presentation inviting both analytical and personal responses to poems; and 3) a group novel presentation composed mainly of students’ own opinion questions about one section of the novel and personal responses from group members. Pedagogically, students’ oral responses have their significance in the construction of
classroom discourse. In comparison to some previous research (Markee, 1995; Ohta & Nakaone, 2004; Skilton & Meyer, 1993; White & Lightbown, 1984; Yuksel, 2009), students in this class played a more contributing and proactive role in building the oral discourse among all participants in the classroom. In particular, when students came up with their own questions to discuss the novel, *Flowers for Algernon*, the control of classroom discourse was completely in students’ hands as they asked and responded to questions provided by students themselves. Such discourse demonstrated a high degree of students’ engagement with the text and their proactive role in their L2 learning process.

With respect to written responses, students were assigned two major writing projects: 1) five entries of response journal to students’ chosen literary work and 2) a literary essay, a final project, in response to the novel, *Flowers for Algernon*. The interviews with the teacher disclose that the teacher placed emphasis on students’ responses for two reasons: 1) to provide them with opportunities to reflect on their reading and talk about it in the target language; and 2) to familiarize them with academic discourse of giving opinions and substantiating them with evidence from the text. The teacher made it clear that this course was designed to develop language through literature, not to study literature. For this reason, instead of judging answers simply as right or wrong, she treated every response with respect so long as it was supported with reference to the text. The teacher’s attitude towards students’ responses is shown in the
With literature of course, students have been taught the idea of the right or wrong answer. It is really hard for them to get that there is a better answer. There is a good answer, better answer, or a not so good answer. And what makes an answer good is that you can find evidence for it. You can support it better. Maybe we can’t get a right answer, maybe even the author. (The teacher, interview, March 2008)

Participation in these responding activities was viewed positively by all students. In particular, most students expressed that the preparation for group discussions helped them enhance their understanding of and engagement with the readings. For example, some respondents enjoyed the process because “thinking about characters was very interesting” (Yuri, questionnaire, March, 2008) or they felt “closer to the characters or the stories” (Mi-Ju, March, 2008). In particular, Mi-Ju emphasized that close reading by positioning herself in the character’s situations was required for responding to literature. Closer engagement with literature was also observed in written responses of some students. For example, in one of our interviews, Jan shared her personal attachment to the short story entitled All the Years of Her Life because she could identify with the characters in the story. In the interview, she talked about her connection to the story with tears in her eyes remembering her mother back in her home country. The following is an excerpt:

I liked All the Years of her Life, which was about the boy who stole from the drug store. I liked it. I was like that when I was a teenager. I didn’t steal, but I didn’t care much about my mother and stuck with my friends. Once it was exactly like the same situation as the
boy in the story. At the end, the boy realized that his mom worried about him. It was first time for him to recognize mother’s love. Regarding my situation, I found my mom’s letter. She wrote a song for me. It was similar to that story. The letter said like that I hurt her, but she still loved me. Since then, I decided to change myself. I was thinking, “what have I done to her?” The story was very similar to my story. That’s why I like that story. While reading the story, I felt kind of down and sad, and started missing my mom. (Jan, March 2008)

The above indicates how Jan was engaged in an intimate dialogue with the story in her L2 reading process, drawing on her own personal experiences and feelings. Her personal aesthetic response that was lived-through, exploratory, and spontaneous (Cazden, 2001; Rosenblatt, 1978) positioned Jan as an active reader and meaning-maker in the productive activity of reading in the target language. Both her emotions and intellect were involved in this L2 reading experience. Overall, multiple opportunities for students’ aesthetic responses elicited more students’ production of discourse in the target language in both quality and quantity that could be conducive to the L2 development (Ali, 1994; Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 1997; Hirvela, 1996; Lazar, 1992; Paran, 2006).

4.5.8 Enjoyment and Pleasure

The story is about people if it is well written. We can get situations that students can identify with. And it can be a stimulus… Our lives have a sense of story in it, something unexpected or unknown in it. I think that’s what comes out in stories. If there is something unexpected or unknown, that keeps people reading and keeps them interested. (The teacher, interview, January 2008)

One noticeable characteristic of this class was that pleasurable reading experiences in the
target language were central to the entire language learning process. According to Krashen (2004), pleasure reading involving emotive sides as well as functional sides of language can contribute to the development of L2. However, in learning processes, emotive aspects are often overlooked while the focus is more on intellectual or cognitive facets of the learning process.

In general, human communication involves both affective and practical sides of language. Also, based on the view that language learning is a social practice (Johnson, 2004), it is natural to take into account the affective sides of language and the learning of it. Human communication is formed in the combination of culture, relationship, intelligence, emotion, and more. Thus, it would be natural and effective to allow affective sides of learning to be part of L2 learning. Language is not just a dry linguistic code. It is always found in interaction among the internal mind and external world (Vygotsky, 1978). In this sense, language can be a reflection of human minds.

Authentic literary texts could be a good example of the role of language in interactions between human minds. In the process of reading in this class, the minds of readers were involved at two levels. At the first level of reading activities, the students’ minds observed the language in the fabric of characters, settings, culture, emotion, feelings, conflicts, etc. At the second level, as they responded to it in personal journals or orally among other individuals, readers’ minds were invited to participate more intimately with the language in the literature. Hence, stories seem to
be a natural vehicle to allow affective sides to thrive in the classroom. As a result, the involvement of affective sides through reading and responding to literature led to a natural increase in the degree of student enjoyment and pleasure in their learning process.

The data from observations and interviews demonstrated that reading literature touched the minds of the students. Based on the analysis of class observations, there was some qualitative evidence that students experienced a high level of enjoyment and pleasure. The researcher often witnessed some evidence, including lively exchange of ideas, laughter and a high volume of students’ voices, highly-engaging heated discussion, to name a few. The data from interviews with students triangulate these observational findings indicating a high level of affective engagement with literary activities:

In academic ESL classes, I learned how to do an exam, how to answer, or how to find a correct answer from the context. But in the literature course, it is about life or something and I can learn more than that. You bring your interpretation. I learn about people and their lives and what’s going on to this people something like that. It is more fun. (Jan, interview, March 2008)

I like the novel that we are reading now (Flowers for Algernon). But before I opened the book, I was a bit discouraged. But I began to read it and I got to enjoy it. I read it about half now and I am really enjoying it because you can read it when you want. (Monique, interview, February 2008)

I enjoy the novel presentation. At first, it was stressful that I had to finish the whole novel. Also the teacher gave us a bunch of homework. Later I found this novel is very easy to understand. This one is a modern novel. I can read and finish very fast. Also, as you remember, last Thursday, we had a very heated discussion. Many people even almost argued. I think everyone enjoyed it. I liked it. If I didn’t take this class, maybe I would
never try to enjoy a novel in English. (Mi-Ju, February 2008)

As illustrated above, all three interviewees indicated that they learned pleasure of reading in the target language from reading experiences with literary texts. In particular, Monique reported that she enjoyed reading the novel which was in the form of an authentic text (i.e., a handy regular book format, not a story within an ESL textbook), which she could carry anywhere to read. The act of reading was viewed as pleasurable engagement by these to students. Further, Mi-Ju echoed what the researcher also witnessed during the novel discussion by stating that she was satisfied with the outcome of a highly engaging exchange of ideas during the discussion.

4.6 Summary of Students’ Feedback

The remainder of this chapter presents students’ reactions and perceptions with regard to their learning experiences with the instruction over 12 weeks on the basis of the post-study questionnaire with the whole class and two interviews with three volunteer students. The post-study questionnaire was e-mailed to all 16 students. Among those, a total of 12 responses were gathered; two students withdrew from the program to go back to their home countries for personal reasons and the other two simply did not reply. The questionnaire was designed to seek students’ reflections on their learning experiences in the course and an evaluation of the course (See Appendix F for a list of questions).

