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Exploring Learners' Emotional Engagement in Text-Driven Task-Based Lessons: Implications from an EFL Setting

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Abstract

Research on L2 learners' engagement has highlighted the impact of emotional engagement on task performance to uphold their language development, but there remains a need for further empirical evidence, especially from the text-driven perspective on task-based language teaching. The present mixed-methods study aims to explore Vietnamese EFL learners' emotional engagement during two task-based lessons driven by two text genres. One speaking task and a writing task that engaged the learners in solving problems driven by the texts were implemented in two three staged lessons. Quantitative data was collected by using a post-task questionnaire analyzed with SPSS v.29 to gauge 33 English undergraduates' emotional engagement, and an interview was conducted with eight students on a voluntary basis to delve into factors that influence their emotional engagement. Observations during the lessons were further used to triangulate evidence. Descriptive statistics revealed that the participants were highly emotionally engaged in both task-based lessons, expressing high enjoyment and low anxiety. Further thematic analysis of engagement during the lessons indicated that pre-task visual prompting, text processing, the proper cognitive challenges of tasks and texts, and peer monitoring were the main influential factors. These findings imply that task design and implementation based on engaging texts potentially heighten learners' emotional engagement in task-based performance, thereby facilitating their language acquisition.

Keywords: emotional engagement, problem-solving, task modes, text-driven approach

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1. Introduction

Premised on theoretical bases and empirical evidence that tasks can uphold facilitative conditions for second language development by offering learners splendid opportunities for natural language use in the classroom setting (Ahmadian & Long, 2021; Derakhshan & Gao, 2025; Ellis et al., 2020; Jackson, 2025; Long, 2015; Nunan, 2004; Trinh et al., 2025; Zare et al., 2025), task-based language teaching (TBLT) has captivated researchers and practitioners for decades. Robinson (2011) has summarized four major benefits of prioritizing tasks in second language learning, including creating contexts for meaning negotiation and language comprehension; providing favorable conditions to improve learners' language production; incorporating pre-modified input; and prompting learners' gap noticing. Mainstream task-based studies have predominantly focused on cognitive manipulations in task design to affect second language development (Lambert et al., 2023), but recent research has called for attention to learners' individual differences in task performance (Ellis, 2024), highlighting learner engagement as a critical precursor of learners' performance in second language learning and education (Asiri & Arini, 2024; Derakhshan & Zare, 2024; Dai & Wang, 2024; Lambert et al., 2023; Philp & Duchesne, 2016; Wang & Kruk, 2024; Wang & Wang, 2024; Wang & Xue, 2024; Zhang & Derakhshan, 2025).

In this background, task engagement, defined as “the level and quality of a learner’s integrated mental and physical activity, as well as their affective experience” during task-based performance (Hiver & Wu, 2023, p. 74), has emerged as a pivotal construct, spurring research on task design features that aim to enhance learners' engagement in task performance and foster their personal investment in task completion and linguistic production (Almukhaild & King, 2023; Dao, 2021; Garcia-Ponce & Tavakoli, 2022; Lambert, 2017; Lambert et al., 2017; Nakamura et al., 2021; Philp & Duchesne, 2016; Phung, 2017; Zare & Derakhshan, 2025). These studies draw on Robinson’s (2015) triad framework of task complexity, task conditions, and task difficulty to affect learners' engagement and performance (Hiver & Wu, 2023). Findings have revealed that both on-task demands and characteristics are crucial for learner task engagement.

Emotional engagement is one of task engagement dimensions (i.e., behavioral, cognitive, social) that was measured in such studies by employing various techniques namely post-task questionnaires, learners' self-reports, and semi-structured interviews (see Zare & Derakhshan, 2025). Contemporary research has

specifically focused on affective factors, highlighting the crucial role of emotional engagement in task-based performance for second language learning since it either encourages or impedes learners' personal investment in task performance (Almukhaild & King, 2023; Kirkpatrick et al., 2025). Despite the literature that informs factors affecting learner affective engagement in tasks, Almukhaild and King (2023) have stressed the impetus for further studies on learner emotions during a task-based language lesson. However, limited literature is available regarding how task design and implementation from the text-driven perspective on TBLT (Tomlinson, 2018; 2023) can impact learners' emotional engagement overall and factors mediating their engagement during task-based lessons. Therefore, the current study draws on the text-driven approach to developing and implementing task-based lessons and examines the following questions:

Research Questions:

1. How do EFL learners emotionally engage in text-driven task-based lessons?
2. What factors affect their emotional engagement during the text-driven task-based lessons?

2. Literature Review

2.1. A Text-Driven Approach to Task-Based Language Learning

A text-driven approach (TDA) to task-based materials development bears some differences from the general task-based approach. Central to task-based language teaching (TBLT) in general is the needs-based syllabus of tasks (Long, 2015) defined as meaning-focused activities that create a communicative need for learners to deploy linguistic and non-linguistic resources to achieve an outcome (Ellis et al., 2020). In the TDA, the selection of engaging texts drives task-based materials development (Tomlinson, 2013; 2023). Although using text (e.g., audios, video extracts, and printed papers) as an input source for task design and implementation has been proposed in TBLT (e.g., Willis, 1996), such texts aim to prompt language processing for comprehension. In the TDA, Tomlinson (2023) argues that designing and implementing communicative tasks particularly in close connection with emotionally engaging texts can foster meaningful learning and facilitate the following principles of second language acquisition:

