

EXPLORING ZHE JIANG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' BELIEFS AND PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF MIND MAPPING TECHNIQUE (MMT) IN EFL READING COMPREHENSION (ERC)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore Zhe Jiang University students' beliefs and perceptions on the use of mind mapping technique (MMT) in EFL reading comprehension (ERC). The objective of this study was to examine Zhe Jiang University students' beliefs on the use of mind mapping technique in EFL reading comprehension (ERC) and to explore Zhe Jiang University students' perceptions on the use of mind mapping technique in EFL reading comprehension (ERC). The participants of this study were 144 first-year English major students purposely selected from Zhe Jiang University. The researcher adopted mixed-method. The instruments for data collection used in this study were Five-Likert questionnaires and semi-structured interview. It showed that there is high reliability with the 4 parts of questionnaires, and each part got high Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.802, 0.942, 0.737 and 0.837 respectively. The findings of quantitative survey revealed participants hold the belief that the use of mind mapping technique (MMT) is useful for EFL reading comprehension (ERC). The qualitative interview suggested that students hold positive perception of using mind mapping technique (MMT) in EFL reading comprehension (ERC). As a conclusion, this study suggested that Zhe Jiang University students hold positive beliefs and perceptions on the use of mind mapping technique (MMT) in EFL reading comprehension (ERC). This study provides theoretical basis for subsequent related academic research.

Keywords: EFL reading comprehension, mind mapping technique.

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INTRODUCTION

With the globalization of economy and culture, English has play an important role all over the world. English language ability consists of speaking, listening, reading and writing, among different part of English language learning, reading English is vital.

Reading is a kind of activity enables users synthesise and evaluate information. But many Chinese EFL first-year English major students find it difficult to read and comprehend reading in English, they can barely absorb information in reading English in a short time (Wulandari, 2019). Reading skills is not about allowing learners to

translate and understand text word for word, but enable readers to read the text and find out useful information in the text precisely and quickly. However, the most common mistake learners make when reading literature is to read word for word instead of finding useful information, which is an non-efficient learning method,

increases the reading time, and takes more energy to study. (Amin, F., & Wahyudin,

A. Y. (2022). Mind mapping is a technique which can help efficiently locate and find out useful information like main topics, subtopics, concepts, images and the interrelationships in a short time and can visually display them (Helwa, S. A. H. A.

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2020). Therefore, this study aims to explore students' beliefs and perceptions towards using mind mapping technique (MMT) in English reading comprehending (ERC).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Comprehension (RC)

Reading comprehension (RC) is a fundamental ability that is critical to academic achievement. Written materials must be understood, interpreted, and analyzed in order for students to learn new information, expand their vocabulary, and refine their critical thinking skills. The RC process in this study consists of two parts: the reader and the reading text. The reader is first considered to be the user of the language, and the text is considered to be an instance of the language in use. with the help of reading ability, readers can absorb textual meaning and interpreting meaning from reading texts (Tennent, W. 2021).

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The Importance of ERC in Chinese University

ERC refers to the process of readers' understanding and interpretation of English text content. ERC refers to the ability to understand English text through reading, obtain information from it, understand the meaning of English text, infer, analyze, evaluate and solve problems. ERC requires readers to have the ability of literacy, language comprehension, background knowledge and thinking ability, to understand the expressions and logical relations of words, sentences, paragraphs and chapters in the text, and to transform them into their own thinking and understanding. ERC is the basis of learning English and thinking in a foreign way, and also an important way to acquire knowledge and information of foreign language (Fatmawan, A. R., Dewi, N. P. A., & Hita, I. P. A. D. 2023).

Reading is an active process, which is regulated and controlled by readers according to different purposes to cultivate people's sentiments and improve self-cultivation. Reading is a kind of thinking process to understand, comprehend, absorb, appreciate, evaluate and explore the text. Reading can change our minds, which may change our fate. If we read literary works by reading classical works, it is easy to ignore the characteristics of literary works, so that readers themselves can get into the so-called history of literary ideas (Samiei, F., & Ebadi, S. 2021).

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Use of Mind Mapping Technique (MMT) in University

MMT was originally a note-taking method created in the 1960s by Tony Buzan (1999), an Englishman. Tony Buzan (1999) believed that the traditional drafting and note-taking methods had four disadvantages: burying keywords, difficulty remembering, wasting time and failing to effectively stimulate the brain, while brevity, efficiency and active personal participation were crucial to successful note-taking. In the case of the diminishing effectiveness of drafting and note-taking methods, there was a need for a method that can continuously increase the return, and this method was mind mapping.

