

Exploring English as Second Language (ESL) Learners' Reading Experiences: Attitudes and Challenges with Implementation of Graphic Organizer Instruction (GOI)

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Abstract

Despite the increasing recognition of Graphic Organizers for Instruction (GOI) as a potentially effective tool for enhancing reading comprehension among ESL readers, there remains a significant gap in understanding how learners perceive and engage with this approach. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the reading experiences and attitudes of ESL learners towards the utilization of GOI in their reading practices. By doing so, this research aims to expand our current understanding of the perspectives of ESL learners regarding the implementation of GOI and the obstacles they may encounter. Ultimately, this study seeks to enrich the existing literature by offering valuable insights into the reading experiences and challenges associated with the use of GOI in ESL reading instruction. To achieve the research objectives, this research employed focus group interviews with 12 purposively selected participants and three sessions of classroom observations. Key findings indicated that GOI positively influenced reading engagement and comprehension among ESL learners, fostering interaction and enhancing their understanding of instructional materials. The study's conclusions highlight the potential benefits of GOI in ESL reading instruction and suggest implications for pedagogical practice.

Keywords: graphic organizers Instruction, reading experience, reading comprehension performance, ESL learners

1. Introduction

Reading is not just a skill but a fundamental right essential for a healthy, happy, and productive life. Pandey (2014) even regards it as the "new civil right." It's crucial for children to acquire basic reading and comprehension skills to fully exercise their democratic rights. Access to education, particularly literacy, is key for equal opportunity, empowerment, social justice, and democratic participation. Without it, individuals face barriers in employment, civic engagement, and personal growth, perpetuating inequality. Literacy empowers individuals to access information, express themselves, and advocate for their rights, especially crucial for marginalized communities. Addressing educational disparities, including literacy, is vital for promoting social justice and ensuring everyone can participate fully in democracy, aligning with the core principles of civil rights movements (Pandey, 2014, p.98).

In the context of English as a Second Language (ESL), the need to improve students' reading comprehension is gaining more significant, especially in Malaysian reading classrooms (Tabitha, 2013). Typically, reading comprehension requires students to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information from texts. By improving their reading comprehension abilities, ESL students develop critical thinking skills that are valuable for problem-solving, decision-making, and lifelong learning (Stephen, 2013). Additionally, strong reading comprehension skills are essential for academic achievement across all subjects. In Malaysian classrooms, where English is often used as a medium of instruction or as a subject itself, students need to comprehend English texts to excel academically. Moreover, in today's globalized world, proficiency in English is often a requirement for many jobs and career opportunities. Improving reading comprehension enhances ESL students' employability by enabling them to understand job-related materials, instructions, and communication in English-speaking workplaces (Kadir et al., 2014).

According to Ghaffari (2017), one reading approach cited in the available literature review and proposed by many reading experts to promote critical reading among ESL students is Graphic Organizers (GO). Reviewing the literature on reading comprehension, the National Reading Panel (2019) introduced the GO as one of the most effective teaching strategies for reading comprehension as this critical thinking-based instruction can engage the cognitive processes which may improve language learners' reading comprehension and critical thinking (Mahdi, 2015 ; Manoli, 2012).

The research gap that this study aims to address lies in the lack of understanding regarding ESL learners' reading experiences and challenges towards the utilization of Graphic Organizer Instruction (GOI). While GOI has been recognized as a potentially effective tool for enhancing reading comprehension among ESL learners, there is limited insight into how ESL learners perceive and engage with this instructional approach. Existing literature often focuses on the effectiveness of GOI in improving reading outcomes without delving into the learners' perspectives and experiences. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gap by exploring ESL learners' experiences and challenges related to the utilization of GOI in reading instruction. By gaining a deeper understanding of ESL learners' perspectives, the study aims to provide insights that can inform the optimization of GOI for improved effectiveness and better meet the needs of ESL learners in reading comprehension instruction.

1.1 Research Questions

The study aims to explore the reading experiences of the ESL learners and their reading attitude towards the implementation of Graphic Organizer Instruction (GOI) in reading. Also, the research investigate the challenges the ESL learner encountered towards the implementation of GOI, and the following are the research questions formulated for the current study.

RQ 1: What are the reading attitude of the ESL learners towards implementation of GOI in reading?

RQ 2: What are the challenges do ESL learners encounter while using GOI approach in reading?

2. Literature Review

The Concept of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of understanding and creating meaning from written language, where readers decode the writer's thoughts and interpret them based on their prior knowledge. The depth of comprehension depends on the reader's existing knowledge, and expertise in reading can vary depending on the familiarity with the text. Beginner readers can become experts when reading familiar texts, while expert readers can become beginners when reading unfamiliar texts. (Akkakosan, 2011).

