

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To facilitate the understanding of speaking problem and Content-based Instruction (CBI) as its alternative solution, a review of relevant literature is presented below. It consists of a review of further analysis related to theories on CBI, theme-based model, speaking skills, problems of speaking, and CBI as a solution to speaking problems.

2.1 Content-based Instruction (CBI)

Content-based Instruction (CBI) is “the integration of a particular content (e.g., math, science, social studies) with second language aims... It refers to the concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills” (Brinton et al, 1989). While Brown (1994) cited in Chowdury (2009) says “...content-based language teaching integrates the learning of some specific subject-matter content with the learning of a second language”

Sutorius as cited by Marani (1991) defines CBI as “the integration of linguistic and content material for the purposes of acquiring a second language in an academic setting”. Rather similarly, Krashen (1982) points out that in content-based instruction, students can acquire the content area of the subject matter with comprehensible input, and simultaneously increase their language skills. To achieve the goal of language skills improvement, Krashen (1982) advocates that

the focus of the teaching is on the authentic and meaningful input, not on the grammatical form. Furthermore, studies reported by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) lead clearly to the conclusion that time spent in experiencing the target language as the medium of instruction is much more effective in producing language proficiency than the time spent in direct language instruction alone. More specific, William and Burden (1997, cited in Brewster, 2004) claim that CBI has some principles, those are: 1) constructivism allows students to be active participation in classrooms; 2) CBI focuses on a learning-centered and learning process; 3) it increases potential for involving different learning styles and multiple intelligences which supports to uncover students' talent and potential; 4) it leads to developing students' independence and self-sufficiency through individual, pair, and collaborative work.

Based on the facts above, it can be inferred that CBI is an effective approach to make student master a foreign language especially in speaking through the content of a course. CBI is effective to be applied for adolescent class since learning-centered process, pair and collaborative works, and the different topics and activities in CBI can increase adolescents' motivation. It is important because as stated above, adolescents are less motivated and less self-confident.

2.1.1 Definition of Content

The use of content in CBI is unremarkable since it facilitates language growth by providing rich avenues for meaningful and purposeful language use.

Therefore, the definitions of content have been proposed by a number of researchers.

As can be seen from Crandall and Tucker's definition, content is clearly "academic subject matter" while Genesee (1994) suggests that content "...need not be academic; it can include any topic, theme or non-language issue of interest or importance to the learners". Chaput (1993) defines content as "...any topic of intellectual substance which contributes to the students' understanding of language in general, and the target language in particular". Met (1999) has proposed that "... 'content' in content-based programs represents material that is cognitively engaging and demanding for the learner, and is material that extends beyond the target language or target culture."

Although definitions of content vary in CBI, there is a commonsensical understanding that a content is a means that allows students to practice the language objectives they are expected to learn while at the same time reinforcing a content area that also has priority.

In addition, Grabe and Stoller (1997) show some reasons for incorporating content into English class. First, content provides contextualized activities to which students are exposed when learning a language. Second, content allows students to be exposed to complex information and involved in demanding different activities that can lead to intrinsic motivation.

2.1.2 Connection with the Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) Movement

CBI connects with the LSP movement, which aims to prepare learners

for real-world demands and satisfy their needs and interests. The content and aims of teaching are determined by the requirement of the learner rather than general education criteria. As mentioned by Strevens (1978), this movement fulfils three characteristics. First, the language-use purposes of the learner are paramount. Second, the content is *restricted* to fit the learner's purposes, *selected* according to his/her interests, developed through *themes and topics* according to his/her needs and focused to satisfy his/her *communicative needs*. Third, the methodology may be any that is appropriate to the learning and teaching situation.

According to Brinton, Snow and Wesche (1989), "LSP courses, through the frequent use of authentic materials and attention to the real-life purposes of the learners, often follow a methodology similar to that of the other content-based models in which a major component is experiential language learning in context".

