



# Cambodian Students' Motivation to Learn English: A Case Study of a Private University in Phnom Penh

## ចលករសិក្សាភាសាអង់គ្លេសរបស់និស្សិតកម្ពុជា៖ ករណីសិក្សានៃសកលវិទ្យាល័យឯកជនមួយក្នុងរាជធានីភ្នំពេញ

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### ABSTRACT

The present small-scale study examined the relationship between integrative and instrumental motivation and English proficiency among Cambodian university students. The participants were seventy-two ( $n=72$ ) year-one students who learned English as a foreign language (EFL). The data were gathered through a survey questionnaire, an interview, and an English proficiency test. The findings indicated that the students' learning motivation was slightly better in integrative motivation compared to instrumental motivation. In addition, motivational orientations, including integrative and instrumental motivation, were found to be no significantly differences in term of gender. Interestingly, there existed a weak correlation between integrative motivation and English proficiency.

**KEYWORDS:** instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, English proficiency, Cambodian student

### សង្ខេប

ការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវមួយនេះមានវត្ថុបំណងសិក្សាអំពីទំនាក់ទំនងគ្នារវាងចលករសិក្សាបែប integrative និង instrumental ជាមួយនិងសមត្ថភាពភាសាអង់គ្លេសរបស់និស្សិតដែលកំពុងសិក្សានៅក្នុងសកលវិទ្យាល័យឯកជនមួយក្នុងប្រទេសកម្ពុជា។ សំណាកស្រាវជ្រាវគឺជានិស្សិតឆ្នាំទី១ ដែលកំពុងសិក្សាជំនាញភាសាអង់គ្លេសនៅសាកលវិទ្យាល័យចំនួន៧២នាក់។ ទិន្នន័យ

ស្រាវជ្រាវទទួលបានតាមរយៈកម្រងសំណួរស្ទង់មតិ ការសម្ភាស និងតេស្តវាស់សមត្ថភាពភាសាអង់គ្លេស។ លទ្ធផលបានបង្ហាញថា និស្សិតមានកម្រិតចលករសិក្សាបែប integrative ខ្ពស់ជាងចលករសិក្សាបែប instrumental បន្តិចបន្តួច។ លទ្ធផលស្រាវជ្រាវក៏ បានបង្ហាញផងដែរថា ចលករសិក្សារបស់ទាំងពីរប្រភេទពុំមានទំនាក់ទំនងនឹងកត្តាភេទនោះទេ ដោយនិស្សិតទាំងពីរភេទមាន កម្រិតចលករសិក្សាប្រហាក់ប្រហែលគ្នា។ ពាក់ព័ន្ធនឹងទំនាក់ទំនង លទ្ធផលបានបង្ហាញថា ចលករសិក្សាបែប integrative មាន ទំនាក់ទំនងខ្សោយជាមួយនឹងសមត្ថភាពភាសាអង់គ្លេសរបស់សិស្ស។

**ពាក្យគន្លឹះ:** ចលករសិក្សាបែប instrumental, ចលករសិក្សាបែប integrative, សមត្ថភាពភាសាអង់គ្លេស, និស្សិត កម្ពុជា

**1. INTRODUCTION**

According to [Iwaniec & Dunn \(2020\)](#), 1.5 billion people worldwide speak English. So far, English has been used and popularized in two domains: English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). It has remarkably and universally continued its exalted status as a leading edge on behalf of a language used extensively for communicative dissemination. That is because of its seminal role as a global language. [Crystal \(2003, p. 3\)](#) stated that English “achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country.” Correspondingly, [Kirkpatrick \(2010\)](#) further posited that it is the lingua franca of Asia and a critical worldwide language.

Over the last three decades, English has grown in popularity in Cambodia, where its expansion is deliberately facilitated through [Kachru’s \(1985\)](#) Expanding Circle or EFL. Institutional, governmental, and professional factors in Cambodia are what drive English teaching and learning ([Hashim et al., 2014](#)). Since the early 1990s, English has maintained its dominant position in Cambodia. For example, it has been the official foreign language in public and private formal education systems ([Moore & Bounchan, 2020](#)). English is the leading foreign language, ahead of others, namely French, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese ([Boun, 2017](#)). Since then, its indispensable acclaim and dominance have generated Cambodian learners’ enthusiasm for part-time or full-time formal learning in many foreign language schools and universities since they may be extrinsically encouraged to learn it as a passport to prosperous careers, international communication, scholarship opportunities, and higher education.

Cambodian university students may take formal English classes with a certain level of English learning perception. Typically, they may include a state of enthusiasm for or interest in learning English. As English teaching in Cambodia continuously holds a learner-centered approach and promotes communicative language teaching ([Neau, 2003](#)), individual understanding differences may contribute to the various reasons to motivate learners to learn English.