To comprehend a text, readers need to identify the main idea and make inferences. Mature readers select appropriate strategies, while poor readers may not be aware of their reading process. Educators play a significant role in teaching students to become strategic learners by helping them develop metacognitive skills and learn when to use reading strategies. (Perfetti & Adlof, 2015)

Reading Comprehension as a Cognitive Process

Reading comprehension is the process of understanding a text which involves various cognitive processes such as recognizing words, accessing their meaning, grouping words into grammatical units, making inferences, and using prior knowledge to construct a coherent and understandable model of the text. (Rohani & Abdul, 2017). It's important for readers to have sufficient cognitive energy to manage these processes effectively. Fluent decoding of words and a broad vocabulary, as well as understanding how writers' express ideas in writing, are crucial factors in achieving this. (Mohd Yussof et al, 2012)

2.1 Graphic Organizers(GO)

Graphic organizers (GO), as defined by Sharpe (2013), are visual displays that show the connections between facts, words, and ideas in an activity. They use keywords and phrases that are visually connected to create a meaningful representation that can help students identify connections between concepts and ideas. GOs can accelerate understanding, improve note-taking, and provide a storyboard that is difficult to achieve with linear outlines. They also help develop thinking abilities by promoting brainstorming, idea generation, and evaluating causes and consequences.

Teachers can improve students' reading comprehension with the use of GOs, which help students break down and understand text. GOs promote critical and creative thinking, allow for collaboration, and aid in decision-making, problem-solving, and critical thinking by highlighting relationships between concepts (Jiang & Grabe, 2017). Furthermore, GO can help students recognize patterns and connections between different ideas, fostering practical and active learning. Additionally, teachers can use GO to create more impactful lessons (Mahdi, 2015). These benefits have been summarized from past literature reviews.

GO can be used before, during, and after reading to aid in the learning process. Before reading, they can be used to assess prior knowledge. During reading, they help students approach the content and construct maps tailored to their learning styles. After reading, they serve as a summarization tool and allow students to evaluate their understanding and track progress. Effective use of GOs can help students connect prior knowledge with new information and identify relationships between ideas (Manoli, 2012).

2.1.1 The Role of Graphic Organizers

Griffin (2015) asserts that GOs have been successfully used in education for over 25 years, and a growing body of data indicates that their use in education is increasing. Several of GO's benefits are listed below.

2.1.1.1. Promoting Meaningful Learning and Thinking Skills

This study found that using GO enhances meaningful learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving among learners. GO can help students integrate important and irrelevant information, shift to more holistic thinking patterns, and demonstrate critical thinking abilities within their disciplines (White, 2017). GO is intended to promote more meaningful learning and assist in the understanding and retention of new material by connecting information to prior knowledge. Low-skilled readers benefit more from GO than other post-reading

methods. Students who use meaningful learning methods develop more interconnected GO structures, which are key for meaningful learning.

2.1.1.2. Providing a Resource for Learning

GO helps students to demonstrate their understanding of a specific topic and encourages them to reflect on their comprehension. (Biria, 2016) It can aid in understanding organization and critical reading principles, while also promoting creativity by identifying patterns and integrating knowledge. Studies have shown that incorporating GO into classroom instruction can enhance learning by inspiring deeper thinking and a better grasp of conceptual interrelationships. (Davoudi & Yousefi, 2014). Students have reported that GO can provide unique and creative learning opportunities and improve their attitudes towards learning (Praveen & Rajan, 2013).

2.1.1.3. Providing Feedback

GO can be used to help students clarify topics and aid teachers in providing feedback and identifying misunderstandings. According to Miranda (2011), GO facilitates communication between students and teachers by revealing students' relationship constructions. Research shows that when GO is coupled with feedback, students' problem-solving skills and failure rates increase significantly, demonstrating the validity of GO's theoretical assumptions. (Griffin, 2015) A shared sense of meaning between instructors and students is fostered as they debate, consider, and modify GO, leading to improved learning and performance.

2.2 *The Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory*

This theory emphasizes the interactive and cultural nature of cognitive development, highlighting the role of social interaction, cultural context, and collaborative learning environments in fostering intellectual growth and learning. There are two critical aspects of Vygotsky theory, which are Scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

2.2.1 Scaffolding

Vygotskian theory, as developed by Lev Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural tools in the development of cognition and language. In the context of reading comprehension, Vygotsky's theory suggests that learners construct meaning through interaction with others and the use of cultural tools, such as GOs to organize and connect their ideas (Verenikina, 2013). This approach is particularly beneficial for ESL learners, who may struggle with the complexities of reading comprehension due to language barriers. Therefore, this theory is particularly relevant to the study of ESL learners, as it highlights the importance of scaffolding and collaborative learning in facilitating reading comprehension.

Scaffolding involves providing learners with temporary support and guidance as they learn new skills, and collaborative learning involves learners working together to achieve a common goal (Atta & Safein, 2017). In the context of reading comprehension, scaffolding and collaborative learning can help ESL learners better understand and engage with the text.

2.2.2 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory offers valuable insights into how GO instruction (GOI) and reading comprehension can be effectively integrated in educational settings. At the heart of Vygotsky's theory lies the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes the importance of providing learners with tasks that are within their current capabilities but require guidance and support to achieve mastery (Chaiklin, 2003). This principle aligns seamlessly with GOI, where GOs serve as scaffolds that facilitate learners' comprehension and organization of information.