- Rich and meaningful exposure to language in use

- Affective and cognitive engagement
- Use of those mental resources typically similar to L1 communication
- Noticing how L2 is used
- Opportunities for contextualized and purposeful communication in the L2
- Encouraging interaction
- Focus on meaning

(Tomlinson, 2023, pp. 12-15)

Like a traditional task-based lesson, a text-driven task-based unit follows three stages: pre-task, main task, and post task. The difference lies in the fact that text processing is embedded throughout the lesson. In detail, the pre-task stage contains several activities for stimulating learners' readiness for a communicative text-driven task. These activities may involve but are not limited to visualization, imagination, text experiencing, and personal response to the text. The task stage encourages learners to complete the communicative task (e.g., proposed initiative inspired by the text, or a solution to a problem posed in the text). The post-task stage mainly guides learners in refining the task performance with activities like peer monitoring, analyzing a model, task revision, or conducting a research task. In short, the text-driven task-based lesson affords learners opportunities to interact with emotionally and cognitively engaging texts before-during-and-post-task stages. In this sense, both text and task factors exert influences over the quality of learners' task performance.

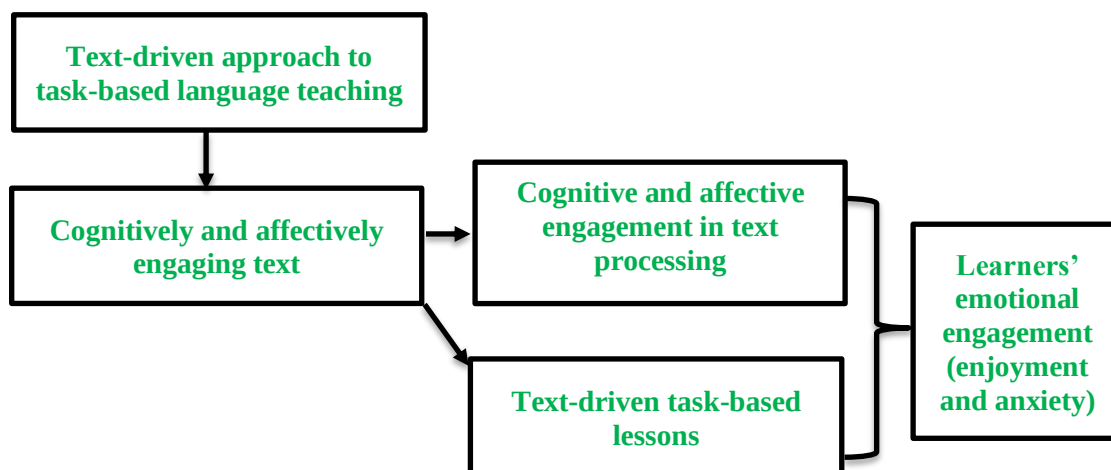
2.2. *Emotional Engagement in Second Language Learning*

The literature on engagement as a multifaceted concept elucidates its pivotal role in learners' academic achievements (Al-Obaydi et al., 2023; Dai & Wang, 2024; Wang & Kruk, 2024; Wang & Wang, 2024; Wang & Xue, 2024). In task-based instruction, delving into learner engagement can inform "how and why individuals focus on, interact with, and learn from tasks" (Hiver & Wu, 2023, p.74). Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia (2014) argue emotions encapsulate affective, cognitive, physiological, motivational, and expressive aspects. Emotions are vital for teachers' and learners' well-being; therefore, positive emotions should be promoted and maintained in the classroom (Boudreau et al., 2018; Derakhshan & Azari Noughabi, 2024; Derakhshan & Park, 2026; Shakki, 2023; Pham & Pham, 2023; Wang &

Kruk, 2024). Teachers, peers and teaching materials could serve as mediating factors for learners' emotions in the classroom (Richards, 2022; Shakki, 2022). Aubrey et al. (2022) found that lessons, learners, and task features moderated learners' task engagement including the emotional dimension. Since the TDA involves cognitive and affective engagement, understanding emotional engagement may inform pedagogical practices.

Philp and Duchesne (2016) described four dimensions of task engagement including cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional. In their description, emotional engagement is intrinsic to motivation, indicating learners' affective responses and involvement during task-based performance. Emotional engagement involves positive and negative feelings during task-based performance (Li, 2025). It triggers other dimensions such as cognitive, social, behavioral engagement such that learners' interest and excitement in tasks or topics can heighten focused thinking, driving them to persist in task completion regardless of difficulties (Philp & Duchesne, 2016). Concerning social engagement, successful task completion motivates students to actively embark on doing more. Social engagement also substantially contributes to learners' task enjoyment. Additionally, a student's enjoyment is evoked by a cognitive challenge.

Input texts and tasks should be cognitively achievable and appropriate so that learners can handle stress caused by cognitive demanding, which would encourage their desire and personal investment in task completion. Asiri and Arini (2024) argue learners will be emotionally engaged in tasks if cognitive demands are properly manipulated. Likewise, Boudreau et al. (2018) and Richards (2022) posit that it is beneficial to stimulate learners' positive affect while impeding their negative affect since positive emotions are instrumental for enhancing their active engagement in academic activities whereas negative ones discourage them from language learning. Considering Broaden-and-Build theory (Fredrickson, 2013), positive emotions provoke fresher thoughts, activities, and social connections, thus facilitating long-term personal resources such as social collaboration, resilience, skills, and knowledge. These resources contribute to enhancing well-being, survival, fulfillment, which in turn induces positive emotions. Nevertheless, research into learners' negative emotions overshadowed positive emotions in second language learning (Arnold, 2020; Miller & Godfroid, 2020).

