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Use of Graphic Organiser and Instructional Scaffolding as a Teaching Strategy for TESL Undergraduates: An Overview of Students' Experiences

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ABSTRACT

Debates over the use of graphic organiser and instructional scaffolding as a teaching strategy are great in number, but not on students' experiences of using them. Therefore, this study explored the significant differences in the learning experiences gained when 'graphic organiser instructional scaffolding' (GOIS) and 'no graphic organiser no instructional scaffolding' (NGNI) delivery modes were used as teaching strategies for argumentative writing in a TESL program. A semi-structured interview questionnaire was used to guide the interviews. A total of 6 students (GOIS, n=3; NGNI, n=3) were interviewed and audio-recorded. The constant comparative approach was used to analyze the interview transcripts of the GOIS and NGNI groups. The findings indicated that the students who use the GOIS delivery mode have more positive experiences compared to students in the NGNI delivery mode. Hence, the study recommends educators to use this delivery mode in future to ensure better learning experiences.

Keywords: argumentative essay, graphic organiser, instructional scaffolding, sociocultural theory, TESL undergraduates.

Introduction

Mastering the skill of writing is most challenging and difficult when compared to other language skills. A number of reasons have been cited as the cause for a poor writing performance which includes inappropriate teaching methods (Tayib, 2015), educators' qualities (Kepol, 2017), classroom size (Imtiaz, 2014) and the ineffective use/lack of use of e-learning tools (Konstantinidis, Tsiatsos, Demetriadis & Pomportsis, 2011). To address these concerns a wide range of studies had looked into instructional scaffolding and graphic organiser as a way to improve argumentative writing (Lancaster, 2011; Meera & Aiswarya, 2014; Tayib, 2015; Allenger, 2015).

Although there are researches on the effectiveness of the graphic organisers and instructional scaffolding in enhancing argumentative essay, the researchers believe that the need should be focused on developing argumentative writing capacity using graphic organisers as instructional scaffolding that includes explicit instruction and guidance from a facilitator and jointly written argumentative tasks in small groups. The researchers believe by doing so, collaboration could occur, helping students accomplish their argumentative tasks successfully. This is consistent with Storch (2011) who noted that in the language classrooms, very few studies have investigated the nature of collaboration when students produce a jointly written text. It would, therefore, be useful to find out if the GOIS delivery mode, which incorporates those criteria, would be an added advantage over the NGNI delivery modes in the argumentative writing performance among TESL undergraduates in Malaysia, as studies had also pointed out the need to conduct research on the efficacy of graphic organisers as instructional scaffolding in argumentative writing (Hawkins, 2011).

Vygotsky's Socio-cultural theory (SCT) was adopted as it was found to be closely related to the study. The major

theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky believed everything is learned on two levels, social and then individual. The ZPD is the learning zone where support is necessary in various ways and which requires social interaction to fully develop. Scaffolding is explained as *"the role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and providing support structures to get to the next stage or level"* (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 176). In the beginning, Vygotsky asserts that learners receive full assistance from their teachers and as they advance, teachers slowly withdraw support and move the responsibility of learning to learners so that they become independent learners. According to Majid and Stapa (2017) scaffolding is closely related to collaboration in a real setting and allows students to view and come out with a conclusion through sharing ideas with their peers in the group.

The key implication of instructional scaffolding is that learners are engaged with their educators, peers, and instructional tools with a high quality of support and help from educators who understand the requirement of learners to perform the task. Instructional scaffolding involves active learning where facilitators question and encourage students to build on prior knowledge, form new knowledge, give positive feedback, and motivate learners by minimizing the level of frustration, thereby ensuring internalization of learning for the learners (Rodrigo, 2012). But, in tertiary education today, there are more than 30 students in a classroom, making it impossible for an educator to ensure learners' learning (Derrick, 2019). According to Chukwuagu (2016), without coaching and maintaining learners' interest in learning, their achievement is affected.

The scaffolding metaphor has been acknowledged as an effective learning tool in enhancing writing performance (Obeiah & Bataineh, 2015). Support is offered for learners to partake in collaborative learning in groups where they learn by sharing ideas in real-life situations among peers. Scaffolding, also undoubtedly provides a supportive learning environment for learners to ask questions, offer feedback and assist their peers in learning new subject materials, hence taking a more active role in their own learning. Scaffolding is therefore, seen as a momentary support to assist students in accomplishing new tasks and understanding concepts which they cannot achieve on their own.

There is a variety of scaffolding approaches to accommodate learners of different levels of knowledge, for instance, teachers are less active in the teaching and learning because learners are actively involved in the collaborative learning tasks (Gagné & Parks, 2013). Therefore, *"the concept of scaffolding has received a great deal of attention in educational research over the past few decades"* (van de Pol, Volman & Beishuizen, 2010, p. 1) and the scaffolding approach is indicated as fundamental in second language learning (L2) as its use of mediators and support from more knowledgeable persons such as educators and peers ensure learners' potential development is achieved successfully (Dongyu, Fanyu & Wanyi, 2013).

It must be noted that scaffolding is not used as commonly as the lecture method at the higher tertiary level and therefore its use or lack thereof, varies from different courses or programs offered in the universities. There are views that the lecture method might be suitable as an effective teaching approach for pedagogical reasons (French & Kennedy, 2016; Kelly, 2017). Replacing the lecture method which is the behavioral learning theory with SCT in ESL learning would entail changes in pedagogy. The educator's role would have to move from the conventional teaching approach such as the lecture method (Brandon & All, 2010) to a more social and friendly approach. The educator shifts from "knowledge provider" to "knowledge facilitator" and large classes are changed to small groups to promote social interaction.