In GOI, educators can leverage Vygotsky's theory by selecting GOs that correspond to learners' ZPDs. By introducing organizers that prompt students to identify main ideas, summarize key points, or analyze relationships between concepts, teachers create opportunities for learners to engage in cognitive processes that promote deeper understanding. This approach not only supports learners in organizing their thoughts but also encourages them to actively construct meaning from texts, aligning with Vygotsky's view that learning is inherently social and collaborative.

Furthermore, Vygotsky underscores the role of cultural tools, such as language and symbolic systems, in mediating learning (Verenikina, 2013). Graphic organizers act as visual representations that help learners externalize and manipulate information, making abstract concepts more tangible and accessible. This process mirrors Vygotsky's notion of externalizing internal mental processes through social interactions and tools, thereby facilitating learners' development of higher-order thinking skills essential for proficient reading comprehension.

By integrating Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory into GO instruction for reading comprehension, educators not only support individual learning needs but also foster a collaborative and interactive learning environment. Through thoughtful application of ZPD principles and effective scaffolding with graphic organizers, educators can empower learners to navigate texts more effectively, enhance their comprehension abilities, and ultimately cultivate lifelong strategies for engaging with and interpreting written information (Atta & Safein, 2017).

2.3 *ESL Learners' Attitude towards GOI Implementation in Reading*

As stated by Jiang and Grabe (2007), the use of GO can significantly enhance reading comprehension and learner motivation by providing a clear and structured way to approach texts. Learners often report feeling more confident and motivated to read when they can visually organize and connect ideas, leading to a more positive attitude towards reading in English. More often than not, ESL learners manifest

positive attitude towards the implementation of GOI in reading. This is due to the visual and interactive nature of GOI makes reading more accessible and engaging for ESL learners who, may otherwise struggle with traditional reading approach such as text-based method. GO such as mind map, flow chart and Venn diagrams help ESL learners to break down the complex information into manageable parts, making it easier to comprehend and retain.

Besides, the implementation of GOI in the ESL context foster high level of reading engagement among ESL learners. By involving ESL learners in the active creation and interpretation of GO, GOI transforms reading from a passive activity into an interactive and dynamic process. This engagement is significant for in-depth learning, as it encourages ESL learners to think critically about the text and make logical connection between different ideas and notions. Moreover, this active engagement not only aids in comprehension but also build a more enjoyable reading experience among the ESL learners. According to Rohani and Abdul (2017), learners reported high levels of enjoyment during their reading process as the learners appreciate the opportunity to approach the text using GO, which encourage active participation and deeper comprehension among the learners. GO aids ESL learners to better understand and easily retain information, which can lead to increased satisfaction and develop positive attitude towards reading. The interactive nature of GOI encourages ESL learners to collaborate and discuss their understanding of the text, thus further enhancing their engagement and enjoyment.

2.4 Challenges Encountered by ESL Learners during GOI Implementation in Reading

The past research from Ghaffari (2017) has demonstrated that cognitive overload can occur when learners are presented with too much information at once, particularly when using GOs. This is especially true for ESL learners, who may already be challenged by language barriers that strain their cognitive resources. When GOs are overloaded with information, they can overwhelm students, making it difficult to identify key concepts and understand relationships between ideas, which can result in a shallow comprehension of the material. Instead of facilitating learning, overly complex GOs can obscure important information, leading to confusion and disengagement (Mahdi, 2015 ; Sharpe, 2013). Effective GO design should prioritize clarity and simplicity to enhance rather than hinder the learning process for ESL students.

Cultural and linguistic barriers play a role in affecting the ESL learner's capability to fully engage with GOI. GO often rely on visual and symbolic representations that may not be universally understood. As a result, learners from different cultural backgrounds may interpret visual information differently, which can lead to misunderstanding and thus reduce the effectiveness of GOs. Aloraini (2021) stated that cultural differences in learning styles and visual literacy can influence how learners interact with GOs. Therefore, educators need to be aware of these differences and offer culturally responsive instruction to ensure that all learners can benefit from GOI.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In this current research design, the researchers employed data triangulation that integrated focus group interviews and classroom observation to offer a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the impact of the GOI on ESL learners' reading experiences. The design began with systematic focus group interviews with 12 ESL learners, which enables us to gather qualitative insights into their learning experiences, reading attitudes and challenges they encountered. This focus group interview was complemented by classroom observation, where we documented the implementation of GOI practices and noted their effects on students engagement and reading comprehension. By triangulating data from these two sources, we aimed to further enhance the credibility of the findings, ensuring that the perceptions captured through the interview were grounded in actual classrooms experiences. This integrative approach enabled us to not only observe the practical application of instructional strategies but also to understand the underlying reasons behind their effectiveness of GOI, ultimately providing a richer, more nuanced analysis of their impact on ESL learners.

