Engaging EFL Learners in Reading: A Text-Driven Approach to Improve Reading Performance

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Abstract

Reading engagement is crucial to motivating EFL learners in reading classes. Recent research has attempted to explore the effect of affective engagement on reading comprehension, but there exists little empirical research regarding the effect of a text-driven approach to task design and development that draws on second language acquisition principles including both emotional and cognitive engagement. The current quasi-experimental study was conducted to investigate its effect on EFL learners' reading comprehension. The study involved 62 Vietnamese EFL teenage learners (aged from 14 to16) from two intact classes at an English language center in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. One class with 31 learners was assigned to the experimental group whose reading lessons employed a text-driven framework for adapting tasks from a textbook used by the center. The other class, who followed reading activities provided in the textbook, was treated as the control group. Two reading comprehension tests, a pretest and a posttest, were administered before and after a 13-week intervention. The results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group on the reading comprehension posttest. In interviews with selected learners, they also reported feeling more engaged and motivated to read.

Keywords: *text-driven, reading instruction, affective engagement, EFL learners*

Reading is primarily a means to access information and knowledge for personal, academic and professional development. For second language (L2) learners, reading is not only a crucial competence to advance their life chances but it is also the way to enhance target language teaching (Watkins, 2017). Advocates of comprehension-based approaches to L2 teaching (e.g.,

Bailey & Fahad, 2021; Krashen, 2004) conceive of reading not just as a skill to develop but also as a utilitarian source of target language input that exposes learners to linguistic features. By reading for meaning, they are likely to have access to cognitive processes that support their language acquisition (Brown, 2007; Cho & Krashen, 2015). Unfortunately, reading is not a captivating and engaging activity for a substantial number of learners (Applegate et al., 2014; Wickramaarachchi, 2017). Therefore, how to support L2 learners to develop their reading performance is an academic endeavor that has attracted extensive research in the past decades, especially in contexts where English teaching methodology is developing.

In Vietnam, where English as a foreign language (EFL) is emerging as a crucial tool for work, study, and integration, the national English curriculum was redesigned to target the development of communicative competence (MOET, 2008; Hoang, 2016). In classroom practice, English textbooks are used mainly to offer learners a variety of language exercises and communicative practices that ultimately enable them to develop communicative abilities. For reading in particular, a typical lesson would start with pre-reading activities, namely introducing and practicing key vocabulary items, open prediction, or answering questions that help activate learners' schemata. Then, text processing activities follow, which involve, for example, deciding true/false statements, answering factual questions, and matching ideas with paragraphs. They all aim to provide learners with such practices of reading strategies as skimming, scanning, predicting, or making inferences, and comprehension self-assessments. Following this stage, extended activities are provided to allow learners to discuss an issue orally, or write a summary or response. Such a practice, in general, is aligned with a weak communicative view of language teaching (Howatt, 1984; Nunan, 2004). That is, the primary and prioritized purpose of reading classes is to practice and learn English rather than use English as a tool for learning or communicating a specific curricular content. Accordingly, reading is rarely aimed at creating personal meaning and development. This common practice may not compromise the learners' view that reading is an arduous, dull, and demotivating activity (Sa, 2020; Wickramaarachchi, 2017).

On the other hand, a strong communicative approach to task-based learning (Howatt, 1984) emphasizes using the target language as a tool to achieve communicative non-linguistic outcomes. In this sense, it places a predominant focus on "reading to learn" and "reading to search…[and] integrate information" (Grabe & Stoller, 2019, p.8). Reading, accordingly, is not intended to practice language skills or reading strategies, but serves as the input for communicative tasks like solving an academic or life problem. Recent research has found that this approach promotes EFL learners' reading performance (Chalak, 2015; Demirel & Amer, 2017; Irfan, 2017; Rezaei et al., 2017; Setayesh & Marzban, 2017). This could be attributed to the alignment of the approach to second language acquisition principles (Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