Implementing the SCT in the ESL learning context would certainly be challenging and time-consuming as educators and learners have to get adapted to a different approach to learning, but it is possible and requires training as the impact is positive and promising. Thus, any university programs considering adopting the use of graphic organisers and instructional scaffolding in argumentative writing must weigh its benefits and disadvantages. Care should be taken in the implementation for a sudden shift in learning methodology that could adversely affect the success rate of instructional scaffolding. According to Servati (2012, p.24) can be ineffective in learning where *"learners may end up confused, causing more stress on their cognitive load…"* if not modeled appropriately. Therefore, the implementation of graphic organiser as instructional scaffolding should be incremental in order to provide both teacher and learners with enough time to become familiar with the new instructional method.

Past studies have looked into the effectiveness of graphic organisers and instructional scaffolding in various contexts and aspects to show how it supports writing (Lancaster, 2011; Meera & Aiswarya, 2014; Tayib, 2015; Allenger, 2015). It would, therefore, be useful to explore students' learning experiences when 'graphic organiser

instructional scaffolding' (GOIS) and 'no graphic organiser no instructional scaffolding' (NGNI) delivery modes were used as teaching strategies for argumentative writing in a TESL program.

Methods

In the present study, the researchers carried out semi-structured interviews with the TESL undergraduates on their learning experiences to investigate if there is a link between the two different delivery modes on the argumentative writing performance among TESL undergraduates. Semi-structured interviews are in-depth interviews where participants are required to answer pre-set open-ended questions and these have been widely employed by scholars (Jamshed, 2014). According to Laforest (2009), semi-structured interviews are used to collect qualitative information and are useful for studying specific situations. The researchers believe that the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews in this study can purvey meaningful feedback on students' learning experiences in the two delivery modes. Semi-structured interviews were also found to be suitable for small samples and for providing access to participants' perceptions and opinions. Newton (2010) asserted that semi-structured interviews provide opportunities for researchers to generate rich data. To facilitate this, the following interview questions were posed to the students:

1. How was your overall learning experience using the delivery mode?

2. How did the delivery mode help you expand your knowledge of argumentative writing ability?

3. What were the challenges that you faced during the learning process using the delivery mode?

4. How would you describe your participation in the learning process using the delivery mode?

5. What are the benefits that you perceived in the use of the delivery mode?

A total of six students, three from each delivery mode, who volunteered to take part in the semi-structured interview were used as samples. As Alshenqeeti (2014) pointed out, students should be free to refuse or to agree in taking part in the semi-structured interview. Although the number of interviewees are small, it is more important to get persistent data rather than getting enough data.

In this study, the graphic organisers and instructional scaffolding were guidance and support provided by a knowledgeable person, i.e. the facilitator. The facilitator used the graphic organisers as visuals (as well as paper-based- modeling, questioning, and group discussion) during the teaching and learning process to assist the students in the argumentative writing task in a more structured and efficient way to optimize performance. The samples are TESL undergraduates.

The GOIS delivery mode functioned as the study intervention in the experimental group while the lecture method, NGNI, was included as a control condition to enhance the understanding of the effectiveness of the present study intervention. Teaching procedure for the GOIS delivery mode involved four stages of learning with the use of the graphic organiser as instructional scaffolding; Stage 1: The Introduction, Stage 2: Assisted Group Discussion, Stage 3: Writing an Individual Essay and Stage 4: Peer Review. During the first stage of week one, the facilitator introduced the argumentative graphic organiser as well as the elements of an argumentative essay via slides. Then, the facilitator modeled the lesson by showing a sample of completed graphic organiser and a sample of a written argumentative essay. The purpose of modeling using the graphic organisers is to provide students with explicit information on the content, organization, argumentative elements, and the use of conjunctions for argumentative writing. Additionally, the facilitator also posed some questions to check on students' understanding as well as to enrich the classroom discourse.

In the second stage of week one, the facilitator allocated students to their respective groups. The facilitator provided students copies of a sample essay and a blank graphic organiser. Students were instructed to read the sample essay, identify and underline the conjunctions used and then, discuss and complete the graphic organiser with appropriate information. The facilitator assisted group members when necessary. Subsequently, in stage three, the facilitator instructed the students to write an individual argumentative essay based on the information gathered in the graphic organiser.

During the last week, students were instructed to complete a checklist and reflect on their peer's essay. In this stage, the facilitator provided students with an A4 paper attached with an argumentative topic. Group members were instructed to draw an argumentative graphic organiser discuss and then complete the graphic organiser with appropriate information. Subsequently, the facilitator instructed the students to write an individual

argumentative essay based on the completed graphic organisers. The facilitator assisted group members when necessary.

In the NGNI delivery mode, the same lecturer who was involved in the GOIS delivery mode acted as the instructor in delivering the teaching method. The teaching was implemented in a classroom equipped with teaching facilities similar to the GOIS delivery mode. The teaching procedure for the NGNI condition involved four stages of learning; Stage 1: The Introduction, Stage 2: Peer Learning, Stage 3: Individual Essay Writing and Stage 4: The Review.

During the first stage, the instructor started the lesson by introducing the argumentative topic. After that, the instructor wrote down the following argumentative elements on the whiteboard and explained them verbally; thesis statements, paragraphs, topic sentences, and supporting details. Then, the instructor asked a few questions related to the argumentative topic. The instructor also introduced and wrote down a few transition signals on the whiteboard and explained them verbally. Next, in the second stage, the lecturer asked the students to form groups. Students were instructed to discuss and list down important points from their discussion. The instructor provided help only when necessary. After that, in stage three, students were instructed to write an individual argumentative essay based on the topic of discussion. In the last stage, the instructor collected and reviewed the students' essays. In the NGNI condition, the instructor provided very basic information and was less involved in the learning process compared to the GOIS condition. During the intervention period of four weeks, students went through lessons based on the lecture mode without the use of graphic organisers and instructional scaffolding

To facilitate data analysis, the interviews were recorded. Jamshed (2014) suggested that researchers should record semi-structured interviews conducted because handwritten notes are found to be unreliable and can cause researchers to miss some important key points. Meanwhile, recording provides the opportunity for researchers to pay attention to the content of an interview as well as the verbal prompts and thus helps transcriptionist to produce a "verbatim transcript" of the interview. The constant comparative approach was employed in this study as *"…it generates theory that can be used as a precursor for further investigation of this phenomenon and related issues"* (Lawrence & Tar, 2013, p.35).

