**2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter demonstrates the review of research, theories and scholarly studies that present findings concerning with the instructional approaches in teaching literature in the English as a Second Language classroom. This chapter includes a theoretical framework explaining on literature in Malaysian English Language Curriculum, literature in ESL classroom, existing instructional theories and approaches in teaching literature, teachers and students’ attitudes on literature in second language learning and students’ attitudes on differing instructional approaches applied in literature lessons.

**2.1. Theoretical Framework**

**2.1.1. Literature in Malaysian English Language Curriculum**

The incorporation of literature in the curriculum of English Language Teaching (ELT) has been noteworthy over the last 20 years (Sivapalan & Subramaniam, 2010). Literature component has been inserted as a part of the Malaysia English language curriculum acting as one of the efforts in satisfying the philosophy of education that is to provide a holistic education that will develop learners’ potentials in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude. According to Marzilah & Sharifah Nadia (2010), In the English language curriculum specifications, the literature component is specifically put under the ‘language for aesthetic use’ learning outcome. Language for aesthetic use can be demonstrated when language learners enjoy a literary text through conveying personal opinions and developing language skills that are enhanced by the opportunities created in learning environment that gives them the space to express themselves which enhances their creative thinking skills. As suggested by Sivapalan & Subramaniam (2008), the addition of literature in Malaysian English Language Teaching (ELT) is to benefit students in three areas, namely language development, cultural enrichment and personal growth. This shows that integrating literature in students’ learning do not only provide language enhance because of the linguistic values it carries, but students’ personal development would also be promoted which is also a main concern in educating students today. Despite the Ministry of Education’s effort in implementing literature component in the English language syllabus, to create an effective teaching and learning that would contribute to students’ academics and personal development, teachers play a huge role in this matter. The ideal specifications and objectives in the curriculum specification may seem too ambitious but they are achievable as the government believes that students are required to reach the objectives and teachers will ensure the achievement. The Ministry of Education believes that the inclusion of literature component in the English subject will lift students’ learning to a higher level that is the higher order of thinking skills. This will enable learners to engage in wider reading of good literary works for enjoyment and self development (Isa & Mahmud, 2012).

**2.1.2. Literature in the English as a Second Language Classroom**

According to O’Sullivan (1991), the inclusion of literature in any language learning is encouraged as it promotes learners’ imagination and creative thinking skills besides honing learners’ linguistic abilities. Literature texts have been thoroughly selected and modified to meet the needs of Malaysian students it is believed that any text can be learned through the correct methods and approaches. In the ESL context, besides benefiting learners with the contentment of enjoyment and language enhancement, learners will be able to contribute to their self development. Integrating literature in the ESL classroom should provide a different perspective of learning language as the purpose of implementing literature component is to improve the learners’ proficiency level in English. Therefore literature should not be taught the same way as other components are. Literature should be considered as an opportunity to be exposed to the authenticity of language written by native speakers and are established writers who have been recognized through their artworks all around the world. In order to teach literature to students, there are several ways to deliver the content of literature and to ensure the students understand what literature is all about.

Literature in ESL can cover the four skills of language which are reading, writing, listening and speaking, through appropriate and suitable methods. According to Bagherkazemi & Alemi (2010), there are advantages of studying literature in the EFL classroom including providing meaningful contexts, involves a profound range of vocabulary, dialogues and prose, appeals to imagination and critical thinking, develops cultural awareness, encourages critical thinking and it is in line with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles. The encouragement of reading habits that literature will provide learners with promotes learners’ reading and develops learners writing skills as suggested by Bagherkazemi & Alemi (2010), literature provides a stimulus for writing. Speaking skills are improved when learners are encouraged to express their thoughts and opinions on a literary text as well as through activities such as recitation of poems and readers’ theatre.

**2.1.3. Approaches to Teaching Literature**

In order to understand a literary work, there are numerous ways that it can be approached. The approaches are proposed by literature experts and have existed for many years. There are three approaches that will be further discussed in this literature review and they are Reader-Response, The Story Grammar Approach, and New Criticism. The approaches have been selected due to the appropriateness in the context of Malaysian English language classroom.

**2.1.3.1 Reader-Response Approach**

The proponent of the Reader-Response Approach is Louise Rosenblatt who came up with the theory in 1938 and her theory has been applied in understanding literary texts up until today. The focus of the Reader-Response Approach is on the reader itself. The reader’s responses when reading a text is a crucial part of the process in understanding a literary text. It emphasizes on the transactional relationship between a literary text and the reader. When readers are able to relate a text to their personal experiences, feelings and are able to express their opinions, it means that the readers’ minds are active and engaged to the text. According to Amer (2003), The Reader Response Approach (RRA) has a growing influence on EFL literature classes (Carlisle, 2000, p. 12). However, the approach has been criticized to having the tendency of learners going out of the literary text context when they are too focused on their personal experiences and feelings. However, to rebut this claim, Rosenblatt (1994) states that the distinctive experiences and feelings demonstrated by learners will still be bound by the text that is being studied and their opinions will be drawn to a consensus understanding on the meaning of the text.