However, several research works conducted on task-based learning seems to have prioritized the cognitive involvement in L2 learning (e.g, Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 1996; Willis & Willis, 2007). Tomlinson (2018) further noted that many classroom tasks, which simulated research tasks, were intentionally made easy to manipulate, lacked authenticity and failed to adequately challenge learners cognitively. Besides, Philp and Duchesne (2016) noted that past research referred to task engagement as cognitive involvement, and argued that behavioral, social and affective dimensions should be included. In particular, affective engagement which involves eliciting emotional reactions to a text (Unrau, & Quirk, 2014) has recently been recognized as a crucial element in second language acquisition (Philp & Duchesne, 2016), and proved to enhance EFL reading instruction (Yulia et al, 2020). Despite its value for reading comprehension instruction (Duke et al., 2021), affective engagement with texts appears to be sparingly practiced in the EFL classroom, especially in the educational setting of Vietnam.

The current paper thus presents a study conducted at an English language center, seeking to engage EFL teenager learners both emotionally and cognitively in reading. The study draws on a text-driven framework proposed by Tomlinson (2003; 2013; 2016; 2018) to investigate the following questions:

Do Vietnamese EFL teenager learners who followed a text-driven approach to tasks for reading instruction outperform their peers who followed the general communicative approach in reading comprehension? What attitudes do they have towards reading and the text-driven reading lessons?

Literature Review

Second **Language Reading Instruction**

A theory of reading instruction would begin with the definition of reading as a construct. This concept has received substantial attention due to its complexity. A simple definition describes reading as the process in which the reader decodes the message intended by the text writer, while a more complex definition stresses the reader's active approach to making sense whereby she interacts with the text, converses with the writer, interprets assumptions, draws inferences, not just to understand message but to appreciate the message as well (Nuttall, 2005). Grabe and Stoller (2019) deconstruct and reconstruct the concept in terms of reading purposes the most basic of which is reading for general comprehension. Accordingly, general reading comprehension simply indicates the capacity for understanding information from a text accurately, which in practice, however, "requires very rapid and automatic processing of words, strong skills in forming a general meaning representation of main ideas, and efficient coordination of many processes under very limited time constraints" (Grabe & Stoller, 2019, p.9). This ability, in other words, is only fully described in terms of a set of mental, cognitive, strategic and linguistic processes required for text interpretation.

Different perspectives on reading and reading instruction have been proposed. A linguistic perspective focuses on the instruction of basic linguistic skills that support text decoding, namely word recognition, semantic and syntactic cues, text structure, and text functions. A cognitive view, on the other hand, emphasizes training cognitive and metacognitive strategies for coping with comprehension processes such as previewing, predicting, information searching, inferring the author's intent, selective attention, monitoring, and so on. All of these skills and strategies are aligned with models that explain how readers coordinate bottom-up and top-down information processing in attempts to decode a text (Angosto et al., 2013; Babashamsi & Shakib, 2013; Fatemi, et al., 2014; Kintsch, 2005; Nunan, 2005; Nuttall, 2005). This coordination also determines the levels of reading comprehension such as literal, inferential, evaluative, and appreciative reading described in Richards and Schmidt (2002).

Recent perspectives on second language teaching devote attention to the active engagement of learners in reading by personally engaging with it, connecting to their life experience, personal world, and background knowledge to make personal meaning, not just to receive the intended message (Burns & Siegel, 2018; Grabe & Stoller, 2019; Lee, 2014; Pietarinen et al., 2014; Unrau & Quirk, 2014; Wang & Eccles, 2011, Watkins, 2017). Text comprehension depends on the interaction of textual, contextual, and reader-related variables (Roe et al., 2005), which necessarily, but not exclusively, involve emotion and motivation (Yulia et al., 2020). It follows then that learners' reading comprehension depends on their ability to coordinate background knowledge, linguistic skills, strategies, cognition and affection, and the degree to which they are engaged cognitively and emotionally with the text. The emotional dimension, however, is not necessarily contingent on any particular levels of reading as long as the text adequately challenges them (Krashen, 2004).