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Although the initial purpose of mind mapping was only to improve note-taking methods, its role and power continue to show up in future research and application, and it was widely used in individuals, families, education and enterprises (Muthmainnah, M. 2023). Tony Buzan (2020) argued that mind mapping was an expression of divergent thinking and therefore a natural function of the human mind, what's more, he believed that mind mapping was a very useful graphic technique, a

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master key to unlocking the potential of the brain, which could be applied to all aspects of life, and its improved learning ability and clear thinking would improve human behavior.

Mind mapping also used both graphic and graphic skills to show the relationship between themes at all levels with mutual subordination and related hierarchy charts, established memory links between theme keywords and images, colors, etc., make full use of the functions of the left and right brain, and make use of the laws of memory, reading and thinking to help people balance development between science and art, logic and imagination and unlock the infinite potential of the human brain (Jin, H., & Wong, K. Y. 2023). Deshatty and Mokashi (2013) defined mind map as a chart that focused on the fundamental keywords, or topics, were the relationships that connected various ideas, words, and phrases to show the relationship among university students.

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Teachers who employ mind mapping technique in their reading practice towards learners can help them have a better understanding of the relationship between concepts and encourage learners to classify those concepts. Abd Karim, R., & Mustapha, R. (2022) pointed out that mind mapping was a simple and comprehensive

way to organize university students' thoughts and helped them to convey their opinions to the audience in a simple and meaningful way. Mind mapping strategy was also a simple way to clarify learning, meanwhile, was helpful for the visual-oriented university students.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

The research methodology of this study was mixed-mode approach. The quantitative data from 40-item close-ended questions of questionnaire would be analyzed with SPSS and the findings of quantitative data analysis were used in investigating the use of mind mapping technique in EFL reading comprehension among Zhe Jiang University first-year English major students. While the qualitative data from 10-item open-ended interviews would be thematically analyzed with NVIVO aimed to investigate perceptions of Zhe Jiang university students on the use of mind mapping technique in EFL reading comprehension.

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During the procedure of qualitative data collection, the researcher prepared 40-item Five-Likert questionnaire as instruments, Before middle of March, the researcher already contacted with 144 students of English major first-grade in Zhe Jiang University via Wechat. Then in middle of March, the researcher sent questionnaire to participants through Questionnaire Star (a Chinese popular questionnaire APP). Within 7 days, the participants all finish the questionnaire. During the process of qualitative data analysis, in middle of March, the researcher finished collecting data, then begin to analysis data in middle of May. Then SPSS was used to to to analyze data, cronbach's alpha was used to get coefficient to test reliability and then KMO test was used to identify validity.

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As for quantitative study, the researcher employed 10 items open-ended interview as instrument. Before middle of March, the researcher randomly choose and contact with 10 students among 144 students mentioned above via Wechat. Then in middle of March, the researcher met those 10 students one by one and interviewed them. The researcher spent 5 days to finish the interview. After data collection, In middle of March, the researcher finished collecting data, then started to analysis data in middle of May. the researcher used NVIVO to make thematic analyse, the themes

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were recorded and coded using labels that showed aspects of mind mapping technique in reading comprehension. Based on qualitative and quantitative data analysis results, the researcher made data integration and then concluded the findings of the study.

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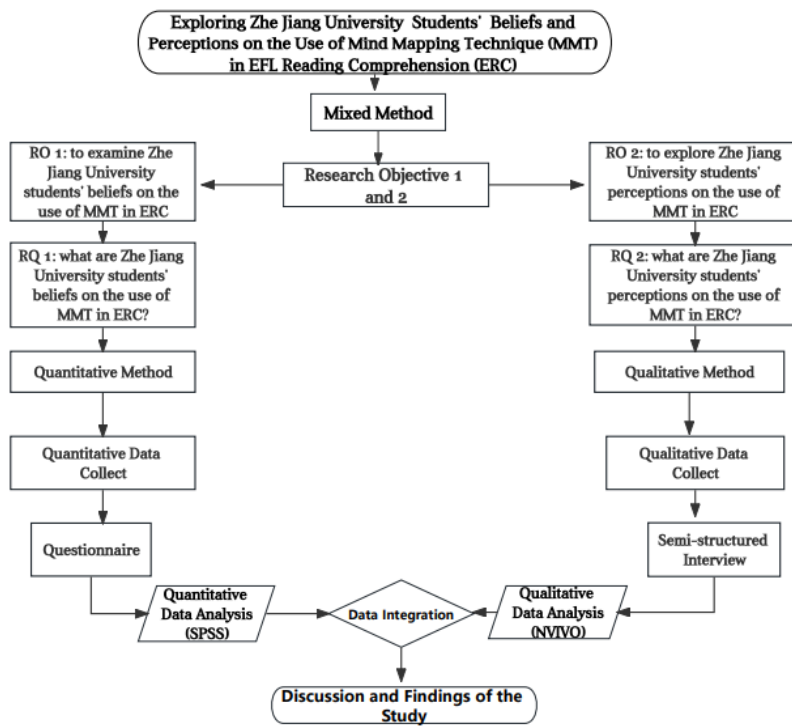


Figure 1. Research Design

Instruments

In the attempt to explore beliefs and perceptions of using MMT in ERC among Zhejiang University students, the researcher employed several research instruments to make a survey thus draw a conclusion of the study. Instruments the researcher employed in this study mainly focus on survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

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Survey Questionnaires

In this study, questionnaire were used in quantitative study to understand students' beliefs of using MMT in ERC.

