Original Paper

Investigating Effects of Teacher's Using Authentic Texts on Cognitive Reading Engagement of Vietnamese EFL Students

Huu Phat Nguyen[1], Ngoc Tai Huynh[1*] & Phuong-Nam Thi Nguyen[1]

[1] Tra Vinh University, School of Foreign Languages, Tra Vinh, Vietnam

[*] Corresponding author: Ngoc Tai Huynh, hntai@tvu.edu.vn

Abstract

The study examines the effects of teacher's using authentic texts on EFL students' cognitive reading engagement related to four variables including (i) reading comprehension, (ii) oral response to reading, (iii) reaction paragraph, and (iv) students' perceptions of learning to read. Participants included 52 Vietnamese undergraduate students of EFL pre-intermediate level. The data of the study were collected through reading tests for the first three variables and a 32- item questionnaire for the fourth variable. Results revealed that students in the experimental condition achieved significantly better understanding of reading comprehension after the intervention course. In terms of reflection after reading and creating a reaction paragraph, the holistic quality of oral response and the reaction paragraph was significantly improved for both groups from a peer rating. However, students in the experimental group showed a more dramatic increase. Moreover, the findings of the questionnaire showed that students in the intervention course achieved a more positive perception of their learning to read.

Keywords

Authentic texts, Cognitive reading engagement, Perception, Respond to reading, Vietnamese EFL students

1. Introduction

Theoretical and Contextual Context of Researching into the Using Authentic Texts for Foreign Language Teaching

According to Tomlinson (2014), the selection of reading materials is an important factor in developing students' cognitive reading engagement performance. Many researchers in the EFL context have studied the significance of using authentic texts to teach reading skills. These linguistic studies have found that using authentic texts in teaching reading promotes students' involvement in their learning to

read (Duong, 2017; Mishan, 2005; Morrison, 1989; Rao, 2019; Peacock, 1997). The preference for authentic texts is due to their availability. With technological advancements and the growth of social networks, it is now easy to access authentic texts that are rich in content, diverse in forms, and of varying levels of linguistic complexity (Mishan, 2005). These authentic texts provide learners with many conveniences in learning to read. The abundance of authentic texts allows learners to have a wide variety of reading materials depending on the objectives of the lesson as well as learners' age, language levels, interests, needs, expectations, and goals.

There have been action plans in Vietnam to improve English language education by supporting qualified teaching and learning for communicative purposes. The use of authentic texts in reading classes by teachers can enhance students' communicative competence, fluency, accuracy, and critical response to reading texts. Mishan (2005) also noted that authentic texts, when used properly, can encourage learners to communicate in the target language, even if they were not specifically designed for EFL classes. This study contributes to the understanding of the effects of using authentic texts in the EFL classroom. Unlike traditional learning materials, authentic texts are written for native speakers and reflect real-world language use.

By using authentic texts, this study provides a fresh perspective on how they impact EFL students' reading engagement, moving away from reliance on simplified or textbook-based materials. Another unique aspect of this study is its focus on cognitive reading engagement. By examining how the use of authentic texts affects students' cognitive processes during reading, the study explores comprehension and analysis mechanisms in depth. This emphasis on cognitive engagement adds depth to the existing literature on language learning and highlights the effectiveness of authentic texts in promoting active and meaningful engagement with the reading material. Furthermore, this study considers multiple variables to enhance its novelty. In addition to examining reading comprehension, the study investigates oral response to reading, reaction paragraphs, and students' perceptions of learning to read. This comprehensive approach provides valuable insights into how authentic texts impact different dimensions of students' reading engagement and learning experience. Additionally, the specific context of the study, which focuses on Vietnamese undergraduate students of EFL at the pre-intermediate level, adds an additional layer of novelty. By conducting the research in this particular language learning environment, the study contributes to the limited body of literature that investigates the effects of using authentic texts in a specific cultural and linguistic context. This context-specific exploration deepens our understanding of how authentic texts can be effectively integrated into EFL education and provides valuable insights for educators working with similar student populations.

In sum, this study's novelty lies in its examination of the effects of using authentic texts on EFL students' cognitive reading engagement across multiple variables in a specific language learning context. By doing so, it advances our understanding of the benefits of authentic texts and offers practical implications for language educators aiming to enhance students' reading engagement and learning outcomes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Cognitive Reading Engagement

In the context of education, the concept of engagement is known as the process of dynamic participation and co-participation of students in completing a specific learning assignment in which a learning assignment can allude to a huge cluster of learning and instructional exercises with which learners are given or select in both in and-out-of-school settings. Engagement in this concept is an interactive and purposive process. Therefore, it is considered to investigate how it may change over time and alter with circumstances and settings (Engeström, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1995). These researchers emphasized the significance of students' change of participation in detailed activity settings. Recent studies related to engagement by Chi and Wylie (2014), Reeve (2013), and Skinner and Pitzer (2012) also emphasized the importance of participation of students in the definition of engagement. According to Fredricks and McColskey (2012), cognitive engagement relates to the mental investment learners make in learning. In the context of education, cognitive engagement involves learners' depth of processing, utilization of pertinent learning strategies, and self-regulation. Cognitive engagement plays a significant role in successful and effective learning progress. The measurement of cognitive engagement is to use report instruments that evaluate students' use of learning strategies, self-regulation strategies, comprehension, and persistence (Greene, 2015). Chi and Wylie (2014) stated that a high level of cognitive engagement can be connected to high levels of achievement. In addition, cognitive engagement is significant to mediate the effects of various types of motivation consisting of levels of self-efficacy and the application achievement aims (e.g., Greene et al., 2004).