The students rated the course 7.2 on average on a scale of 0 being very poor to 10 being
excellent. This implies students’ moderate satisfaction with the course. A closer look into the rating distribution explains the result. That is, polarized opinions accounted for this moderate level of satisfaction. While five respondents’ ratings ranged from 7 to 7.5, the rest were divided into two opposite sides on the scale: three respondents’ ratings were below 6 and four above 8. This illustrates a clear distinction between acceptance and resistance towards the course, meaning some students were highly satisfied while others were not.

There may be several factors involved for such marginal results. One factor has to do with individual students’ different learning styles and preferences towards instruction. For example, two of the three students on the low extreme end expressed the need for more teacher-controlled instruction in the class. Although they appeared to participate well in group discussions, these two students indicated a conflicting desire for more teacher intervention during the class time. Moreover, all three of them in the lower end stated that they were reluctant readers even in their L1. Thus, the relatively low satisfaction level of their learning experiences in the class may be attributable to both their unfavorable view towards reading in general and their lack of extensive reading experiences for pleasure.

On the other hand, class observations revealed that all four respondents who rated the course above average demonstrated highly active participation in the class work throughout the course in comparison to their peers. They seemed to be more motivated in their learning
processes. Also, in contrast to the respondents who rated the course below average, none of these four students in the higher end expressed a negative view towards the low occurrence of teacher intervention.

In addition, group dynamics appeared to play a positive role in relation to the students’ learning outcomes. Based on class observations, all four of them happened to be situated in one of the two groups that performed more highly focused, engaging, and productive group discussions compared to the other two groups in the class which demonstrated less active participation in small group discussions. If these four students had been in the other two less active groups, different levels of satisfaction about the course might have been anticipated.

In response to the question of “what parts of the class did you find the most enjoyable,” seven respondents mentioned the novel presentation, followed by the poetry presentation (3), small group discussion (2), vocabulary (1), and reading interesting stories (1). Findings suggest that opportunities for freely exchanging and negotiating meaning through literary discussions (i.e., the novel presentations and group discussions) in small groups were substantially appreciated by the majority of the respondents. Respondents were also asked about their favorite literary pieces from the class readings. The results revealed that students chose *Flowers for Algernon* (7), *All the Years of Her Life* (2), *Penny in the Dust* (2), *The Luncheon* (1), *Tell-Tale Heart* (1), and all the poems (1). In contrast, respondents selected the following as their non-
favorite texts: *Tell-Tale Heart, Hills like Elephants, The New Food, Slaves Come to My Heart* and *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*. What should be noted here is that the students’ non favorite pieces were mostly from the textbook. On the other hand, with the exception of *The Lady or the Tiger* and *Tell-Tale Heart*, most of the pieces chosen as students’ favorites came from outside sources. Of the favorite texts, the majority selected *Flowers for Algernon*, which was the only novel among the course material. A possible explanation for this outcome may be that the novel is more developed with well-rounded characters compared to short stories. Moreover, the novel deals with the theme of human relationships and challenges which this group of ESL young adult students may have been able to better empathize with. Monique further explained the positive aspects of this novel:

It (the novel) is more developed. Of course you can enjoy a short story, too, but in a novel, every character is well developed. And it contains issues. Even though the book is from 1950s, the issues in the book are still relevant. In the past, it was like a science fiction, but is going to be real. So people are concerned about this. That’s why the book is still in print and popular. I like stories that we can discuss on. (Monique, interview, March, 2008)

Further, Mi-Ju added another reason why she preferred the novel. It was the authentic nature of the novel; that is, it was a real book that could be found outside the classroom rather than only in an ESL textbook. Mi-Ju emphasized that she viewed the novel as reading for pleasure, whereas the stories in the textbook were seen as reading for studying. She described her
view towards reading materials as follows: “When I read *Flowers for Algernon*, I read it everywhere, on the bus or at a table. But when I read old stories (older short stories in the textbook), I have to sit on the chair at a desk with my dictionary” (Mi-Ju, interview, March, 2008). Further discussion will be presented in the next chapter to address the issues when selecting texts in an L2 classroom.

In addition, the questionnaire explored students’ perceptions about their linguistic progress. Their answers varied; four felt their vocabulary had improved, while others mentioned the improvement in their reading comprehension, writing skills, paraphrasing skills, understanding of English literature, and confidence in reading longer English texts. Although the scope of this study does not allow for specific quantitative measures of participants’ linguistic improvement, qualitative results of the questionnaire and interviews reveal that most participants noticed a development in their L2 skills as a result of this class. The following presents some of the students’ perceptions in relation to their L2 development:

I learned much vocabulary and how to paraphrase. (Yuri, questionnaire, March 2008)

Discussion helped me improve my language skills. You need to prepare and read before discussion. It is hard to express your feeling or what you think about a story. But once we have a lot of discussion, I can come across that stage and tell what I think, and the reasons why I think like that. It makes my talk more fluent, accurate and more logical to say something to someone else. (Jan, interview, March 2008)

The novel helped me with my reading speed… Also, vocabulary! A lot of vocabulary that I learned from academic class are not used in our daily life. But in this class, the
teacher teaches us which words are used in everyday context. I can use expression in the stories in daily life. (Mi-Ju, interview, March 2008)

Reading English texts can teach me what an English-speaking writer think, and the way they organize their work. It’s also helpful to my writing. And during this class, I get more vocabularies than any other classes. (Nancy, questionnaire, March 2008)

My speaking is not perfect yet, but I gained a lot of confidence to talk with people. (Monique, interview, March 2008)

I can read English novel without hesitation now. I can finish reading thick English novels. (Jane, questionnaire, March 2008)

Lastly, students made suggestions to improve the course in the questionnaires and interviews. Suggestions were made in four particular areas: teacher’s role, participation structures, reading materials, and class activities. First, three students stated in the questionnaire that they desired more teacher intervention throughout the class. They wanted to see more teacher control of the class. Secondly, the students expressed the need for different participation structures. Discussing in small groups of four was the dominant participation structure in this class and all the students maintained their position with the same group members over the entire term. Except for one occasion towards the end of the term when the entire class discussed *The Use of Force*, all the discussions were done within groups. Several students, including Mi-Ju, expressed their enjoyment and appreciation for the chance to participate in the whole class discussion after reading *The Use of Force* in Week 11.

Early this week, we had a whole class discussion on *The Use of Force*. The teacher asked
to each group, how about this group and how about that group? That was very interesting. That was the first and last whole class discussion. I think that was very good. In our group we reach just one conclusion, but other groups could have another conclusion. I could hear another person’s opinions. (Mi-Ju, interview, March 2008)

This is not to say small group discussion was not valued by the students. The results of the questionnaire revealed that 75 % of the students (i.e., nine out of 12) selected it as their most enjoyable aspect of the class. Thus, what was desired by some students was extension of such group discussions to whole class discussions which would enable them to hear other viewpoints.

Thirdly, a suggestion was made on reading material and activities. As the novel was picked as the most enjoyable reading material, one student stated in the questionnaire that more novels could replace the textbook. Three students indicated that they would want to read more modern stories rather than what they referred to as “old stories.”

Lastly, more dynamic classroom activities were suggested. Students were satisfied with the main instructional routines of reading and discussing literature on one hand, but some dynamic and routine-breaking activities were called for on the other hand. Students’ suggestions included: incorporating different media along with written literary texts, dramatization of written stories, and different discussion formats.