Figure 1*A Framework of Text-Driven Task-Based Lesson and Emotional Engagement*

2.3. Research on Emotional Task Engagement

Recent studies testify to the conditions under which tasks can foster learner affective engagement. For instance, it was observed that learners reported their emotional engagement in tasks involving learner-generated content condition (Lambert et al., 2017), and expressed a higher level of enjoyment and anxiety in the less time constrained opinion-exchange task (Phung, 2017). Likewise, Phan and Dao (2023) found when having greater control over task content, learners reported a high level of emotional engagement in collaborative writing. Qiu and Lo (2017) pointed out tasks with familiar topics enhanced learners' affective engagement. On the other hand, Dao (2021) found that learners did not express their emotional engagement in performing tasks with different goal orientations: a convergent decision-making task versus a divergent opinion-exchange task. Jackson (2025) found that learners were more affectively engaged with the simple campus task than with the complex museum task. Regardless of the findings, Almkhaild and King (2023) have emphasized the impetus for further research on learner emotions during a task-based language lesson. Tasks are crucial for driving learners' language development, which might be predicted by how successfully learners engage with such tasks. Given this, the role of learners in TBLT has been under-researched across diverse EFL contexts. Therefore, Ellis (2024) argues that learner engagement as an individual difference variable should be examined throughout a whole task-based lesson rather the task alone. This study thus aims to explore learners' emotional engagement from the text-

driven perspective on task design and implementation, which has been under-researched in the literature.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study draws on a mixed methods design. Two 50-minute task-based lessons following the text-driven approach were developed and implemented in two weeks. Questionnaires and interviews with reference to the previous studies (Dao, 2021; Lambert et al., 2017; Nakamura et al., 2021; Phung, 2017) were conducted after each lesson. Classroom observations were also conducted to ensure robust data triangulation, providing a comprehensive view of learners' emotional engagement across two text-driven task-based units.

The lessons follow a five-step procedure (see appendix for details). Two texts of different genres were selected to drive the design of two problem-solving tasks. One is a news article reporting a common problem regarding children's confidentiality disclosure on Facebook, and the other depicts an overcrowding at a museum. The two text-driven tasks, an oral and a written one, pertain to problem solving. The oral task is a proposed solution to safeguarding children's personal information on Facebook, whereas the writing task elicits a solution to the overcrowding, apart from the one proposed in the text.

3.2. Participants and Setting

The study took place at a public university in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. Due to availability and accessibility, the convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants on a voluntary basis. They involved 33 English-majored students (25 females, 8 males) who were enrolled in a B2-level Listening and Speaking course in an English Studies – Translation and Interpretation undergraduate program. Eight of the participants including four males and four females were invited to participate in the interview due to their voluntariness.

Table 1
Demographic Data of Interview Participants

Task modes	Students	Gender	Years of training program	Majors
Writing task	A	Female	2	English studies
	B	Male	2	English studies
	C	Female	2	English studies
	D	Male	2	English studies
	E	Female	2	English studies
Speaking task	F	Male	2	English studies
	G	Male	2	English studies
	H	Female	2	English studies

3.3. Instruments

The questionnaire included two clusters namely task enjoyment and task anxiety, each consisting of four items that aimed to elicit learners' self-rating of their emotional engagement based on a 6-point Likert scale. One open-ended question was also included to elicit detailed self-reflections on their emotional engagement during task performances. The scale was adopted from Nakamura et al. (2021).

Based on the questionnaire responses, a semi-structured interview was designed to delve into the learners' emotional engagement in the lessons and factors affecting their emotional engagement (Appendix). Each interview was conducted in Vietnamese for around 20 minutes via Zoom. All the interviews were recorded, using Zoom's built-in recorder function with the participants' permission. All the participants were kindly requested to set their cameras on and sit in a quiet place during the interviews.

Non-participant observations were used to supplement data. To reduce the

observer's effect, free notes were taken about signals of engagement during the lessons and zoomed narrowly in some conversational exchanges between the students. The notes were reconstructed right after each lesson to ensure that the information was fully retained.

3.4. Data Collection

Prior to the study, the students were informed of the research purposes, the experimental material adhering to the current curriculum, and the publication of data. They had the right not to participate in the survey and interview without any reason, and their participation was voluntary and was not evaluated. Thereafter, the two lessons were conducted in two weeks. After each lesson following Tomlinson's five steps, the participants were kindly requested to respond to the questionnaire. The semi-structured interview was conducted within 24 hours to support their recall. During the lesson, the main researcher closely observed learners' emotions and engagement by approaching different positions in class.