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In addition, the history of questionnaires can be traced back to the 19th century, for example, Karl Marx produced a worker questionnaire containing nearly 100 questions, which was used to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the working, living and thinking conditions of workers. Since the 20th century, structured questionnaires have been used more and more in quantitative research, and have

became one of the main ways of sociological research combined with sampling survey (Shrestha, N. 2021).

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In this study, questionnaire were used in quantitative study to understand students' beliefs of using MMT in ERC. The Five-Likert Scale questionnaire of this study (see appendix A) was adopted from study of Abd Karim, R., and Mustapha, R (2020) on the use of mind mapping technique in EFL reading course, what's more, it would be finished online with popular Chinese questionnaire software (Questionnaire Star), so that every student were free and had enough time to finish questionnaires. In this study, the researcher employed Five-Likert questionnaire including both of open-ended and close-ended questions to test Zhe Jiang University students' beliefs and perceptions on the use of MMT in ERC. The open-ended questions of Five-Likert questionnaire was composed of 5 point Likert scale rating from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) without a neutral point so that the participants could choose concrete answer. After the subjects have answered all the questions, the researcher would account the scores of the whole question according to the criteria. The higher the score, the more weakly the participants agreed.

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In total, there is 40 items of questions in Five-likert scale questionnaire. The first section consisted of 7 questionnaire which aims to collect study background of participants, like number account of reading comprehension class and ability of using mind mapping skills. The second part consisted of 33 items close-ended questions which focus on the text areas or skills that students used in MMT for ERC, as well as advantages, limitations and suggestions for using MMT in ERC.

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Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures was an important part in a research. Data collection was the foundation of scientific research, which enabled researchers to conduct in-depth analysis and verification, resulting in accurate and comprehensive results. For example, in medical research, data collection was used to support the diagnosis and treatment of diseases; In social science research, it helped researchers analyze social phenomena and trends. Business decisions. In the business world, data collection helped companies understand market needs, consumer preferences and competitors, enabling them to make more informed decisions. For example, by analyzing user

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behavior and preferences, companies made personalized recommendations and increase sales conversion rates; Government departments used data collection to provide better services.

Data collection was essential for understanding the state of society, the economy and the environment, predicting future trends and potential risks, and developing effective policies and business strategies.

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Procedures of Quantitative Data Collection

In this study, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique. A total of 144 students purposive selected from majors of English department of Zhejiang University. The account of population and sampling was based on Krecjie and Morgan (1970) sample size table, the participants were the sample consisted of 144 first-year English majors of the Faculty of English of Zhe Jiang University. The sample was obtained by the purposive sampling technique.

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During the procedure of qualitative data collection, the researcher prepared 40-item Five-Likert questionnaires as instruments. Before middle of March, the researcher had already contacted with 144 students of English major first-grade in Zhejiang University via Wechat APP. Then in middle of March, the researcher sent questionnaires to participants through Questionnaire Star (a Chinese popular questionnaire APP). Within 7 days, the participants all finished the questionnaires. The following table showed data collecting procedure of questionnaires.

| | Students | Total |
|--------|----------|-------|
| Day 1 | 10 | 10 |
| Day 2 | 13 | 23 |
| Day 3 | 9 | 32 |
| Day 4 | 16 | 48 |
| Day 5 | 15 | 63 |
| Day 6 | 20 | 83 |
| Day 7 | 16 | 99 |
| Day 8 | 22 | 121 |
| Day 9 | 8 | 129 |
| Day 10 | 15 | 144 |

Table 1. Data Collecting Procedure of Questionnaires

Procedures of Qualitative Data Collection

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As for qualitative study, the researcher employed 10 items open-ended interview as instrument. Before middle of March, the researcher randomly chose and contacted with 10 students among 144 students mentioned above via Wechat. Then in middle of March, the researcher met those 10 students one by one and interviewed them. The researcher spent 5 days to finish the interview. After data collection, In middle of March, the researcher finished collecting data, then started to analysis data in middle of May.

THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Summary of Key Findings

This study aimed to find out Zhe Jiang University students' beliefs and perceptions of using MMT in ERC. In this study, mixed method was employed, both qualitative and quantitative data were used. The study focuses on two research questions: the first one What were Zhe Jiang University students' beliefs on the use of mind mapping technique (MMT) in EFL reading comprehension (ERC)? secondly, what were Zhe

Jiang University students' perceptions on the use of mind mapping technique (MMT) in EFL reading comprehension (ERC)? The study involved 144 first-year English majors students selected from Zhe Jiang University, participants were selected purposive. Purposive sampling technique enabled researchers reduced the complexity and diversity of samples, reduced the cost and time of research, and selected samples according to the purpose and demand of research, thus improved the efficiency and accuracy of research.

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Zhe Jiang University Students' Beliefs of Using of MMT in ERC

Based on quantitative data analysis results, it is easy to conclude the research question one: what were Zhe Jiang University students' beliefs of using MMT in ERC? Mind mapping affected students' reading comprehension in many ways. For example, MMT helped students quickly found the main idea of the article, improve students' learning efficiency, reduced students' time to do problems, and thus enhanced students' autonomy in doing problems and interest in learning. MMT provided users with a clear frame of thought and provide convenient knowledge arrangement. Mind mapping enhanced the user's logical thinking ability and enable the user to form their

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own learning style. Mind mapping prolong the memory effect and increase the user's confidence. It enabled users to acquire good second language learning habits.

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The study's findings on students' beliefs of using MMT in ERC was similar to those of Saori, S. (2020). The research question of the study was whether there was a significant difference in reading achievement between students taught using mind mapping and students taught using other methods. The study found significant differences. This was demonstrated by the experimental group having a higher average score (71.76) than the control group (60.24). The average score of the experimental group increased from 62.35 to 71.76, an increase of 9.41 points. Meanwhile, the average score in the control group dropped from 62.59 to 60.24, a drop of -2.35 points. At 32 degrees of freedom, the F-number (23.5) was higher than the F-table (1). The results showed that mind mapping improved EFL students' reading comprehension ability. The study's findings are similar to the study of Alomari (2019), which focused on using mind mapping techniques to improve "reading comprehension in fourth grade Arabic students in Jordan." And the experimental results showed that reading comprehension effectively improved the reading comprehension ability of Jordanian children. The findings of this study were

also in line with those of Rubiyah et al (2019), who used concept mapping techniques to improve students' descriptive writing skills. The results of reading assessment Cycle 1 showed that students' average score improved to 7.35 points, an increase of 11.27%, which means mind mapping technique played important role in improving reading skills.

At the same time, the results of this study were highly consistent with Khatimah and Rachman(2018), who argued that mind mapping techniques improved students' reading and writing skills.

Zhe Jiang University Students' Perceptions on the Use of MMT in ERC

Based on semi-structured interviews of the study, it was easy to conclude the perceptions of Zhe Jiang University students on the use of mind mapping technique in EFL reading comprehension.

Judged from semi-structured interviews, almost all students used little or no mind mapping in reading comprehension, ninety percent of students don't initiate mind

map-related conversations. Most students did not agree that the use of mind mapping was a waste of time, and they thought that the school should introduce relevant courses when appropriate. Most students affirmed that mind mapping was useful for reading comprehension. Participants generally believed that mind mapping could simplify the text, discovered the details of the article faster, helped them quickly find the center of the article, reduced the time to do problems, and helped students quickly mastered knowledge. MMT helped students build a framework of ideas and gave students effective help in learning. Most students found the use of MMT in ERC to be efficient, convenient, fun and useful and thus can help develop their own learning style. However, to some extent, some participants believed that it was hard to get used to using mind maps for reading comprehension. There were several reasons why they found it difficult to use. First, they cite a lack of imagination as the biggest hindrance. Therefore, it was somewhat difficult to adapt to the suitability of mind mapping in the initial stage.

The study's findings on participants' perceptions on the use of mind mapping technique in EFL reading comprehension was similar to those of Puspitasari, E. (2020). The research results in the article showed that through repeated reading,

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selection of basic information, classification and organization of information, identification of relationships between concepts, and mind mapping training through the steps of visual arts and key words presentation, all participants admitted that their understanding of the material discussed in class had improved. Mind mapping had a positive impact on students' reading comprehension. The author suggests using MMT as an alternative method for reading comprehension, encouraged English teachers to use mind mapping in classroom teaching of reading comprehension, and encouraged students to use mind mapping for independent training of reading comprehension accuracy and extensive reading.

Conclusion

The study's results supported the notion that Zhe Jiang University students held positive beliefs and perceptions of the use of MMT in ERC. With a focus of reading acquisition, this study looked at the beliefs and perceptions of students on the use of MMT in ERC. The results of a review of related research and empirical data showed that applying mind mapping technique in EFL reading comprehension could be good among Zhe Jiang University first-year English major students. It could be inferred

that students may have an good learning experience with mind mapping in English reading. It was advised that teachers and educational institutions could increase opportunities to help students access mind mapping because many students needed more opportunities to get familiar with mind mapping technique.

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