The semi-structured interview was administered using the convenience sampling technique one week after the argumentative essay writing post-test. The researchers sought the help of the subject coordinator to engage the students for the interview based on their interest in taking part, collected before the interview, an important ethical procedure to be observed (Alshenqeeti, 2014 & Palinkas et al., 2015). Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) recommended that *"…when comparing subgroups, at least three cases per subgroup should be selected"* (p.245). Further, issues such as the respondents' manners, views and interviewer's predictions can be a guide to high validity and at the same time possibility for unfairness. Therefore, to avoid these possibilities, the researchers emphasized on the respondents' honest replies and views related to the interview questions.

The respondents were also allowed to use the language that they were comfortable in and express their views without fear of grammatical errors. Since it was a semi-structured interview the researchers ended the conversation when they found that the respondents had nothing more to add. The recorded data were transcribed verbatim by listening to the recorded data. The transcriptions were verified by an inter-rater and subsequently analyzed for 'emergent themes' using the 'constant comparative method'.

An analytical framework which is a modified version by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) from Glaser and Strauss (1967 as cited in Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007) was employed in the present study. The analysis of the interview transcriptions was done manually, and the steps presented in Table 1 were adopted.

Initially, as advocated by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), interviews from each delivery mode which were analyzed according to the themes identified were given to the interviewees to confirm whether the themes had captured their statements exactly. Once associations

Table 1: Analysis Procedures for Semi-Structured Interview

Step	Procedure
1	The entire set of data is read.
2	The data were chunked into smaller meaningful parts by underlining the chunk in the interview transcript.
3	Each chunk of data is labeled with a code.
4	All new chunks of data are compared with previous code and *"similar chunks will be labeled with the same code"* (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p.565)
5	All coded data are grouped by similarity.
6	A theme is then identified and assigned to each group of coded data.

(Source: Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007)

were made, the themes within the two delivery modes were confirmed before making a comparison and judging on why one particular delivery mode was better than the other in terms of overall argumentative writing performance.

Two validity checking approaches suggested by Creswell (2014) that is, the 'external auditor' and 'member checking' were employed by the researchers. First, the researchers requested a colleague who had experience in teaching ESL to analyze the interview transcripts by reading through the six interview transcripts and identifying the emergent categories. Then, the emerged categories were discussed by the researchers and the colleague to check if the categories were reasonably accurate. The inaccurate categories were discussed further until both parties came to a consensus. Besides that, the researchers had also requested two interviewees to look through the themes that had emerged from the interview for accuracy. No amendments were made as the emergent themes identified in the interview transcripts contained true experiences of the interviewees.

Results and Discussions

This section presents the analysis of the semi-structured interview data of six selected students who underwent the two delivery modes, that is the GOIS (*n* = 3) and the NGNI (*n* = 3). The findings from these analyses are presented and discussed according to the categories and subcategories that emerged from the students' learning experiences. Additionally, similarities and differences in students' learning experiences of the two different groups are also presented.

A total of six interview transcripts were analyzed and compared from the two delivery modes and a total of two similar categories emerged: similar 'commitment to accomplish the learning task,' and 'challenges.' Table 2 illustrates the similar categories and subcategories that emerged among the interviewees of the two delivery modes.

Table 2 shows the similarities in responses of the six respondents on the experience gained from their lessons; the GOIS and NGNI groups. For the purpose of this research, only the categories which indicated similarities will be discussed. They are 'commitment to accomplish the learning task' and 'challenges'.

Category a: Commitment to accomplish the learning task

The category 'commitment to accomplish the learning task' emerged from students' involvement in the learning process and commitment to accomplish the written task. Commitment towards the written task is essential as it helps students to construct knowledge through independent learning and contribution of ideas during group discussions. The subcategory 'independent learning' describes how the delivery modes had persuaded individual students from the GOIS and NGNI groups to be independent to accomplish the learning task. The following student mentioned that she had to write her own individual essay without referring to any source.

> *Aaaa… in this delivery mode completing the task when I have to write down my own individually essay, aaaa... normally before this I refer to the samples from the website, from internet to write my essay. Aaaa... so, aaaa... so when I were asked to write my essay mmmm... to my own essay so, it's a bit hard and a bit challenging for me because it... ya, [yes] I have to write my essay without referring to website and on another things.* (GOIS12)

On the other hand, the following student cited that she had to plan the time for consultation with her lecturer regarding the learning task. She also added that there was a need for her to spend more time to practice writing in L2 so that she could express her feelings.

> *So, I try to make, to make a time to mmmm… to consult with the lecturer, in the other time like not in the class only but mmmm… mmmm… after the class. So, I think I really need have to spend time more aaaa… spend more time in practicing writing. Besides that, aaaa… instead of depending on the teacher. But I always try like aaaa… I try to aaaa… like I want to express my feelings, I write in notes so that I try to write aaaa… I try to write in English.* (NGNI04)

Table 2: Similarities in Categories and Subcategories for GOIS and NGNI Delivery Modes

No.	Categories	No.	Subcategories	GOIS	NGNI
(a)	Commitment to accomplish the learning task	(i)	Independent learning	√	√
(b)	Challenges	(i)	Uncertainty with information	√	√