3.2 Population and Sampling Method

This qualitative study utilized purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of participants. The researcher intentionally selected 12 respondents, all of whom are 16 years old IGCSE Year 10 students. They were divided into two groups, 6 students were assigned to both GO 1 (Concept Mapping Strategy) and GO 2 (KWL Strategy). In GO 1, there were 3 (25%) females and 3 (25%) males, while GO 2 included 2(16%) females and 4 (34%) males, all of whom are ESL learners. This method was designed to capture a broad spectrum of viewpoints and backgrounds relevant to the study's context, providing a comprehensive understanding of how GOI is perceived and experienced by ESL learners. Through focus group discussions, the study gathered both individual perspectives and collective insights, enriching the depth and scope of the research findings.

3.3 Interview and Classroom Observation Protocol

In this study, the researcher used focus group interview and classroom observation for data collection.

3.3.1 Focus Group Interview

Interviews provide flexibility in question formulation and allow for in-depth exploration of topics. Typically, they use open-ended questions, which facilitate the discovery of unexpected themes and capture the complexity and nuances of the research subject. The use of probing questions and follow-up prompts within these open-ended questions enables the researcher to explore specific details and uncover deeper meanings. This approach helps the researcher gain a more profound understanding of the context surrounding participants' experiences.

Moreover, participants engage in discussions that allow for the exploration of diverse perspectives, the questioning of assumptions, and the collaborative building of insights. This process often reveals nuanced perspectives and shared understandings that might not emerge as clearly in one-on-one interviews, thereby providing a comprehensive view of how GOI is perceived and experienced among ESL learners. Overall, focus groups provide a dynamic platform for generating rich qualitative data that illuminates the complexities of ESL learners' experiences with GOI in reading comprehension instruction.

3.3.2 Classroom Observation

Integration of classroom observation into focus group interview is a robust approach to enhance depth and credibility of educational research. This integrative approach allow rich contextual understanding as classroom observation provides direct, real-time data on teaching practice and students interactions. By observing these practice, researchers gain an authentic understanding on how instructional strategies are applied and how students respond in a natural setting. Integrating these observational data into focus group interview allows for a more nuanced exploration on these practices, as participants can discuss and reflect on specific instances observed.

3.4 Data Triangulation

To strengthen the credibility and rigor of the current research, the researcher employed data triangulation by integrating classroom observation as an additional qualitative data collection approach. Observations provide objective data on classroom dynamics, while focus groups offer subjective perspectives from participants. This dual method allows researcher to cross-verify information and corroborate findings, reducing the potential for bias and offering a more comprehensive understanding of the studies phenomenon. When participants in focus groups discuss and provide feedback on observed practices, it confirms whether the observed behaviors align with their experiences and perceptions, thus strengthening the credibility of the research. Furthermore, data triangulation aids to ensure that conclusion drawn are robust and supported by diverse evidence, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the research outcomes.

3.5 Research Procedure

The researcher conducted virtual focus group interviews with 12 purposively sampled participants from two groups (GO 1 and GO 2). Interviews were held in a quiet, distraction-free virtual setting via Zoom. The sessions lasted about 60 minutes, with participants informed a week in advance. Rapport was established, and active listening was employed to create a supportive atmosphere. Interviews were recorded with consent, and pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity. Post-interview, the data was transcribed, analyzed using NVivo 12 software, and thematic analysis was applied to identify patterns and themes. The results were organized, coded, and communicated to address the research questions.

The classroom observation procedure involved systematically observing and recording the behavior and interactions of ESL learners during reading activities to assess the effectiveness of Graphic Organizer Instruction (GOI). The observations were conducted over three sessions in a natural classroom setting to ensure the authenticity of the data. The researcher used a structured observation protocol to focus on specific aspects of student engagement, comprehension, and interaction with the GO tools. Notes were taken in real-time, and the observations were supplemented with video recordings for accuracy. After each session, the data were reviewed, and key patterns were identified. The findings from the classroom observations were then triangulated with interview data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of GOI on ESL learners.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 RQ 1: What are the reading attitude of the ESL learners towards implementation of GOI in reading?

Theme1: Reading Engagement and Motivation of ESL Learners

The introduction of GOI in reading activities led to a noticeable increase in ESL learners'

engagement and motivation. They found that the visual and interactive nature of GO made reading tasks more engaging and less monotonous.

Theme 1a : Reading Engagement

In the context of ESL learners, reading engagement is crucial as it directly influences how effectively they can comprehend and retain information in a non-native language. The implementation of GOI has been demonstrated to have a significant impact on the reading engagement of ESL learners.

Three ESL learners affirmed,

"It made me to actively process the info, rather than passively receive it" CM G4

"It engage me to organise the info and allow me to understand the reading materials easily." KWL G6

"This activity actively engage me to the reading text." KWL A1

GOs can significantly enhance active participation among ESL learners by providing visual aids that simplify complex information and foster reading engagement. These tools help learners organize their thoughts, making it easier to understand and retain new concepts, which is crucial for second language acquisition (Aloraini, 2021).