It is strengthened by Martin (1990) who breaks down content-based language education "modules", using the idea of context: context non-specific and context-specific. As he elaborates:

"Modules may be (a) context non-specific, or (b) context-specific. In the first case, they are simply designed according to general pedagogical and second-language learning principles and may be targeted to general-purpose language-learners of specific-purpose learners. Modules of the first type are typically designed by language teachers without specialist knowledge of the subject matter being treated. In the second case, the module's design may be sensitive to the methodology, preferring learning modes and cognitive landscape of a specific discourse community. These are true ESP (English for Special Purpose) modules, aimed at a well-defined, relatively homogeneous learner population, and are typically designed by language teachers possessing specialist knowledge in the field in question or by language teachers in conjunction with a subject specialist."

Based on the descriptions above, it can be inferred that CBI is an effective approach to make students master a second or foreign language especially in speaking through the content of a course. CBI is effective to be applied for ESP

class or at a vocational class such as hotel management class. In this type of context, content-based programs contain authentic tasks centered around authentic materials that are needed by the students to prepare themselves to work in the real-world.

2.1.3 Prototype Models of CBI

CBI can be seen as having weak and strong forms. Specifically, Stoller (2004) writes:

[. . .] At one end of the continuum are “content-driven” approaches with strong commitments to content-learning objectives (immersion, partial immersion, sheltered subject-area courses); at the other end of the continuum are “language-driven” approaches with strong commitments to language learning objectives, using content mainly as a springboard for language practice.

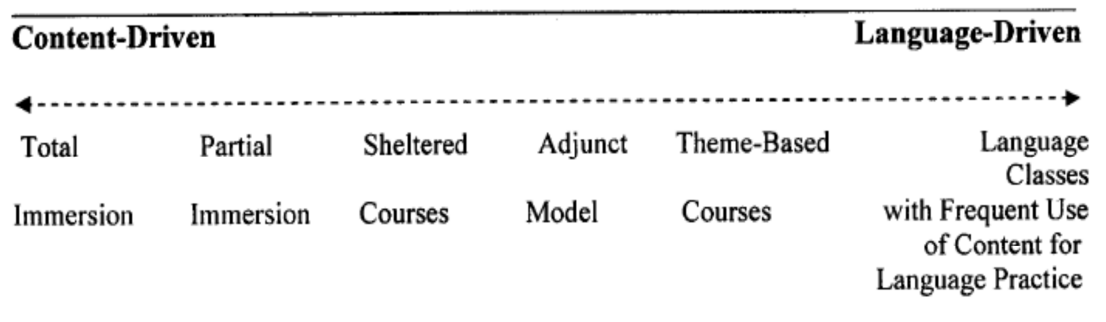


Figure 1: Content-Based Language Teaching. A Continuum of Content and Language Integration. Met (1999: 7)

In content-driven programs, students learning of content has the greater importance rather than language learning. Content outcomes are a driving force of instruction, and student mastery of content is held to be of paramount importance. Whereas in language-driven programs, content is used as a useful tool for furthering the aims of the language curriculum. Content learning may be considered incidental, and neither teachers nor students are held accountable for

content outcomes. Examples of programs that tie across the continuum can be found in all levels of education. One of these program models is discussed below.

2.1.3.1 Theme-Based (TB)

Theme-based course (also termed theme-based instruction or topic-based teaching) is one of the approaches within the broader model of content-based instruction (CBI) in which the emphasis is on exposing students to a “highly contextualized” second language environment by using the subject matter as the content of language learning (Wesche & Skehan, 2002). It is an approach to language teaching in which the whole course is structured around certain themes or topics (Brinton, 2001; Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2003). Theme-based instruction differs from traditional language instruction in that the language structures/items to be covered in a syllabus are determined by the theme or topic (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2003). In a theme-based course, different teaching activities are integrated by their content, the teaching of different skill areas is incorporated into the theme (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2003). The rationale for this thematic approach is to “avoid[s] fragmentation and unconnected skill exercises” and a variety of activities are integrated around meaningful content (Berry & Mindes: 1993).