Category b: Challenges

The 'challenges' category emerged in the statements made by students about the challenges that they had experienced using the GOIS and NGNI delivery modes under the following subcategory; 'uncertainty with information' explains students' experience of being uncertain to accomplish the given task. The following excerpt from the GOIS12 explains the situation where some group members had something in their minds, but they did not know how to explain their points and ideas. As a result, it was difficult for the group members to make a decision. The following quote explains the situation:

> *They have something on their mind but they don't know how to deliver that... how to explain that because some ya, [yes] because I don't know, maybe they scared or scared to try to explain the point and the ideas. So, mmmm... so, it was so difficult because aaaa... to decide aaaa... to decide the which ideas is true, which idea is acceptable and so on.* (GOIS12)

As for the NGNI delivery mode, the following student revealed that it was hard for her to structure the paragraph for argumentative writing because she obtained very few exercises and very little guidance from her lecturers. The following excerpt explains the situation:

> *Aaaa… structuring the paragraph, I think that's really hard. Because, I don't know which is more important and which is not. So, I don't know how can I rearrange the point and aaaa… make it to a paragraph. Which aaaa… I don't know whether it is my fault or the lecturer's fault. Because, sometimes the lecturers give aaaa… less exercises on how to write the writing.* (NGNI14)

Hence, based on the analysis, the GOIS and NGNI delivery modes have two similar categories.

Besides the similarities, the two delivery modes revealed a total of six different categories; 'improved knowledge,' 'knowledge construction,' 'proffers support in learning,' 'room for collaboration,' 'commitment to accomplish the learning task,' and 'challenges.' Table 3 illustrates the different categories and subcategories that emerged from the interviewees of the two delivery modes.

Category a: Improved knowledge

The "improved knowledge" category emerged for the GOIS delivery mode but not for the NGNI delivery mode

Table 3: Differences in Categories and Subcategories for the GOIS and NGNI Delivery Modes

No.	Categories	No.	Subcategories	GOIS	NGNI
(a)	Improved knowledge	(i)	Produce a good result	√	X
		(ii)	Construct a good essay	√	X
		(ii)	Exchange and share ideas	√	X
		(iv)	Prevent redundancy of ideas	√	X
		(v)	Identify ideas	√	X
(b)	Knowledge construction	(i)	Planning the Essay	√	X
		(ii)	Create ideas	√	X
(c)	Proffers support in learning	(i)	Completing the writing task	√	X
		(ii)	Link to prior knowledge	√	X
		(iii)	Provides room for understanding	√	X
(d)	Room for collaboration	(i)	Chance for interaction	√	X
(e)	Commitment to accomplish the learning task	(i)	The need to contribute ideas	√	X
		(ii)	The need to ask questions	X	√
(f)	Challenges	(i)	Prevent from thinking further	√	X
		(ii)	Lesson not interesting	X	√
		(iii)	Lack of practice	X	√
		(iv)	Barriers to thinking	X	√
		(v)	Unproductive pair discussion	X	√
		(vi)	Unclear explanation	X	√
		(vii)	Lack of feedback	X	√
		(viii)	Exam-oriented learning	X	√

(Table 3). The following five subcategories were found to emerge for the GOIS delivery mode: 'produce a good result,' 'construct a good essay,' 'exchange and share ideas,' 'prevent redundancy of ideas', and 'identify ideas.' The subcategory 'produce good result' describes how the GOIS delivery mode has given the students confidence to produce good results. The following student expressed that the delivery mode has given students the confidence to produce good results.

> *With the help of the lecturer... with help mmmm… of the mmmm... with help of the group of friends mmmm... will... mmmm… will help to mmmm… will help us to create a good result.* (GOIS04)

The subcategory 'construct a good essay' describes how the delivery mode has assisted the students to construct good essays. According to the following student, the graphic organiser has helped her to write a quality essay because it shows the steps clearly and also shows the part to be corrected.

> *Mmmm... okay. For me, mmmm… I am not very good in writing abilities so, mmmm… so, for me graphic organisers, mmmm… with help of the teacher, will help me to give a good essay, good writing because they show us steps, they show us mmmm… which aaaa… which part we should correct it. Mmmm… they show us mmmm… how to make a very good quality essays.* (GOIS04)

Subcategory 'exchange and share ideas' describes how the GOIS delivery mode has provided a chance for students to exchange and share ideas. The following student indeed agreed that the delivery mode has provided her a chance to exchange and share her ideas with the group members.

> *So, I can exchange and share my ideas with them. So that, the result of my essay is aaaa.... is very good. So, mmmm...* (GOIS04)

The subcategory 'prevent redundancy of ideas' describes how the GOIS delivery mode had helped students to avoid redundancy of ideas in learning. The following student clearly described her experience.

> *I think without it… without this, we just always argue, argue, argue…just like I say, leader, our leader is very active and busy during the group discussion, so using this one we know all that particular idea or aaaa… idea aaaa… have been said before this. So, there is no redundant in that using ideas, so we just oh, we just pass by, pass by just proceed… proceed to the next idea until we get the conclusion.* (GOIS14)

The subcategory 'identify ideas' describes how the GOIS delivery mode has assisted students to easily identify ideas for their writing. One of the students stated that a step-by-step procedure and guidance as well as practice helped her to identify ideas for writing.

> *Aaaa… in this delivery mode aaaa... where the facilitators shows me the steps-by-steps of the procedure, guidance and the practice, really improve me identify the ideas in writing.* (GOIS12)

Category b: Knowledge Construction

The 'knowledge construction' category emerged from how the GOIS delivery mode assisted students to construct knowledge. This was achieved through students' participation in the learning where they were able to grasp the learning content. Two subcategories emerged for GOIS delivery mode, and they were: 'planning the essay' and 'create ideas.' These were not experienced by the respondents in the NGNI group.

The subcategory 'planning the essay' describes how the delivery mode of GOIS had guided students in planning their essay. The following student pointed out that she had learned to use the graphic organiser effectively and as a result, she was able to plan her essay well compared before.