Theme 1b: Reading Motivation

GOs significantly boost motivation among ESL learners by making lessons more visually appealing and easier to understand. These tools help learners break down and organize complex information, which can enhance their confidence and willingness to participate in class. The implementation of GO 1 assisted the participants in understanding the reading texts, thereby resulting in increased motivation and confidence in their reading ability. Two participants strongly agreed that GO 1 motivated them to read, as they declared that,

"It increase my motivation to read. I feel motivated to read! I also got to learn to understand the text easily without missing any info." CM G4

"Yes for me! English is my second language, I can understand the passage, and it boost my confidence to read and write." CM G5

Also, three participants felt motivated to do the reading activity using the GO 2. They expressed that,

"I felt motivated and confident to read! It helped me to improve my reading comprehension skills!" KWL G5

"I felt motivated to read! The reading activity is very suitable for reading skills and made the reading classroom more interesting." KWL G6

"It motivate me to arrange the info that make it easier for me to understand." KWL A1

The increase in engagement and motivation observed among learners suggests that GOI can make reading tasks more interactive and appealing. This is consistent with research indicating that visually stimulating and interactive tools can enhance student interest in learning activities. The findings support the idea that GOI not only aids comprehension but also contributes to a more engaging learning environment.

Smith and Carney (2020) demonstrate that GO lead to higher levels of motivation in ESL students, as they provide a clear structure and facilitate better comprehension, thereby making the learning process more enjoyable and less intimidating. According to Marashi and Kangani (2018). students using GO report increased motivation and positive attitudes towards learning, attributing their enjoyment to the clarity and organization these tools bring to their studies. ESL learners often experience a high level of motivation when using GO, as these tools make learning more interactive and engaging. GOs provide a visually stimulating way to process information, which can make lessons more enjoyable and less daunting for language learners.

Theme 2 : Perceived Usefulness of GOI

GOs are a powerful tool for enhancing reading comprehension and retention. They offer a visually appealing and interactive way to organize information, facilitating deeper learning and comprehension.

Theme : 2a : Enhanced Comprehension and Retention

GOs have been found to significantly improve reading comprehension by helping students organize information visually, make connections between ideas, and summarize text effectively (Marashi & Kangani, 2018). This structured approach supports learners in understanding and retaining complex information by presenting it in a more accessible format, thereby enhancing overall comprehension skills. By breaking down complex texts into digestible parts, GOs simplify the comprehension process and engage students in active interaction with the material.

A significant number of ESL learners reported that GOI significantly enhanced their reading comprehension and retain information from texts. They felt that GOs helped them to break down complex texts into more manageable parts, facilitating better understanding of the main ideas and supporting details. This structured visual representation of information made it easier for them to grasp the overall structure and key points of the reading material. As pointed out by the following participants, they disclosed

"Yes for me, because it help us to improve our reading comprehension." CM G5

"Of course, Yes, it helped me in my reading comprehension before, during, and after reading."
KWL G6

"By using the KWL, I'm improving at spotting the main points and key details, it helps me to have a better understanding in English texts." KWL A1

"I think teachers are encouraged to use GO to teach. I think it's effective for all students. It helps me improve my reading comprehension" CM G4

Furthermore, ESL learners also highlighted that GOI assisted them in better remembering the content they had read. By organizing information into clear visual formats, learners found it easier to recall details and concepts during discussions, exams, or when applying the knowledge to other contexts. This enhanced retention is especially significant for ESL learners, who often struggle with retaining complex information in a non-native language.

The findings suggest that GOI is largely perceived as beneficial by ESL learners, particularly in terms of enhancing reading comprehension and retain information easily. This aligns with research of Davoudi and Yousefi (2014), it support the effectiveness of GOs in helping students not only enhance their reading comprehension, but also help them to organize and retain information easily. This positive attitudes reported by ESL learners indicate that GOI can be a valuable instructional tool in ESL contexts.

Theme 2b: Facilitation of Critical Thinking Through GOI

GO encourage learners to think critically about the reading text by identifying key points, analyzing relationships, and drawing inferences. This deeper level of engagement goes beyond surface-level reading and promotes a more analytical approach, which can be particularly beneficial for ESL learners striving to improve their language proficiency. When learners see that they can analyze and understand texts more deeply, they are likely to become more invested in the reading process (Eddie, 2016)

Majority of the ESL learners perceive that GOs aid them engage with the material more critically, allowing them to create connections, draw inferences, and analyze the content effectively. They expressed that using GOI allowed them to break down complex ideas and examine relationships between different parts of the text, fostering a more analytical approach to reading.

As highlighted by two participant, KWL G6 and KWL A1

"Yes, for me! It encourage me to think while reading! Train me to become a critical thinker also."
KWL G6

"GOs encourage me to think more deeply about the reading texts." KWL A1

The implementation of GOI has been demonstrated to significantly encourage critical thinking among ESL learners, a crucial skill for deep comprehension and effective learning in ESL contexts. GOI facilitates this process by providing learners with structured, visual tools that guide their thinking and help them engage with the material at a profound level. This finding aligns with the study conducted by Luparello (2014), which underscores the effectiveness of critical thinking-based instruction such as GOI, in fostering critical thinking among ESL learners. This alignment with Luparello's research highlights the value of integrating GOI into ESL instruction, not only for improving language comprehension and retention but also for fostering the critical thinking skills necessary for academic and personal success.