2.1.3.1.1 Objectives

As it lies close to the language-driven end of the continuum, it is very clear that theme-based courses do have explicit language aims which are usually more important than the content learning objectives. As Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1985) point out that theme-based would constitute the weakest representation of

CBI models whose main aim is to develop learner's communicative proficiency. This is in line with the objective of hotel management class in vocational school since particular discipline held in the class, such as English offers a strong language-oriented projection and allows a high degree of flexibility in terms of content selection.

2.1.3.1.2 Learning and Teaching Activities

Teaching and learning activities in CBI can be adapted from Task Based approach since in content-based courses students need to be engaged in a variety of tasks and classroom roles as they attempt to gain a greater command of both the language and the target content. This is supported by Nunan (2004) who points out that "CBI is very much in line with the principles of task-based language teaching". Nunn (2006) has proposed a task-based framework based on units of instruction that leads students through tasks and exercises which may or may not focus on form through to "holistic outcomes in the form of written reports, spoken presentations and substantial small-group conversations that lead to decision-making outcomes". The same unit-based model can be successfully applied to more content-centered courses in the form of flexible staged tasks which allow for instruction to be adapted to fit situational needs.

To realize what is pointed out by Nunan above, TBI may be adapted here following Willis's model. He (1996) proposes the following sequence of tasks:

PRE-TASK PHASE

INTRODUCTION TO TOPIC AND TASK

This is the basic procedures of the three phases which shows the kind of preparation that may need to be done beforehand, and identifies the steps involved in setting up a task. It goes on to illustrate a range of preliminary activities that can be used in class to introduce the topic and prepare the learners of the task itself. In this phase the teacher explores the topic with the class, highlights useful words and phrases, and helps learners understand task instructions and prepare. Learners may hear a recording of others doing a similar task, or read part of a text as a lead in to a task.

TASK CYCLE

TASK

Students do the task, in pairs or small groups. Teacher monitors from a distance, encouraging all attempts at communication, not correcting. Since this situation has a “private” feel, students feel free to experiment. Mistakes not matter.

PLANNING

Students prepare to report to the whole class (orally or in writing) how they did the task, what they decided or discovered. Since the report stage is public, students will naturally want to be accurate, so the teacher stands by to give language advice.

REPORT

Some groups present their reports to the class, or exchange written reports, and compare results. Teacher acts as a chairperson, and then comments on the content of the reports. Learners may now hear a recording of others doing a

similar task and compare how they all did it. They may also read a text similar in some way to the one they have written themselves, or related in topic to the task they have done.

LANGUAGE FOCUS

ANALYSIS

Students examine and then discuss specific features of the text or transcript of the recording. They can enter new words, phrases, and patterns in vocabulary books.

PRACTICE

Teacher conducts practice of new words, phrases, and patterns occurring in the data, either during or after the analysis. Sometime after completing this sequence, learners may benefit from doing a similar task with a different partner.

2.1.3.1.3 Role of Teacher

“Instructor must be more than just good language teachers. They must be knowledgeable in the subject matter and able to elicit that knowledge from their students” (Stryker and Leaver, 1993). It can be inferred that in theme-based course, it is a language teacher, and not a subject specialist, that is responsible for teaching content. In details, teachers have to keep context and comprehensibility foremost in their planning and presentations, they are responsible for selecting and adapting authentic materials for use in class, they become student needs analyst, and they have to create learner-centered classrooms. As Brinton et al. (1989) note:

They are asked to view their teaching in a new way, from the perspective of truly contextualizing their lesson by using content as the point of departure. They are almost

certainly committing themselves to materials adaptation and development. Finally, with the environment of time and energy to create a content-based language course comes even greater responsibility for the learner, since learner needs become the hub around which the second language curriculum and materials and therefore teaching practices revolve.