> *So, aaaa... basically aaaa... nowadays aaaa... I had learned the delivery mode, I tend when I… before I write the essay, I tend to draw the graphic organiser first because maybe before this I don't draw the step-by-step, the graphic organiser well aaaa... and nowadays after I have learned the graphic organiser with our lecturers and facilitators... so ya, [yes] I... I tend to write the, the step-by-step graphic organisers step. So, it will helps me to plan my essay well and it is more structured than, before.* (GOIS12)

The subcategory 'create ideas' describes how the GOIS delivery mode had facilitated the students to create ideas in argumentative writing.

> *Mmmm… aaaa… .in my opinion, the use of graphic organiser… organisers, mmmm… it will help to aaaa.... will help the students to create more new ideas mmmm… more opinion because mmmm… the...because... oh... mmmm… okay. Mmmm... using the graphic organiser, mmmm... mmmm... by giving more interesting and motivating topics for the students to... to create more ideas and opinions.* (GOIS04)

> *Oh, ya [yes]. So, we have just to write we have say and… just like I said, our ideas, our reasons and our supporting details in my group discussion, aaaa… previously… we just*

do like that, so it helps me a lot to speak and… give idea more… in the discussion. (GOIS14)

Category c: Proffers support in learning

The category 'proffers support in learning' emerged from how the GOIS delivery mode proffered support for students in their learning. The GOIS delivery mode had supported and helped them to complete the argumentative writing task, linked their prior knowledge to their argumentative writing, and provided room for a better understanding of the writing task. Three subcategories emerged from the 'proffers support in learning' category; 'completing the writing task,' 'link to prior knowledge', and 'provides room for understanding.'

The subcategory 'completing the writing task' describes how the GOIS delivery mode had supported students to complete the argumentative writing task. One student stated that the delivery mode had helped her to complete the writing task given by the facilitator.

And also, for the group activity… group work activities, mmmm… the involvement of the teacher mmmm… mmmm… help the students more in doing their task because mmmm… the… because… mmmm… the lecturer gives a very clear explanation…. (GOIS04)

The subcategory 'link to prior knowledge' describes how the delivery mode of GOIS had persuaded students to use their prior knowledge to accomplish the learning task. The following statement clearly indicates how students had used their prior knowledge to create more ideas to accomplish the given task.

Aaaa…interesting topic aaaa… such as study at school or study at home… make me involve and mmmm… and produce more ideas relating to my prior knowledge which is, aaaa… before this in our previous group discussion aaaa… some of us choose to be studied at home and some of us choose to study at school. But at the end of the discussion, we get aaaa… one solid idea or conclusion which is, study at school is more aaaa… it's more… (GOIS14)

The subcategory 'provides room for understanding' describes how the GOIS delivery mode had given room for students to understand the learning better. The two students described their experiences.

Okay, mmmm… well for me aaaa… graphic organisers as instructional scaff… aaaa… scaffolding, mmmm… it's very easy to understand because mmmm… (GOIS04)

And also, mmmm… the help of the lecturer or teacher mmmm… in writing an argumentative essay mmmm… will make the students mmmm… will make the students… aaaa… yeah, understand better. Aaaa… and somehow, I think that this delivery mode is easier to understand and learn because…ya, [yes] you know the step-by-step, so easier for us to… for us like student to understand it and to use it in our writing essay. (GOIS12)

Category d: Room for collaboration

The category 'room for collaboration' emerges from how the GOIS delivery had provided students with opportunity for collaboration. The delivery mode had provided students a chance for interaction with their peers during group work. Only one subcategory emerged from the "room for collaboration" category and that was the 'chance for interaction'.

The subcategory 'chance for interaction' describes how the delivery mode had offered students an opportunity for more interaction. One student indicated that there was a question and answer session which offered more opportunities for interaction and drew her away from being an introvert person.

Aaaa… exchanging ideas mmmm… I could make my essay better and also mmmm… the questions and answer session provides mmmm… mmmm… opportunity… opportunity for more interaction because mmmm… questions aaaa… because mmmm… the… because mmmm… some students are not…are shy aaaa…. to… to aaaa…. tell about their aaaa… (GOIS04)

Category e: Commitment to accomplish the learning task

The category 'commitment to accomplish the learning task' emerged from students' involvement in the learning process and commitment to accomplish the written task. Commitment towards the written task is essential as it helped students to construct knowledge through independent learning and contribute ideas during group discussion. This category emerged in the two delivery modes but different subcategories emerged for the delivery modes.

The subcategory 'the need to contribute ideas' describes how the delivery mode had encouraged students to contribute ideas to accomplish the learning task. One of the students stated that she tended to contribute more

ideas during the group discussion in order to improve herself.

> *And aaaa... lectures aaaa... and the facilitators also you know aaaa... give us, encourage us to talk more, to give aaaa... to give more ideas, to give more conclusions aaaa... so that aaaa... ya, [yes] you know I tend, I tend, myself tend to aaaa... to contribute more because aaaa... because I know that I have to contribute and give more ideas to the group discussion so that I can improve myself aaaa... using the delivery mode.* (GOIS12)

The subcategory 'the need to ask questions' emerged in the NGNI delivery mode and explained: the necessity for someone to ask questions to students and assist them to accomplish their learning task. The following student pointed out that she required someone to ask her questions so that she could activate her ideas to accomplish the given task.

> *Somebody need to ask you questions, because the idea will not come easily from you. I need someone to ask me, what is the question aaaa… someone need to push me.* (NGNI04)

This indicates that the GOIS delivery mode is effective as students were able to accomplish the task without need for further guidance.