[Hall \(2011\)](#) succinctly believed that with some level of motivation, it is easier to picture anyone acquiring a language. [Mackey \(2014\)](#) said that learning a foreign language could have many benefits and that learners can learn a second language (L2) if motivated. Students cannot reach long-term goals without the right motivation, and having a good curriculum and good teachers is not enough to guarantee that students will do well ([Dörnyei, 1998](#)). Motivation is theoretically known as a prime determinant of second language acquisition (SLA) ([Hernández, 2006](#)). It has a role in a student’s ability to acquire an L2 ([Wood, 1998](#)). The elements, such as a substantial objective or need, the desire to accomplish the goal, the impression that learning L2 is relevant to achieving the aim of satisfying the need, the belief in the likelihood of learning L2 success or failure, and the value of prospective outcomes or rewards, all contribute to motivation. ([Oxford & Ehrman, 1993](#); [Dörnyei, 2001](#), as cited in [Saville-Troike, 2006](#)). Both instructors and academics have primarily regarded motivation as a critical component influencing the pace and effectiveness of SLA or foreign language acquisition ([Dörnyei, 1998](#)). According to [Krashen’s \(2002\)](#) theory, motivation, viewed as a source of emotional filter factors, significantly boosts L2 acquisition. He further stated

that learners exhibiting a high level of motivation are thought to accomplish L2 acquisition.

Motivation in the context of learning an L2 has been a well-studied topic for the past thirty years. Gardner and his colleagues were the first to study this topic, and they have done the most in-depth research on motivation and how it affects SLA (Bernaus, 1995). Earlier research on motivation for learning was mainly focused on L2 education (James, 2012). In L2 motivation research, different researchers have conceptualized L2 motivation models, ranging from Gardner's socio-educational model (1985, 2001, 2005, as cited in Lai (2013)) to Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005, 2009, as cited in Lai, 2013). On the other hand, many English instructors in Asian nations have long neglected inspiring language learners; as a result, learners have been hampered in their ability to utilize English in their daily lives (Sugita & Takeuchi, 2010).

In the same way, not much research has been done on what motivates people to learn English, especially in Cambodian higher education, even though "the position of English as a lingua franca situates it in an almost unique motivational sphere." (Iwaniec & Dunn, 2020, p. 163). Besides, Cambodian instructors seem unaware of their students' motivations or aptitudes. According to the teaching experience of the researcher, it may be presumed that some Cambodian EFL university students learning English have few opportunities and are afraid to interact in English outside the classroom. Thus, the mechanisms by which they are motivated to attain communicative learning seem constrained. In this circumstance, they may get demotivated to study English. With this in mind, this is not a typical scenario, and what and how beyond the desire of Cambodian university students to learn English should be spurred on empirical investigation.

This study will shed light on two educational benefits. The findings should raise awareness of the study setting inside the Department of English. They must assimilate their students' motivation levels due to formal English exposure. At a practical level, this may be a tangible and methodical study with implications for future course curriculum design, instructional practices, and course materials that support learners' motivation to learn foreign

languages. Second, since there are few studies on learning motivation in Cambodia, the results will encourage English lecturers to heed their students' learning motivation. The researcher is prompted to be sure that it will motivate Cambodian lecturers to improve and assist Cambodian students' English abilities.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Motivation to Learn a Second Language (L2) Definition

"*Motivation* derives from the Latin verb *movere* meaning 'to move' What moves a person to make certain choices, to engage in action, to expend effort, and to persist in action – such basic questions lie at the heart of motivation theory and research." (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 3). Dörnyei (2001, p. 27) claimed that motivation is an engaging activity. It relates to "why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it." There are different scholars who have provided definitions of motivation. Pintrich and Schunk (1996) defined motivation as "the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained" (p. 4). Besides, motivation refers to "an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action" (Brown, 1994, p. 152).

The motivation to study any other academic subject differs considerably from the drive to study an L2. This is true because an L2 serves as a code for communication and a symbol of the L2 culture in which it is spoken (Cohen, 2010). Motivation is an impetus for affecting foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 1998). It is somewhat known that motivation determines whether or not a learner can learn a foreign language (Dörnyei, 2001). Spolsky (1989) argued that when a student is motivated, he will devote more time to learning a particular aspect of L2. The definition of L2 learning motivation defined by Gardner (1985) is considered acclaimed. According to Gardner (1985), motivation is the combination of effort and desire to attain the aim of language acquisition and positive attitudes about language learning. Moreover, Gardner & MacIntyre (1993) stated that motivation comprises three components: the desire to accomplish a goal, the work

expended toward that objective, and satisfaction with the activity itself. Mao (2011) emphasized that based on the theories of motivation (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993), the importance of motivation has prompted several scholars to study language learning motivation.