2.1.3.1.4 Role of Learner

One goal of Content-based Instruction (CBI) is for learners to become autonomous so that they come to “understand their own learning process and ... take charge of their own learning from the very start” (Stryker and Leaver, 1993). CBI is in the “learning by doing” school of pedagogy. This assumes, students learn through doing and are actively engaged in the learning process. They do not depend on the teacher to direct all learning or to be the source of all information. Central to CBI is the belief that learning occurs not only through exposure to the teacher's input, but also through peer input and interactions. Accordingly, students assume active, social roles in the classroom that involve interactive learning, [negotiation](#), information gathering and the co-construction of meaning (Lee and VanPatten, 1995).

Learners themselves may be sources of content, and joint participants in the selection of topic and activities. Such participation “has been found to be highly motivating and has resulted in a course changing its direction in order to better meet the needs of students” (Stryker and Leaver, 1993).

2.1.3.1.5 Role of Instructional Materials

Deriving from the evolution of Communicative Language Teaching approach, the materials in theme-based course are divided into three categories: text-based materials, task-based materials and realia (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

Text-based materials, commonly known as textbooks, are designed to support communicative language teaching suggesting a kind of sequencing and grading of language practice. Further, Savignon (1983) argues that the textbook is the most common of classroom materials combining language samples, explanations and activities into a single volume. While task-based materials include a variety of games, role-plays, simulations and task-based communication activities. They are in the forms of cue-cards, pair-communication practice materials, and student-interaction practice booklets. In others such as role play, different role relationships are given to the students, for example, as a hotel receptionist and a guest. And realia are classified as samples of authentic, then they are selected, and occasionally edited so that they would progressively become more difficult, complex, and challenging (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). They usually feature a variety of text types and discourse samples, combining oral input — teacher presentations, video sequences, recorded passages, guest lecture talks, radio and TV broadcasts, etc— with written materials —newspapers articles and ads, tourist guidebooks, technical journals, railway timetables, etc. Another key feature is the interest in the concept of integrated skills which are often “characterized by a heavy use of instructional media (e.g. videotapes and/or audiotapes) to further enrich the context provided by authentic readings selected to form the core of the thematic unit” (Brinton et al. 1989). It means that although the topics presented are commonly provided on listening or reading, the oral passage or written text always serves as the basis for further exploration of other areas —grammar, vocabulary, language awareness, etc.— as well as acting as a

springboard for the practice of productive skills — making presentations and oral reports, engaging in discussions and debates, giving oral or written response to questions or issues associated to the topics, writing summaries, commentaries, etc. In this way, skills and language analysis are integrated around the selected topics in a meaningful, coherent and interlinked way.

In addition, the language learning in theme-based courses is facilitated by the materials that are used typically with the subject matter of the content course (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). As a result, the learning materials are usually teacher-generated or adapted from outside sources, and an attempt is often made to integrate the topic into the teaching of all skills. As such, in theme based sources, students often move to higher levels of language processing (e.g. comparison, separating fact from opinion) through the variety of text types, formats, and activities to which they are exposed (Snow et al, 1989).

2.1.3.1.6 Assessment Methods

In theme-based courses, teachers are more likely to assess language growth than content mastery. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) suggest that there are a number of instructional activities that can be used for assessment. In addition, Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters (1992); Hughes (1989); Underhill (1987) cited in O'Malley and Pierce (1996) point out that the teachers can use as wide a variety of assessment activities as possible to make their assessment more authentic and reliable.