Category f: Challenges

The category 'challenges' emerged in the statements made by students about the challenges that they had experienced when they underwent the GOIS and NGNI delivery modes. Students from the GOIS delivery mode highlighted an issue under the following subcategory: 'prevent from thinking further'. However, students from the NGNI delivery mode identified the following seven subcategories: 'lesson not interesting,' 'lack of practice,' 'barriers to thinking,' 'unproductive pair discussion,' 'unclear explanation,' 'lack of feedback', and 'exam-oriented learning.'

The subcategory 'prevent from thinking further' describes how students experienced difficulties to think further from the graphic organiser. One student mentioned that she was not able to think further and therefore she was not able to elaborate more on the ideas in learning.

> *Aaaa… the challengers that aaaa… that I find in graphic organiser is mmmm… the… the chart… mmmm… the chart graphic, the graphic that they show nmmm… like example mmmm… we writing an argumentative essays, mmmm… they already give us the idea but mmmm… the idea will mmmm… somehow will make the students mmmm… make the students hard to elaborate more about the ideas because they might have another ideas but mmmm… but the graphic organiser mmmm… that they put in the…in writing an essay will stop them from aaaa… thinking further.* (GOIS04)

The subcategory 'lesson not interesting' describes how students were bored using the NGNI delivery mode. The following extract from one of the students' interview revealed that the delivery mode was boring because the lecturer was teaching the whole time without any discussion in groups.

> *Aaaa… so, sometimes if everyone is boring because aaaa… the lecturer just explains and sometimes using projector, I feel like using projector is boring. Because, I just look at the slide and sometimes, I just not pay attention to the slide, because sometime the slides is too boring and too, too long and, its not simple and it's like copy paste (giggles) slide.* (NGNI04)

Further, the student also revealed that the lecturer did not provide adequate examples and the lesson was boring. Thus, the students tended to lose focus on the lesson while listening and taking notes.

> *Aaaa… not many examples provided. Mmmm… it's not too attractive too. It's boring. Overall, aaaa… I think the students lose focus in the group… in the task. So, we only can ask them question after the class. And I just sit and listen and just take notes.* (NGNI04)

Another student from the same group shared her experience using the NGNI delivery mode. According to her, the NGNI delivery mode was not motivating because the lecturer used the same teaching method which she found not helpful in her learning process. The following extract explains her feelings:

> *Well, most of the time I find it's not motivating, but the lectures is really…less interesting but they are using the same method which is, may with that have exist long years ago and, it's kind of not helping me at all, because yes, because like people nowadays or students nowadays wants something that is more helpful, something that is more aaaa… like very simplest way method, and aaaa…. most of the time like I really have aaaa… problems in how to begin my essay writing ever since my high school.* (NGNI14)

Additionally, she also found the delivery mode boring because she had to sit in one place and just keep thinking on what to write and that was stressful for her. Furthermore, the lecturer's voice projection was poor

and the classroom was dull as everyone was quiet. The following extract from the interview details out the student's experience:

> *And then, I do feel mad when it comes to essay and I'm not really excited, because, it's boring and also…I have to seat in a place and just keep thinking what, what I have to write and it's really stressful. It's boring so, so it's not very much help since, they also the voice projection is not that loud. And, the classroom start to become very dull, and everyone just keep quiet and just aaaa… sometimes some of them be like "This class is so boring lah, we should go out" something like that. So, I understand because I'm also a passive student, I'm not participate any of the activities in that class. I would rather just keep quiet and do my own things.* (NGNI14)

In line with this, the delivery mode was not of much help as the lecturer did not explain well. Further, students had to sit for long hours which made them stressed and sleepy. The following excerpt explains the student's experience:

> *I find it very less helpful in essay writing, since during the lecture mode aaaa… the lecturer itself is not explaining things very well. Because, we have to seat for long hours and we become stress. So, the students become tend to be tired and the class… also aaaa… start at the evening. So, of course people gets sleepy and hungry, and cause boring.* (NGNI14)

Furthermore, the delivery mode was found to be lacking in terms of vigorousness for the students. The following student explains the situation:

> *Aaaa.... the lecture sometimes aaaa... I find it not very lively...maybe the lecturer can have question and answer session, so when the student asks... aaaa... ask any questions, so the lecturer will know the ability of the student, maybe they understand or not understand what the...or... the lecturer also can do more writing activities…* (NGNI115)

> *So, now in the college it's the same thing. So, we have less writing exercises and not much attention is given. Plus, aaaa… so many other subjects to catch up, and aaaa… of course I know the basic elements to use, such as introduction, mmmm… mmmm… body paragraph and conclusion. But, aaaa… sometimes I get stuck to write my essay.* (NGNI04)

The subcategory 'barriers to thinking' describes how students experienced difficulties in thinking using the NGNI delivery mode. One student faced problems in thinking and coming out with ideas. She stated the following:

> *Sometimes, it's quite difficult to think and come up with the ideas. But, maybe I have to read a lot of things. But, sometimes when I did my test, my writing test or anything, aaaa… I have aaaa… how do you say aaaa… blackout, it's not blackout but…blank. I become blank and I can't think of anything, so it's like even the simplest technique or simplest technique that lecturer say is like, it couldn't cross my mind.* (NGNI14)

The subcategory 'unproductive pair discussion' describes difficulties students faced during pair discussion in the NGNI delivery mode to produce productive tasks. The following student explained the situation:

> *Example, during the pair work, so we ended up discussing something else, instead of giving the aaaa… instead of given the task. Like we, like usual as we are, if we are in the...we are not discussing the task, we are discussing the something else.* (NGNI04)

The subcategory 'unclear explanation' describes how the two students in the NGNI delivery mode were unclear with the explanation given by their lecturer to accomplish the given task. The following excerpts explain the situation:

> *And then, sometimes the lecturer's explanation is not very clear to us because aaaa… Okay. Lecturer explain how to do, but I think that's not enough as the class is occupied with many aaaa… of the students. Aaaa... because sometimes we want to ask the lecturer, and then they, are aaaa… helping someone else.* (NGNI04)

> *Like I aaaa… it's hard for me to understand what the lecturer said, it's hard for me to understand what the lecturers try to teach. Aaaa… the lecturer's explanation is also is not very clear to me. Like he or she want to say, want to explain something but, it's like he want to explain but sometime not. It didn't gets me.* (NGNI14)

The subcategory 'lack of feedback' describes how in the delivery mode of NGNI, adequate feedback was not provided to the students. One student mentioned that she did not get back her written task and as a result, she could not identify her mistakes.