Theme 3 : Reading Attitude toward Implementation of GOI

The implementation of GOI in ESL classrooms has elicited a range of attitudes from ESL learners, both positive and negative. These attitudes are reflective of the diverse experiences and learning preferences among students. Understanding these attitudes is crucial for educators to optimize the use of GOI in the ESL reading classrooms.

3a) Positive Reading Attitude

Generally, 50% of the ESL participants (6 out of 12), who had a positive reading attitude towards the application of GO 1 in their ESL reading classrooms. According to them, they could comprehend more regarding the reading topic and effortlessly answer the questions given in the passage. For instance, three participants CM G1, CM G4 and CM G5 from GO 1 asserted that:

"Overall, I think it's a good activity for me, because it encourage me to read in English. It also help me understand the text better. I can also check back easily if I miss any info." CM G1

"I think it gave me general knowledge about a topic, specifically the peregrine passage. I got to learn more about the bird species." CM G4

"Concept maps improve my sentence structure and my knowledge in text structure." CM G5

In addition, three participants from GO 2 demonstrated a positive attitude and reported,

"They are interesting and it encouraged me to read more also." KWL A1

"I guessed the they are fun and interesting. I think they made the reading classroom more fun."
KWL G2

"Yes, it helps me to understand the text better because it has a purpose for reading." KWL G5

The above excerpts suggest that the Concept Mapping strategy and KWL Strategy are an effective reading strategy that promotes reading comprehension performance among ESL learners. ESL learners perceived that GO 1 helped them to have a better understanding of the text and GO 2 developed a purpose of reading and created engaging learning environment in language learning.

3b).Negative Reading Attitude

Nevertheless, one-third (4 out of 12) of the ESL learners disagreed with implementation of GOI. There were two participants, namely CM A3 and CM A6 confessed that the reading activity and the reading lesson were difficult for them due to lack of prior knowledge on how to construct the concept map and the unfamiliar contents. They stated that,

"I'm a bit confused, I find it's a bit hard to understand the context, I cannot build my own concept map." CM A3

"Emm, I find the reading lesson and activity is a bit difficult but overall is ok for me. I can understand the text, some points are confusing." CM A6

On the other hand, two participants from GO 2 protested that:

"I don't like the activity. I found it hard to understand the reading text." KWL A3

"No, I don't think it help me! I find it hard to understand the text! Maybe I don't know the topic." KWL A4

The reading attitudes toward the implementation of GOI in ESL contexts reveals a diverse range of learner experiences. On the positive side, many ESL learners found GOI to be a highly effective tool for increasing engagement, improving comprehension, and fostering critical thinking. This findings align closely with the research carried out by Aprianto and Syarifaturrahman (2020), who emphasized that ESL learners generally exhibited a positive attitude toward the implementation of GOI in the ESL reading classrooms. Their study provides valuable insights into the reasons behind this positive attitude and reinforces the effectiveness of GOI as an instructional strategy in enhancing reading comprehension and engagement among ESL learners. Despite negative attitude among some ESL learners, GOI still can be a powerful tool in ESL education. By addressing the specific needs and challenges of ESL learners, GOI can enhance understanding, engagement, and overall language proficiency. Over time, learners may come to appreciate the value of this instructional method, leading to more positive attitudes and better learning outcomes.

Classroom Observation Findings

Theme 1: Engagement and Participation

Generally, ESL learners demonstrated increased engagement when using GOI. ESL learners, particularly the visual learners responded well to the structure of GOs, as they provided a clear and organised way to process information. However, it was observed that some learners, especially those with limited English proficiency, they found that it's a challenge for them to connect the visual elements with the text, leading to a slower pace in completing tasks compared to their peers.

The increased engagement observed among ESL learners using GOI is a promising outcome, particularly for visual learners who benefited from the clear and organized way information is presented. GO helped demystify reading tasks by providing a structured framework that guides learners through the material, making the process more accessible and less intimidating. However, this increased engagement was not universal. Learners with limited English proficiency encountered challenges in connecting visual elements with textual content, which slowed their pace in completing tasks. This suggests that while GOI can effectively enhance engagement for some students, its success is influenced by learners' language skills and familiarity with visual learning tools. To address these challenges, educators may need to provide additional scaffolding and differentiated instruction, particularly for those students who struggle to bridge the gap between visual and textual information.

Theme 2: Comprehension and Retention

Majority of the ESL learners demonstrated enhanced comprehension of reading materials when using GOI. The visual representation of information helped learners identify key points, supporting details, and the relationships between concepts, leading to improved comprehension and retention for many ESL students. However, it was noted that retention varied among individuals. While some students greatly benefited from this approach, others struggled with the spatial organization required by GOs.