## 2.2. Motivation Orientation: Instrumental and Integrative Motivation

People developed different motivational theories, such as the social-education theory, the three-level motivational construct theory, and the social-cognitive theory. Motivation is typically divided into two categories: intrinsic, extrinsic, integrative, and instrumental. This study, based mainly on the work of Gardner & Lambert (1972), looks at how learning an L2 can be made more interesting. Gardner & Lambert (1972) identified two major types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. These are addressed in the social-educational model (Gardner, 1985). Similarly, Lukmani (1972) stressed that students' motivations for learning a new language should be divided into integrative and instrumental categories.

*Integrative motivation* means that a person wants to learn a language to become part of the culture of those who speak it. In other words, learners should put in much effort to learn the language of a valued L2 community to talk with the group. For example, learners with integrative motivation like to learn English to understand it well, learn more about English speakers, and fit in with English-speaking societies like those in the US, UK, or Australia.

Instrumental motivation and integrative motivation are not always incompatible (Brown, 2000). *Instrumental reason*, conversely, implies that a student is intrigued to learn the language for specific goal incorporation, such as passing an exam, obtaining a job, or meeting other requirements (Winke & Brunfaut, 2021). It is instead called a functional objective (Thornbury, 2006). Language learners with instrumental drive recognize the benefits of social and economic aspects through L2 awareness.

Hamp-Lyons (1983) pointed out that, even though further research is needed, past studies demonstrate that instrumental motivation can be just as effective as integrative motivation in language acquisition.

However, Gardner & Lambert (1972) echoed that integrative motivation is more productive for SLA. In the same vein, teachers and parents in Asian and non-Asian countries constitute a critical role in the integrative drive for SLA (Yu & Downing, 2012).

## 2.3. The Relevant Studies

According to a review of the literature in the linked articles, there have been numerous research studies on motivation in various settings, particularly EFL. Most studies showed that university students exhibited instrumental and integrative drives; however, the vast majority indicated more instrumental than integrative motivation. A few subsequent studies also revealed an association between English proficiency and learning motivation, including instrumental and integrative motivation.

Lim (2012) explored Cambodian EFL motivational orientation and proficiency. The primary purpose of his investigation was to examine the instrumental and integrative motivation of a sample of university students majoring in English, as well as possible relationships between motivational orientation and English proficiency. This mixed methods research adopted a motivation questionnaire, while an interview was later employed. The findings indicated that instrumental motivation was the primary reason students learned English. However, a negative association between students' motivation and English proficiency was later reported.

Chumcharoensuk (2013) did a study to compare the different ways Thai and Cambodian first-year English majors were motivated to learn English. This mixed methods study examined the similarities and differences in motivation between two groups of learners. The research tools, including a self-report questionnaire and interview, were used during data collection. The findings revealed that while most Thai and Cambodian students were instrumentally motivated to learn English, there were differences, as most Cambodian undergraduates showed integrative motivation towards English learning.

Choomthong & Chaichompoo (2015) used a modified version of Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (ATMB) (2004) and a semi-structured interview to find out how and why Thai university students want to learn English. The samples were

1475 juniors. The findings revealed that learners' integrative and instrumental motivations were both high, with the instrumental motivation slightly higher than the integrative motivation.

Degang (2010) examined the level and sorts of English learning motivation of Thai undergraduate students ( $n=50$ ). He initially utilized an adjusted 20-item questionnaire from Gardner's (1985) AMTB. The reports indicated that the students were highly motivated, both instrumentally and integratively, to learn English, although it was found that integrative motivation was more slightly than instrumental motivation.

In China, Liu (2007) discovered Chinese university students' attitudes towards and motivation to study English and the relationships between their attitudes and motivation and English proficiency. The researcher administered an adapted 44-item questionnaire from Gardner's (1985, as cited in Liu, 2007) and Clement et al.'s (1994, as cited in Liu, 2007). Two hundred and two non-English major undergraduate students participated in this survey. The results revealed that the samples had positive attitudes toward English and were engaged in instrumental and integrative motivation to study it. In addition, their attitudes and learning motivation were associated with their English proficiency.

Samad et al. (2012) examined how motivated Iranian EFL students were and how well they spoke English. The study's main goals were to look at two types of motivation: instrumental motivation and integrative. A hundred respondents were invited to complete the modified AMTB questionnaire. It was found that the majority of students (58%) had instrumental motivation, and the integrative reason was statistically significant ( $r=.72$ ), except for the instrumental cause ( $r=.35$ ). A finding additionally revealed that the high-ability students were highly integrative-motivated.

Oranpattanachai (2013) explored the motivation of Thai undergraduates in English classes. The main objectives were to determine integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. With 420 samples, this investigation utilized a motivation questionnaire and English course scores. The results showed that integrative and instrumental motivations existed

among students. Also, integrative motivation was significantly different from instrumental motivation.