> *But not very often because, they have to aaaa… concentrate or focus to others too. But sometimes, the lecturer not enough time and never return back to the… to our writing. Because aaaa… yes. They did not give back our written task. They did not check our mistakes or something. And we don't know our mistakes.* (NGNI04)

The subcategory 'exam-oriented learning' describes how the delivery mode of NGNI has provided students with more exam-oriented learning. One student highlighted the following experience:

> *Their examples like personal problems, and then aaaa… we… we are, we are tend to more focus on getting good*

> *grade. Because sometime lecturer focus more on the exam instead of writing practise. They just want we have…they just want us to have a good grade I think. Because, they did not focus on our writing practise actually. They just want, okay, aaaa… you do this test, and then you have your grade.* (NGNI04)

Overall, the similarities (Table 2) and differences (Table 3) in categories and subcategories of the themes emerged from the semi-structured interview explain how students' experience learning differently in the two delivery modes namely, GOIS and NGNI. However, the findings from the interview data revealed that the GOIS group was found to experience more learning benefits and less learning obstructions compared to the NGNI group. The interview results also revealed that the GOIS delivery mode offered students a situation where they were able to contribute their ideas and as a result, students were able to be committed to accomplishing their learning task. In line with this, according to scholars, the instructional scaffolding comprises active learning through questioning and prompting so that students can build on their prior knowledge. Thus, through these collaborations, facilitators have the opportunity to provide positive feedback and motivation to their students for internalization to occur (Rodrigo, 2012). These findings are in line with the sociocultural theory that claims knowledge is learned through others and through that connection, students assimilate and internalize the knowledge into their personal values (Vygotsky, 1978). Nerf (2017) also stressed that the sociocultural theory encourages learners to learn in social contexts among students through discussion, collaboration, and feedback. Thus, these approaches mentioned by Nerf (2017) which were experienced by students in the GOIS condition (Table 3) could have been the reason for students in the GOIS group to have more positive experience compared to their counterpart in the NGNI group.

Additionally, other possible reasons for students in the GOIS group to have better experiences than the students in NGNI group can be connected to the teaching approach employed by the facilitator. The GOIS group adapted a simple step-by-step instructional scaffolding approach from Ellis and Larkin (1998) which is inclusive of four learning stages using various approaches. This is in line with the view of Obeiah and Bataineh (2015) who stressed that a step-by-step approach and the amount of help provided by the facilitator in various stages can help students become independent learners. In the GOIS condition, the facilitator employed the modeling and questioning approach at the beginning stage of the lesson to guide the students using the argumentative graphic organiser to write the argumentative essay. Therefore, the modeling and questioning approach could have helped students to stay active, focused, and concentrate on their learning throughout the lesson and thus, aided the students to accomplish their argumentative tasks from the actual to potential level through interaction (Shi, 2017). The findings of this study are also congruent with the findings of López et al. (2017) that modeling significantly improves writing skill although employed for a short duration. This is evident for the GOIS group, where the facilitator has provided appropriate modeling according to students' needs, interest and abilities to meet the expectations. In line with this, students in the GOIS delivery mode were also instructed to work in small groups with the presence of a facilitator, as evident in this study, who provided guidance and help for students to work collaboratively in accomplishing the learning task. At the same time, during these collaborations, students could have shared their ideas, renegotiated their opinions, and come to a conclusion (Noor, 2014) as evident in this study.

Furthermore, students went through various activities throughout their learning sessions, for instance, reading articles related to argumentative topics and completing the graphic organisers, drawing an argumentative essay graphic organiser and finally writing an individual essay. Thus, the facilitator could have applied his expertise in leading the learning process while students went through various activities and these could have transformed their interpersonal activities into inter-psychological activities gradually (Shi, 2017). Moreover, the role of students who are committed to contributing ideas to learn and the facilitator who provides encouragement and support to engage interaction between peers during group work (Webb et al., 2013) have been evident in this study (Table 3). Therefore, these may be the reason for the GOIS group to have more positive experience compared to the students in the NGNI group.

Additionally, the peer-review sessions where students had to read, review, and exchange their essays with their peers could have provided students opportunities to learn from each other and helped them to understand the mistakes that they may have overlooked. As a result, this would have provided opportunities for students to accommodate different levels of knowledge in order to progress in their learning to write the argumentative essay. Therefore, the researchers believe these activities might have benefited students in the GOIS group more compared to the students in the NGNI group.

Moreover, the effectiveness of the graphic organiser as instructional scaffolding in the argumentative writing

had most probably assisted the GOIS group to construct and produce a better piece of writing. Previous studies on graphic organisers, such as Higgins (2012)indicated positive perceptions among students using the graphic organiser. This is also consistent with the assertion made by Miller (2011) who claimed that although the graphic organisers are great tools to assist students in writing, very few of them were proven to increase students' writing skills and guide students towards better writing by themselves, but when provided with scaffold instruction using a graphic organiser, they actually scaffold students' thoughts into writing a fine piece of writing. In line with these claims, Hawkins (2011) too, asserted that the graphic organisers as instructional scaffolding promote a helpful teacher-student interaction as the structure of the genre allows students to pay attention to communicating their ideas without getting confused in structural procedures.