3.5. Data Analysis

The survey data were analyzed with SPSS v.29. After checking the data for invalid responses, a Scale test was initially conducted to analyze the internal reliability of task enjoyment and anxiety across two tasks. Then, descriptive statistics independent samples T-test were calculated to indicate the levels of emotional engagement and compare learners' emotional engagement across the two tasks. Classroom observation notes were reconstructed, focusing on events that offered insights into learners' emotional engagement to triangulate with the self-report data from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The interview data were transcribed verbatim, thematically coded, and cross-checked for accuracy by the second researcher, and for consistency with reference to previous studies (e.g., Aubrey et al., 2022). Extracts of the data were coded and categorized into engagement dimensions as follows:

Table 2
Signals and Examples of Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement	Signals and examples
Positive (enjoyment)	Joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love E.g., I enjoyed doing the task since it enhanced my lexical items and ideas from the texts
Negative (anxiety)	Anger, anxiety, boredom, and frustration. E.g., I got nervous about the time constraint during the task performance.
Neutral (mix of enjoyment and anxiety)	E.g., I liked doing the task, but it didn't really catch my attention since its topic was a bit boring.

4. Results

4.1. Learners' Emotional Engagement

The results of internal reliability analysis showed that the survey scale is highly reliable. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were .869 (speaking enjoyment), .924 (speaking anxiety), .872 (writing enjoyment), and .954 (writing anxiety).

Table 3
Statistics of Participants' Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement	Tasks	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Enjoyment	Writing task	33	4.30	.68	2.80	5.80	.261
	Speaking task	33	4.52	1.02	2.00	5.80	
Anxiety	Writing task	33	2.92	1.06	1.00	4.75	.895
	Speaking task	33	2.88	1.24	1.00	5.75	

Table 3 displays the description of levels of participants' emotional engagement. In both tasks, the students' levels of enjoyment (Writing, $M = 4.30$, $SD = .68$; Speaking, $M = 4.52$, $SD = 1.02$) were much higher than their anxiety levels (Writing, $M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.06$; Speaking, $M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.24$). This result indicates that the students enjoyed the tasks more than they felt anxious. The higher standard deviation in the speaking task suggested a stronger emotional engagement. The Independent-

samples T-test indicated that the mean difference in learners' emotional engagement dimensions were not statistically significant across two tasks ($p = .261$; $p = .895$, respectively), suggesting that both speaking and writing task designed with reference to two text genres had a similar potentiality to emotionally engage learners in task-based performance.

Data from the open-ended question offers more detailed understanding. As Table 4 displays, higher proportions of learners reporting positive emotion during task performance compared to those expressing negative emotion across two tasks. There was a minimal difference in the percentages of learners reporting a positive emotional engagement across two tasks (speaking task = 64%; writing task = 67%). The participants reporting negative emotion in the writing task doubled that in the speaking task. Besides, 18 % of participants shared their emotional engagement in the writing task, tripling the number for the speaking task. A small proportion did not respond in the speaking task (24%). Overall, observation revealed that the classroom atmosphere of the speaking task was more dynamic than that of the writing task. This result will be elucidated in the next section.

Table 4

Emotional Task Engagement Across Two Tasks Through Students' Open-Ended Responses

Tasks	Total	Emotional task engagement			
		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unreported
Speaking task	N=33	64%	6%	6%	24%
Writing task	N=33	67%	15%	18%	0

4.2. Factors Affecting Students' Engagement During Text-Driven Task-Based Lessons

Table 5

Factors Affecting Participants' Emotional Engagement in Text-Driven Task-Based Lessons

Lesson	Students	Text content	Visual prompt	Brainstorming	Time limit on task	Content of the task	Peer monitoring	Teacher instructions
Lesson 1 (including writing task)	A	+	+	+	-	+	+	+
	B	-	Ne	+	-	+	+	Ne
	C	+	+	+	-	+	+	+
	D	+	-	+	-	+	+	+
Lesson 2 (including speaking task)	E	+	+	+	-	+	+	+
	F	+	+	+	-	+	+	+
	G	+	+	+	-	+	+	+
	H	+	+	+	-	+	+	-

Note. Ne means Neutral

The interview data analysis in Table 5 reveals that the participants in lesson 2 expressed a greater frequency of positive emotions than those in lesson 1, and they reported lower frequencies of negative and neutral emotions. Deeper analysis shows factors that might influence their engagement. Each factor will be analyzed in detail, using the interview data occasionally triangulated by observation data where appropriate.

4.2.1. Pre-task visual prompting

For the speaking lesson, most of the interviewees expressed their positive emotions

towards the visual prompting of their imagination to prepare them for the speaking task. For instance, Student E said, “when first looking at the picture together with given words, I felt curious about the upcoming content and thought about the problem that happened to many Facebook users recently, including me”. The observation data further uncovers their emotional engagement during pre-writing and pre-speaking activities with the following excerpts noted. They overall showcase the participants’ enjoyment during their discussion with laughs and verbal expressions such as ‘How come?’, ‘It’s really hot’, ‘I was afraid...’, ‘funny situation’.

Excerpt 1: Pre-writing discussion

S1: What do you see in the picture? I can see a spacious building surrounded by many people standing in line. What are they doing?

S2: I guess they just come here to visit the building.

S1: Sure. What do they want to visit inside the building? Watching movies in the cinema?

S2: [laughing] how come? I think they may go to the museum.

S1: OMG. It's really hot. I'll stay at home if I am supposed to line up like this.

Excerpt 2: Pre-speaking discussion

S1: What does “disruption” mean?

S2: I have checked it. It means “sự sập đổ”.

S1: Yeah. I can guess the problem in the picture right now. It is about Facebook disruption. Is that right?