In their 2011 study on English motivation, Ghanea et al. looked at the link between Iranian EFL learners' integrative and instrumental motivation and how well they learned English. The samples comprised 128 undergraduate students from Shiraz Azad University majoring in English as a foreign language. Two main instruments were employed to collect the data. They were a language proficiency test and a questionnaire determining a motivation scale. The correlation coefficient and  $t$ -test were employed to examine the obtained data. The three key results were indicated, respectively. First, there was a significant correlation between integrative and instrumental motivation and English proficiency among Shiraz Azad University EFL students. Secondly, there was no relationship between instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. Thirdly, neither males nor females were associated with all types of the mentioned motivations.

Vaezi's (2008) research project is to describe and study the integrative and instrumental reasons why Iranian college students learn English as a second language. For the study, 79 students who did not study English as their major were chosen and asked to fill out a questionnaire about why they wanted to learn English. They were given a modified 25-item survey to determine which of the two types of motivation they were more likely to use. The results showed that Iranian students were more motivated by what they could get out of learning English. They were also very motivated and had good attitudes about it.

#### 2.4. Research Objectives and Questions

In this way, the main goals of this study were to find out the levels of instrumental and integrative motivation Cambodian EFL learners use to learn English and to see if there is a link between motivational orientations and English proficiency. As a result, the above goals will be met by answering the guided research questions below:

- (1) What are the levels of motivation of Cambodian EFL students?

- (2) What is the difference between male and female students' motivational orientations to study English?
- (3) What is the correlation between integrative and instrumental motivation and students' English proficiency?

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research Design

This section discusses the methodological issues of the present study. The quantitative paradigm has dominated L2 motivation research for over four decades (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). L2 motivation researchers affirmed that mixed methods research is academically a budding means for further L2 motivation studies (Dörnyei, 2007; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Kim & Seo, 2012, as cited in Zhang & Kim, 2013). In this study, the researcher argued that it might provide a well-deserved method to explore motivation to learn English in a Cambodian higher education setting. This study used a mixed methods approach, emphasizing categorization in the explanatory sequential design. Prioritized and finished first are the quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by a small amount of qualitative data for clarification and elaboration (Creswell, 2012).

#### 3.1. Research Site and Participations

The current study's only territory was a private university in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The researcher chose to perform the study at the site due to its ease of access for data collection. As the researcher is a part-time English lecturer there, he wanted to ascertain the adult learners' motivation for English study. Marshall & Rossman (2010) recommended that researchers have a much better chance of getting to their research site if they know the area well. Additionally, based on the current literature review, just a few research studies have been conducted in universities, regardless of whether they are private universities or colleges. Thus, this research elucidates further results in the context of private education. The researcher investigated 72 young adult students who were juniors (from two classes), all enrolled in one university. As for demographics, they were comprised of 42 female (58.3%) and 30 male (41.7%) year-one students who were taking a Bachelor's

degree in Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at the time of the study (the academic year 2022-2023) using convenient sampling. They were drawn because they have some experience learning English and may express negative or positive attitudes towards learning English. Khmer is their mother tongue, and their ages range from 17 to 42, with an average age of 20.

#### 3.2. Instrumentation

##### 3.2.1. Questionnaire

According to the recommendation from Iwaniec & Dunn (2020), questionnaires should be considered for gathering information about language learning motivation. The electronic questionnaire-based survey, the primary tool, was employed using Google Forms and centered on probing the students' views on the kinds of motivation for learning English. The two casual-relationship variables, integrative and instrumental motivation, were assessed by the adopted questionnaire, which was based on Degang's (2010) self-reported questionnaire that had been modified from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (1985, as cited in Degang, 2010) and Liu's questionnaire (2005, as cited in Degang, 2010).

The motivational survey consisted of two sections using a five-point Likert scale. The first is the demographic data section (gender and age). The second one is comprised of 20 statements related to two major types of motivation, namely integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Among those, ten items are about instrumental motivation (items 1-10), and integrative motivation comprises ten items (items 11-20). The respondents could respond to each statement by selecting only one answer among the five choices: *strongly agree* (5), *agree* (4), *neutral* (3), *disagree* (2), and *strongly disagree* (1). All items of the online questionnaire were entirely written in English because the research participants, whose major is English, were strongly assumed to have acute questionnaire comprehension.

According to Degang (2010), a panel of experts and language specialists once examined the questionnaire. Also, the researcher re-verified it to ensure that it would be finely and contextually adopted. The reliability coefficient of the adopted

questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha was .84, which is high.

### 3.2.2. Interview Protocol

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather qualitative data about the students' motivational orientations, such as integrative and instrumental motivation. Merriam (1998) said that one of the benefits of the semi-structured interview is that it gives the interviewees some power and control over the interview. Each person asked to participate was invited to talk about and explain important things and experiences related to learning English openly and honestly. Interview protocols with guided questions were made and changed based on the researcher's experience teaching English and a literature review. The researcher checked content validity, language clarity, and language appropriateness. The interview was conducted in Khmer since the first language is subject to the authenticity of the informants' perceptions and experiences in learning English. For further analysis, the researcher transcribed the data emanating from the interviews.