Text-Driven Approach to Tasks

Although the communicative task-based approach emphasizes selecting authentic materials, catering to learner needs (Nunan, 2006; Van den Branden, 2007), and providing tasks that stimulate learners' cognitive engagement (Mackey, Ziegler & Bryfonski, 2016), little attention has been paid to the potential impact of affective engagement in task-based activities. Tomlinson's (2013, 2016) text-driven framework provides an innovative approach that is grounded in effective SLA principles. Apart from providing rich exposure to language input, plenty of opportunities for purposeful language use; drawing learners' attention to form after a focus on meaning, Tomlinson attends to both cognitive and affective engagement as indispensable elements (Tomlinson, 2016, 2018). He argues that selection of appropriate texts is the stepping stone to optimizing such SLA principles. Appropriate texts should have the potentials to be cognitively and affectively engaging, to connect to learners' lives and experiences, and have an appropriate level of challenge. Based on these texts, a series of activities can be designed to lead learners through a process of experiencing, taking in, reacting, reflecting, and language learning in such a way that it arouses and sustains their curiosity, attention, and engagement (Tomlinson, 2018).

Learners of all ages as well as levels of proficiency approach a text for their own purposes of reading (Mickan & Lopez, 2017; Tomlinson, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to help them establish a connection between the text and their own lives, experiences, and world knowledge, and to stimulate their personal responses while processing the text. Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) explained the values that the text-driven approach (TDA) to materials adaptation and development offers. First, the approach boosts learners' affective commitment by encouraging them "to laugh, to cry, to feel exhilarated, disturbed, excited, sad, sympathetic or angry" (p.5). In addition, it can improve learners' cognitive engagement, providing an incentive for learners to connect the text to their life, to have a complete understanding, to assess thoughts put forward, or to solve problems posed in the text. This approach also enhances content value by adding personal thoughts and experiences to deepen learners' experience with the target language. Finally, it triggers communicative tasks relevant to learners' needs to do with the target language, and guarantees a rich and meaningful exposure to the target language use.

In textbook-dictated educational settings, however, it may be hard for teachers to elect relevant texts in accordance with the criteria proposed. Consequently, in order to promote learners' engagement in reading classes, teachers may adapt and develop existing texts that have the potential to create cognitive and emotional engaging activities.

Procedure of Text-Driven Approach

In a text-driven approach to task-based learning, the text drives tasks which intentionally lead learners through stages of exploring, experiencing, personal intake, communication, and language learning while processing a text.

Stage 1: Readiness activities. Like in a typical communicative lesson, this stage prepares learners for experiencing the text. According to Tomlinson (2013), the teacher should help learners to connect the text topic and their own life experiences. They could be asked to use inner speech, imagine or visualize, draw, mime, recall and share their life events, background knowledge, or make predictions. For example, to prepare for the text about the work of storm chasers that we used in our experiment (see appendix), our learners were asked to imagine what would happen in their area and if they were storm chasers, what they would do. Then they watched a short clip about a storm chaser so that they could be mentally ready for experiencing the text. Mental readiness rather than language practice is targeted at this stage, so the lesson

begins in the learners' mind and not in the text (Tomlinson, 2013). In a general communicative lesson, in contrast, learners study and practice vocabulary in this stage.

Stage 2: Experiential activities. The main aim of this stage is to allow learners to use all their resources and skills. Unlike general communicative reading lessons which often require learners to read and complete comprehension tasks, the TDA learners are instead asked to continue visualization, check their predictions, talk to themselves, or question while reading. These activities encourage task-free personal reactions, and contribute to their mental representation. For example, in the previous stage, learners were asked to imagine that they were storm chasers in a terrible storm (visual imaging), and as reading through the text, they tried to talk in their mind what storm chasers would often do and how they would feel in a storm (inner speech).

Stage 3: Intake response activities. Activities during this stage help learners articulate and deepen their personal responses to the text after first experience. The activities focus on reflecting on their feelings and opinions "sharing what the text means to them", not on comprehension questions (Tomlinson, 2003, p.104). For example, learners think back over the storm chaser in the text to recall mental images and decide what they think about him (personal connection, affective and cognitive engagement). The learners then work in groups and discuss their responses to the statement in the text, "It is a dangerous job." (Interaction, affective engagement).