Since the primary goal of theme-based course is to develop students' communicative proficiency, the teacher has to provide instructional activities in

which students can talk extensively in the target language. These kind of activities have been proposed by Brinton (2003) such as information gap, role play, simulation, and oral presentation. They can be assessed as the followings: 1) information gap. To rate an information gap activity, the teacher can evaluate the students becoming the speaker on accuracy and clarity of the description as well as on the resulting reconstruction. While the listener should be rated on ability to follow directions or complete the task. Accuracy-rather than speed or description of fine details-should be considered. An example of a scoring rubric for information gap activities designed by an ESL teacher S. Copley (1994) can be used as well; 2) role play/simulation. To rate role play or simulation, the teachers can modify or adapt rubrics for oral language to suit the task and their students' level of proficiency. For example, assessment may include language functions, vocabulary, grammar, discourse strategies, clarity of facts presented, and nonverbal gestures if these have all been part of class instruction; 3) oral presentation. Students can be asked to make oral reports of particular issue related to the theme of the course. These reports can be rated by beginning with a rating scale or holistic rubric that reflects the major focus of instruction and revise it based on students' actual performance.

Oral language should be assessed for each student at least twice during each quarter or semester since it provides baseline data as well as information on improvement of language proficiency on a continuous basis. Teachers can set up a rotating schedule for assessing students in order to avoid assessing all students at

once in a short period of time. In this way, assessment becomes an ongoing part of daily or weekly instruction.

2.1.3.1.7 Sample of Successful Implementation of Theme-based Courses

An interesting case is reported in Klahn (1997), with the description of an advanced Spanish course developed around the theme of ‘Contemporary Mexican Topics’ at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) of Columbia University (New York, US). The syllabus was organized around a selection of topics sequenced “by carefully controlling the quantity and quality of the content of the material so that each lesson guided the student to a higher level of competence (...) The different topics lent themselves to the performance of certain linguistic tasks that, when studied in a specific order, facilitated students’ progress” (Klahn, 1997). The topics included were (1) The History of Mexico, (2) The Political System, (3) Means of Communication, (4) The Mexican Economy, (5) Geography and Demography, (6) The Arts, (7) Popular Culture, and (8) US Mexican Relations. All the materials used for the course were samples of authentic Mexican discourse: historical, biographical and autobiographical texts, newspapers and magazine articles, editorials, film reviews, economic predictions and graphs, political speeches, poems, short stories, popular traditions, interviews, business letters, recipes, and tourist brochures, as well as excerpts of films, television programs, soap operas, TV interviews, commercials, and documentaries. Materials were purposefully selected —and occasionally edited— so that they would progressively increase their degree of difficulty, complexity, and challenging.

According to the author, in terms of outcomes the course had “very positive results in the cognitive, linguistic, and affective domains. (. . .) Student evaluations demonstrate the potential for a course of this kind to achieve the goal of greater socio-cultural understanding through increased foreign language fluency” (Klahn, 1997).

It is commonly agreed that theme-based courses constitute an excellent tool for the integration of language and content providing that curriculum planners, course designers and teachers manage to keep language and content exploration in balance, not to lose sight of content and language learning objectives, and not to overwhelm students with excessive amounts of content that may lead to overlooking the language teaching and learning dimension of instruction.

2.2 Speaking Skills

Speaking can be defined as the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non verbal symbols in the variety of context. It is categorized as productive skill since the learners are encouraged to produce their language to communicate with others. To most learners, mastering the skill of speaking is the single most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language. The success of learning a new language is measured in terms of the ability to carry out the conversation in the language. That is why the ability to speak a foreign language is an indication that a person masters a language. Despite of its importance, many language learners feel that speaking a new language is harder than listening, reading or writing. It is often viewed as the most

challenging one compared to other skills (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, Nunan, 2003). This happens because of several reasons. First, unlike reading or writing, speaking happens in real time which means that the person you are talking to is waiting for you to speak right away. Second, when a person is speaking, he cannot edit and revise what he wants to say as done in writing. Last, the social and contextual factors play a much more significant role in spoken interaction than in written communication since most of oral exchanges that people normally engage in are not preplanned. That is why speaking is often perceived as the hardest skill to master in another language.