### 3.2.3. English Proficiency Test

A modified TOEFL ITP practice test was administered to assess students' English abilities. Due to the researcher's vast teaching expertise on-site, he determined that the test was contextually relevant and applicable to the participants. It comprises sixty items in total and covers different listening, vocabulary, grammar, and reading sections.

### 3.3. Instrument Administration

After finding a group of students who were all in an English-language undergraduate program at a private university in Cambodia, the researcher started evaluating the gatekeeper. He sought permission from the university's dean of the English Department, where this research was conducted. Once allowed, the researcher employed collective administration. He approached students from two separate classrooms and invited them to participate in the study. After informing the learners about the purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary nature of the survey and ensuring they completely understood the simplified survey procedure explanation, the English

proficiency test and electronic questionnaire via Google Form were sent to them to fill out in their classrooms. The students were informed that their survey participation would not affect their final evaluation (semester result), nor was it required to include their names as part of the biographical information. To avoid bias, the researcher encouraged them to be truthful in their responses and stressed that no answer was better than any other one. The time allowed for taking the test was ninety minutes, and they were granted thirty minutes to complete the online questionnaire.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted only once, based on the students' availability after administering the online questionnaire and English proficiency test. Each typical interview session lasted between thirty and forty minutes. Eight informants (four males and four females) were chosen randomly. They were well informed of the intent of the interview and relevant ethical issues. Each interview was audio-recorded accordingly, following the informants' permission.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Before answering any of the study questions, normality tests were done to see if parametric tests were the right way to process concrete data. Descriptive statistics were generated on the integrative motivation and instrumental motivation to seek replies from student participants in terms of frequency, percentage, mean scores (*M*), and standard deviation (*SD*).

The researcher adopted the interpretation of the score by Degang (2010), as depicted in Table 1. The mean was utilized to analyze the average scores for each variable as well as the sum of the mean scores for all items relating to the degree and kind of motivation.

Table 1  
*The interpretation of score (Degang, 2010)*

Scale	Mean Range	Level	Score Range
5	Strongly Agree	Highest	4.50 - 5.00
4	Agree	High	3.50 - 4.49
3	Moderate	Moderate	2.50 - 3.49
2	Disagree	Low	1.50 - 2.49
1	Strongly Disagree	Lowest	1.00 - 1.49

The normality test, which is shown in Table 2, shows that the data on English proficiency scores,

instrumental motivation, and integrative motivation were not normally distributed. This means that the non-parametric method needs to be used.

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was performed to see if integrative and instrumental motivation statistically differed. The researcher also used the Mann-Whitney Test to determine if there was a difference between the mean scores of male and female students on integrative and instrumental motivation. Finally, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was conducted to better understand the possible relationship between students' enthusiasm to study and their English competence.

Table 2  
*Test of normality*

	Tests of Normality		
	Shapiro-Wilk		
	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Score	.960	72	.022
Instrument	.949	72	.005
Integrative	.891	72	.000
Total Motivation	.841	72	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The interview transcripts were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively. This was done by counting the frequency of the answers, which might better explain the entire data set. Simply put, the purpose was to find out if the information the samples wrote about themselves in the questionnaire matched what they said in person. It is worth mentioning that pseudonyms were used to refer to the interviewees in the following sections.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. English Major Students' Levels of Motivation to Learn English

A mean analysis was computed to answer research question one about the students' levels of motivation when they are learning English in Cambodia's higher education.

Table 3  
*Mean values of each type and overall motivation*

Motivation	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Degree
Instrumental	3.51	.05	High
Integrative	3.90	.79	High

As demonstrated in Table 1, the mean score for all motivational types fell between 1 (the lowest level)

and 5 (the highest level). Table 3 indicated that the total mean for all items of instrumental and integrative motivation was 3.51 and 3.9, respectively, which similarly indicated a high level of motivation. The interpretation of such results was that to learn English at the university, the students postulated both types of orientation, including instrumental and integrative motivation; however, the latter has a slightly higher mean value than the former.

When further unpacked in qualitative data, the quantitative findings were primarily supported. On top of the instrumental orientation, all interviewees ( $n=8$ ) shared a similar view by reporting that they predominantly perceived the significant role of English not only in Cambodia but also in the world.