Students' engagement in learning and school activities in the learning process is shown at a high level of cognitive engagement such as (e.g., Ripke et al., 2006). The activities and learning process to boost cognitive engagement include teachers' expectations, provision of challenging assignments, and conversational interaction related to the learning themes (Taylor et al., 2003). In addition, Rodriguez (2005) stated that students who engage cognitively in the learning process show a higher level of self-efficacy. From the definition of cognitive engagement, it is considered that cognitive engagement plays an important role in learning process of students. In the context of the present study related to reading skills, cognitive engagement is regarded as cognitive reading engagement. In this kind of engagement, the researcher selected a series of authentic texts as a facilitator for improving students' cognitive reading engagement. This kind of engagement involves reading comprehension (reading achievement), (oral) response to reading, reaction paragraph, and self-efficacy.

2.2 Description of Authentic Materials

2.2.1 Definitions of Authentic Materials

A diversity of theoretical angles related to authentic materials is presented by many scholars. First, Wilkins (1976, p. 79) identified authentic materials are "a student's competences to participate in real-world events." They are not produced for pedagogical targets but they may be and should be applied into a language in general to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and social knowledge

12

Second, Morrow (1977) defined authentic materials are written materials for communication. Adopting Morrow's viewpoints, Thornbury (2016) has indicated that authentic materials are those materials that have not been especially purposed for language learning. Thirdly, Nunan (1988, pp. 99-102) gave the traditional concept of authentic materials like the materials which have been prepared for providing the latest information on different fields of daily life rather than for teaching language. Similar to this point, Jordan (1997) described authentic materials as those that were not written for language teaching intentions. Likewise, Wallace (1992, p. 145) defined authentic materials as "…real-life texts, not written for pedagogic purposes." Little (1999, p. 17) had a similar idea when he stated that authentic materials are created to "fulfill some social purposes in the language community in which it was produced." However, because they are created by native speakers, they can be used as a source of real language for language students.

2.2.2 Types of Authentic Materials

Authentic materials are divided into two main forms containing written and spoken form. Oura (2001) represented the popular types of authentic materials such as article newspapers, magazines, song, web pages, radio, TV broadcast, movies, and posters. However, Genhard (1996) categorized authentic materials into three principal types below.

Table 1. Three Principal Types of Authentic Materials (Genhard, 1996)

Authentic printed materials	Sports reports, online newspapers, magazines, restaurant menus, train tickets, etc.
Authentic listening materials	Radio news, cartoons, songs, etc.
Authentic visual materials	Street signs, magazines and newspapers pictures, post cards etc.

The wide variety of authentic texts that can be utilized in the language classroom are boundless. The popular types of authentic texts include newspaper articles, magazine reports, stories, novels, letters, news on the Internet, etc. To investigate the effects of using authentic texts on students' cognitive reading engagement, the researcher decided to choose authentic texts from an online news website. Selecting authentic texts should be appropriate and effective with the purposes of reading lessons and these authentic texts should not be selected randomly. Therefore, the researcher chose eight authentic texts based on the criteria of Nuttall (1996). According to Nuttal (1996), there are three principal criteria to select authentic texts to be used in classes involving the suitability of content, exploit-ability, and readability.

Suitability of content can be focused on themes or topics of texts that attract and motivate learners to discover and learn. In addition, these texts should relate more closely to students' needs. *Suitability of exploit-ability* contributes to the development of different language skills to encourage students to develop their autonomy. *Suitability of readability* means that texts should contain the difficult level of

13

structural and lexical items. Moreover, the amount of new vocabulary and grammatical structures also should be involved in the texts. It is significant to evaluate the linguistic level for the learners.

In addition to the three key criteria presented, Nuttall (1996) also figured out two other important factors in choosing authentic texts are variety and presentation. A variety of texts used can be made a reading course more interesting. In the situation of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), students often feel bored when they deal with one theme area. On the other hand, one of the main benefits of using texts in the same theme area is that they present similar words so that students do not face trouble learning and comprehend it. While on contrast, the students gain highly specialized in that theme area and not in others. Therefore, selecting authentic texts should consider this feature. The second factor is that the "authentic" presentation. Using photos, diagrams, pictures, etc. helps put the text into the particular background. This assists students to imagine and understand not only the content of the text better but also how it would be utilized. A more "attractive" text can magnetize the students and engage them in reading.

Based on the main criteria when choosing authentic texts above, it can be seen that selecting authentic texts are assumed to encourage students to discover and read for themselves, to engage students to read as well as to provide background knowledge to students. For that reason, language instructors should consider the types of authentic texts used for teaching and learning reading in the classroom.

For the present study, eight authentic texts are taken from the website www.breakingnewsenglish.com to teach for the experimental group in six weeks because of the following reasons. With the purpose of the research paper, firstly, they are found to be rich in content, diverse in forms, and of different levels of linguistic complexity (Mishan, 2005). Secondly, the illustrations in authentic texts help students comprehend not only the message from the text better but also engage their attention and motivate them to discover in their reading process (Guariento & Morley, 2001; Tamo, 2009). The purposes of reading activities are to improve students' language items, main ideas, detailed ideas, and cognitive reading engagement, and mini-tests are designed to accompany the materials.