We had always the same pattern: we read and discuss, and read and discuss. I think that’s why people get tired or bored. Even if they were different stories, it was always the same pattern. She could find other ways to teach through different activities. (Monique, interview, March 2008)
4.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of this qualitative descriptive case study of an adult ESL class with LBLI in western Canada in response to two research questions that guided the study: 1) what is the nature of teaching practices of LBLI in an adult ESL classroom at a private language institute? And 2) what are the students’ learning experiences with such instruction? The purpose of this present study was to have a thick description of the class with LBLI through data triangulation by employing multiple data sources such as class observations, interviews with three students and the teacher, two questionnaires with the whole class, and written documents. The study attempted to investigate what was happening in the class with literature as a key L2 learning material and how participants in the class perceived the instruction. Ultimately, this investigation on how literature is used was an attempt to make a contribution to the database of scholarly and pedagogical inquiries with regard to how literature can best be used for L2 development.

First, the chapter began with an overview of the 12-week-long course on a weekly basis. Next, the nature of teaching practices of the course was explored by discussing different aspects of the course including assignments, classroom discourse, materials, and learning outcomes. Then, eight recurrent themes that emerged from the data were presented in response to the second research question regarding the students’ learning experiences. Comments from the participants
(i.e., the teacher and students) were presented to illustrate the perceptions and perspectives of the
insiders in regard to students’ learning experiences. Lastly, the chapter ended with the results of
the questionnaire sent to all students to examine their reaction to the instruction. The next chapter
will provide a summary of the findings and further discuss the findings to suggest instructional
implications for ESL practitioners as well as implications for ESL/EFL publishers, curriculum
developers, L2 teacher-educators, and L2 students. The limitations of the study and its research
implications will also be presented.
Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The present study was designed to explore and document the nature of teaching and learning practices in an adult ESL classroom in a private language institution incorporating literature as a key teaching material for the development of students’ second language (L2). This chapter will summarize the research findings and provide teaching implications for L2 teachers interested in Literature-Based Language Instruction (LBLI) as well as implications for publishers, policy makers, curriculum developers, teacher educators, and L2 learners.

5.2 Significance of the Study

The study attempted to answer the following research questions that guided the study: 1) What is the nature of teaching practice of LBLI in an adult ESL classroom at a private language institute?; and 2) What are the students’ learning experiences with such instruction? Determining whether or not L2 teachers should use literature in their classrooms was not the purpose of this study. By answering the research questions by means of a documentation of one particular ESL class with LBLI, the study aimed to shed light on how literary texts are being used in a language classroom and ultimately how they can/should be incorporated more effectively. Furthermore, the focus was on the voices of students reflecting their reactions and perspectives toward their
learning experiences with LBLI by presenting their comments gathered from the questionnaires and interviews. Ultimately, with the thick documentation of an adult ESL class with LBLI, the current study attempts to contribute to the further scholarly discussion by filling a research gap in the existing literature on the topic of learning L2 through literature. Previous research agrees that, although literature has been adopted in an L2 classroom particularly for younger learners, 1) little attention has been paid to the pedagogical issues around how literature can best be used in L2 classrooms, particularly for adult L2 learners, and 2) the nature of teaching/learning practice of incorporating literature for L2 development in adult L2 classrooms has not been well-documented (Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Gilroy & Parkinson, 1997; Kim, 2004; Lazar, 1992; Paran, 2006; Yuksel, 2009). In light of this research gap, there is a necessity for descriptive qualitative classroom-based research specifically in two areas concerning the topic: 1) the nature of LBLI in an ESL classroom with adult learners in a “private institute setting” where many ESL/EFL adult learners depend on in their L2 learning and 2) representation of “students’ reactions and perspectives” about the instruction incorporating literature. An investigation of these instructional inquiries can provide insights into the question of “how” literature can effectively be used in L2 classrooms for the development of L2. In order to pursue these research inquiries, careful documentation of a particular ESL classroom was carried out over 12 weeks at a private language institute in western Canada.
5.3 Summary of the Findings

The class under study was an advanced-level ESL class composed of 16 international adult students. Some stayed in Canada for a short term to polish their English for advancement in their future careers while others were enrolled in the program in the pursuit of entrance to a university in North America. The class was one of two advanced-level reading courses as part of a 12-week intensive ESL program. This course was technically categorized as a non-academic reading class using literary texts (i.e., fiction), whereas the other reading course was regarded as an academic reading class with academic articles as the main reading material.

One of the teaching aims underlying this course was to develop the target language through reading and discussing various literary texts that served as both a resource of language and a source for interaction. In essence, this class was an application of content-based language instruction with literature as content. The underlying rationale for this class was that stories, a universal speech genre, would invite ESL learners to more authentic and pleasurable language experiences while promoting language skills such as summarizing, paraphrasing, reading between the lines, referencing, to name a few.

Over the 12-week term, over 30 pieces of literature were read and discussed. They included short stories, poems, newspaper articles, and a play. Some were from the textbook and some were chosen by the teacher from outside sources. Also, the novel entitled Flowers for
Algernon was another major reading material.

Reading and discussing literary texts were central to the teaching and learning practices of the class. A large proportion of the class time was spent in small group discussions. The discussions were mainly based on the questions from three sources: the textbook, the teacher, and students. Some questions were efferent (i.e., seeking information) or presentational in their nature and some were aesthetic (i.e., involving personal responses) or exploratory (Barnes & Todd, 1995; Rosenblatt, 1978). Students’ own-constructed questions played an important role during the novel presentation where individuals in a group of four took turns leading a small group discussion on one of the four sections of the novel. During discussions, students were encouraged to exchange and negotiate their opinions and responses by referring to the text to support what they had to say.

Writing was another major component of this class. Each student chose five literary pieces to respond to in their response journal and was also required to write a literary essay on the novel. Throughout the course, unfamiliar vocabulary from the texts was constantly discussed and reviewed. The teacher selected a list of vocabulary from each piece and discussed different shades of the words by touching on usage, part of speech, collocations, and denotation/connotation. This was followed by group discussions of the questions using a new vocabulary item and weekly vocabulary quizzes requiring paraphrasing and composing a sentence. The
following recurrent themes highlight the nature of the instruction in this particular literature-based ESL class for adult learners at an advanced-level:

a. Language learning through language use
b. Active vocabulary learning by understanding different shades of language and using them in a meaningful context
c. Student-Centered (i.e., independent learning and students as responsible agents,)
d. Collaborative interaction
e. Teacher’s role as a participant
f. Experiencing different language, genres, and discussion formats (e.g., formal presentation, group discussion, etc)
g. Aesthetic and analytic response
h. Language learning with enjoyment and pleasure

5.4 Instructional Implications

In light of the fact there is a scarcity of empirical studies on how literature can/should be used in an L2 classroom, the profound purpose of this present study was to present pedagogical implications for L2 teachers on the grounds of findings of the study. The following pedagogical implications have been drawn for L2 teachers who are interested in incorporating literature into their L2 classrooms. Successful integration of LBLI would require a sensitive and careful approach to the following: reading material selection, involving both aesthetic and efferent reading, creating a community respecting students’ voice, extended reading experiences, a teacher as a facilitator, a student’s agency, experiencing different shades of language in context, and a combination of different participating structures.
5.4.1 Careful Reading Material Selection

The successful selection of reading texts is a key to the satisfactory outcome of learning in an L2 classroom. On the basis of the findings of the present study, the successful selection would need to encompass two major primary criteria: the text needs to be 1) appropriate to students’ proficiency level and 2) relevant to their interest. These two criteria would need to be taken into account in the process of selecting reading texts for a high engagement with the texts. Previous research supports their importance (Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 1997; Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002; Krashen, 2004; Nuttall, 1996; Smallwood, 1998). If the reading texts are not favoured by students, poor learning outcomes are likely. This is because LBLI classes primarily consist of activities stemming from the act of students’ reading of the texts.