People today are more likely to have an international attitude. It includes being interested in foreign or international affairs, being willing to live or work abroad, being ready to communicate with people from other cultures, and not being ethnocentric about other cultures (Yashima, 2002). Because of what the informants said, they did not doubt the usefulness of English, which has been growing a lot in Cambodia over the past few decades. As a result, university graduates are encouraged to get good jobs at government institutions, private companies, and schools that teach English as a foreign language. What is more, they will be able to travel abroad where English is spoken. To complete their academic tasks and self-study, which are of the utmost importance, they could have access to plenty of information from sources on the Internet. Interestingly, the most preferred career among the eight interviewees is an English teaching position. In addition, most interviewees ( $n=6$ ) revealed a shared motivator: high classroom engagement in learning English. As an illustration, they actively and variously engaged in English learning activities, mainly aiming to obtain high scores on formative assessments such as homework, class participation, assignments, and achievement tests. For example, two interviewees stated the following:

“Frankly speaking, I love English. If I cannot use English in the next few years or even from now on, I might not be able to get a good job. The reason is that English is a highly sought-after foreign language for most employers in Cambodia. I am taking two



concurrent degrees, and English is my chosen one. I hope to be a full-time staff member at any company and a part-time teacher of English to earn much more money to support myself and my family.”

“I always work in pairs or groups assigned by my lecturers. I like sharing ideas and other relevant information with them. Also, I usually read my textbooks in English, such as Literature Studies or Core English, although I do not spend time reading other materials at home. What I know is solely about getting high scores at the end of the semester.”

Regarding integrative motivation, all informants ( $n=8$ ) shared a convergence of ideas about personal interests and passion for learning English. All the interviewees’ learning experiences in English lasted at least three years. Two-thirds of the interviewees noted that they merely appreciated English, Cambodia’s most eminent foreign language. Despite sometimes being nervous when learning English in class, they are happy and particularly enjoy learning it. Two informants ( $n=2$ ) articulated that they have been, to some extent, influenced by the culture of Westerners, so they unavoidably found English intriguing. Moreover, two students displayed passive sociocultural language contact, which is not involved in direct communication with L1 speakers (Dörnyei, 1990, as cited in Lim, 2012). They habitually watch English movies and listen to songs in English. This was exemplified in the following illustrative quotes:

“Sometimes I feel that speaking English makes me proud in front of other people. I am enthusiastic about behaving and acting like a foreigner. It does not mean such a show-off, but rather my preference. I use English to communicate with Khmers and foreigners, especially tourists.”

“I prefer watching movies in English. There are subtitle attachments so that I can follow up on any mispronounced words or sentences. It is helpful since I can improve my listening ability and learn a new way of life.”

At this point, interviewees were mostly interested in personal interests or affinities, getting to know the target culture and blending into it, career prospects, communication, and study opportunities.

Using what we learned from both data types, the students had two kinds of motivation: instrumental and integrative at a high level. Two main reasons might account for such results. Based on this, the first

plausible justification is that all students were predominantly determined to study English for integrative and instrumental purposes. Many scholars (e.g., Belmechri & Hummel, 1998; Dörnyei, 1994; Huang & Wen, 2005; Qin & Wen, 2002; Ushioda, 1996, as cited in Liu, 2012, p. 18) have manifested that instrumental and integrative motivation is not ‘opposite ends of a continuum.’ Liu (2012) further explained that both motivations are associated with sustaining language learning.

As Hashim et al. (2014) stated, English is a ‘*cultural capital*’ notion in Cambodian society. English is the foreign language that develops the Cambodian economy (Igawa, 2008). Hence, Cambodian students are instrumentally motivated to maximize future career enhancement, study-related needs, or communication opportunities. It endorsed a study by Hum (2018), who reported that Cambodian university students were primarily prompted to believe that English revitalized their studies and jobs.

Considerable studies have contradicted the findings of this section. A plethora of studies expressed that university students’ instrumental motivation slightly outperformed their integrative motivation (e.g., Al-Ta’ani, 2018; Choomthong & Chaichompoo, 2015; Dhakal, 2018; Kitjaroonchai & Kitjaroonchai, 2012; Liu, 2007; Tanjitanont et al., 2020; Vaezi, 2008), while the results of this showed that motivation was slightly more integratively oriented than instrumentally. A study undertaken by Degang (2010) corresponded to this result, pointing out that integrative motivation slightly outweighed instrumental motivation. Nonetheless, both motivational orientations were similar at a high level. Several works consistently echoed this result (e.g., Assavanadda & Tangkiengsirisin, 2018; Degang, 2010; Kashefian-Naeeni et al., 2018; Tanjitanont et al., 2020).

In addition to the finding thereof, another statistical treatment was employed to determine if there was any significant difference between the two sources. From Table 3, though there was slight difference in means of integrative motivation and instrumental motivation, the statistical significance proved that the difference in the two motivation was valid ( $Z=-4.775$ ,  $p=0.00$ ), from which it can be evident that the Cambodian EFL students were more integratively

motivated to learn English at the said university. This finding contradicted other previous studies (e.g., Zanghar, 2012; Choubsaz & Choubsaz, 2014), which revealed that a significant association between both variables was not confirmed.