S2: Yes. That's right. At that time, I was afraid that my account was hacked.

S1: Me too. Having realized the problem, I watched TikTok videos. Netizens joked that Mark

Zuckerberg, the owner of Facebook, was busy attending the richest Indian man’s son, so he did not care much more about his company. I think he lost a lot of money due to the problem. [laughing]

S2: [Laughing]. How could they think about that funny situation?

Notes. S1 = student 1; S2 = student 2

For the writing lesson, three interviewees reported that the visual prompting somewhat activated their imagination regarding the forthcoming topic. Student C’s recount represents this, “I found the picture presented before the main activities

captivating as it aroused my curiosity about the upcoming lesson events.” Conversely, Student D perceived the prompt failed to provide adequate information to link to the subsequent activities, suggesting, “you should provide more stimuli such as a video before the main activities so that we could have more relevant sources of information about the text and task. The picture led me to think of overcrowding in the museum, rather than addressing an architectural problem of the museum to limit the overcrowding specified in the task.” This student might not recognize the cognitive challenge of the task as will be presented later.

4.2.2. Text content

In step 2 of each lesson, the learners embarked on their first encounter with the texts, focusing on meaning rather than language. Then, they were asked to personally respond to the texts, purposefully initiating their affective and cognitive experience of the texts. They were free to express their feelings about the text, and subsequently shared it to peers. Seven interviewees reported no problems with understanding the material although they reported understanding only two-thirds of the content upon their first experience. They even admitted that the knowledge from the material was useful for their future jobs as interpreters and translators who are supposed to encounter diverse subject matters and disciplines.

Upon my initial reading of the text, I comprehended approximately 70% - 80% of its content. I found it exciting to be involved in the text-driven task since it afforded me opportunities to gain exposure to English, but also enhanced my understanding of various cultural aspects given its ordinary feature. Knowledge accumulated from such readings, I think, is useful for my encounters with translation and interpretation in the future.” (Student D).

This engagement could be related to the exposure to the useful language in the texts. Student E said, “I got excited about doing the tasks because I could utilize words in the texts [...] to complete the tasks.” Only Student B in the writing lesson thought he would not encounter such a situation in his future job, which partly alleviated the learner’s emotional engagement. The remaining participants from both groups expressed their positive emotional task engagement.

As a result of text engagement, when asked to recount the highlights in the texts for both tasks, they were all confident about summarizing them although sometimes they needed some cues for recall. The participants from both groups, excluding

student B, also explained that exposure to the language learned previously could enhance their familiarity with the language.

4.2.3. Brainstorming

Despite encountering some difficulties, the participants were still engaged in the text-driven tasks. They expressed a preference for such tasks that stimulated their cognitive efforts more than performing simple tasks. Student G in reflecting on the speaking task shared, “I was excited to encounter challenges regarding the new task type and brainstorming process because I thought it was necessary for any learning process and I preferred to be involved in such a task. Notably, upon completing the task, I felt a sense of achievement.”

4.2.4. Time on task

It is worth noting that participants expressed their negative emotional engagement during task performance due to time constraints. All of them expected extended time on both tasks. Student G suggested, “having a few extra minutes would help me generate my ideas during the speaking task.” Student A also expressed anxiety for the time allotted for the writing task, “I felt nervous being asked to finish the writing task within eight minutes. I had thought that I could not finish the task during such a time limit but finally managed to complete it”. The observations notes revealed the following data.

Excerpt 3. Learners' request for extended time for speaking task

S1: Would you please extend the duration for the task, sir? I feel embarrassed right now because I think I cannot complete the task in 3 minutes.

T: Just try your best to complete the task during the time limit. You will have some more time to work in groups to enhance your speaking.

S1: Thank you. I'll do my best.

4.2.5. Teacher's instruction

Most of the participants found it easy to keep track of the teacher's instruction although one student confessed, "I was embarrassed because I sometimes could not

follow his instruction and asked for my partner's explanations." (Student H). The excerpt below illustrates the learner's confusion as the teacher's instruction was so fast that he could not catch.

Excerpt 4.

S1: Would you please repeat your instruction because your speech is a bit fast?

T: Sorry. Listen again please... Is it clear to you?

S1: Yes. That sounds better.

T: If any confusion regarding the instruction, feel free to ask me again please.

[The whole class kept silent.]

4.2.6. Task content

The learners' understanding of task content, including the task instruction and language used in the task, further contributes to their engagement. This is highlighted in their further discussions regarding the task as follows:

Excerpt 5. Learners' reflections in the writing task

S1: The task asked us to propose possible solutions to a large-scale problem. How could we as students provide architectural suggestions to tackle overcrowding? It is the job of an architect.

S2: I do think so. But given the challenge, I think it would be more fascinating to successfully provide the solution rather than dealing with easy things which could not help enhance our knowledge and problem-solving skills.

S1: I just said so, but I will try my best to complete the task.

Excerpt 6: Learners' reflections in the speaking task

S1: It is apparent that parents prefer to show off their children's achievements, but they did not care about the fact that their children's personal information can be stolen by bad people.

S2: Of course. They did not know that their children could be kidnapped if the personal information fell into bad people who try to collect as much as personal information such as their names and schools.

S1: Yes. How dangerous it was. Recently I have heard from the news that scammers made phone calls to parents reporting that their children with their exact names and school were hospitalized and required the parents to send money to bank transfer.