Unlike comprehension questions in communicative reading lessons that aim to check understanding, in this stage, learners have a positive start by sharing with others what the text means to them, visualize, draw or mime what they can remember from the text. There is no right or wrong answer because they are not being asked about the text but about their personal interpretation and reaction to the text. Their representation may be incomplete, so sharing with others can extend and deepen their understanding. According to Tomlinson (2013), in this stage learners are engaged in further thinking and discussing by asking questions, summarizing the text, drawing what comes to mind while recalling the text, saying what they like or dislike about the text, or responding to a statement in the text.

Stage 4: Development activities. This stage is similar to the post-reading stage of a CLT lesson in that it allows learners to produce language. To Tomlinson (2013), development activities drive learners to produce the target language meaningfully and originally. The point is that learners can base their language production on the meaning they derived from the text and on connections with their own lives. These production activities allow them not only to engage cognitively and affectively but also to focus on meaningful and purposeful communication in the target language.

There are a wide choice of activities or tasks that learners can be offered. For example, they can make an oral presentation, write a letter to the author, write a continuation of the text, make an invention inspired by the text, or solve a problem posed in the text. In our demonstrated lesson, learners could choose to write a letter to Warren, or imagine themselves to be Warren writing a letter to describe his job. In another lesson about a letter of a boy playing games too often and now wanting to change his bad habit, our learners worked in groups and wrote advice to the boy, drawing on their own experiences.

Stage 5: Input response activities. Input response activities draw learners' attention to certain linguistic features salient in the text. The activities during this phase may involve interpretation and awareness raising that concentrate their attention on discovering the purpose and language of the text. In interpretation tasks, learners think deeply about the text to develop "critical and creative thinking skills" (Tomlinson, 2013, p.105). Awareness raising tasks push

learners to develop "communication strategies, discourse features, genre characteristics or text-type features" (Tomlinson, 2013, p.106). For instance, in the sample lesson, learners may work in groups to discuss what they think about the storm chaser's job closely focusing on a text extract "if there was a storm, he would take a camera and chased after the storm", or find what tense is used throughout the article, and explain the function of this tense, giving examples of its use. Such language focus activities are likely to promote interaction which induces noticing and attention necessary for language acquisition.

Stage 6: Further development activities. Activities in this phase are optional. Students can be driven to produce language further or encouraged to engage in revising or editing works produced in the previous development stage, drawing on what was studied in the Input Response. For example, learners can return to the letter that they wrote and correct mistakes, drawing on the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary obtained from the Input Response Activity.

Related Studies

A few theoretical discussions (Al-Mousawi, 2020; Harper, 2019) and case studies (e.g., Darici & Tomlinson, 2018) have demonstrated the TDA to materials development in a few EFL and ESL contexts. For example, Al-Mousawi (2020) designed a unit to teach cultural differences to a class of adult learners with mixed cultures, gender and age in the UK, and discussed how the unit activities matched the SLA principles grounded in the TDA. Harper (2019) argues that the TDA can provide pre-task scaffolding activities that complement a task-based approach to materials development for teaching intercultural communication. Likewise, in their case study, Darici and Tomlinson (2018) designed a unit of TDA materials for teenage Turkish learners of English, and had it evaluated by the learners via a questionnaire. The results showed that they gave positive feedback on the engagement and interestingness of the text and tasks. These studies all suggest that the EFL learners are likely to be cognitively and affectively engaged, and they have positive evaluations of the TDA materials. Such engagement and attitudes are believed to push learners' language acquisition (Darici & Tomlinson, 2018).