2.3 Effects of Authentic Texts on Language Acquisition

Authenticity in instructional materials plays a crucial role in teaching and learning reading in English as a foreign language. Mishan (2005) mentioned the effects of learning with authentic texts on cultural understanding, reading performance, and increased confidence. Firstly, authentic texts help students be exposed to a real language in real situations. In addition, they can gain real information and know what is going on in the world around them (Morrison, 1989; Peacock, 1997; Rao, 2019). Therefore, from the richly experience "they have an intrinsic educational value." (Sanderson, 1999). Secondly, students broaden their understanding of various areas of current affairs through reading authentic texts. Ngai's study (2003) confirmed that the authentic texts' advantages increasing background knowledge are specified, especially a significant rise in cultural understanding. In parallel, McGinnis and Ke (1992, p. 238) concluded "through a carefully organized and rich divergent variety of authentic texts, students can acquire the greater ability to develop cultural understanding by themselves". Thirdly, according to

14

Marzban and Davaji (2015), authentic texts can supports practicing essential sub-skills such as scanning, skimming, clustering, interference, identifying, analyzing, and summarizing. These can help students adjust their reading style flexibly. Furthermore, students also develop and enrich their amount of vocabulary and grammatical points when learning English with authentic texts (Morrison, 1989). Besides, Mishan (2005) stated authentic texts containing a wide variety of text types, language types, which are not easily found in textbooks. This helps students have more suitable selections for them. It also means that it is easier to find something in authentic texts that can interest learners and may encourage them to read and enjoy reading because they are likely to contain topics for their interest. Mishan (2005) added that authentic texts make the reading lesson of students more exciting.

In conclusion, as proved by some previous studies, authentic texts bring about significant benefits in terms of both linguistic and non-linguistic features for language learners. Those advantages are truly worth considering to be exploited in language learning, especially in English language learning. In other words, it is assumed that authentic texts provide a rich source of background information in learning a language. In addition, authentic texts are directly related to students' real life and prepare them to face and deal with real-world situations.

2.4 Empirical Studies on the Effects of Authentic Texts on Cognitive Reading Engagement in Vietnam

A remarkable number of small-scale studies on the impact of authentic materials on reading comprehension in the EFL context, students' improvement in local and global reading comprehension through the intervention of authentic materials in terms of background knowledge, language acquisition, vocabulary development, and reading motivation were emphasized. In the study of Do (2008), Vietnamese EFL students were reported to promote their motivation in learning to read. Furthermore, they gain a lot of useful and up-to-date knowledge from a topic variety of authentic texts. In the context of TESOL classroom, Nguyen (2010) figured out that awareness of readability and selection of authentic texts in teaching reading skills and the students in their language acquisition. Moreover, the study also emphasized the readability and modification of these authentic texts in order to enhance students' reading comprehension. In terms of effects on perceptions of learning to read, the study of Tran (2010) showed positive results on reading perception of Vietnamese undergraduate students majoring in English in reading class using authentic materials. Duong (2017) reported that the high school students received a considerable improvement in their reading comprehension in terms of vocabulary development when learning reading with authentic materials. In addition, these students achieved better reading scores after the intervention course.

In brief, focused on the positive results of the previous studies related to effects of authentic materials on students' reading comprehension achievement, it can be seen that authentic materials bring a major influence on particular linguistic knowledge of students and their learning to read . Moreover, these empirical studies only demonstrated the effectiveness of authentic materials on reading comprehension and reading motivation. The present study is implemented to demonstrate the effects of teacher's using authentic texts on cognitive reading engagement of students in higher education. Therefore, with the

15

positive results of the prior studies and to fill in the gap, this present study is conducted to investigate how the effects of teacher's using authentic texts in particularly helps EFL students improve their cognitive reading engagement.

2.5 Problem-Based Justification in Vietnam EFL Learning-to-Read Context

In the real context at TVU, Vietnamese EFL students face difficulties in their reading related to lack of vocabulary, background knowledge, grammatical structures, motivation, time, strategies, and materials. The biggest challenges that hinder students' cognitive reading engagement are namely unknown words and background knowledge. In addition, motivation, strategies, and materials also contribute to students' low cognitive reading engagement. To me as a teacher who has been working with Vietnamese EFL students in studying reading in General English classes, I realized some challenges of students in learning reading. The challenges mainly about unfamiliar themes that make students feel frustrated and sometimes discouraged. They reported that unfamiliar topics caused difficulty in understanding the meaning of the text. This might be the major reason why one of these students said that "Sometimes, I face unfamiliar themes in the texts so I do not understand the content of the texts and I cannot do exercises related to these texts." Student Tien Hung, a Vietnamese EFL student, shared his issue when facing the reading tasks.

With reading in course books, students perceive course books to be full of pedagogical tasks creating tiredness and boredom. They add that doing exercises in course materials created a feeling of inferiority of their own reading skills. Course books put students under "fear of making mistakes when reading and doing exercises as the teachers might call for checking and giving scores." With these challenges in learning reading of students above, the present study will begin with a closer look at authentic texts that might affect the level of students' cognitive reading engagement.

In addition, it is clear that several studies related to teaching and learning English with authentic texts have been researched by many scholars in the world and in Vietnam. The participants of these studies almost are both teachers and students in schools and universities. However, at TVU, authentic texts seem to gain fewer researchers' attention, especially when focusing on a separate skill like reading. The present study is conducted to aim at studying the topic with participants at pre-intermediate level in university. Hopefully, with these participants, and the focused research area in reading skills, the researcher is able to find out the effects of teacher's using authentic texts on cognitive reading engagement of Vietnamese EFL students in TVU. Moreover, some possible suggestions are provided to improve students' reading process and help teachers carefully adjust authentic texts and activities in their reading classes.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Hypotheses

The present study formulated two research hypotheses. First, using authentic texts by the Vietnamese teacher in reading class can effectively assist learners in improving their reading and writing quality.

16

Second, learners have positive perceptions of authentic texts and the use of authentic texts in learning to read.

3.2 Research Questions

To find out the effects of teacher's using authentic texts on students' cognitive reading engagement performance, two research questions are posed.