The majority of students in the class under study indicated a common preference of contemporary and relationship focused literary texts: for example, short stories such as All the Years of Her Life and Penny in the Dust, and the novel, Flowers for Algernon. First, on the basis of students’ feedback in the questionnaire and interviews, all three texts appeared to be appropriate to some students’ level. Several mentioned that they were not “too difficult to read” (Mi-Ju, interview, March 2008) or “I didn’t need to use dictionary too much to follow the story” (Jane, questionnaire, March 2008). In fact, these pieces are frequently found to be on the reading
list for young English-speaking readers in North America. The use of literature for young people in an adult L2 classroom is indeed supported by some scholars (Cho & Krashen, 1994; McNicholls, 2006; Smallwood, 1998; Tomlinson & McGraw, 1997). Additionally, it is also worth noting that all these pieces named most frequently by the students in the class as their favorites are contemporary stories dealing with human relationships. Both short stories are on the theme of a relationship between teenagers and parents. Similarly, the novel presents the challenge of Charlie with lower intelligence struggling with difficulties in the relationships with people around him. The findings cannot be generalized to all the ESL readers in other learning contexts. However, the students’ preference of contemporary and relationship-related stories suggests that L2 teachers may consider incorporating some literary texts with these features for their adult L2 learners.

In addition to the criteria above, another factor that should be considered when selecting texts is the physical format of reading texts. In other words, how are the literary texts presented: one should ponder on how literary texts are presented: are they introduced in the textbook, or are they authentic books? The findings of the study suggest that participants in this particular class favoured stories chosen from an outside source and the full length authentic novel over most stories presented in the course textbook. In particular, two interviewees, Mi-Ju and Monique, mentioned that the novel was preferred because they could read it anywhere, even without the
pressure to look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary. One possible interpretation can be that the novel in an authentic book format may have in turn yielded the experiences of reading for pleasure in contrast to that of reading for analysing. This is not to say that the stories in the textbook completely failed to appeal to the readers. One explanation is that the different form of introduction of the texts may have influenced students’ presupposition or motivation in relation to reading.

5.4.2 Involving Both Aesthetic and Efferent Reading

Discussing and responding are an essential part of LBLI. In order for students to fully benefit from this essential part of the instruction for both L2 development and literary appreciation, the instruction would need to involve both efferent and aesthetic responses to literature (Ali, 1994; Davis, 1989; Elliott, 1990; Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002; Hess, 2006; Hirvela, 1996; Lazar, 1992; Tutas, 2006).

In language classrooms, the focus has often been on practical sides of language in view of language as an instrument to exchange information. This was more prevalent in adult ESL classrooms in a private institutional setting (James, 2003; Paran, 2006). However, one can say that human language involves a combination of affects and intellects (Mcrae, 1991). Language carries a message in our mind to another mind for certain purposes in a particular context (Vygotsky, 1978). A mind and a mind meet and communicate through language. Thus, teaching
only practical sides of language to L2 users may result in the failure of presenting the complete 
facets of language in context (Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Hess, 2006).

Likewise, reading experiences in L2 have also been confined to skill-oriented and 
information seeking processes in many L2 classrooms (Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 1997; James, 
2003; Paran, 2006). Rosenblatt (1978) argued that readers can take two different stances when 
reading: aesthetic and efferent. In the efferent reading stance, readers seek to find information by 
using various reading skills such as skimming, scanning, or close reading. On the other hand, an 
aesthetic reading stance is taken when readers approach literary texts to create meaning while 
transacting with the text, drawing upon their preoccupations, present feelings and emotions, 
experiences, background, and the conditions and circumstances around them. Efferent reading 
may involve presentational talk, whereas aesthetic reading can involve exploratory talk (Barnes 
& Todd, 1995). Readers opt to take on one or both stances when reading, depending on the 
genres of the texts and purposes of reading. Nonetheless, aesthetic reading has been underrated in 
language classrooms (Elliott, 1990; Lazar, 1992). In order to engage with language in the text to 
the fullest extent, students should be given opportunities to experience both stances (Rosenblatt, 
1978). Consequently, this combination is ultimately likely to allow L2 users to experience and 
develop both the affective and practical sides of language.

Findings reveal that, in this class under study, attempts were made to balance the two
stances. On the one hand, students had to pay closer attention to information in the texts as they were required to make a summary or to answer comprehension questions. On the other hand, they were encouraged to immerse themselves in the stories as they made a personal response to short stories or prepared for a novel/poetry presentation. The aesthetic reading was clearly evident in small group discussions on the novel over four class days in which one of the most heated exchanges of responses was yielded. Students actively and vigorously responded to a set of questions about the story constructed by their peers as if they personally knew the protagonist named Charlie in the story. The discussions were enriched with a contribution from every individual participant by bringing his or her ideas, emotions, and viewpoints in the target language. This reading experience that was aesthetic in nature was extended to efferent reading afterwards when they were asked to write a formal literary essay about the novel. After all, it is important that L2 teachers create opportunities to engage students in both reading stances in order to maximize the quantity and quality of interaction among readers, language, and literature.

5.4.3 A Community of Readers

Based on the findings of the study, one can argue that LBLI was able to contribute to the facilitation of a venue for a rich exchange and negotiation of each individual’s thoughts and reflections on readings in the class because the act of reading and talking about literary texts was central to the L2 curriculum in this class. One teaching implication that can be drawn from the
findings of the study is that, in order to make this venue a substantially welcoming place for all the voices of the students in the classroom, it is essential to establish a sense of a community among all the participants in the classroom. That is to say that it is very important to make each individual feel that they are welcomed and their voices are valued by all others, including a teacher. Without the establishment of such membership, it would be challenging to evoke students’ genuine voice-embedded interactions.

The teacher in the present study put this principle into practice by encouraging students to share opinions freely. As noted in the interviews and the class time, it was the teacher’s pedagogical belief that there may be no right or wrong answers in responding to literature, but there can be good or better answers if those are supported by evidence in the text. One of the distinctive pedagogical advantages of LBLI is that any answers or interpretations can be acceptable as long as they are supported by evidence in the text. Different viewpoints are encouraged and invited. Such a learning atmosphere is important because it can enhance the quality and quantity of interaction in the target language in the class (Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 1997; Kim, 2004; Paran, 2006). Hence, an L2 teacher’s effort to create a sense of community of readers and language users should be required from the very first class.

5.4.4 Extended Reading

However, we had always the same pattern: we read and discuss, and read and discuss. I think that’s why people get tired or bored. Even if they were different stories, it was
always the same pattern. She could find other ways to teach through different activities. (Monique, interview, March 2008)

Another teaching implication is that the act of reading needs to be stretched to its fullest extent so that readers can experience and benefit from works of literature which are linguistically, emotionally, and culturally-rich texts. For example, in this class, discussion in small groups played an important role in the rich literary and linguistic experiences of the students. However, over the lengthy period of the term, some students viewed it as a routine instructional process and lost their focus: For example, all three students being interviewed pointed out the habitual routine of this reading and discussion pattern.

Although small group discussion has its place in the class as an important venue for reflecting on and extending their readings, students’ reading can and should be even further extended by bringing readers and texts more closely to one another. It can be done through the active engagement of students’ minds and thoughts. Such active engagement can commence before reading to hook up students’ interest with any aspect of the story and continue during and after reading. For example, as a warm up activity before reading, some ground work can be done to get them familiar with the sociocultural or historical background of the story. Without such preliminary engagement, some literary texts specific to a particular time, place, and culture can be challenging and even foreign to some readers. Consequently, this may result in an unsatisfactory level of engagement with the story. Mi-Ju stated the following in line with this:
The story (*An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*) was a little bit weird. I wondered about that story, so I did some research online. I found that that story is an old one and that story is connected with the time. That means that if I wasn’t in that century, I wouldn’t be able to understand that situation and everything. (Mi-Ju, March 2008)

With regard to post-reading activities, in addition to small group discussions, various types of activities stretching students’ response can be implemented. For example, dramatic activities can serve as a means to connect readers to a story. They can include readers’ theater, dramatization, process drama, frozen images, among others (Kao & O’neill, 1998; Liu, 2002; McGowan-Rick, 1994; Ralph, 1997; Song, 2000).