The use of GOI was shown to significantly not only enhance comprehension among the majority of ESL learners, but also contributed to improved retention for some learners, as the organized structure helped solidify their understanding. However, retention outcomes were not consistent across the board. Some students, especially those unaccustomed to linear note-taking methods, found it difficult to adjust to the spatial organization required by GOs. This difficulty suggests that while GOI can be an effective tool for enhancing comprehension and retention, it may not suit all learners equally. Educators should consider incorporating a variety of note-taking and organizational strategies to accommodate diverse learning styles, gradually introducing GOI to help students become more comfortable with this approach.

Theme 3: Collaboration and Peer Interaction

Based on the classroom observation, the use of GOs often led to more collaborative learning. ESL learners were observed discussing how to fill out the organisers and sharing ideas, which enhance their understanding through peer interaction. On the down side, it was observed that minority of the students exhibited with lower confidence in their English proficiency, displayed reluctance to participate in group activities involving GOI. They feared making mistakes and being judged by their peers, which sometimes led to disengagement.

The collaborative learning environment fostered by GOI was another notable benefit, as ESL students often worked together to complete GOs. This collaboration allowed ESL learners to discuss ideas, clarify concepts, and learn from each other, thereby enhancing their understanding through peer interaction. However, this collaborative aspect also presented challenges for some ESL students, particularly those with lower confidence in their English proficiency. These students were sometimes reluctant to participate in group activities involving GOI due to fear of making mistakes and being judged by their peers. This reluctance led to disengagement, highlighting the social and emotional barriers that can affect the effectiveness of collaborative learning in ESL contexts. To create a more inclusive environment, educators should focus on building a supportive classroom culture where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process. Providing opportunities for smaller group work or pairing students with supportive peers could help build confidence and encourage more active participation.

4.2 RQ 2: What Are the Challenges do ESL Learners Encounter While Using GOI Approach in Reading?

Theme 1: Difficulties with GO Complexity

This is one of the challenges that ESL learners experienced when working with GOs which were extremely intricate or detailed. These obstacles can negatively impact the effectiveness of GOI in enhancing the reading comprehension and overall learning experience.

Theme 1a: Overwhelming Information

Many ESL learners expressed that they found certain GO to be overwhelming due to the sheer amount of information they were required to process at once. The complexity of these GO often made it difficult for students to focus on key concepts and establish meaningful connections between ideas. As stated by the following participants,

"The GO has so many different sections and arrows that I don't know where to start, I feel lost." CM G5

"I find the GOs with many branches and boxes is confusing, I end up missing important details" KWL A4

Overwhelming information in a GO can lead to cognitive overload, where the brain struggles to process and retain the extensive data presented. This is particularly problematic for ESL learners, who may already be operating at the edge of their cognitive capacity due to language barriers. When confronted with a complex, information-dense GO, these students might find it difficult to identify key concepts or establish connections between ideas, leading to a superficial understanding of the material.

Theme 1b: Navigation and Usability Challenges

Another significant difficulty associated with complex GOs is the challenge of navigation and usability. Learners may find it hard to understand how to interact with a GO that has a complicated structure or layout. The instructions for using such GOs might be unclear or difficult to follow, particularly for students who are not familiar with GO in general. This can lead to a steep learning curve where students spend more time trying to figure out how to use the tool than actually engaging with the content it is meant to help them understand. These usability challenges can diminish the overall effectiveness of the GO, making it more of a hindrance than a help in the learning process. Two participants disclosed that,

"I spent longer time trying to understand how to fill in the GO

than reading the text, the tool was too complicated."

"The instruction for using the GO were confusing, I wasn't

sure if I was doing it right. I keep on trying and made the whole process frustrating"

The finding highlights significant challenges ESL learners face when using complex GOs, primarily due to overwhelming information and difficulties in navigation and usability. The issue of cognitive overload arises when GOs present too much information, causing confusion and hindering the learner's ability to focus on key concepts and make meaningful connections. Additionally, the complexity of these tools can lead to frustration, as students may struggle with unclear instructions and spend more time figuring out how to use the GO than engaging with the material.

This finding is consistent with research from Ghaffari (2017), the study suggested that cognitive overload can occur when learners are using GOs that presented with too much information. For many learners, especially those who are unfamiliar with the use of GO such as ESL learners, this can lead to confusion and difficulty in focusing on the most critical aspects of the content. The excessive detail can obscure the primary purpose of the GO, making it harder for students to see the bigger picture and understand the main ideas. Instead of aiding comprehension, an overloaded GO can become a source of frustration, hindering the learning process.

Theme 2: Cultural and Linguistic Barriers

Besides difficulties with GO complexity, the current findings identified cultural and linguistic barriers as another challenges encountered by

the ESL learners, especially in the areas of limited vocabulary and language proficiency.