(1) What are the effects of teacher's using authentic texts on cognitive reading engagement of Vietnamese EFL students in the context of a non-major class?

(2) What are Vietnamese EFL students' perceptions of learning to read with authentic texts in their reading class?

3.3 Research Design

This study was conducted as an empirical study following quantitative research method using a questionnaire and an intervention with two reading tests. The intervention time for the present study was six weeks. Table 2 describes the overall research design.

Table 2. Research Design

Panel			
Group	Pretest	Intervention	Posttest
EG (n = 24)	O_1	Eight authentic texts	O_2
CG (n = 28)	O_1	Eight texts in course books	O_2

Note. EG = Experimental Group; CG: Control Group; O_1 = Pre-test; O_2 = Post-test

Reading texts in the experimental and control condition are of the same level of B1-CEFR, similar length of about 300 words and of the same topic.

3.4 Participants

The subjects involved in the present study were 52 Vietnamese undergraduate students of EFL pre-intermediate level within the age group of 19 to 20, sharing economic and social similarities. The students were divided into an experimental group of 24 students and a control group of 28 students. All pre-intermediate level students must follow the reading skills in General English with two significant tests including a midterm test and a final test to check their English reading proficiency. All of the participants have learned English for eight years. At the time of participating in this study, they just finished General English 1 in university.

The textbooks for their learning of previous reading skills are Objective KET and Objective PET. For reading lessons, students have opportunities to learn vocabulary, and grammatical structures, develop various reading strategies and enhance their reading comprehension.

17

All students displayed a commitment to the learning activities: they took part in the course regularly and actively, and they completed all the required cognitive reading engagement tests, and questionnaires.

3.5 Description of Intervention

Each reading session lasted for four periods which was usual for Vietnamese undergraduate students (50 minutes/period). The session of the two groups began at different times. The session in the morning started at 7 a.m. and ended at about 10.45 a.m., with a 30-minute break in between. In the same way, the session in the afternoon started at 1 p.m. and finished at about 4.45 p.m., with a 30-minute break in between. There were 52 Vietnamese EFL students at the pre-intermediate level participating in the session. Firstly, the instructor had an orientation meeting in which students were notified of what they were expected to do in each reading lesson as well as the instructor's expectations.

Table 3. The Description of Intervention

Text in the course book	Authentic text on the Internet
I. Warm-up (3 minutes)	
- The instructor asks students to look at the title and then predict to check their understanding of the title of the text.	- Before reading, students gain background information for the real text that they are going to read through a three-minute video. The significant purpose of this activity is to help students activate their background knowledge to examine their understanding of the title. Note: The selected theme of the real text is updated and close to students' needs. Students are interested in the theme of the real text to improve their reading ability.
II. Pre-reading (7 minutes)	
- The instructor asks students to scan for the unknown words and phrases in the reading text. - The instructor provides words and phrases in the reading text in English meanings and relevant examples.	- The instructor encourages students to guess the main content of the text focused on the title and the short video and to enumerate words and phrases related to the title. - The instructor asks students to look at exercise 1 (synonym matching) and try to predict the words and phrases. He encourages students to try to predict or infer the meanings of the words and phrases.
III. While-reading (15 minutes)	
- The instructor asks students to read individually	- The instructor asks students to read the real text

the text again and then complete two exercises involving true-false information and multiple-choice questions. Students can be received supports from the instructor.	and engage the information together to complete two reading tasks including true-false information and multiple-choice questions related to the real theme of the text.
- With two reading activities, the instructor asks students to work in pairs or work in groups to discuss to find out the answers to the questions in the reading tasks.	- Students are asked to answer orally or write their answers on the blackboard. Besides, students have opportunities to work in pairs or work in groups to answers the questions in the two reading tasks.

IV. Post-reading (10 minutes)

- The instructor asks students to work in pairs to discuss some questions related to the topic of the text.	- The instructor designs one activity (oral response) in this section. Students are encouraged to answer critically in their responses.
- Students present their discussion for the whole class and receive the instructor's feedback.	- Each pair records their responses and then sends them to the instructor after finishing a meeting in the classroom.

IV. Writing (15 minutes)

- Students work on the writing task in approximately 15 minutes.

- Writing is the final activity in each reading lesson to develop their writing competence and raise their critical thinking focused on the framework of students' cognitive reading engagement.

- Both outline 1 and outline 2 are reaction paragraphs. Students can choose one of two outlines to write. For both writing outlines, the significant thing perceives students' reactions about the theme related to the reading text.

3.6 Measurement Instruments

Cognitive reading engagement was measured through four dependent variables: reading comprehension, oral response to reading, reaction paragraph, and self-efficacy. Cognitive reading engagement tests were designed to measure for the first three variables including reading comprehension, oral response to reading, and reaction paragraph. A 32-item questionnaire was designed to measure students' self-efficacy.