**2.1.3.2 The Story Grammar Approach**

This approach would be one of the most applied approaches in the teaching and learning of literature in the ESL classroom. According to Amer (2003), the Story Grammar is based on the conceptualization that readers should be consciously aware of text structure. This explains that the focus of this approach is the text itself. Readers can be assumed to have knowledge of discourse conventions or “textual schemata” that assist in text processing (Amer, 2003). This means that readers will not read without any schemata in their minds because they will have expectations when they read a text. In order to understand a text, readers will use contextual clues that exist in the text and draws inferences and come to a conclusion of their understanding regarding the text. This approach contributes to learners’ enhancement of comprehension skills. The Story Grammar Approach is applied in the Malaysian English classrooms because it emphasizes on the conventions of a text which include the events and specific details such as the characters and characteristics, settings, issues that arise in the text, major events, plot, and the resolution of the text. The Story Grammar Approach at least provides an alternative way to the traditional discussion of a literary text.

**2.1.3.3 New Criticism Approach**

This approach focuses on the form and structure of a literary text. This approach provides no space for subjective meaning and reader’s personal response. The analysis of a text is entirely concentrating on the text itself. It covers the historical background of the text and the conventions of the construction produced by the writer. What matters more is understanding the literary work per se, the textual object itself or, to be precise, how it is put together or structured, its form (Clarke, 2005). It is an approach to understanding a text on what it really is based on the text. The closed reading that it employs leads to the analysis of a text in a critical way when readers decipher meaning of it through the verbal forms depicted. The literary devices that are activated in this approach deal with the author’s choice of words, imagery, symbolism, etc (Clarke, 2005). This approach is applied the Malaysian English language classroom when teachers focus on the elements such as simile, repetition, alliteration and others in order to ensure students’ understanding of a text.

**2.1.4. Teachers’ and Students’ Attitudes on Literature in Second Language Learning**

According to Siti Norliana, Roszainora, Chittra & Kamaruzaman (2009), Students’ attitude is one of the main factors that determine their success in language learning. Attitudes concern with a learner’s cognitive, emotional responses and portrayal of behaviour as well as beliefs. Learners have the tendency to demonstrate negative attitudes towards the study of literature due to the language of the text itself that demotivates them. One of the main challenges in learning literature are caused by the text itself, such as the language of the text, especially when there is a mismatch between the texts selected and students’ language ability (Siti Norliana, et. al, 2009). In fact teachers are facing difficulties themselves to decide on the texts that should be taught in the classroom that would not be too difficult and distant from learners. Struggling readers share the same problems which are weak comprehension, lack of interest and confidence (Arvidson & Blanco, 2004). Feeling distant with the culture exposed by a literary text also contribute to the challenges in meaning making and hinders readers from benefiting the linguistic values it delivers. This is where the teacher’s roles come in to the rescue. Teachers should two texts differently as one text may be approached in a different way compared to the other text. However, teachers are still showing their lack of exposure of the techniques to teach literature. Probably due to the focus on examination-oriented in the Malaysian education, teachers are using the method of providing important key points and a certain understanding of a literary text to be agreed by all in the study of literature. The aesthetic values that expected to be met are ignored by the teachers. This leads to the ineffectiveness of literature study on students’ language learning and personal development.

**2.1.5. Students’ Attitudes on Instructional Approaches in Study of Literature**

From the study done by Siti Norliana et. al (2009), students who are participants of the study demonstrate positive attitudes when their teachers apply various methods in the teaching and learning of literature in the ESL classroom. A total of 86% of the students agreed with the statement ‘I would enjoy watching a film or video about the text’ (Siti Norliana, et. al, 2009) shows that students do enjoy the study of literature when creative instructional approaches are applied. However the materialization of various instructional approaches do not entirely succeed when teachers in this study do a lot of discussion on the plot, themes and moral values of a text which do not provide much aesthetic values to the students because their aim is to score in the examinations. However, this study manages to discover the students’ interest in learning literature through drama. They find it more helpful and videos and films that are related to the text help them understand a text better than only reading. This research has yet to discover the teachers’ skills and knowledge on the instructional approaches in teaching literature in the ESL classroom. Hence, this proposal will define a gap to explore the teachers’ awareness, knowledge and skills in teaching literature effectively.