### 5.4.5 Teacher as a Facilitator

Instruction with literature to serve both as a resource for language and as a source for interaction requires a teacher to serve as a facilitator rather than one who transfers knowledge. In other words, to make a class filled with students’ voices and meaningful interactions in an LBLI class, the teacher would need to present himself or herself as someone who is interested in their voices and attempts to create a forum for them to share their interpretations and reactions to literary texts. The teacher would need to be there with students to establish an environment where students explore meanings listening to other voices.

### 5.4.6 Students as Participants

Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that education should help learners move from the other
regulatory stage to the self regulatory stage by expanding the learner’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) through interaction. In this sense, fostering students’ sense of independence as language users is critical. In particular, this would be important for advanced-level students. Students should be given multiple opportunities to enhance their independence as language users. Therefore, teachers must allow students to talk, think, make decisions, and negotiate in collaboration with other students.

Students need to learn to be active participants in their learning process. They are present in the class not just to receive knowledge passively. They are there to learn and use language. In an advanced level class, as done in this class under study, students could initiate interaction by asking their own questions to elicit responses from their peers as opposed to those classes where interaction is always initiated by the teachers. This will result in an extending a typical teacher-led IRF (i.e., initiation, response, and feedback) to a more extended, student-led interaction. For the successful implementation of LBLI, the teacher should be responsible for encouraging students to view themselves as active participants in their learning process.

5.4.7 Different Shades of Language in Context

LBLI is where language and literature mingle together. Lengthy literary texts can demonstrate how language functions and operates at a discourse level in context. Hence, in the act of reading, it is important that the instruction should direct readers’ awareness to how
language operates and contributes to meanings in literature. Words have different shades which create different meanings depending on the context. The discussion and reflection on the link between language and meaning should be part of a curriculum. LBLI potentially transcends sentence-level language learning to utterance-level and offers contextualized language. Thus, it can provide students with opportunities to experience and experiment with different shades of words in context including denotation, connotation, figurative meanings, literal meanings, and usage of words.

5.4.8 Various Participation Structures

LBLI can provide student-centered learning in the sense that students’ voices are at the core of teaching and learning in the classroom. Teachers would need to ponder the question of how students’ voices can be maximized in both quantity and quality. In order to achieve a high volume of quality exchange of students’ responses before/during/after reading, various participation structures can be implemented. This is because different participating structures can contribute to different outcomes of responses or interactions in quantity and quality (Barnes & Todd, 1995; Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Dornyei & Csizer, 1998; Yuksel, 2009).

In this class, the major participation structure was a small group discussion. Most interaction was done in small groups with the exception of the occasion of a whole class discussion that took place when discussing the short story, The Use of Force, at the end of the
term. While small group discussions established a non-threatening environment for interactions throughout the term, several students indicated that there could have been more class discussion followed by small group discussion or opportunities to work with other members in their group to hear other viewpoints in the class.

Diversifying participating structures in terms of size, modes, and formats could increase chances to meet students’ different needs, proficiency levels, and their personal preference.

Moreover, their responses could be stretched further. In addition to small group discussion, other possible structures can include whole class discussions, individual or group presentations, individual written responses, on-line exchange of responses, to name a few.

5.5 Implications for Publishers, Policy Makers, Teacher-Educators, and L2 Learners

One implication that can be drawn from the study for ESL/EFL publishers particularly for those producing literature-based materials is that more careful consideration needs to be made in relation to the kinds of literary texts to be included in the reading material. As Johnson (2004) stressed in light of Bakhtin’s literary theory, it is important for L2 learners to experience and be exposed to various speech genres associated with sociocultural and institutional contexts in the course of developing their L2. Thus, various genres of literature including fiction and non-fiction can be included in a course reading material, including short stories, novels, poems, essays, newspaper articles, diaries, and scientific journals to name a few. This wide range of literature
can demonstrate different styles and structures of various discourse to L2 learners who may not have experienced them previously. In addition, findings of the study suggest that some L2 students may prefer particular literary texts on certain topics written in or reflecting certain times. For example, the students in the present study expressed more appreciation for stories that were contemporary and that dealt with relationships in family, with friends, or in society rather than older ones or classics. Additionally, ESL publishers particularly those in Canada could consider including more of Canadian literature which new comers to Canada could benefit from reading and discussing contemporary Canadian content. In particular, realistic stories about immigrants or multiculturalism of Canada could appeal to new comers or immigrants to the country and engage them in a more relevant and lively discussion of the readings. Another implication for the publishers is related to a format for presenting literature. One student in the study explained that she sat at a desk with a dictionary when reading short stories in the textbook in contrast to reading anywhere such as on a bed or on a bus when she read teacher-selected short stories presented in a handout or the novel, *Flowers for Algernon*. This may be an indication of a possibility of different effects that different formats of presentation (i.e., authentic book or non-authentic book format) can make. Also, all of the literary pieces that the students indicated they enjoyed the least were largely from the textbook. There may be numerous factors to account for this negative experience with those pieces in the textbook, but one possible factor can be the
format of their presentation (i.e., the format of an academic textbook). Such format may be attributable to readers’ negative presumption about the short stories in the textbook. Thus, publishers could consider alternative ways of presenting literature in a more authentic format: for example, a series of short stories in a pocket book format separate from a study guide.

With regard to implications for policy makers and curriculum developers, I would like to suggest that more discussions and effort be made in order to promote a learning environment which strives to achieve a balance between functional syllabus and “contextual syllabus” (Kramsch, 1996), implicit learning and explicit instruction, affective sides and practical sides of language, or an efferent approach and an aesthetic approach to reading. LBLI can possibly be one alternative means through which such learning context can be reinforced. Also, it is important to take into account alternative ways of evaluation/assessment of students’ achievement in a course or their overall growth in L2 proficiency. It is often the case that students’ test results may not completely account for their actual language proficiency or their overall growth in L2 over the term. Test results coupled with a holistic assessment approach, using portfolios demonstrating students’ long-term growth, could be implemented so as to better reflect students’ learning. Subsequently, with such change in the means of evaluation, teaching practices in a classroom can likely move towards a more holistic contextual syllabus such as LBLI.

For teacher-educators, one implication that can be suggested based on the study is that
Teaching ESL (TESL) training programs could include a component that offers a forum for future ESL/EFL teachers to discuss and ponder a possibility of incorporating literature in their L2 classrooms. According to previous research such as Paran (2006) and Belcher and Hirvela (2000), only a few ESL/EFL teacher training programs (i.e., less than 10% of TESL programs in England and North America) provide such opportunities in a form of workshops or a course. The inclusion or expansion of opportunities for scholarly discussions in TESL programs about L2 teaching methods involving literature can broaden L2 teachers’ view towards the feasibility of learning and teaching L2 through LBLI and ultimately lead to its more active implementation into practice in their teaching contexts.

Lastly, I also suggest that L2 students play a role as more responsible participants in their learning process. The fundamental goal of LBLI is to raise students’ voices in L2 as Cox and Boyd-Batstone (1997) asserted. The collaborative and interactive nature of LBLI would call for more active participants’ role from students for successful learning experiences with LBLI. Students should view themselves as an active language user and not as a passive information processor as they negotiate and exchange meanings with their peers, teachers, and the texts.