3.7 Cognitive Reading Engagement Tests

The cognitive reading engagement tests consisted of three main parts. The first part included a reading passage of about 300 words. This part was designed to check students' reading comprehension. In the first part of the pre- and post-cognitive reading engagement test, the topic of the reading passage was the environment and life issues respectively. The length and the language used in the text were at pre-intermediate level. The source of the reading text was www.breakingnewsenglish.com. In the

reading comprehension tests, students dealt with three types of reading comprehension tasks including synonym matching, true-false questions, and multiple-choice questions. In brief, students read the reading passage and then did three types of reading comprehension tasks. The key purpose of the reading comprehension tests was to test students' language items, main ideas, and detailed ideas. The second part consisted of ten questions to test students' oral responses related to the passage. The content of the ten questions in the oral response tests would be engaged the theme of the reading passage in the reading comprehension tests. The length and the language used in the ten questions were at pre-intermediate level. In the core purpose of the oral response tests, the researcher desired students to freely talk about their thinking, judgment, and interest in the reading passage for 2 to 3 minutes. And the longer they talked, the more ideas they revealed. It showed they were more involved in the reading. Moreover, the researcher wanted to see the improvement of the confidence of students in their oral response performance. The final part was the task of writing. The topic of the writing related to the theme of the reading passage. The writing task at the writing tests for each student was to produce a 100-120 word paragraph to give their reactions to life issues. The target object of writing works of students was an academic non-professional reader. Particularly, a prompt for the writing tests was about students' reactions related to the reading theme. The prompt provided at the writing tests aimed to encourage students to form more details that they think of focusing on the standard format by giving them guiding sentences or phrases. The allotted time for the writing task at the writing tests was 60 minutes. The rater will give one single point for the general quality of the student's writing text. The point ranges from 0 to 10, as a whole number or a decimal number. The student's writing text is scored based on three following criteria including (i) Clear Thesis Sentence, (ii) Quality of Supporting Evidence, (iii) Effectiveness of the Global Structure of Text. In general, the point is the rater's general impression of the persuasiveness of the text; the part about grammar errors and spelling, if not seriously obstructing the reader's comprehension, could play a less important role in the rating. In brief, the pre-test and post-test had the same format and same prompt; however, the content of the prompt was different. The same grading rubric of writing was applied to all the texts. To ensure the scoring quality of the writing points was reliable. For the rating of the 15 sampled written texts with two raters studying a Master's degree in English Language and Education, the correlation between two raters was established: Alpha reached .983 between rater 1 and rater 2.

3.8 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was employed to examine the students' perceptions of their effectiveness in learning to read in English. The 32-item questionnaire was adapted from the conceptual framework of Mishan (2005) and used an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 10 which was interpreted from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items were about students interest in reading, *e.g., I think I am motivated in reading, I think I am encouraged to read more by myself, I think I am actively intended in reading lessons, I think I like reading more from public media;* attitude towards reading, *e.g. I think I am aware of different types of reading, I think reading helps me enrich my background knowledge, I think reading helps me expand my grammatical points, I think reading helps me enrich my vocabulary, I think reading will provide me*

20

with new language items, I think reading is necessary to develop my imagination, I think through reading, I can develop my critical thinking; their self-assessment of their effectiveness in reading comprehension, *e.g. I think my background knowledge about various fields has been broadened through reading, I think when I read a text, I can get main idea, usually when I read the text, I can get detailed ideas, I think I have achieved good results in my reading performance, I think through reading, my writing performance will be improved;* their preference in learning activities in reading lesson, *e.g. I think I like discussion activities after reading, I think there should be more discussion activities in reading lessons;* and their preference in terms of reading materials, *e.g. I think from reading I am supported with interesting and latest reading materials, I think through reading lessons I can read more texts related to my job; I think reading lessons use texts related to my field; I think I need the texts make me interested, I think I need the texts that give me more pleasure in learning reading, I think I want more materials that give me more interest to read, I think texts relate closely to my experience, I think I like materials with various topics.* This questionnaire was collected twice, which was at the beginning and end of the experiment. It was written in both English and Vietnamese for students' comfort in reading. The data collected were submitted to SPSS 20.0 for analysis. This questionnaire obtained the reliability coefficient with Cronbach's Alpha .92 for the first time (prior to intervention) and the reliability coefficient with Cronbach's Alpha .87 for the second time (after intervention). The core purpose of this questionnaire is to find out Vietnamese EFL students' perceptions of their self-assessment of their own effectiveness in reading and their preference for learning activities and reading materials in a reading lesson.

4. Research Results

For cognitive reading engagement tests and questionnaires, the difference between the two groups at pre-test and post-test moment, as well as the tendency of development of each group from pre-test to post-test moment were examined through Independent Samples-T-test and Paired Samples T-test, respectively.

4.1 Effects on Reading Comprehension (Achievement)

The mean score of reading comprehension of the experimental group was 6.05 and the control one was 6.57 (as illustrated in Figure 1). There was no significant difference in the mean score of the two groups at the pre-reading comprehension test moment. After the six-week intervention, the mean score of the post-reading comprehension test of the experimental group was 7.29 and the mean score of the control one was 6.63. The difference was reported as significant ($t(52)=2.34$, *p*=.02). In regards to the development pattern of each group from pre-test to post-test, the experimental group has improved significantly: the experimental group from the score 6.05 at pre-test to 7.29 at post-test as a significant development ($t(24)= -4.10$, *p*=.000). However, the mean score at the pre-test of the control group was 6.57 while it only obtained 6.63 at the post-test ($t(28)=-426$, *p*=.673). It can be emphasized that there was no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test in terms of reading comprehension in the control group after the six-week intervention of authentic texts.