Furthermore, this result was congruent with other studies that showed that there was a significant correlation between instrumental and integrative motivation; however, the mean score of instrumental motivation was higher than that of integrative motivation (e.g., Wang, 2010; Ghanea et al., 2011; Vaezi, 2008; Lim, 2012; Dhakal, 2018).

Table 4

*Differences between instrumental and integrative motivation on Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test*

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
	Integrative - Instrument
Z	-4.775 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test  
b. Based on negative ranks.

Both types of motivation propelled the students toward English learning. Such a result might justify the empirical finding by Gardner and MacIntyre (1991), who pointed out that instrumentally and integratively motivated learners performed better than others who were not so motivated. The samples' propensity to familiarize themselves with native speakers, the target language community, or their affinity for English-speaking people may be the main factor explaining the outcome. However, they may not be able to interact regularly with native English speakers in Cambodia. In the interviews, three informants explained that the Cambodian community could hardly directly communicate with foreigners who spoke English, except for those who could be reached only in major cities, namely Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.

Interestingly, Lim (2012), who expanded on his discussion of why Cambodian college students might be integratively motivated, might shed light on the result of this section. He believed they might possess the ideal L2 self of being proficient in English. In this respect, they could raise more awareness of the culture of English speakers in which they are interested. Dörnyei (2009) indicated that the learner's ideal L2 self is a clear and accurate depiction of whom they wish to become; moreover, it can be applied to

describe the motivational environment in a variety of learning circumstances where there is minimal or no contact with native speakers of the target language.

#### 4.2. Differences between Male and Female Students of Motivational Orientations in Studying English

The Mann-Whitney test was used statistically to see if there was any possible correlation between males and females in terms of motivation to learn English. The findings similarly reported a non-significant difference between females and males in light of two sources, including instrumental and integrative motivation. Hence, there were no differences between males and females in their integrative motivation and instrumental motivation to study English. They would exert similar effort in their English learning at the university.

Like the quantitative data, the interview data showed that both male and female interviewees are interested in learning English for their own sake and helping others. They said they were ready to learn English and improve it by doing things like English-learning tasks or classroom activities and practicing English outside of class. Other studies (like Qureshi et al., 2018; Dhakal, 2018; and Ghanea et al., 2011) that came to similar conclusions (like Qureshi et al., 2018; Dhakal, 2018; and Ghanea et al., 2011) back up this result.

People often think women have an advantage over men when learning a new language. Additionally, this commonsense assumption is borne out by research (Heinzmann, 2009). For instance, according to past studies rigorously reviewed by Henry (2011), males were less motivated to learn L2 and had less favorable attitudes regarding the target language's speakers and cultures. Henry (2011) underpinned the sociocultural aspect, which might indicate whether gender is related to motivation. One premise that led to the explanation was that both male and female Cambodian learners showed an equally strong desire to learn English for various purposes.

#### 4.3. Correlation between Motivational Orientation and Students' English Proficiency

A Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to find out if there was a link between achievement in studying English and both types of motivation.

Table 5

*Spearman correlation matrix*

	1	2	3
1. Instrument Motivation	—	.310**	-.010
2. Integrative Motivation		—	.243*
3. Students' English Scores			—

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level [2-tailed].

Table 5 suggested a weak [ $r=.243^*$ ] positive relationship between the English test scores and integrative motivation. From the findings, we may be able to conclude that while the students are more integratively motivated to learn English, their test scores tend to increase accordingly. Furthermore, the specific results in Table 5 showed that the student's English proficiency had nothing to do with instrumental motivation, no matter how good the student was at English; however, this conclusion may need to be verified with larger sample study.

Integrative motivation in L2 learners may encourage them to learn about the target language's history, culture, society, and a wide range of other topics on their own. Consequently, for those SLA learners, studying a language is a joy. L2 learning and integrative drive, according to Gardner, are significantly correlated (Wang, 2014). Samad et al.'s (2012) study confirmed this result because only integrative motivation was related to a student's proficiency. Such a result justified the claim that integrative motivation is more effective for SLA (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gass & Selinker, 2001). Nonetheless, these closer results did not align with Lukmani's (1972) study, which revealed that the test scores were significantly associated with instrumental but not integrative motivation.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to determine the motivation levels to learn English and the correlation between motivational orientations and Cambodian EFL students' English proficiency. The findings showed that the students were integratively as well as instrumentally motivated in learning English. It supported the assertion of most papers that students are both instrumentally and integratively focused when learning a foreign language. Moreover, it was

reported that integrative motivation had a minimal relationship with English proficiency. Due to the results, it is axiomatic that English classroom teachers should promote motivation, especially integrative orientation. Teachers who understand motivation are vital in stimulating students' integrative motivation.