4.2.7. Peer monitoring

Regarding peer monitoring in the post task, Student C emphasized the importance of feedback and comments from the group members, which substantially contributed to improvements on his writing performance regardless of the limited time in the main task. He added, “doing such a task was really challenging to me at first, but I was less worried about the task when given another 4 minutes working with my group members who encouraged me with some more interesting ideas and grammatical corrections.” Excerpt 3 from observation notes represents their emotional engagement during the activity.

Excerpt 7. Students' exchanges after the writing task

S1: Fortunately. The teacher gave us some extra time to work in groups. I have lacked some ideas for my writing performance. I just wrote down some sentences which are not really connected. Would you please help me with that?

S2: Let me see. You had better make use of the simple present and future tenses to describe the detailed information in your writing because we were expected to come up with solutions.

S1: Ok. I'll clear and correct them all right now.

S2: Quickly. I am afraid we do not have time.

5. Discussion

The current study set out to explore EFL learners' emotional engagement during two text-driven task-based lessons and what factors affected their emotional engagement or disengagement. Overall, learners' positive emotional engagement is evident in different stages of text-driven task-based lessons. Given that no statistical difference was recorded in learners' emotional engagement between the two tasks with different modes, the individual differences the learners brought to the task performance might influence their emotional engagement (Robinson, 2015). This finding aligns with previous studies on task engagement in other contexts (e.g., Garcia-Ponce & Tavakoli, 2022; Lambert et al., 2017; Nakamura et al., 2021; Phung, 2017; Xu & Qiu, 2024), emphasizing the influence of task features on emotional engagement. Notably, the present study, however, expands our understanding of task design to stimulate learner engagement in the whole lesson from the text-driven perspective, which shows sharp contrast with these previous studies which focused on task orientations, modes, familiarity, and learner preferences.

Several factors may explain the learners' emotional engagement at different stages of the lessons. **In pre-task activities**, text processing could foster learners' excitement with visual prompting to evoke their imagination and attention, which in turn hooks them personally to the texts. The activity where they pronounced their preferences and opinions about the texts with their peers further involved learners' affective response to texts. According to Tomlinson (2023), this stage is intended to elicit initial engagement with the texts, which mentally prepares them for the text experience. Aligned with Cho's (2019) findings that imagining and recalling prompts enhanced learners' engagement in the writing revision, the three prompting conditions – questions, pictures, imagination – might have contributed to learners' emotions during the main text-driven tasks. Additionally, by experiencing the texts related to their prior knowledge, the learners are emotionally engaged (Lambert et al., 2023). Based on such arguments, familiar text contents – vocabulary, topics, and grammar – could have affected learners' emotional engagement in the task execution. Evidenced in the post-lesson interview, the participants' successful report on the text highlights related to their study of translation and interpretation, further echoes the argument underscored by Ainley (2012, as cited in Asiri & Arini, 2024) that learners' interest in certain tasks leads to their emotional investment in those tasks, attentional focus, in-depth information processing, and good memory of the material. This finding is consistent with other researchers' argument that emotions can exert an influence on learners' memory (Miller & Godfroid, 2020). By contrast, their real-life experience of similar places as evidenced in the data may enhance their engagement.

Classroom moods are moderated by the text-driven problem-solving tasks. It was possible that the speaking task included an authentic text about the confidentiality of Facebook, and the learners were actively involved in cognitive manipulations during the task performance. In particular, the learners were requested to brainstorm possible solutions to the problems that first posed some challenges for them but subsequently stimulated their emotional engagement in task fulfillment. This indicates that cognitive challenges in the problem-solving tasks are achievable and proper, which left learners with an optimal stress level, enhancing the quality of their task performance and their positive attitudes towards the tasks (Asiri & Arini, 2024). Their enthusiasm is a signal of emotional engagement in performing the text-driven tasks, which results in their cognitive efforts involving their brainstorming processes to solve the problems (Philp & Duchesne, 2016). Miller and Godfroid (2020) underscore the influence of positive emotions on learners' cognitive abilities considering Cognitive Load Theory. Accordingly, the cognitive load for a task

performance (Plass & Kalyuga, 2019) can be affected by emotions. When emotionally engaged in the tasks, the learners invest their time and efforts in brainstorming innovative solutions in response to the problem perceived to be challenging to them during their first encounter. Learners' emotions could be seen as a predictor for task motivation, resulting in their highly cognitive effort. Especially, as learners are intrinsically motivated for problem-solving tasks (Graesser & D'Mello, 2012), their pleasure and positive engagement in tasks increase, which induces greater embarkment on tasks, and reduces boredom, anxiety, and anger (Asiri & Arini, 2024).

Their positive emotional engagement and personal investment in task completion could also be attributable to the text-driven familiar task topics (Panday-Shukla & Egbert, 2024). This is consistent with Phung's (2017) findings which revealed learners' task preferences stimulated by the chances to generate ideas and fulfill communicative needs. Likewise, the relevance of text contents to the students' future jobs as translators and interpreters who are supposed to encounter a wide range of spontaneous topics is instrumental in upholding learners' task engagement and attention given to task performance (He & Yahia, 2024). Their emotional engagement can also be due to the time-constrained condition for task performance, which to some extent hindered their positive emotions, leading to their requests for more time during task performance (He & Yahia, 2024).