21

In conclusion, there was no significant difference in reading comprehension performance of the two groups before the six-week intervention of authentic texts. Connecting with effects of teacher's using authentic texts, students in the experimental group achieved significantly better understanding after the six-week course.
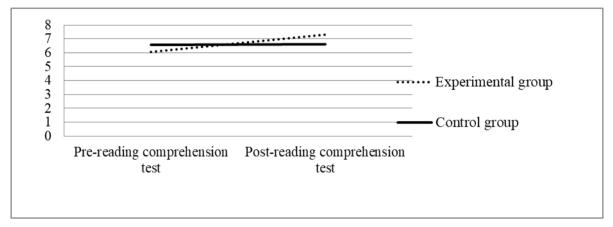

Figure 1. Reading Comprehension Performance

4.2 Effects on Oral Response to Reading

The mean score of the pre-oral response test in the experimental group was 3.94 and it was 3.19 in the control group (as illustrated in Figure 2). There was no statically significant difference in the mean score of the pre-oral response test in the two groups. The mean score of the post-test of the experimental group on the oral response performance was bigger than that of the control group after the six-week intervention. The mean score of the post-test in oral response in the experimental group was 5.71 while it was 3.58 in the control group. It can be concluded that there was a statistically significant difference ($t(52)=5.03$, $p=.000$) in the mean score between the experimental group and the control group at the post-test moment. In regards to the development pattern of each group from pre-test to post-test, both groups have enhanced significantly: the experimental group from the score 3.93 at pre-test to 5.71 at post-test as a significant development ($t(24)=-5.26$, $p=.000$), and the control group from 3.18 to 3.58 as a significant improvement ($t(28)=-2.70$, $p=.012$).

In summary, there was no substantial difference in oral response performance of the two groups before the six-week intervention. However, after the six-week course, students in the experimental group showed a more substantial enhancement in their oral response performance, in comparison to the control group. Particularly, although both groups have been enhancing after the six-week course, the enrichment of message transfer of the experimental group was indicated to be statistically clearer than that of the control group.
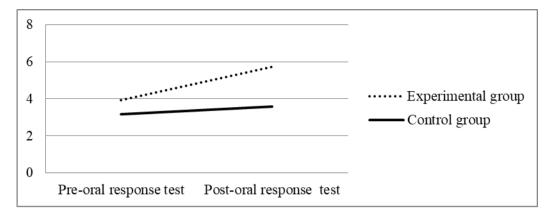
Figure 2. Oral Response Performance

4.3 Effects on Reaction Writing

The mean score of the pre-writing test of the experimental group was 4.96 and that of the control group was 4.71 (as illustrated in Figure 3). The results showed that no variance was observed (t(52) =.851, *p*=.399). The mean score of the post-writing test in the experimental group was 6.20 and that of the control group was 5.28. It can be concluded that there was a significant statistical difference in the writing performance in the two groups (t(52)=2.10, *p*=.041).

To conclude, there was no substantial difference in writing performance of the two groups before the six-week intervention. However, after the six-week course, students in the experimental group showed a more remarkable enhancement in their writing performance, in comparison to the control group. Particularly, although both groups have been enhancing after the six-week course, the enrichment of ideas and logical characteristics in writing skills of the experimental group was indicated to be statistically clearer than that of the control group.
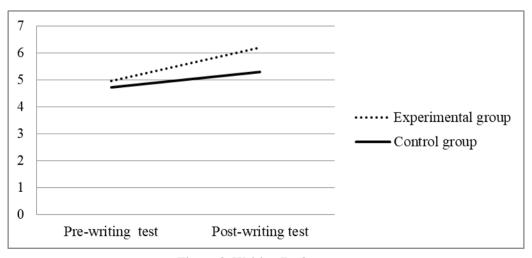

Figure 3. Writing Performance

4.4 Effects on Perception of Learning to Read

The mean scores of the questionnaire on students' perceptions of their learning to read at the pre-test of the experimental and control group were 6.19 and 6.29, respectively (as illustrated in Figure 4). There was no significant difference in the mean score of the two groups at the pre-test moment. After the six-week intervention, the mean score of the post-test of the experimental group was 7.14 and the mean score of the control one was 6.40. The difference is recognized as a statistical significance because the value of the Sig. (2-tailed) of .000 was lower than $p=.05$, in which the experimental group scored higher than the control group. For that reason, it was clear that the participants in the experimental group performed a higher level of positive towards their learning to read and their appreciation of reading, compared to the participants in the control group. In regards to the development pattern of each group from the pre-test to post-test, the experimental group had a significant development from the score of 6.19 at pre-test to 7.14 at post-test, and the value of Sig. (2-tailed) was .003. In contrast, the mean scores of the participants in the control group also slightly increased from 6.29 to 6.40, and the value of Sig. (2-tailed) was .635. It is concluded that the participants in the control group maintain their perceptions of their learning to read and their appreciation of reading.

In conclusion, there was no significant difference in perceptions of learning to read in two groups before the intervention. After the intervention of the study, the results of the post-test questionnaire also indicated the significant difference in perceptions of their learning to read and their appreciation of reading of two groups. It can be clear that the participants in both groups have shown a more positive perception of their cognitive reading comprehension and reading practice. However, students in the experimental group had clearer and more positive thinking about learning to read than the students in the control group.
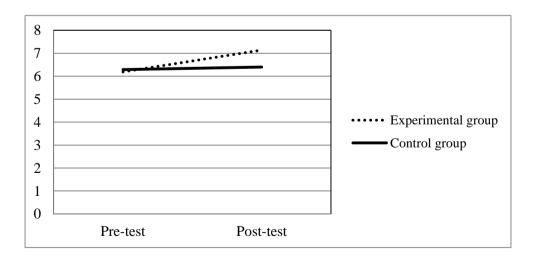

Figure 4. Perception of Learning to Read

5. Conclusion

Research question 1: What are the effects of teacher's using authentic texts on cognitive reading engagement of Vietnamese EFL students in the context of a non-major class?

The research results indicated that the mean scores of three variables including reading comprehension, oral response to reading, and reaction paragraph at the pre-test in the two groups were not significantly different.

For the first indicator of cognitive reading engagement, reading comprehension performance students in the experimental group and the control group improved after the intervention. However, students in the experimental group achieved significantly better understanding after the intervention course.