2.2.1 The Components of Speaking Skills

There are some of the micro-skills involved in speaking as Brown (2004) proposes; 1) produce reduced forms of words and phrases; 2) use an adequate number of lexical units (words) to accomplish pragmatic purposes; 3) produce fluent speech at different rates of delivery; 4) monitor one's own oral production and use various strategies devices to enhance the clarity of the message; 5) use grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc), system e.g. tense, agreement, pluralization, word order, patterns, rules, and elliptical forms; 6) produce speech in natural constituents: in appropriate phrases, pause groups, breathe groups, and sentence constituents; 7) express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms; 8) use cohesive devices in spoken discourse.

The micro-skills refer to yielding the small elements of language, such as phonemes, morphemes, words, collocations, and phrasal units. To be able to

produce different intonation and stress, use a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures are the example elements of micro skills. In brief, micro skills deal with the small elements of language which contain ingredients of difficulties.

On the other hand, in the macro-skills of speaking (Brown, 2004), the speaker has to; 1) appropriately accomplish communicative functions according to the situations, participants, and goals; 2) use appropriate styles, registers, implicatures, redundancies, pragmatic conventions, conversation rules, interrupting, and other sociolinguistics features in the face-to-face conversations; 3) convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations as focal peripheral ideas, events, and feelings, new information and given information, generalization and exemplification; 4) convey facial features, kinesics, body language, and other non-verbal cues along with verbal language; 5) develop and use speaking strategies, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, providing a context for interpreting the meaning of words, appealing for help, and accurately assessing how well your interlocutor understands you.

Those macro-skills above are crucial in communication and interaction, particularly to people who are engaged in a conversation with foreigners. When working in a hotel, students who graduate from vocational school, particularly those from hotel managing class have to master those macro-skills of speaking above in order to be able to communicate with the foreigners successfully and serve them well.

2.2.2 Problems of Speaking

Andhi Wahyu Tri Jatmiko's research (2006) reveals that the students produced very little English. Most of the interactions was dominated by teacher talk, while learner talk was only 25% for the whole interaction. Ur (2001) argues that there are some problems that the students face in speaking, those are: 1) inhibition. Unlike reading, writing, and listening activities, speaking requires some degree of real-time exposure to an audience. Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom. Learners are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts; 2) nothing to say. Learners may complain that they can not think of anything to say. It means that they have no motive to express themselves beyond the guilty feeling that they should be speaking. It can also happen because the learners have little knowledge about the topic being discussed; 3) low or uneven participation. This problem is compounded by the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all. It is also a common problem in some classes because talkative learners tend to speak a lot more than the shy learners; 4) mother tongue use. In classes where all or a number of the learners share the same mother tongue, they may tend to use it because it is easier. Learners may think that it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language. If they are talking in small groups it can be quite difficult to get some classes, particularly the less disciplined or motivated ones to keep the target language.

More specific, to adolescent students, speaking in a foreign language might be a big challenge since their natural characteristics very much influence its learning process. Some of these characteristics are that they may be easily discouraged, are inquisitive about adults & often challenging their authority, and may show disinterest in conventional academic subjects (<http://www.catlin.edu/middle/characteristics-of-adolescents> (online)).

Further, Fulcher (2003) points out that it is unremarkable to observe that learning to speak a foreign language for an adolescent or adult is much more difficult than learning to speak a primary language. In addition, Harmer (2000) argues that adolescents tend to be less motivated, and less cooperative; therefore, they make poor language. Thus, it can be concluded that in general, adolescents including students of vocational school are less motivated and less confident in learning a foreign language.

2.3 CBI as a Solution to Speaking Problems

Some of the intellectual development of adolescent students are that they prefer active over passive learning activities, prefer interaction with peers during learning activities, and respond actively to opportunities to participate in real life situations (<http://www.catlin.edu/middle/characteristics-of-adolescents> (online)). This argument and the characteristics above call for the application of CBI in vocational schools since the use of real-world content, different topics, learning strategies, pair and collaborative learning, and student-centered in CBI will build and increase the students' motivation and self-confidence.