Nevertheless, a paucity of empirical research has been undertaken so far to examine the effects of TDA on EFL learners' learning outcomes. Two studies investigated the impact of TDA on cultural awareness and competence. In their study, Cardona, Rico and Sarmiento (2015) depicted how the TDA principles for materials development helped elementary English students in Colombia (including 21 females and 8 males aged 17-19) develop cultural awareness. Learning activities were designed and implemented in two classrooms for three months. Three research instruments were observation, questionnaire, and the artifacts created by the students in response to the activities designed to enhance their cultural awareness. The result indicated that the students increased their cultural awareness and had a positive attitude towards the text-driven approach activities. This action research is supported by another similar study conducted in Arab Saudi. Alhazmi (2022) used a pretest-posttest one group design and a questionnaire to investigate twenty-five female Saudi EFL high school students who were taught 3 sessions of TDA materials on cultural awareness. The study similarly revealed that the TDA activities were perceived to be enjoyable and captivating, and increased the students' cultural understanding. Overall, both studies have offered some insights, but they are case studies or action research studies which purport to the lack of strong empirical evidence on the effect of TDA.

Two quasi-experimental studies attempted to determine the impacts of TDA on other skills such as intercultural communication, speaking ability, and English for specific purposes. Esalati and Rahmanpanah (2020) examined the learning of 40 Persian EFL learners aged 18-

30, sampled and assigned to two groups: experimental and control. The experimental group followed the TDA, while the control group did not receive this treatment. Using an intercultural competence questionnaire, and a Preliminary English Test (PET) on speaking ability to measure the learners' cultural awareness and speaking ability before and after the treatment, they concluded that the TDA language learning materials encouraged the students to develop cultural awareness, and improved their speaking ability. In a different educational context, following the TDA framework, Taghipour and Mohseni (2021) developed materials for teaching English for occupational purposes to 30 pre-service flight attendants in Iran assigned as the experimental group. The control group including 30 learners was instructed by the usual existing material. The findings of this study indicated that both groups demonstrated significant language proficiency achievement at the end of the course, but in favor of the experimental group.

To sum up, despite those who advocate to the use of TDA for developing materials (Gilmore, 2007; McDonough, et al., 2013; Park, 2014), there exists little empirical evidence on its impact on foreign language learning. The studies reviewed above have demonstrated its potential effects on learning in different ways: cultural understanding, speaking, English for occupational purposes, but there is still a need for further research on the role that TDA plays in teaching reading in the EFL context such as Vietnam, where no studies appear to have been conducted to date, and teaching and learning are mainly textbook-based.

Research Method

A quasi-experimental design was selected and a convenience sampling technique (Fraenk et al., 2012) was used in the study that involved two intact classes. They were assigned to the experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG) respectively. The EG followed a text-driven approach to task-based reading instruction, while the other was instructed with the general communicative procedure, following the textbook activities. Reading comprehension was measured with two reading tests taken from the past versions of Key English Tests for A2 level. The researchers obtained consent from the participants for reporting their test data.

Context and Participants

The participants involved 62 EFL teenager learners from an English language center in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam with an enrolment of over 2,000 learners. Before enrolling in the language center, all the learners took a placement test and were placed into relevant classes, so it was assumed that the sample had a similar level. With additional information on the participants such as their school grade-levels, the books they had used in previous courses, we estimated that their level of English was equivalent to A1 according to the CEFR (2001). The CG had 18 females and 13 males and the EG consisted of 14 female and 17 male learners. Their age ranged from 14 to 16.

Data Collection

Tests. A pre-test and a post-test were employed to measure the EFL teenager learners' reading comprehension. The pretest consisting of 17 reading comprehension items was extracted from a Cambridge's KET past test version. The purpose of the test was to confirm the sample homogeneity in English reading proficiency. A post-test of the same format was compiled to measure learners' reading comprehension achievement. Three texts of similar themes to the ones the learners had studied in the curriculum were extracted from past-version Cambridge KET test batteries. Each text consisted of seven test items.

Interviews. Six of the learners from the EG were purposefully invited to respond to an interview, including two high scorers (labelled as S1 and S2), two middle scorers (S3 and S4)

and two low scorers (S5 and S6) so that their attitudes towards the reading lessons and the effect of TDA were explored to gain further insights into the effect. The interview was conducted in Vietnamese (the learners' mother tongue) after the posttest. Anonymity was ensured in the report.