5.6 Limitations and Research Implications

Group dynamics should be considered when dealing with findings of this study. The reason is that they can be a factor in determining the nature of students’ interactions or the degree
of their participation (Dornyei, 2002). The teacher compared the class with the one she taught in the previous summer. She explained that the summer class’s students appeared to be more actively participating and more self-directed in discussing the texts. She inferred that it might have stemmed from the maturity of the students as well as the presence of more female students in the class. She mentioned that they seemed to be “older and more mature” (The teacher, interview, March, 2008) in that they maintained their attentiveness and interest during group discussions. Also of a total of nine students in the previous class, eight were female students who demonstrated high engagement. In addition, a closer look at each group discloses that the groups were divergent in the quality of interaction in group discussions. As the small group discussion format was the most prevalent feature of the class, its outcome affected students’ learning experiences over the term. Class observations support that some groups had more engaging discussions than others. Therefore, it would be interesting for future research to compare the interactions of different groups within one class and multiple classes taught by the same teacher using the same material and instruction.

Another limitation is that types of reading materials might have accounted for the outcome of this particular class. Several students indicated that they would prefer reading more contemporary stories. Further research can be done to investigate how different materials representing different genres and times impact students’ learning experiences. Moreover, LBLI
classes with different proficiency levels also need to be explored to understand what materials can be adopted to fulfill the needs and levels of the students. For example, children’s or adolescent literature could be considered to be used extensively as reading material for beginner or intermediate classes for adults.

As noted in Chapter 1, the present study was originally designed to investigate how literature for young people is used in adult ESL classrooms to see the potential of such comprehensible literature for L2 development, particularly for lower proficiency adult L2 learners. However, the scope of this research had to be broadened from literature for young people to literature in general due to a scarcity of the use of literature, especially literature for young people, in an adult ESL classroom available in accessible research sites. However, the potential of literature for young people as a teaching material for adult L2 learners at a beginner or intermediate level have been supported by a number of scholars (Casey & Williams, 2001; Cho & Krashen, 1994, 2001; Smallwood, 1998; Tomlinson & McGraw, 1997). Further empirical studies to examine the nature of classroom discourse in L2 classrooms for lower proficiency adult learners and students’ learning experiences are imperative to deepen our understanding in relation to the use of literature for developing an L2 in adult classrooms across different proficiency levels in a range of contexts.
5.7 Concluding Remarks

Human communication both orally and in writing has practical sides as well as affective sides. Bernhardt (2000) supported the idea that “knowledge and affect are linked to individual readers” (p. 798). L2 classes have often focused on the practical sides of language and moreover they have often been limited to a sentence level without considering context. As a result, affective sides of language have been overlooked. Even when the affective sides were dealt with in the class, they were viewed as a representation of a linguistic code rather than as part of the social practice of human communication. Similarly, according to Rosenblatt (1978), reading practice often focused on efferent reading. She argued that an aesthetic reading stance should also be promoted as it would engage us in transactions between readers and texts.

Particularly stories, the universal speech genre, can serve as a venue for the interaction between the affective and practical sides of language as well as efferent and aesthetic reading. The findings of the present study suggest that literature can enrich L2 classes as it serves as a resource of language and a source for interaction. Through meaning-filled interaction around literature, instruction with literature can involve students in the learning of language both as an object and as a subject. L2 learners can develop and learn with the target language in the LBLI classes. To maximize the learning outcomes of the instruction, careful steps and preliminary considerations should be taken in terms of the active participant role of the teacher and students,
appropriately chosen text materials, and the quantity and quality of classroom discourse. The successful implementations of LBLI can bring seemingly superficial L2 classrooms one step closer to the reality outside the classroom. More real, not just realistic interaction can be facilitated as interactions among participants in the classroom promote authentic, jointly-constructed exchanges of meaning by involving and connecting minds of language users.

Furthermore, it can boost the students’ voice in L2, which Cox and Boyd-Batstone (1997) argued is the ultimate goal of L2 instruction. L2 students’ voice can be fostered by the teacher’s constant attempt to connect students with literature by offering them opportunities to explore literary texts, taking the role of meaning-makers in the community of readers and language users.

Changes in the nature of the interactional structure in the classroom can lead to changes in overall teaching practices and ultimately the education system (Gibbons, 2004). Given that, the action of putting students’ voices at the front while participating in co-constructing meanings together with other participants by means of literature-based L2 instruction can possibly lead to substantial changes in classroom practice in which the voices of students, a teacher, and texts come together interwoven and, in particular, the voice of L2 students can grow in the literal and figurative sense.
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Appendix A
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Initial Contact Letter

Dear Academic Director, Andrew Scales,

My name is Won Kim, a graduate student in the program of Master of Arts in Children’s Literature (MACL), a joint program offered by four departments including: Language and Literacy Education (LLED); the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies (SLAIS); English; and Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia (UBC). I am writing to ask for your assistance in the research that I am conducting for my Master’s thesis that is entitled “Using literature in an adult ESL classroom: A case study.” I wish to conduct my study in an adult ESL class in your institute, specifically in a class in which students learn English language through literature as a context of second language (L2) learning. The purpose of the study is to explore the nature of practices in an adult ESL class with a literature-based instruction and to investigate the effects of the instruction for the development of L2 of adult ESL learners. This study will contribute to the expanding literature in this field of L2 acquisition and provide L2 teaching practitioners with pedagogical implications for the implementation of literature-based L2 instruction.

Methodology

First, I will observe the class for full class time on a weekly basis during the 12-week for a total of 12 times. In an effort to minimize my influence on students’ performance during the class and to help maintain a natural classroom setting, I will take the position of participant-as-observer by building trustful relationships with the students. However, I will remain sitting in one corner of the classroom and not intervene or interfere with the students’ performance during the class unless there is a need or permission by an instructor. The entire class period will be digitally audio-recorded. Field notes will be taken after each observation period.

Second, two e-mail-based questionnaires will be given to all students in the class who volunteer to participate. In the first week of the term, a pre-study questionnaire will be e-mailed to the students to ask for their background information and personal language learning history as
well as their learning goals and expectations toward the course. Similarly, a second questionnaire will be sent at the end of the term to learn about their satisfaction and reflections with regard to the course particularly a teaching approach using literature.

Third, a series of 30-minute interviews will be conducted with 3-4 students as well as with the course instructor. First, students who volunteer to be interviewed will meet individually or in a group with me for a mid-term session and a post-study session. Semi-structured interviews will be used to ask about student progress, concerns, reflections, and experiences with regard to the course. Also, two interviews with the course instructor will be conducted before and after the course. These interviews will seek information on his or her teaching philosophy, teaching goals and approaches, and satisfaction with the course. Suggestions for improving course instruction will also be drawn from the interviews. All interviews will be digitally audio-recorded, transcribed, and kept for further analysis.

Finally, data will also be collected through written documents such as writing assignments of the 3 to 4 students who are being interviewed and course handouts including a course outline. With assistance and permission by those participating students and the instructor, their writing assignments will be accessed, copied, and analysed by the researcher.

Protection of Participants

Human consent procedures will ensure protection of the participants in the study. Participants will be informed that participation in the study is voluntary and that they can withdraw from the study at any time during the research process. Also, every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality. Any identifiable information about participants will not be revealed in reports of the completed study. All recordings and written documents will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet and will be accessed only by the researchers and used only for the study.

Your assistance in finding a class in your institution will be much appreciated. Should you agree to participate in the study, please contact me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or the Principal Investigator, Dr. Marlene Asselin, at (604-822-5733).