For the second indicator of cognitive reading engagement, the results presented that the students' oral response to reading performance in both groups achieved a significant enhancement after the intervention course. Nevertheless, the students in the experimental group performed better than the ones in the control group. In other words, the students in the experimental group expressed their content in the oral response by connecting their understanding of reading text and their own experience. This led to the broad difference in the quality of oral response to reading of the two groups. It could be that the primary reason the students in the experimental group performed better came from their thinking and interest that they perceived in their reading comprehension.

For the third indicator of cognitive reading engagement, reaction paragraph, students in both groups also obtained a remarkable improvement after the intervention. However, the students in the experimental group showed more progress than the students in the control group.

Research question 2: What are Vietnamese EFL students' perceptions of learning reading with authentic texts in their reading class?

Students' self-efficacy in the pre-test in the two groups was not different. However, there was a marked change in the students in the two groups at the post-test. It could be concluded that the students in the experimental group reached more positive perceptions of their learning to read and their appreciation of reading than the students in the control group: they appreciate the reading lessons better and feel more effective for reading steps.

6. Discussion

The level of cognitive reading engagement of students in the two groups before the treatment was analogous. In the three variables investigated, the second variable (oral response to reading) and the third variable (writing related to reading) reached a slow rate. In other words, the students' oral response to reading and writing related to performance were at below-average levels. They seemed to have a lack of understanding and ideas to express their opinions. In terms of writing related to reading, they did not know how to logically organize their ideas into their work. After 1.5 months of conducting the treatment with intervention course (authentic texts) and conventional course (texts in course books), the students in the two groups reflected a considerable improvement in their cognitive reading engagement performance.

The highlighted point was that many students in the experimental group responded better in their oral test and their quality of writing related to reading was higher at the post-test moment than at the pre-test. Particularly, they connected their understanding of the content of the text to their oral and writing performance. Two typical writing papers of the students at post-writing related to reading test would be presented in Appendix 1.

This reinforced that the students in the experimental group had been aware of how to gain potential benefits of authentic texts including engaging background knowledge in reading comprehension and oral response to reading test, reading comprehension development, idea expression from in writing test, reading sub-skills development in reading comprehension tasks from reading comprehension test, and confidence improvement to engage their reading comprehension as well as oral and writing performance. On the other hand, the students in the control group did not achieve well and even some of them gained lower points than before the intervention.

These results demonstrated that using authentic texts in learning reading in the context of a non-major class might bring better effects than using conventional materials in maximizing Vietnamese EFL students' cognitive reading engagement competence. This result of this study is consistent with the research result of Marzban and Davaji (2015). Their findings indicated that there was a strong relationship between authentic texts and cognitive reading engagement of intermediate students. The study also had a practical viewpoint of the level of reading improvement of students in learning reading with authentic texts. Additionally, this result also figured out that the students' motivation was promoted through learning reading with authentic texts (Marzban & Davaji, 2015; Mishan, 2005). Learning with real languages and then they applied them to their speaking skills (Morrison, 1989; Peacock, 1997; Sanderson, 1997).

In conclusion, using authentic texts in reading classes brought more benefits and enhancement to students' cognitive reading engagement in terms of reading comprehension, oral response to reading, and writing related to reading, in comparison with the conventional course.

7. Implications

The study contributed to a better understanding of how authentic texts affected Vietnamese EFL students' cognitive reading engagement. To assist students to learn reading with authentic texts effectively, this research might draws several implications for both students and teachers.

7.1 To Students

First, students themselves raise their awareness of the significance of reading and the effectiveness of authentic texts in learning reading. They should be flexible to discover authentic texts in learning reading.

Second, students should spend their free time reading popular sources of real texts such as newspapers, magazines, blogs, etc. in different areas to enhance their background knowledge as well as their language competence and self-study.

7.2 To Teachers

First, teachers play a significant role in assisting students to orient the reading aims and instruct them how to use authentic texts to achieve their goals. For that reason, teachers should utilize several common sources of real texts to design practical reading activities for their students. The teachers should select appropriate authentic texts in terms of theme and the length of the text for their students' reading competence.

Second, teachers should offer advice and encouragement for students to read more authentic texts at home. The teachers can organize a detailed schedule to check whether their students have completed their reading with authentic text or not. The important thing is that the teachers should provide clear instruction on what each student has to complete in the process of reading with authentic texts at home.

References

Chi, M. T., & Wylie, R. (2014). The ICAP framework: Linking cognitive engagement to active learning outcomes. *Educational Psychologist*, *49*(4), 219-243 https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2014.965823

Do, T. T. T. (2008). *Using Authentic Materials to motivate second year English major students at Tay Bac University during speaking lessons* (Master's thesis). Tay Bac University.

Duong, T. T. H. (2017). *The effects of using authentic materials on students'reading comprehension achievement at Le Hoan High School* (Master's thesis). University of Language and International Studies. Vietnam National University.

Engeström, Y. (2000). Activity theory as a framework for analyzing and redesigning work. *Ergonomics, 43*(7), 960-974. https://doi.org/10.1080/001401300409143

Fredricks, J. A., & McColskey, W. (2012). The measurement of student engagement: A comparative analysis of various methods and student self-report instruments. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly, & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 763-782). New York: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-2018-7_37

Genhard, J. G. (1996). *Teaching English as a foreign language: A teacher self-development and methodology*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Greene, B. A. (2015). Measuring cognitive engagement with self-report scales: Reflections over 20 years of research. *Educational Psychologist*, *50*(1), 14-30. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2014.989230

Greene, B. A., Miller, R. B., Crowson, H. M., Duke, B. L., & Akey, L. (2004). Predicting high school students' cognitive engagement and achievement: Contributions of classroom perceptions and motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *29*(4), 462-482. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2004.01.006

Guariento, W. & Morley, J. (2001). Text and task authenticity in the EFL classroom. *ELT Journal*, *55*(4), 347-353. https://doi.org/10.1093/ELT/55.4.347

Jordan, R. R. (1997). *English for Academic Purposes: A Guide and Resource for Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511733062

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355

Little, E. (1999). *Conduct disorder: Generalisation across settings and implications for home and school based interventions* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). RMIT University, Bundoora, Australia.