Procedure

In the first week, the pre-test was administered to all the participants. Then the two groups were assigned to two different conditions. After 13 ninety-minute sessions of intervention, the posttest was administered, following the same procedure as in the pretest.

The textbook 'Q-skills for Success - Introduction Level- Reading and Writing' (Mcveigh, 2015) was prescribed by the Center, and therefore used for both groups. Over thirteen 90-minute sessions, both groups followed the same course contents and classroom requirements except for the approach used. All the participants from both groups were required to read eight texts, from unit 6 to unit 10 of the book. Each unit comprised two texts and a writing part. A typical unit of reading would start with vocabulary exercises, and a pre-reading discussion. Then, students read the text and complete comprehension-based exercises such as guessing meaning from context, previewing, skimming, and scanning. The practice exercises involved multiple choice, true/false, matching, and gap-filling, followed by discussion questions as an extension of what is read.

The control group followed textbook activities exactly for all lessons: pre-reading, reading, and post-reading activities. In contrast, the experimental group followed lessons adapted to suit the TDA stages. Activities were designed to lead the students through stages for text processing and engagement. For readiness activities to engage the teenager learners' thoughts with the topic or context of the text, we used techniques such as visualization, connecting to previous experience, mini role play, or prediction. In the experiential stage, the learners continued to focus on making sense of the text by visualization and/or inner speech questioning of the author. Then, in the intake stage, the learners deepened and articulated their personal interpretation and reaction to the text through activities such as drawing what came to their mind when they recalled the text, saying what they liked or disliked about the text, or summarizing the text. Afterwards, in the development stage, they presented their views orally, wrote a letter to the author or presented an inspired invention or a solution to a problem posed in the text. Finally, for input response, the learners were guided to discover the use of vocabulary, structures, and complete exercises and tasks in the textbook. An example lesson is attached in the appendix, which was earlier explained as an illustration for the approach.

Data Analysis

As the test scores were entered into SPSS version 20, the scale test analysis was firstly run to check the internal reliability of the tests. The Cronbach's alpha obtained was .75. After that, descriptive statistics was calculated for both groups. Then, the Independent-samples t-test was performed to compare the total mean scores of the groups before and after the treatment to find out whether the experimental group outperformed the control group. Cohen's effect size measure was employed to determine the effect size of the TDA lessons. Regarding the qualitative data analysis, the interviews were carefully transcribed and sent back to the participants for checking and confirmation. The interview data were then read and analyzed for further evidence on the effect of the new approach on reading learning.

Results and Discussion

Learners' Reading Performance Before and After Treatment

Table 1. Between-Group Mean Difference in Initial Reading Performance

Groups	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	31	5	16	8.55	3.26	1.199	.235
Experimental	31	4	15	7.55	3.30		

The results of the Independent-Samples t-Test, as presented in Table 1, indicate that no statistically significant difference was observed between the control group and the experimental group in their initial reading comprehension level.

After the treatment, as seen from Table 2, the results of the Independent Samples t-Test showed a significant difference between the two groups in terms of reading comprehension scores. The experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group. The results indicate that at the end of the intervention, the students receiving the text-driven approach to task-based reading instruction outperformed those who followed the textbook-based reading activities in their reading tests.

Table 2. Between-Group Mean Difference in Reading Performance After Treatment

Groups	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD.	T-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	31	10	20	16.43	3.09	4.59	.000
Experimental	31	15	21	19.26	1.46		

The effect size based on Cohen's d was 1.15, which means that the experiment had a strong effect on the reading improvement of the experimental group (Cohen, 1998, cited in McLeod, 2019; Sawilowsky, 2009). This result indicates the outweighing effect of the TDA intervention on the experimental group's reading performance as opposed to the control group who studied reading lessons which focus on extracting information to answer comprehension questions and learning new language features.