There are several techniques and tasks used in CBI which are familiar to anyone who practices CLT (Brinton, 2003). It is because CBI is interpreted as one of the ways in Communicative Language Teaching, as Rodgers (2001) explains,

Communicative Language Teaching has spawned a number of off-shoots that share the same basic set of principles, but which spell out philosophical details or envision instructional practices in somewhat diverse ways. These CLT spin-off approaches include The Natural Approach, Cooperative Language Learning, Content-Based Teaching, and Task Based Teaching.

Deriving from the evolution of Communicative Language Teaching, the techniques in CBI that can be applied to overcome speaking problem faced by learners, specifically for adolescent students are as follows:

- Information gap

It is a form of pair work in which the students are each given different pieces of information. One student will have the information that the other partner does not have and the partners will share their information. Each student plays an important role because the talk cannot be completed if the partners do not provide the information the others need. This kind of task is effective because everybody has the opportunity to talk extensively in the target language.

- Jigsaw

It is another variation of information gap. Typically, the class is divided into groups and each group has part of the information needed to complete this task. The class must fit the pieces together to complete the whole (Richard, 2005). In doing so, they must use their language resources to communicate meaningfully and so take part in meaningful communication practice.

- Discussion

It involves opportunities for students to express their own opinions and ideas about topics, in this case related to the theme of the CBI unit.

- Role play

“Role play is an excellent way to stimulate real communication that is relevant to experiences outside the classroom” (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000; Nunan, 2003). It entails having students act out a situation in which they pretend they are in a various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. Therefore, role play constitutes a way to give the opportunity to practise improvising a range of real-life spoken language in the classroom.

- Simulation

Simulations are very similar to role plays. Kayi (2006) points out that simulations are more elaborate than role plays. In simulations, students can bring items and props to the class to create a realistic environment. He also argues that this task are entertaining so that they can motivate students. Moreover, simulations increase the self confidence of hesitant students.

- Problem solving

It involves students working in pairs or groups to arrive at a solution to a given problem. In CBI, the context of the problem relates to the theme students have been studying in the content unit.

Also, there are other speaking activities that can be used to promote the use of spoken language in contexts that are suitable for the typical foreign language classrooms, they are:

- Drill

Lazaraton (2001) argues that this activity can be implemented for accuracy practice. Drills range from repetition drill to substitution drill. Although this type of activity gains much criticism in language teaching, it still plays an important role to teach pronunciation. Drills are proved useful as the first step towards more communicative output.

- Dialogue Recitation

Ur (2001) argues that dialogue recitation is a traditional language learning technique that has gone somewhat out of fashion in recent years. The learners are taught a brief dialogue. Then, they perform it privately in pairs or publicly in front of the whole class. This activity is a good way to get learners to practice saying target language utterances without hesitation and within a wide variety of contexts.

- Prepared speech

The students can be given a topic for their speech or they may choose their own. Since this activity might bore the listeners, it is a good idea to assign the listeners some responsibilities during the speech (Lazaraton, 2001).

- Oral presentation

Harmer (2001) argues that students make a presentation on a topic they are assign to or of their own choice. Such talks are not designed for informal spontaneous conversation because they are prepared and more writing-like.

- Games

Brown (2001) argues that a game could be any activity that formalizes a technique into units that can be scored in some way. A student or groups decides one thing that the rest of the students have to guess what it is by asking questions related to the thing. This activity is good for motivating students since the whole students are involved in this activity to be a winner.

- Decision making

Brown (2001) points out that decision making activity is one kind of problem solving activities, where the ultimate goal is for students to make a decision. The students are given a problem for which there are a number of possible outcomes and they must choose one through negotiation and discussion.

Besides the above task-types, there are two types of exercises; namely, focusing and shaping exercises proposed by Scarino (1988) to promote the use of spoken language in contexts that can be applied in CBI. As he argues, communication task type refers to the typology of tasks and exercises (Scarino et al., 1988).