In the post-task activities, peer monitoring took the role of enhancing their task performance via collaborative idea exchange and task revision. According to Richards (2022), learners' emotional engagement is mainly evoked by group-based classroom activities rather than individual activities. Moreover, from the social constructivist perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), social assistance is a contributory factor to learners' task engagement and language development (Leeming, 2024) since such support is especially advantageous for "learners' needs, wants, and abilities," (Huh & Egbert, 2024, p. 70), hence encouraging their interest in task revision. Accordingly, group interaction assisted the learners in enhancing their speaking and writing performance (Xu et al., 2019). However, this stage of the lesson could serve as a compensation for their insufficient time in the task phase reported to cause their anxiety. Activities that encouraged the learners to do task repetition or revision, according to Aubrey et al. (2022), may contribute to learners' emotional engagement in the speaking task.

In line with the Broaden-and-Build theory (Fredrickson, 2013), the learners' positive emotional engagement during the text-driven task performance reinforces novel ideas and social connections with group members. Philp and Duchesne (2016) argue that learners' emotional engagement elicits their insightful thinking, perseverance in task completion despite challenges, and shared excitement. The peer monitoring stage further accounts for learners' emotional engagement in the text-driven tasks since they are given an additional opportunity to enhance their speaking and writing task performance.

Various text-driven lesson factors influence their engagement in the lessons including visual prompting, text context, task content, brainstorming, and peer monitoring. Nevertheless, the learners encounter some problems that could disengage them. First, nervousness in performing the two tasks due to time constraints could have somewhat disappointed them, which was observed through their whispers in groups. Regarding Personal Investment Theory (Maehr, 1984, as cited in Lambert et al., 2017), three factors such as time, talent, and energy account for learners' persistence, continued motivation, and performance level. Richards (2022) argues learners would not invest their time and energy in language learning if they encounter negative emotions. Secondly, the text extracted from an existing textbook for the writing task design could to a certain extent hinder the learners' emotional engagement as compared to an authentic text used for the speaking task (He & Yahia, 2024). The writing topic is not as trendy as that for the speaking which captivated learners' attention and active involvement. Another influential factor for learners' emotional engagement lies in their first encounter with the problem-solving nature of both tasks despite their emotional engagement when completing the tasks. Besides, the task instructions sometimes left the learners with some embarrassment.

6. Conclusion

This study points to learners' emotional engagement during text-driven task-based lessons involving two problem-solving tasks of different modes. Their emotional engagement in the two tasks could be mainly inspired by elements of text-driven task-based lessons which were designed with reference to engaging texts and implemented in a five-step procedure. Each step in the lessons could play a pivotal role in inspiring their emotional engagement, as evidenced in their involvement in active interaction with the visual aids, discussing with friends about the content of texts, raising

questions regarding the texts, expectation on extended time during task performance, brainstorming for solutions posed in the texts, collaborative idea exchange during task monitoring. With such preliminary evidence, the study extends the literature by providing insights into learners' emotional engagement from a text-driven task-based perspective. It adds further evidence to conclude that emotional engagement elicits other dimensions of task engagement such as cognitive, behavioral, and social (Philp & Duchesne, 2016).

However, some unavoidable limitations in the current study could affect the interpretation of the findings. First, some extraneous factors might have negatively influenced learners' emotional engagement but were not examined in the study. These include large-sized class, lesson time limit, and mixed English proficiency. For instance, time pressure might have induced learners' increased anxiety during text-driven task performance. In addition, the teacher's instructions might have also resulted in some learners' confusion on account of the large-sized class, inhibiting their active involvement in task performance. Future research may control these extraneous influences to enhance understanding of the specific impact of text-driven tasks on emotional engagement. Incorporating a wider range of research methods, such as the idiodynamic approach, can provide deeper insights into learners' emotional states during task performance. This approach allows for real-time tracking of emotional changes, offering a more dynamic view of engagement (Boudreau et al., 2018; MacIntyre, 2023). Last but not least, a small sample size makes the result transferable rather than generalizable. Therefore, there remains a need for further evidence from wider classroom contexts. Addressing these limitations and exploring these suggestions will further enhance our understanding of emotional engagement in text-driven task-based language learning.

The findings of the study offer some pedagogical implications. First, pedagogic tasks can be designed in connection with engaging texts and implemented in a classroom procedure in which principles for second language acquisition are embedded in pre-task activities, text-driven tasks, and post-task activities (Tomlinson, 2023). These elements collectively influence learners' emotional engagement. Implementing a structured five-step procedure for text-driven tasks can systematically enhance learners' engagement. Each step, from pre-task activities to post-task reflections, plays a crucial role in maintaining learners' interest and involvement. From the perspective of materials development, teachers might utilize engaging texts in both coursebooks and other sources of text genres such as

newspaper articles, advertisements, poems, etc. to develop text-driven task-based lessons to optimize learners' emotional engagement, thus possibly leveraging learners' task performance and second language learning. Designing tasks that are relevant to learners' future careers or real-world scenarios can increase their personal investment and motivation. Encouraging collaborative activities such as peer monitoring and group discussions can also enhance emotional engagement.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Text-driven task-based lessons

The text for a writing task (presented as in the image below)

EXPLORE THE THEME

Look at the photo and read the information. Then discuss the questions.