Learners' Attitudes towards Reading and Text-Driven Reading Lessons

Interviews with our six learners further revealed evidence about the learners' attitude towards reading and opinions on learning reading with the TDA.

Feeling bored with reading due to incomprehension. Out of the total, three students (S2, S5, and S6) stated that they liked studying reading although they admitted reading was not their regular habit. The other three, in contrast, found reading boring.

"I often feel bored with reading because I seem not to understand what I read, such as new vocabulary, and contents" (S1)

"Looking at the text with so many words, I feel sick, so many new words I don't understand, and that makes me bored." (S3)

All of the students reported that they often had problems with interpreting the meaning of a text. S6 confessed, "I know what new words in the text mean, but I cannot understand them in full sentences". Even a high scorer like S1 admitted, "I seem not to understand what I read, such as new vocabulary, and contents."

EFL learners often read because they are required to read to respond to comprehension questions and train reading strategies, instead of reading for personalized purposes. As a result, the textbook activities may be dull for teenage learners, especially when the text is dense with words. Such instructional practices might have negatively affected their reading motivation, which has been reported in previous research on L2 reading (Bailey & Fahad, 2021; Sunggingwati & Nguyen, 2013).

Better comprehension due to engagement with reading. Teenagers are emotionally driven and easily demotivated by their biological development (Cockroft & Atkinson, 2017), so they need to be supported in terms of reading engagement. The TDA intervened in the present study draw on several text-driven principles and techniques namely visualization, connecting to own lives, and opportunities for meaningful and emotional engagement with reading texts could make reading more enjoyable and productive to the students. Interview evidence revealed that all the participants found the new approach interesting and impactful on their learning.

"I was especially more interested in images because they inspired me to catch up with new information. After reading, I could easily remember the information about the characters, images and contents in the reading passages. Thanks to the new approach, my reading skill seemed better than before, and actually I am satisfied with knowledge that I gained from the course." (S1).

"I prefer the new approach applied in the reading periods because I was allowed to watch vivid pictures and interesting video clips which, to some extent, supported me with some information that helped me remember both vocabulary and contents easily". (S2)

Attention to language in the text. Apart from enhanced comprehension, S3 admitted that the activities also caught her attention to the language in text, which is likely to push her language acquisition (Tomlinson, 2018).

"With the new approach, I had a deep feeling for reading because the vivid images and real videos inspired me to read more to have a better understanding of the text. I must confess that after each reading session, it was the new grammar structures that caught my attention. In other words, I think I can remember the reading contents as well as new words better. I feel better at my reading skills now thanks to the new teaching approach." (S3).

S5's response further uncovers evidence about deep learning: *"When I attended this class, I was taught with a new approach that provided me with more in-depth understanding of the contents and vocabulary."*

The positive outcomes mentioned above are understandable as the fundamental principles of SLA were optimized in the experiment (Tomlinson, 2013, 2018). In particular, the learners' reading improvement could be attributable to a series of text-driven activities that engaged them both cognitively and emotionally throughout the process of reading (Darici & Tomlinson, 2016). Not just cultural knowledge as indicated in previous studies (Alhazmi, 2022; Cardona, Rico & Sarmiento, 2015), foreign language reading skills were also enhanced by using the

TDA, adding further empirical evidence in line with previous studies regarding the positive effect of TDA language skills (Esalati & Rahmanpanah, 2020; Taghipour & Mohseni, 2021).

Implications and Conclusions

Innovative approaches to foreign language instruction are essential to engaging and motivating learners in learning. Despite issues regarding convenience sampling and the use of a pre-determined textbook with somewhat esoteric readings, the current study has much to offer. It seeks to compare the impacts of a text-driven approach to task-based reading learning and a three-stage communicative reading approach on teenage learners. The findings of the study expand our understanding that the TDA is potentially effective for foreign language learning in general and reading comprehension development in particular. The study expands the literature by contributing further insight into the application of SLA knowledge to enhance second language pedagogy. For teachers, this study means that any texts from EFL textbooks that contain potentially engaging topics or information can be deployed for developing relevant tasks to engage learners in text processing at a deep level. This implementation would bring a 'fresh breeze' into the EFL classroom, motivating learners to read and develop love for reading. As a result, there is a likelihood that they will establish long-term reading habits, which in turn improves their comprehension and language acquisition (Cho & Krashen, 2015). Additionally, textbook designers are encouraged to balance cognitively and affectively engaging texts and purely academic content-based texts so that opportunities can be granted for a whole-person approach to learning, where various dimensions namely behavioral, cognitive, and affective, can be facilitated.