Theme 2a : Cultural Barrier

Cultural differences in cognitive styles were identified as a key barrier to effectively engaging with GOI. Some ESL learners come from educational backgrounds where visual learning strategies like GOs are not commonly used. This unfamiliarity can make it difficult for them to understand the purpose and function of these tools. As one participant highlighted,

"When my teacher showed us a graphic organizer, I didn't understand how it was supposed to help me. It felt strange and confusing at first, and I wasn't sure if I was using it right." KWL A4

Theme 2b: Language Proficiency and Vocabulary

The findings revealed that lack of appropriate vocabulary and limited language proficiency were major obstacle to impede the ability of the students to engage with GOs. When students struggle with the language used in the GOs, it can lead to confusion and hinder their ability to extract and synthesize information effectively. As hinted by the following participants:

"Absolutely Yes, I have faced the problem of not understanding a sentence or a word. I would read the in front and the back sentences of the sentences I don't understand and read them again. If, I still don't understand I would look for dictionary." CM A2

"Generally, I don't have much problems. I can understand most of the main points in the text. Only a few sentences with vocabulary I don't understand." CM G1

"I think I can understand at least half of the main points and only some new words I don't understand." CM G4

Thus, cultural and linguistic barriers play a crucial role in shaping ESL learners' ability to fully engage with GOI. These barriers can hinder both the comprehension and practical use of GO, reducing their effectiveness as educational tools. However, by adopting culturally responsive teaching practices and providing appropriate linguistic scaffolding, educators can help mitigate these challenges and support ESL learners in successfully engaging with GOI.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Implications of the Study

The findings from this study have several crucial implications for educators, instructional designers, and curriculum developers, particularly in the context of teaching ESL learners.

The study underscores the necessity for simplifying GOs to prevent cognitive overload. Educators and instructional designers should prioritize clarity and simplicity in the design of GOs, ensuring they highlight key concepts without overwhelming learners with excessive information (Akkakosan, 2011). More specifically, the educators should adapt GO to address the specific reading and comprehension need of ESL students. This adaptation include simplifying the language used in GOs and providing clear instructions on how to utilize them effectively. This approach will make these tools more effective in enhancing comprehension and retention, particularly for ESL students who may already be navigating language barriers.

Besides, provided the cultural barriers identified in this current study, there is a strong implication for the curriculum development of culturally responsive teaching materials. The curriculum developers should design or adapt the GOs to reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of ESL learners. This involves incorporating culturally relevant examples and scenarios within the GOs to make them more relatable and engaging for students. By doing so, educators can enhance students' understanding and acceptance of GOI, leading to better engagement and educational outcomes (Carolina, 2013).

Additionally, the study's findings underscore the importance of providing additional language support and scaffolding to address linguistic barriers. Educators should offer support such as glossaries, bilingual resources, and opportunities for students to discuss content in their native language before using English. This approach can help ESL learners overcome language barriers and use GOs effectively and efficiently. Additionally, scaffolding techniques should be employed to gradually build students' proficiency with both the language and the use of GOs (Atta & Safein, 2017).

Moreover, the study also points to the need for strategies to foster positive attitudes towards GOI among ESL learners. Educators should emphasize the benefits of graphic organizers in improving reading comprehension and organizational skills. Creating a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable exploring and using graphic organizers can help shift negative attitudes and increase their overall effectiveness (Aloraini, 2021).

5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Future researchers can take the initiative to examine how digital GOs and educational technology tools impact ESL learners' engagement and learning outcomes. They can explore the benefits and challenges of integrating technology into GOI and its effect on student

motivation and comprehension.

Additionally, future researcher can investigate the impact of GOI on the writing skills of ESL learners instead of reading skills in the current study. They can find out how the use of GOI can improve the writing abilities of the ESL students.

5.3 Conclusion

GOI in ESL classrooms has been effective in boosting reading engagement, motivation, comprehension, and critical thinking among students, particularly through its visual and structured approach. While most learners responded positively, finding GOs helpful in breaking down complex texts and making learning more interactive, some faced challenges due to unfamiliarity with the tools or content. Overall, with proper support, GOI can significantly enhance the ESL learning experience, making it a valuable instructional strategy.

GOI can enhance ESL learners' reading comprehension, but its effectiveness is often hindered by the complexity of the organizers and cultural and linguistic barriers. Overly detailed GOs can overwhelm learners, leading to cognitive overload and frustration, while unfamiliarity with visual learning tools and limited language proficiency further complicate their use. Simplifying GOs and providing clear instructions, along with culturally responsive and linguistically supportive teaching practices, can help ESL learners better engage with and benefit from GOI.

The use of GOI in ESL classrooms shows promise in increasing student engagement, particularly for visual learners, by providing a clear, structured way to process information. It enhances comprehension and retention for many students by clarifying key concepts, although some struggle with the spatial organization required. Additionally, GOI fosters collaboration and peer interaction, but students with lower English proficiency may feel anxious about participating, which can lead to disengagement. To maximize GOI's effectiveness, educators should incorporate flexible, differentiated instruction and cultivate a supportive classroom environment that encourages participation and learning from mistakes.

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Authors' contributions

Kellie Hon: Primarily responsible for the conception and design of the study, data collection and curation, formal analysis, and drafting of the original manuscript.

Meijun Lu: Provided overall supervision throughout the research process, validated and refined the analytical methods, assisted with data analysis and interpretation of the research results, and contributed to the critical review, revision, and finalization of the manuscript.

All authors: Have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to its publication.

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