More specific, he elaborates that focusing exercises focus on elements of the communication process. These include exercises focusing on forms (e.g., vocabulary, structure, and pronunciation), skills (e.g., cognitive processing skills and learning how-to-learn), and strategies (e.g., seek confirmation; express lack of understanding; ask someone to explain what was just said; use mime, gesture, and facial expression to convey meaning). While shaping exercises develop and structure language within an extended piece of discourse (e.g., matching

exercises, cloze exercises, substitution exercises, dictation exercises, reading aloud with close attention to pronunciation, and substituting alternative sections of a dialogue).

In terms of the grouping of participants who work on tasks and exercises, Long (1989) proposed three basic groups of interlocutors in the classroom. They are individuals, groups (including dyads), and the whole class, namely, the teacher-fronted format, where every student is supposed to do the same thing at the same time. As Brinton (2003) argues that pair and group work are a hallmark of the communicative theme-based classroom. They entail the discussion or exchange of information related to the content unit. In pair or group work, the teacher first presents the task, then divides students and sets a time limit for completion of the task. While students work, she or he circulates to answer questions and makes sure that the students “are on task”. Pair and group work culminate in a reporting stage, with students from each group sharing their ideas or solutions with the rest of the class.

Ur (2001) and Meng (2009) suggest pair and group work is especially important for large classes. Meng (2009) argues that getting students to do things in small groups in class is the only conceivable way to get large-scale students involvement in a large class. With these small groups, the teachers can immediately engage each student in the theme-based class in learning activities. The group work will increase the quantity of language practice opportunities, improve the quality of student talk, individualize instruction, create a positive affective climate in the classroom, and increase students’ motivation. These

techniques, tasks, exercises, and grouping practices reflect the principles of CBI since they present learner centered environment in which students learn through doing and are actively engaged in the learning process. In other words, they involve the active participation of learners in the exchange of content or theme-related information.

2.4 Weakness of Content-based Instruction (CBI)

Despite the many benefits of content-based instruction, it also has shortcomings. Kinsella (1997) has criticized that CBI is too teacher driven because EFL teachers adjust teaching materials to make them accessible to their students rather than teaching their students the skills of learning of their own. In addition, as she (1997) argues

These modifications of instructional delivery place the bulk of the responsibility on the teacher, and while facilitating short term comprehension, they do not necessarily contribute to the ESL students' ability to confidently and competently embark on independent learning endeavors...

In short, despite the effectiveness of CBI in contextualizing language and making input comprehensible, this practice does not create independent learners.

Another weakness is the language in CBI is “functionally restricted” as Swain (1988) has claimed that in CBI, the input is “functionally restricted”; in other words, “certain uses of language seem not to occur naturally-or, at least, to occur fairly infrequently-in the classroom setting”

While Brinton, Snow, Wesche (1989) softly argues that “the very notion of converting to content-based teaching involves re-educating teachers to view their instructional domain and responsibilities quite differently than they might

previously have. Unless adequately prepared for their new teaching duties, teachers will invariably have to fight the urge to rely on their traditional techniques as well as on materials and lesson plans developed over the years for a different audience-many of which may be inconsistent with the goals of the content-based program”

Thus, it can be inferred that it takes time and resources for teachers to be trained in using CBI, to gain knowledge of the content, and believe in its effectiveness.

2.5 Successful Speaking Activities in the Classroom

Classroom activities that develop learners’ ability to express themselves through speech would therefore to be an important component of a language course (Ur, 1991). Moreover, Ur (1996) also lists the characteristics of a successful speaking activity, those are: 1) learners talk a lot. As much as possible of the period of time allotted to the activity is in fact occupied by learner talk; 2) participation is even. Classroom discussion is not dominated by a minority of talkative participants: all get a chance to speak, and contributions are fairly evenly distributed; 3) motivation is high. Learners are eager to speak: because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it, or because they want to contribute to achieving a task objective; 4) language is of an acceptable level. Learners express themselves in utterances that are relevant, easily comprehensible to each other, and of an acceptable level of language accuracy.