Nevertheless, from our personal observation and experience, the teacher's autonomy to select and develop interesting texts for their students' learning is crucial for promoting the TDA in the EFL context. In Vietnam, teachers at public schools often time are restricted or even dictated by the textbook-based practice. In private institutions like the one in which the experiment was conducted, teachers have more choices to adapt the materials, which facilitates the application of TDA. Another important problem is the time limit in conducting a text-driven task-based lesson in public educational settings where the curriculum is tightly structured in blocks of time, which practitioners may need to consider and address.

Apart from the considerations mentioned above, this research was conducted at a language center in a capital city, focusing on teenage learners, so the results may have limited external validity. Therefore, future research could further examine the effect of TDA on different target learners in various contexts, especially public schools. Besides, in this study, the measurement of specific reading comprehension skills was missing; therefore, future research could explore the effect of TDA on reading skills in more detail. Finally, the effects of TDA on the acquisition of specific language components and other skills than reading are gaps that should be filled to enrich empirical evidence that can advance pedagogical richness.

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Appendices

Appendix A

A Sample lesson on the text: A Storm Chaser (McVeigh, 2015)

READINESS

1. Think of one disaster in Viet Nam in recent days. What was it? What happened? How did you feel about it?

2. Look at these photos (tropical depression, flood, landslides, heavy rain, tropical storm)

(photos shown)

3. Which photo are you thinking of? If you are outside and there is about a strong storm, what will you do first?

4. Now. Look at these photos: What do they do? Do they react like you?

(photos shown about people's reactions in a storm)

EXPERIENCE

5. Watch the video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-yNDbsYduA)

6. What do you think about storm chasers? Imagine how Warren Faidley in the text feels about his job.

7. Do you like this job? Do you want to be a storm chaser in the future?

8. Read the text. Keep thinking about the questions.

INTAKE RESPONSE

Work in groups. Share your thinking about the following sentence from the text "*It is a dangerous job.*"

Work in pairs.

Student A: You are Warren Faidley, a storm chaser. Your friend is a reporter. He/she wants to interview you about your job. Answer his/her questions.

Student B: Your friend acts as Warren Faidely. You are a reporter who is curious to know about Warren Faidely's job. Interview him about his job.

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Write about either one topic:

A. A letter from Warren, introducing your job (what you do every day, how you feel about and so on)

B. A letter from yourself to Warren, explaining why you are suitable to be his apprentice.

INPUT RESPONSE

Work in groups to discuss what you think the storm chaser's job "if there was a storm, he would take a camera and chased after the storm"

Students then complete comprehension checking questions in the textbook namely multiple choice, matching paragraphs with details given.

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY 2

Look back at the letter you wrote and improve it.

Appendix B

Interview questions

1. How long have you learned English?

2. Which of the four skills of listening - speaking - reading - writing do you like the most? What skills are you best at?

3. How much do you rate your reading skills on a 10-point scale?

4. Do you have a habit of reading English? How many hours a day do you read?

5. How do you feel before studying a reading lesson?

6. What difficulties do you have in reading skills?

7. Compared with previous reading lessons you had in the previous course, do you see any difference in reading classes this time? Do you find it more interesting or just normal?

8. What new points do you see and which points do you like?

9. Would you like to continue learning reading lessons in this way?

10. Do you see that your reading skills have improved?

11. Do you see anything in the reading lessons that are not suitable for you? Do you have any suggestions to improve them?