In line with these reasons, the group-work activity using the graphic organisers to accomplish the argumentative tasks might have guided the students to interact and develop their argumentative writing skills. The findings are contradicted with Kwon (2014) who claimed that students faced difficulties communicating with their peers during groupwork, but constant with Gagne and Parks (2013) who claimed that interaction during group-work is capable of fostering learning through shared scaffolding which enables students to accomplish a given task successfully. Finally, the researchers believe the GOIS group which is supported by the sociocultural theory had better experiences compared to the students in the NGNI group as it is strongly inspired by the sociocultural theory which emphasizes on social interactions that take place in meaningful contexts (Vygotsky, 1978).

Additionally, students in the GOIS group claimed to have experienced different aspects of learning where they were able to write more organized essays, gain new knowledge, had a chance to ask questions, and felt motivated to learn. In addition, they also claimed that the GOIS delivery mode had offered them a friendly environment for learning which had helped them to think during their group discussion. The interview results are consistent with Mahmudah's (2016) findings which indicated improvement in the writing skills, as well as in the students' motivation, when provided scaffolded instruction using graphic organiser.

In contrast, the findings from the interview data revealed that the NGNI group experienced less learning benefits and more learning obstructions compared to the GOIS group (Table 3). One thing which needs to be highlighted here is that students in the NGNI group obtained knowledge on the same topics as the students in the GOIS group but without instructional scaffolding and the use of graphic organisers. Students found the lecture method governs by the behavioral response to be more boring without any grouping and opportunity for them to discuss, as proven in this study and past research (Kelly, 2017). According to Harvey (2011), internalization through dialogue is vital for students' development in content and higher order thinking but the NGNI group could most probably experience less exploratory talk and guidance between students and instructor in the NGNI condition. That is why Brandon and All (2010) urged that educators had to change their role from the lecture method to a more social and friendly approach such as the GOIS delivery mode. Therefore, the absence of these opportunities could have been the reasons why the students in the NGNI group experienced less learning benefits and more learning obstructions compared to the GOIS group.

Two similar subcategories emerged for the GOIS and NGNI groups (Table 2) although both groups experienced different learning conditions. The subcategory "independent learning" and "uncertainty with information" emerging from the NGNI group could most probably relate to instructional scaffolding strategy that were not offered in the NGNI condition. As a result, the NGNI group may have experienced less exploratory talk and guidance with their instructor. In line with this, they have experienced being uncertain to accomplish the given task and this may have urged the students to construct knowledge through independent learning as evident in the study. However, as for the GOIS group, the facilitator plays an important role as a mediator in giving appropriate support so that students can move towards independent learning (Obeiah & Bataineh, 2015). But, although instructional scaffolding was offered, the subcategory "uncertainty with information" emerged for the GOIS group and this can be related to group members who did not know how to explain their points during groupwork as evident in this study. This is in line with Rodrigo (2012) who claimed that challenges can occur when students learn collaboratively and this can sometimes be related to the amount of time allocated for a learning task and difficulties meeting with each individual's need in a group.

Overall, the GOIS group perceived more positive experiences compared to the NGNI group in the overall learning process and this could be related to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory where the graphic organisers act as an instructional scaffolding tool and was helpful in students' argumentative essay writing while the facilitator was more of a mentor compared to being a dominant content

expert. Further, students also experienced a more positive learning where they felt free to ask questions, provide feedback, and support their peers in learning and these factors had provided an incentive for the students to take an active role in their own learning. Additionally, students were also able to share their responsibility to teaching and learning through scaffolded instruction in their groups and therefore through these interactions, students were able to take ownership of the learning and outperform their counterparts in the NGNI group.

Conclusion

In sum, the present study revealed that the GOIS delivery mode had effectively transformed students' learning to be better than the NGNI delivery mode, which is conventional and still dominates over other methods in disseminating knowledge among TESL undergraduates in the local context. The GOIS delivery mode has been found to be able to engage students in their learning and also promote students' argumentative writing performance better than the lecture mode (NGNI). The GOIS group had better experiences in the argumentative essay writing lessons compared to the NGNI group and had enabled students in the group-work activities to develop competencies such as cooperative learning, cognitive strength, and personal skills that are vital for TESL undergraduates. These were possible with the presence of interaction and graphic organisers as facilitation tools as well as strong mediation skills on the part of the facilitator who was able to provide systematic instructional scaffolding during the learning process. In fact, the use of graphic organisers and instruction scaffolding had also proven to be a better approach compared to the presently used lecture method in this institution where the study was conducted.

However, the potential of graphic organisers and instructional scaffolding to promote higher tertiary level students' argumentative writing performances compared to the lecture method have yet to be adequately proved, although as far as this study is concerned, the students from the GOIS group had more positive experiences compared to the students in the NGNI group. This study indicated that the GOIS method has stimulated and harnessed students' interactions and should be given consideration in the teaching and learning of argumentative writing among TESL undergraduates. Besides, as indicated in the interview results, although students from the NGNI group shared some common challenges, the issues brought up by the GOIS group regarding their learning experiences require additional attention from the facilitator. In this respect, a good measure would be to include the use of graphic organisers and instructional scaffolding and group-work activities in teaching argumentative writing among TESL undergraduates. Therefore, any university programs considering adopting the use of graphic organisers and instructional scaffolding in argumentative writing must weigh its benefits and disadvantages. Care should be taken in the implementation for a sudden shift in learning methodology could adversely affect the success rate of instructional scaffolding. Thus, the implementation of instructional scaffolding should be incremental in order to provide both teacher and learners with enough time to become familiar with the new instructional method. The research ends with a strong recommendation that the use of graphic organisers and instructional scaffolding in groups to cater to students' interaction process can become an ideal strategy to be adopted by academicians in the process of teaching argumentative writing. This implies not only for TESL undergraduates but also for all other graduates in higher academic institutions as the benefits would definitely enhance students' writing skills which is crucial for future employment.

Competing Interests Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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