### 5.1. Pedagogical Implications

The results present a picture that contributes to further literature on motivation, particularly in the Cambodian context. Even though integrative and instrumental dominance exists in this study, proper motivational enhancement is crucial to ensuring that both types of motivation, especially integrative motivation, will be sustained. Moreover, learners persistently indicate their appreciation of English and its cultures, and being highly proficient is crucial (Kitjaroonchai & Kitjaroonchai, 2012).

An implication is intercultural communicative competence, which cultivates integrative motivation. This means that English teachers should focus on cross-cultural teaching awareness, help students understand that learning English should be a way of life, and give students more freedom by giving them tasks related to real life. Also, authentic textbooks and other teaching materials (Jin, 2014) should be used to create a classroom community where people use the target language to learn about and share English culture. Incorporating extracurricular activities is an asset to boost learners' motivation (Denault & Guay, 2017). English debate, English-speaking competitions, student media, and English learning clubs with the involvement of native or native-alike lecturers and an English learning environment should expose and familiarize the students with hands-on experience and communication and arouse their interests. Since some samples in this study have problems mastering English vocabulary and grammar, teachers should consider teaching new words and grammar in context. Teachers should consider flipped classrooms (Afzali & Izadpanah, 2021), language games during a lesson (Yacob & Yunus, 2019), and gamified learning (Hashim et al., 2019), which were implicatively suggested by previous studies that students were both engaged and motivated to learn grammar.

## 5.2. Limitations of the Study

A few possible limitations of the research should be noted. Because this small-scale study looked at the participants learning English at one university, generalization sounds impossible and impracticable enough for other university learners. For this reason, the researcher strongly suggested that further studies should only be more conclusive in different academic contexts with the triangulation of multiple data sources, namely journal writing, field notes from classroom observations, focus group interviews, and a larger sample. Besides, the link between motivation and language proficiency empirically requires longitudinal investigation. Iwaniec & Dunn (2020) suggested that a longitudinal study should be concrete and further explain the correlation between motivation and language outcome, meaning that motivation and language proficiency can grow stronger or weaker throughout language learning.

Since research on motivation in Cambodia remains scant, subsequent studies should be undertaken considering the following suggested directions: Firstly, future research might extend this present study by examining the possible correlation between motivation and other variables, such as self-regulation, self-efficacy, language learning strategies, language learning styles, language anxiety, and the experience of learning English. Similarly, various motivational models with more advanced research techniques should be employed to investigate motivation's more comprehensive role in learning English. The study of more than one setting or institution with diverse non-English majors and groups of participants may yield more notable results and be more generalizable.

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**APPENDIX A**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Part I: Personal Information**

1. Gender: ( ) Male ( ) Female

2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years old

**Part II: Motivation Types**

**Instruction:** Please choose one alternative by ticking in each statement below according to your degree of agreement or disagreement. 5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3=neutral; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree.

**A. Instrumental Motivation**

Statements	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1. I mainly focus on using English only for class assignments and exams.					
2. I simply quote the English textbooks and do not really communicate myself when speaking or writing in class.					
3. I am interested in reading only textbooks for my university study, but not other English texts e.g., newspaper, and magazines.					
4. I am more interested in earning an English-medium university degree and a good job than learning the English language itself.					
5. I am more interested in furthering my higher education than learning the English language itself.					
6. Learning English is important for travelling abroad.					
7. Learning English is important for making me a knowledgeable and skilful person.					
8. Learning English is important for making me an educated person.					
9. Being proficient in English can lead to more success and achievements in life.					
10. Being proficient in English makes other people respect me.					

**B. Integrative Motivation**

Statements	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
11. Studying English enables me to understand English books, movies, pop music etc.					
12. Studying English enables me to better understand and appreciate the ways of life of native English speakers.					
13. Studying English enables to be able to keep in touch with foreign acquaintances.					
14. Studying English enables me to discuss interesting topics in English with people from other national backgrounds.					



15. Studying English enables me to transfer my knowledge to other people e.g. giving directions to tourists.					
16. Studying English enables me to participate freely in academic, social, and professional activities among other cultural groups.					
17. Studying English enables me to behave like native English speakers: e.g. accent, and using English expressions.					
18. Studying English enables me to appreciate English arts and literature.					
19. Studying English helps me to be an open-minded and sociable person like English-speaking people.					
20. I am determined to study English as I can to achieve maximum proficiency.					

## **APPENDIX B**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDES FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

1. What is your experience of learning English?
2. Why do you pursue a Bachelor of Education in English?
3. How do you generally think about English?
4. What are your main reasons for learning English?
5. Do you make an effort to improve your English? Why or why not?
6. What is your main goal in learning English? Why?
7. What are the things that motivate you to learn English? How?
8. What do you feel when learning English?
9. What are your best ways to learn English effectively?
10. Who are the people motivating you to study English? Explain?
11. What are some learning tools and ways to learn English?