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Won Kim, M.ED
Co-investigator
A candidate in the program of Master of Arts in Children’s Literature
Marlene Asselin, PhD
Principal Investigator
Department of Language and Literacy Education
University of British Columbia
Ponderosa F 102 – 2034 Lower Mall,
Vancouver, British Columbia, V6T 1Z2
Phone: 604 822 5733
Marlene.asselin@ubc.ca
Appendix B
The University of British Columbia
Department of Language & Literacy Education
2033 Lower Mall
Vancouver, British Columbia, V6T 1Z2
Tel: 604-822-5788 Fax: 604-822-3154
E-mail: lled.educ@ubc.ca

Consent Form for Instructor

Using Literature in an Adult ESL Classroom: A Case Study

Principal Investigator:
Marlene Asselin, Ph.D.
Department of Language & Literacy Education
University of British Columbia
(604) 822-5733

Co-Investigator:
Won Kim, M.ED
Master of Arts in Children’s Literature
University of British Columbia
(***) ***-xxxx

Purpose:
The main purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of teaching practices in an English as a Second Language (ESL) class for adults using literature as well as the students’ learning experiences in the class. Specifically, the study is interested in these questions:

- What is the nature of literature-based instruction in an adult ESL classroom?
- What are the students learning experiences with such instruction?

This research is conducted for Master’s thesis of Won Kim, co-investigator, as part of requirements of his Master degree program, Master of Arts in Children’s Literature. We would like to invite you to participate in this study since we believe that these research questions can be investigated through the exploration of your teaching approaches, practices, and experiences in the classroom using literature-based instruction.

Study Procedures:
If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to do the following:

- Permit the co-investigator to observe your class on a weekly basis that will be digitally-audio-recorded. The researcher will remain sitting at the back of the classroom in an attempt not to interrupt the class unless there is your need or permission for the researcher to participate in any class activities.
- Allow the researchers to access written documents related to the course such as a course outline and class handouts and to photocopy them.
- Assist the co-investigator in gathering a photocopy of writing assignments of the 3 – 4 selected students who volunteer to participate in interviews.
- Participate in two 30-minute interviews (i.e. before and after the term) that will be audio-recorded. Interviews will be scheduled with the co-investigator at a mutually-agreeable date, time, and location. Interview questions will be provided to you several days before the interviews take place.

Confidentiality:
The Investigators will make every effort to ensure your confidentiality. In order to do this, the following steps will be followed:

- All identifying information (e.g., your name, age, gender, nationality, etc) in the transcripts of the recordings from the interviews and the observations will be removed or changed.
- All audio-recordings of the interviews and the observations and all written documents related to you will be used only by the Investigators named above.
- All recordings and documents will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. You will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.
- All computer documents will be kept in password-protected files.
- The recordings and transcripts will be destroyed after completion of this study.

Contact for Information about the Study:
If you have any questions or require further information about this study, please contact Dr. Marlene Asselin at (604) 822-5733 or Won Kim at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Contact for Concerns about the Rights of Research Subjects:
If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598.
Consent:
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

____________________________________________________
Your Signature     Date

____________________________________________________
Your Name (Printed)    Date
Appendix C
The University of British Columbia
Department of Language & Literacy Education
2033 Lower Mall
Vancouver, British Columbia, V6T 1Z2
Tel: 604-822-5788 Fax: 604-822-3154
E-mail: lled.educ@ubc.ca

Consent Form for the Whole Class

Using Literature in an Adult ESL Classroom: A Case Study

Principal Investigator:
Marlene Asselin, Ph.D.
Department of Language & Literacy Education
University of British Columbia
(604) 822-5733

Co-Investigator:
Won Kim, M.ED
Master of Arts in Children’s Literature
University of British Columbia
(***-**-****)

Purpose:
The main purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of teaching practices in an English as a Second Language (ESL) class for adults using literature as well as the students’ learning experiences in the class. Specifically, the study is interested in these questions:

- What is the nature of literature-based instruction in an adult ESL classroom?
- What are the students learning experiences with such instruction?

This research is conducted for Master’s thesis of Won Kim, co-investigator, as part of requirements of his Master degree program, Master of Arts in Children’s Literature. We would like to invite you to participate in this study since we believe that your reflections, experience, and views as a student in this ESL course would help us investigate these questions.
Study Procedures:
If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to do the following:

- Respond to two e-mail-based questionnaires in the beginning and at the end of the term and e-mail them back to the researchers.
- Permit the co-researcher to observe the class on a weekly basis that will be digitally-audio-recorded.

Confidentiality:
The Investigators will make every effort to ensure your confidentiality. However, anonymity to the instructor can not be guaranteed due to the small size of the class. The following steps will be taken to maximize your confidentiality:

- All identifying information (e.g., your name, age, gender, nationality, etc) in the questionnaires and the transcripts of the recordings from the class observations will be removed or changed.
- All audio-recordings of the class observations and all written documents related to you will be used only by the Investigators named above.
- All recordings and documents will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Your names will not be used in any reports of the completed study.
- All computer documents will be kept in password-protected files.
- The recordings and transcripts will be destroyed after completion of this study.
- If you decline to participate in this study, any data and information related to you obtained during class observations will not be part of the study and will be excluded from any reports of the study.

Contact for Information about the Study:
If you have any questions or require further information about this study, please contact Dr. Marlene Asselin at (604) 822-5733 or Won Kim at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Contact for Concerns about the Rights of Research Subjects:
If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598.

Consent:
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or
withdraw from the study at any time without being harmed or disadvantaged during the course.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study and to permit any or all of the following to be carried out during the course (please put ‘x’ in brackets below to indicate your consent to one or all of the following):

(    ) Two E-mail questionnaires     (    ) Weekly class observations

____________________________________________________
Your Signature                                      Date

____________________________________________________
Your Name (Printed)                                 Date
Appendix D
The University of British Columbia
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Tel: 604-822-5788 Fax: 604-822-3154
E-mail: lled.educ@ubc.ca

Consent Form for Three Selected Students

Using Literature in an Adult ESL Classroom: A Case Study

Principal Investigator:
Marlene Asselin, Ph.D.
Department of Language & Literacy Education
University of British Columbia
(604) 822-5733

Co-Investigator:
Won Kim, M.ED
Master of Arts in Children’s Literature
University of British Columbia
(XXX) XXX-XXXX

Purpose:
The main purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of teaching practices in an English as a Second Language (ESL) class for adults using literature as well as the students’ learning experiences in the class. Specifically, the study is interested in these questions:

• What is the nature of literature-based instruction in an adult ESL classroom?
• What are the students learning experiences with such instruction?

This research is conducted for Master’s thesis of Won Kim, co-investigator, as part of requirements of his Master degree program, Master of Arts in Children’s Literature. We would like to invite you to participate in this study since we believe that your reflections, experience, and views as a student in this ESL course would help us investigate these questions.

Study Procedures:
If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to do the following:
• Permit the co-investigator to observe the class on a weekly basis during the term that will be audio-recorded.
• Respond to two e-mail-based questionnaires in the beginning and at the end of the term and e-mail them back to the researchers.
• Share your writing assignments with the researchers by allowing them to be photocopied and analysed by the researchers.
• Participate in two 30-minute interviews (i.e. in the middle and at the end of the term) that will be audio-recorded. Interviews will be scheduled with the co-investigator at a mutually-agreeable date, time, and location. Interview questions will be provided to you several days before the interviews take place.

Confidentiality:
The investigators will make every effort to ensure your confidentiality. In order to do this, the following steps will be followed:
• All identifying information (e.g., your name, age, gender, nationality, etc) in the questionnaires and the transcripts of the recordings from the interviews and the class observations will be removed or changed.
• All audio-recordings of the interviews and the class observations and all written documents related to you will be used only by the investigators named above.
• All recordings and documents will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Your names will not be used in any reports of the completed study.
• All computer documents will be kept in password-protected files.
• The recordings and transcripts will be destroyed after completion of this study.

Contact for Information about the Study:
If you have any questions or require further information about this study, please contact Dr. Marlene Asselin at (604) 822-5733 or Won Kim at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Contact for Concerns about the Rights of Research Subjects:
If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598.