Marzban, A., & Davaji, S. (2015). The Effect of Authentic Texts on Motivation and Reading Comprehension of EFL Students at Intermediate Level of Proficiency. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *5*, 85-91. https://doi.org/10.17507/TPLS.0501.11

McGinnis, S., & Ke, C. (1992). Using authentic cultural materials to teach reading in Chinese. *Foreign Language Annals*, *25*(3), 233-238. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1992.tb00533.x

Mishan, F. (2005). *Designing authenticity into language learning materials*. Bristol, UK: Intellect Books.

Morrison, B. (1989). Using news broadcasts for authentic listening comprehension. *English Language Teaching Journal*, *43*(1), 217-221. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/43.1.14

Morrow, K. (1977). Authentic Texts in ESP. In S. Holden (Ed.), *English for specific purposes*. London: Modern English Publications.

Ngai, C. K. Y. (2003). *A study of student perception of authentic materials and its relationship with language proficiency* (Master's thesis). The University of Hong Kong.

Nguyen, K. D. (2010). *Teachers' Perceptions about Readability and Modification of Authentic Texts Chosen for Teaching Reading in the Vietnamese Context*. Vinh Long Community College.

Nunan, D. (1988). *The learner-centred curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524506

Nuttall, C. (1996). *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language*. Bath: Heinemann.

Oura, G. K. (2001). Authentic task-based materials: Bringing the real world into the classroom. *Sophia Junior College Faculty Bulletin*, *21*, 65-84.

Peacock, M. (1997). The effect of authentic materials on the motivation of EFL learners. *ELT Journal*, *51*(2). https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/51.2.144

Rao, P. S. (2019). The Effective Use of Authentic Materials in the English Language Classrooms. *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, *7*(1), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.34293/SIJASH.V7I1.556

Reeve, J. (2013). How students create motivationally supportive learning environments for themselves: The concept of agentic engagement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *105*(3), 579-595. https://doi.org/10.1037/A0032690

Ripke, M. N., Huston, A. C., & Casey, D. M. (2006). Low-income children's activity participation as a predictor of psychosocial and academic outcomes in middle childhood and adolescence. In A.

Huston & M. Ripke (Eds.), *Developmental contexts in middle childhood: Bridges to adolescence and adulthood* (pp. 260-282). New York: Cambridge University Press. ttps://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511499760.014

Rodriguez, M. C. (2005). Three options are optimal for multiple-choice items: A meta-analysis of 80 years of research. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, *24*(2), 3-13. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-3992.2005.00006.x

Rogoff, B. (1995). Observing sociocultural activities on three planes: participatory appropriation, guided appropriation and apprenticeship. In J. V. Wertsch, P. Del Rio, & A. Alverez (Eds.), *Sociocultural studies of mind* (pp. 139-164). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139174299.008

Sanderson, P. (1999). *Using newspapers in the classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Skinner, E. A., & Pitzer, J. R. (2012). Developmental dynamics of student engagement, coping, and everyday resilience. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly, & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 21-44). New York: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-2018-7_2

Tamo, D. (2009). The use of authentic materials in classrooms. *Linguistic and Communicative Performance Journal*, *2*(1), 74-78.

Taylor, B. M., Pearson, P. D., Peterson, D. S., & Rodriguez, M. C. (2003). Reading growth in highpoverty classrooms: The influence of teacher practices that encourage cognitive engagement in literacy learning. *The Elementary School Journal*, *104*(1), 3-28. https://doi.org/10.1086/499740

Thornbury, S. (2016). Communicative language teaching in theory and practice. In G. Hall (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 224-237), London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315676203-20

Tomlinson, B. (2014). *Developing Materials for Language Teaching*. London: Bloomsbury.

Tran, H. T. M. (2010). *Using authentic materials to improve English major students' reading skill at Thanh Do College of technology*. University of Language and International Studies. Vietnam National University.

Wallace, C. (1992). *Reading*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilkins, D. (1976). *Notional Syllabuses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

APPENDIX 1.

SAMPLE OF TWO STUDENTS' WRITING WORK

Two samples of two students' writing work in the experimental group at the post-test; they are the original writing work of two students and they are not corrected or edited by the researcher of the study. In response to the topic "how you changed your lifestyle in the pandemic. Will you keep the lifestyle? Why (not)?"

Student 1

In the pandemic, I regularly read books. I will keep the lifestyle because of two significant reasons. First, I can widen my knowledge related to human history. For example, when I read the book named "Lược Sử Về Loài Người." I know the process of human formation and know the way they built up and hunting. Second, I understand deeply about the foundation of different cultures. For instance, I know the traditional dishes of many countries and different religion of the countries. In short, I love books and I will maintain this habit.

Student 2

In the pandemic, I spend my spare time with my family. I will keep the lifestyle because of two significant reasons. First, I treasure time with my family members. For example, I feel happy when we enjoy our dinner meal together. Second, I have a lot of life stories to share with others. For instance, I always tell my parents about my study at university. They often say some best words to support me in studying. In short, I will spend time with my family and share my life with them.