1. Do you visit museums or art galleries often? Why or why not?
2. What do you personally think about Pei's design for the Louvre?
3. Why do you think the initial reaction to his design was so negative?

AN ELEGANT SOLUTION

In 1983, architect I.M. Pei was commissioned by French president François Mitterrand to design a new grand entrance for the world-famous Louvre Museum and to reorganize the museum's interior. The project presented many challenges. The historic buildings were in disrepair; the entrance could not handle the large number of visitors; art galleries were not connected; and people got lost in the corridors.

Pei came up with a grand plan. His solution was to place a new entrance in the exterior courtyard. He would build new areas underground that would welcome visitors, provide public spaces, and give easy access to the art galleries. The new entrance would be marked by a glass-and-metal pyramid, mirroring the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt. When Pei unveiled his design, the international response was extremely negative, and Pei received criticism from all sides. However, he completed his plan, and the updated Louvre was opened in 1989. Today the glass pyramid at the Louvre is a beloved jewel of the Paris landscape, admired by both Parisians and tourists.

(source: Tarver Chase, B. & Lee, C. (2018), *Pathways: Listening, speaking and critical thinking 3* (2nd edition). Boston: National Geographic Learning.)

The text for a speaking task

Source: [https://vietnamnet.vn/en/handle-and-remove-harmful-information-on social networks-to-protect-children-2211304.html](https://vietnamnet.vn/en/handle-and-remove-harmful-information-on-social-networks-to-protect-children-2211304.html)

Lesson 1

Step 1: A readiness activity

Students are given 30s to look at a picture which is potentially related to an upcoming text as below:



(source: https://www.lemonde.fr/en/opinion/article/2023/03/25/should-foreign-tourists-pay-more-for-museum-admission-than-french-residents_6020579_23.html)

- Teacher asks “What do you have in mind?” after taking a look and then elicits things related to the picture but does not explicitly tell students the content of the picture.
- Students continue to brainstorm in connection with the picture and the teacher’s elicitation

Step 2: An experience of a potentially engaging text

Imagine

When you're lost in the crowd in a museum, what will you do?

You're an architect, then come up with a solution on your own.

Step 3: A personal response to the experience of the text

Students read a real text in the coursebook and compare what they have thought of in the picture and the content of the text. While reading the text, students are encouraged to continue thinking of a new solution to help the number of visitors avoid getting lost, in addition to the one suggested in the text. Students work with a partner to tell him/her about the essence of the text.

Step 4: A text-driven task (A writing task)

In eight minutes, students are asked to write an 80-word letter to the French president to provide a new solution to handle a large number of visitors and decoration of the building in addition to the one suggested in the text.

Step 5: Peer monitoring

Students form a group of four. Students share their writing with others. Then, revise their letter making use of anything they have learned from their partner.

Lesson 2

Step 1: A readiness activity

Are you using any electronic devices? What are they? Have you installed any applications or browsed a website on your devices? What are they?

Please take a look at the following photo in 30s and tell your partner about an important problem that Facebook users have recently coped with?

Facebook and Instagram outage: Widespread disruption resolved

By Clara Duffy, CNN
 2 minutes read · Updated 3:37 PM EST, Tue March 5, 2024



Thousands of users reported issues accessing Facebook, Instagram and Facebook Messenger on Tuesday morning. ...
 Thousands of users reported issues accessing Facebook, Instagram and Facebook Messenger on Tuesday morning. ...

(<https://edition.cnn.com/2024/03/05/tech/facebook-instagram-outages/index.html>)

Step 2: An experience to the potentially engaging text

Think about one problem that you used to encounter when using a certain application or a website.

- What was the problem?
- What did you do to deal with it? Did you search Google for more information about the problem and then you asked Google for solutions? Or did you ask someone else for help?
- How did you feel when dealing with the problem? Did you consider it normal or frustrating? Why

Step 3: A personal response to the experience of the text

Students read an authentic piece of text and compare what they have thought of in the picture and the content of the text. While reading the text, students are encouraged to continue thinking of a solution to help keep children's private information. Students work with a partner to tell him/her about the essence of the text.

Step 4: A text-driven speaking task (speaking task)

There are no measures or tools to ensure the safety of children's confidential information and private life in social media. To provide possible solutions for this situation, you are expected to present your ideas about what designs/functions should be added in social media (i.e., Facebook) to help hide children's personal information automatically to prevent people from stealing the information when it is accidentally posted by their parents.

Step 5: Peer monitoring

Students form a group of four. Students report their speaking to other partners. Then, revise their speaking performance making use of anything they have learned from their partner.

Appendix B: Interviews

1. How do you feel about doing the task driven by the text?
2. What factors made you feel interested/ nervous about the task?
 - Content of the text? Familiar words?
 - The illustrative picture?
 - Brainstorming?
 - Time on task?
 - Content of the task?
 - Peer monitoring?
 - Interaction?
 - Teacher's instructions?
3. What do you still remember about the text? please tell me?
4. Do you think the text is useful for upgrading new knowledge which is related to your major as English studies?
5. Do you think that the task driven by the text could help remember the content of the text more than studying the text and doing exercises related to it (i.e., gap filling, matching, etc.)?
6. Do you think that the writing task/ speaking task driven by the text could enhance your writing skill? Why? Context and vocabulary given in the text? Not rigid topics like in other academic essays/speaking topics?
7. What do you recommend to improve your task performance?