Consent:
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without being harmed or disadvantaged during the course.
Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

_____________________________________________________________________
Your Signature                                            Date
_____________________________________________________________________
Your Name (Printed)                                         Date
Pre-study E-mail Questionnaire (for all students)

Using Literature in an Adult ESL classroom: A Case Study

1. Personal History
   a. Name (will not be disclosed)
   
   b. Age
   
   c. Gender
   
   d. Mother tongue
   
   e. Major Subject/Year of Study
   
   f. Any English exam scores if applicable (e.g. TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, ETC)
   
   g. Years of studying English at school
   
   h. Years of study abroad experience in English-speaking countries if applicable
   
   i. Any other investments in learning English before coming to ELI
   
   j. Any significant personal experience related to learning English

2. English Language Learning History
   a. In what English language skills (e.g. listening, speaking, writing, and reading) do you feel confident the most and the least?
b. How would you rate yourself as an English user in the scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent)?

c. What is your purpose of learning English language?

d. What is your biggest concern in your English language abilities?

e. Do you like reading in your first language, and what genres (e.g. novel, newspaper, essays, poetry, etc) do you like to read?

f. Do you read in English for pleasure? If so, what genre do you frequently read?

g. Have you read any literature for young people or adults in English? If so, what are the titles?

h. What would you like to learn from this course?
Post-study E-mail Questionnaire (for all students)

Using Literature in an Adult ESL Classroom: A Case Study

(All the information in this questionnaire will be solely used for this research. Your answers will be strictly confidential.)

1. Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with this course in the scale of 1(poor) to 10(excellent)?

2. Overall, what parts of the course did you enjoy the most?

3. Overall, what parts of the course did you find challenging or difficult?
4. Which literature pieces did you like the most? and which one did you enjoy the least?

5. How would you rate yourself as an English user in the scale of 1(poor) to 10(excellent) now?

6. Did this class help you with your English? If so, in what ways?

7. Any suggestions or comments about the course?
Appendix G
The University of British Columbia
Department of Language & Literacy Education
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Tel: 604-822-5788 Fax: 604-822-3154
E-mail: lled.educ@ubc.ca

Mid-term Interview Questions for Three Selected Students

Using Literature in an Adult ESL classroom: A case Study

1. What parts of the class did you enjoy the most?

2. What parts of the class did you find challenging or difficult?

3. Did you enjoy any class readings? If so, what texts did you enjoy the most, and why? Which texts did you enjoy the least, and why?

4. How do you feel about your progress in English language abilities in this course?

5. Beside language skills, what have you learned from the course for last five weeks?

Any other comments you want to make in relation to the course?
Appendix H
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Vancouver, British Columbia, V6T 1Z2
Tel: 604-822-5788  Fax: 604-822-3154
E-mail: lled.educ@ubc.ca

Post-study Interview Questions for Three Selected Students

Using Literature in an Adult ESL Classroom: A Case Study

PART A: Course and Instruction

1. Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with this course in the scale of 1(poor) to 10(excellent)?

12. Overall, what parts of the course did you enjoy the most?

3. Overall, what parts of the course did you find challenging or difficult?

4. How did you like reading of literature introduced during the term?

5. Which literature pieces did you like the most and the least?

6. Did this course help you enjoy and appreciate literature more? If so, in what ways?

7. Do you think you would want to continue to read some more literature in English after the course? If so, what genres do you want to read?
PART B: Language Development

8. How do you feel about your progress in language skills upon completion of this course?

9. How would you rate yourself as an English user in the scale of 1(poor) to 10(excellent) now?

10. If you noticed any progress in English, what aspects of the course were most helpful for your improvement in English?

11. What suggestions would you like to make to improve the course in terms of its content and instruction??
Pre-study Interview Questions for Instructor

Using Literature in an Adult ESL Classroom: A Case Study

1. How long have you been teaching ESL?

2. What is your language teaching philosophy or approach that you believe in?

3. Are you a reader of literature for pleasure?

4. How did you come to start using literature in your teaching?

5. What types or genres of literature do you frequently use in the class?

6. Do you also use literature for young people in the class for adult learners?

7. Why do you use (those) literature in teaching ESL?

8. Which literature pieces are you going to use in the course, and what was your selection criteria?

9. What teaching approaches are you going to take to teaching language using literature? In this class, and why?

10. What are your teaching goals for this course?

11. Do you have any concerns about this course that you want to address at this point?
Appendix J
The University of British Columbia
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2033 Lower Mall
Vancouver, British Columbia, V6T 1Z2
Tel: 604-822-5788  Fax: 604-822-3154
E-mail: llededuc@ubc.ca

Post-study Interview Questions for Instructor
Using Literature in an Adult ESL Classroom: A Case Study

1. How did you enjoy teaching this course?

2. What do you think was successful in your teaching during the course?

3. What do you think was successful in the students’ learning experience during the course?

4. Do you think your course objectives have been achieved?

5. What part of the course did you find challenging?

6. How do you feel about your selection of literature and activities using the books you selected?

7. Have you noticed any improvement in the students’ language skills over the term? If so, in what specific areas?

8. What changes do you wish to make to improve the course?
## Appendix K

### Course Objectives

#### Literary component
- Understand the major elements of a novel: plot and setting, narrator and point of view, characters and characterization, style, structure, and theme.
- Recognize literary devices
- Understand how the literary devices are used to establish meaning
- Understand some of the basic language of criticism of the novel
- Infer and interpret meaning of theme and motivation of characters

#### Language component
- Adjust reading rate according to task: for example scheme and scan a variety of passages to find main ideas and specific information
- Critically analyze short stories and gain appreciation of stylistic and rhetorical nuance, tone, genre awareness, writer’s bias and point of view
- Paraphrase and summarize in oral and written form a variety of readings
- Synthesize information from readings
- Understand authentic prose which is lexically, structurally, and rhetorically complex
- Understand a wide range of registers from the most casual to the most formal
- Understand sociocultural references
- Increase reading speed
- Build on existing vocabulary through recognition of roots, affixes, and part of speech
- Use strategies to organize, retain, and expand vocabulary and idioms in context

#### Appreciation of Reading component
- Read a Canadian novel with confidence and for enjoyment

Source: From the course syllabus, January, 2008.
Appendix L
Certificate of Research Approval

The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - FULL BOARD

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT:UBC BREB NUMBER:
Marlene Asselin UBC/Education/Language and Literacy Education H07-01202

INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:
InstitutionSite
N/AN/A
Other locations where the research will be conducted:
English Language Institute at UBC

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):
Won Kim

SPONSORING AGENCIES:
N/A

PROJECT TITLE:
Using literature for young people in an adult ESL classroom: A case study

REB MEETING DATE: CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE:
June 28, 2007 June 28, 2008

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:DATE APPROVED:
July 18, 2007
Document NameVersionDate
Protocol:
Research ProposalN/AMay 31, 2007
Consent Forms:
Consent Form for Selected 3-4 StudentsN/AJuly 9, 2007
Consent Form for Course InstructorN/AJuly 9, 2007
Consent Form for All StudentsN/AJuly 12, 2007

205
Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:
Face to Face Post-study Interview (selected 3-4 students)N/AMay 31, 2007
Pre-study E-mail Questionnaire (all students)N/AMay 31, 2007
Face to Face Pre-study Interview (course instructor)N/AMay 31, 2007
Face to Face Post-study Interview (course instructor)N/AMay 31, 2007
Post-study E-mail Questionnaire (all students)N/AMay 31, 2007
Face to Face Mid-term Interview (selected 3-4 students)N/AMay 31, 2007
Letter of Initial Contact:
Letter of Initial ContactN/AMay 31, 2007

The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and signed electronically by one of the following:

Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Arminee Kazanjian, Associate Chair
Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Associate Chair
Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair