

CAMBODIAN BUDDHIST MONKS' MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH: GRADE LEVEL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

English is the world language. Most countries in the world including Cambodia have adopted this language into their school curriculum. Thus, learning English has become an essential need for many people in Cambodia and the world. There are many factors contributing to the success of English language education. One of the most important components is motivation. There are two types of motivation including intrinsic and extrinsic ones. The present study employed a quantitative design and aimed to examine if there were statistically significant differences among Cambodian Buddhist monk students' motivation in learning English. 93 Cambodian Buddhist monk students learning at a Cambodian Buddhist primary school participated in the study. The results show that there were statistically significant differences in students' motivation from different grades. Finally, a study with a larger sample size is recommended. A qualitative study to explore students' motivation in learning English is also recommended.

Keywords: Cambodia, Buddhist Primary School, Buddhist Monk, Motivation in Learning

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language or a global language. Thus, if you know English well, it means that you can travel to different countries in the world easily without having barriers to communication. In Cambodia, English has been used as a foreign language. It has also been included in the public school curriculum from Grade 4, and it will also be included in preschool levels in the short future (MoEYS, 2015). Prior to this, English was brought into Cambodia between 1970 and 1975 during the Khmer republic or Lon Nol period (Em & Mao, 2022; Neau, 2003a). However, English and all other foreign languages were forbidden from learning and teaching at the start of the Khmer Rouge (KR) or Pol Pot regime in 1975 (Clayton, 1998). Neau (2003a) noted that the KR ended in 1979, but the study of foreign languages including English was not allowed to be learned or taught until 1989. Igawa (2008) also noted that the ban on English education at that time was due to political invasions. Instead, Cambodian students were encouraged to learn Vietnamese and Russian. These days, many English textbooks have been developed to use in government schools to promote students' motivation in learning English (see Table 1).

Table 1. Information about English Textbooks used in Cambodian Public Schools

Grades	English Textbooks	Real Practices	Publishers
Grade 1	No Official Textbook*	2 hours per week	Not available
Grade 2	No Official Textbook*	2 hours per week	Not available
Grade 3	No Official Textbook*	2 hours per week	Not available
Grade 4	English Grade 4**	2 hours per week	MoEYS

Grade 5	English Grade 5**	2 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 6	English Grade 6**	2 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 7	English Grade 7, English is Fun Book 1, English is Fun Book 2	4 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 8	English Grade 8, English is Fun Book 3, English is Fun Book 4	4 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 9	English Grade 9, English is Fun Book 5, English is Fun Book 6	4 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 10	English Grade 10	4 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 11	English For Cambodia Book Five	2 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 12	English For Cambodia Book Six	2 hours per week	MoEYS

Source: Keo, Yoeurn, Som, et al., 2022 (2022, p. 109).

*Most teachers in government schools do not teach their students English at all because most of them are old and do not know English.

**There is no specialized teacher of English for primary school. Thus, young teachers thought to know English are often selected to teach students at these grade levels.

In Cambodia, the English score in the national exams (Grades 9 and 12) is only a surplus. That means if students receive fewer than 26 points, their scores are equal to zero. However, if they receive 26 or more points, they can receive additional points to add to other subjects. For Cambodian national exams, the overall English score is 50. As previously said, the scores from 1 to 25 are equivalent to zero, so if the students wish to receive surplus scores, they must obtain at least 26 points. As a result of this form of score-giving, some students become disheartened and lose motivation, which is one of the key elements in the success of learning the English language.

The key to a successful learning process is motivation, and it is the same for English language learning. Some experts have specific definitions of motivation. Students' motivation is seen to be a key factor in their success in learning English (Dörnyei, 2019; Ehsan et al., 2019). Another definition of motivation is the direction of conduct or the factors that lead someone to wish to repeat one activity or another. Additionally, motivation and academic success as measured by evaluation point averages are strongly connected from elementary school through college (Locke & Schattke, 2019).

It can be seen from the previous description as a whole that motivation is the fusion of effort and desire, justifying people's behaviors, wants, and desires to achieve the directions of learning toward an aim (Fry, 2003). Motivation is the term for the causes that underpin willingness and volition of behavior. Motivation is also a collection of closely connected ideas, perceptions, values, interests, and behaviors (Ryan & Deci, 2006). However, by receiving an incentive, students will be enthused about learning and inspired to study English well. Teachers may assist students to become more motivated by making certain adjustments after becoming aware of the importance of motivation in students' language acquisition (Wu & Wu, 2008).

Teachers should obtain an understanding of the harmonies and tensions that predominate in the current educational theory via the study of learning theories and their historical evolution (Achinstein, 2002). Unfortunately, students in Cambodia still lack the drive to a large extent because they occasionally lack confidence. It happens because, occasionally, teachers do not understand how their students feel about English. Therefore, it is helpful to inform the readers, especially the teachers, of how strong the students' motivation is and what their incentive is. As

Boekaerts (1997) noted because effective learning is exceedingly difficult for students to achieve without a desire to study. It might be claimed that teachers need to be aware of how important it is to inspire students and increase their inspiration.

Motivation is essential for learning since, without it, it will be impossible to put learning activities into practice. The level of the student’s learning efforts needs to be determined by their motivation. The reward is one of the elements that affect students' motivation. Depending on the kind of appreciation offered and the conditions in which it is delivered, the function of reward may either increase or decrease motivation. Teachers should make an effort to provide their students with more autonomy or control over their education. Teachers must also create a learning environment that respects connection, objective context, and outside evaluation (Dörnyei, 2019).

In keeping with the reasoning provided above, we are aware that motivation is seen as a success while learning a new language in a classroom setting. Teachers can determine their students' interests by learning about their motivation. Therefore, it is crucial that this study be taken into consideration by those who are involved in English language instruction (see Em, 2019; Em, 2022).

As mentioned earlier in this article, there are two types of motivation: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. As Schneider (2012) noted, intrinsic motivation means the desire that someone wants to do something without being told or forced, while extrinsic motivation is the drive that urges someone to do something to reach the goals.

The current study aimed to examine if there were statistically significant differences among the Buddhist monk students studying in Grades 4, 5, and 6 at a Buddhist primary school in Cambodia. There have been some studies about English education in Cambodia. Those studies have been conducted by Cambodian and foreign authors regarding the challenges of English language learning and teaching, the macro skills, vocabulary, grammar, and motivation in learning English. We have chosen 16 studies to put in Table 2 as the literature review of this study.

Table 2. Selected Studies of English Education in Cambodia

Authors	Titles	Publishers
(Neau, 2002)	Teaching English in Cambodian Secondary Schools: With a Special Focus on Teachers' Preferences Towards the Improvement of Their Professional Careers in Language Teaching.	Bulletin, Graduate School of Education, Hiroshima University
(Neau, 2003a)	The Teaching of Foreign Languages in Cambodia: A Historical Perspective	Language, Culture and Curriculum
(Neau, 2003b)	Towards the Improvement of ELT in Cambodian Secondary Schools: Practical Concepts Suggested by Cambodian Teachers of English.	International Journal of Curriculum Development and Practice
(Neau, 2004)	Ongoing Professional Development for In-Service Cambodian Teachers of English in Secondary Schools: Contemporary Issues, Needs, and Future Directions	(Doctoral Dissertation, 広島大学).

(Clayton, 2008)	The Problem of ‘Choice’ and the Construction of the Demand for English in Cambodia	Language Policy
(Igawa, 2008)	English Language and Its Education in Cambodia, a Country in Transition	Shitennoji University Bulletin
(Moore & Bounchan, 2010)	English in Cambodia: Changes and Challenges	World Englishes
(Hashim et al., 2014)	English in Higher Education in Cambodia	World Englishes
(Heng, 2017)	Cambodian EFL University Students’ Learning Strategies and Motivation to Improve Their English Language Speaking Skills: A Qualitative Study	Journal of Studies in the English Language
(Soeung et al., 2019)	The Relationship Between Private Tutoring and English Achievement: A Case of Four Cambodian High Schools	The University of Cambodia Occasional Paper Series
(Houn & Em, 2022)	Common Factors Affecting Grade-12 Students’ Speaking Fluency: A Survey of Cambodian High School Students.	Jurnal As-Salam
(Em & Nun, 2022a)	Cambodian Grade-12 Students’ Perceptions of Public English Textbook and Exam Papers	PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)
(Em & Nun, 2022b)	Cambodian high school students’ motivation in learning English: One-way ANOVA analysis	Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Language Teaching (JLLLT)
(Em, 2022)	Challenges of English Language Learning and Teaching in Cambodia: A Case Study of Kith Meng Brasat High School	Cambodian Journal of Educational Research
(Sor et al., 2022)	Cambodian High School Students’ Motivation Toward Learning English	PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)
(Keo, Yoeurn, et al., 2022)	Cambodian Buddhist Monk Students’ Motivation in Learning English: The Case of Hun Neng Buddhist Primary School, Kampong Cham Town	Jurnal As-Salam
(Em et al., 2022)	Cambodian students’ motivation in learning the English language: A small-scale survey at a private high school in Phnom Penh	Journal of Research on English and Language Learning (J-REaLL)
(Bon, 2022)	Developing Cambodian secondary school students’ intercultural competence: Strategies and challenges	Issues in Educational Research
(Bon et al., 2022)	Classroom activities and student motivation in learning an English subject: A case study at a public secondary school in Cambodia	ELE Reviews: English Language Education Reviews

In the above table, we have tried to select some studies that are relevant to English education and motivation in learning English in the Cambodian context. We have also listed those articles based on the years of their publications. That means the older articles were put first. Notably, there are still some more articles regarding English education and motivation in learning

English in the Cambodian context, but we found that the articles in the table can mix up the ingredients just now.

METHOD

The present study is a part of a bigger study. The study employed a quantitative design. The participants were selected randomly from a Buddhist primary school in Cambodia. 93 Buddhist monk students attended the study voluntarily. All the participants were also informed that they could withdraw themselves from the study at any time if they found that the study was against their privacy or was not confidential.

One-way ANOVA and Bonferroni analyses were considered in the present study. The focus was to examine if there were statistically significant differences among the students learning in Grades 4, 5, and 6 at the target school.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the results of the study from the data analyses. The demographic information of participants is also presented here.

Demographic Information

Table 3. Demographic information (N = 93)

Demographics	Values	N	Percentage (%)
Genders	Male	93	100
Ages	11-15	8	8.60
	16-20	85	91.40
Grades	Grade 4	31	33.30
	Grade 5	32	43.40
	Grade 6	30	32.30

Note: See also (Keo, Yoeurn, et al., 2022; Keo, Yoeurn, Som, et al., 2022).

Based on Table 3 above, there were 93 Buddhist monk students participated in the study. All of them were males, and their ages were between 11 and 15 years old. They were the students in Grades 4, 5, and 6 at a Buddhist primary school.

Motivation Items

Table 4. Intrinsic Motivation Items

No.	Intrinsic Motivation Items	M	SD	Min	Max
1.	I learn English because I like it.	4.06	.65	2.00	5.00
2.	I learn English because I enjoy it.	3.96	.80	1.00	5.00
3.	I learn English because I feel happy when I learn it.	3.88	.88	2.00	5.00
4.	I learn English because I like learning about people’s cultures.	3.75	.89	1.00	5.00

5.	I learn English because I like making more friends.	3.91	.94	1.00	5.00
6.	I learn English because I like listening to English songs.	3.82	.85	2.00	5.00
7.	I learn English because I feel interested in it.	3.96	.87	1.00	5.00
8.	I learn English because I feel that the language is fun.	3.76	.93	1.00	5.00
9.	I learn English because I like reading texts in English.	3.74	.91	2.00	5.00
10.	I learn English because I like keeping in touch with foreign friends.	3.87	.81	2.00	5.00
11.	Overall	3.84	.52	2.50	5.00

Note: See also (Keo, Yoeurn, et al., 2022; Keo, Yoeurn, Som, et al., 2022). M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation.

As revealed in Table 4, the Buddhist monk students reported high motivation in all items (1-10), and the sum of all items shows that the monk students had high intrinsic motivation toward learning English as a foreign language (M = 3.8, SD = .52). These results mean that the participants in the studied context wanted to study English more than normal without being forced.

Table 5. Extrinsic Motivation Items

No.	Extrinsic Motivation Items	M	SD	Min	Max
1.	I learn English because I need it for my study.	4.27	.75	2.00	5.00
2.	I learn English because I need admiration from others.	3.59	.94	2.00	5.00
3.	I learn English because I need to search for documents.	3.84	.85	2.00	5.00
4.	I learn English because I need to use it in my future career.	4.16	.81	2.00	5.00
5.	I learn English because I need to become a knowledgeable person.	4.35	.63	2.00	5.00
6.	I learn English because my school needs me to learn.	3.82	.81	2.00	5.00
7.	I learn English because I need to win speaking competitions.	3.76	.92	2.00	5.00
8.	I learn English because I want to appear more educated.	3.93	.88	2.00	5.00
9.	I learn English because I want to get a good job.	4.46	.61	3.00	5.00
10.	I learn English because I want to pass the exam.	4.41	.66	3.00	5.00
11.	Overall	4.03	.50	2.50	5.00

Note: See also (Keo, Yoeurn, et al., 2022; Keo, Yoeurn, Som, et al., 2022).

As shown in Table 5, the Buddhist monk students reported the highest motivation in items 1, 5, 9, and 10. The monk students also reported high motivation in items 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8. Overall, the sum of all items shows that the monk students had high extrinsic motivation toward learning English as a foreign language (M = 4.03, SD = .50). The results mean that the participants in the studied context needed to study English to fulfill their outside goals or to get the rewards.

Inferential Statistics Analysis Results

Table 6. One-Way ANOVA Analysis of Motivation

Motivation Types	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
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Intrinsic motivation	Between Groups	3.149	2	1.574	6.389	.003
	Within Groups	22.178	90	.246		
	Total	25.326	92			
Extrinsic motivation	Between Groups	3.961	2	1.981	9.086	.000
	Within Groups	19.619	90	.218		
	Total	23.581	92			
Overall	Between Groups	3.543	2	1.772	9.112	.000
	Within Groups	17.498	90	.194		
	Total	21.041	92			

As revealed in Table 6, there were significant differences in the intrinsic motivation variable (Sig = .003). There were also significant differences in extrinsic motivation (Sig = 000). Overall, there were also significant differences when combining the two types of motivation (Sig = 000). The results mean the students from the three grades had different levels of motivation for learning English.

Table 7. Multiple Comparisons Using Bonferroni Analysis

Dependent Variable	(I) Grades	(J) Grades	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Intrinsic motivation	4	5	-.10907	.12510	1.000	-.4143	.1961
		6	.32634*	.12713	.036	.0162	.6365
	5	4	.10907	.12510	1.000	-.1961	.4143
		6	.43542*	.12615	.003	.1277	.7432
	6	4	-.32634*	.12713	.036	-.6365	-.0162
		5	-.43542*	.12615	.003	-.7432	-.1277
Extrinsic motivation	4	5	-.13095	.11766	.806	-.4180	.1561
		6	.35968*	.11958	.010	.0680	.6514
	5	4	.13095	.11766	.806	-.1561	.4180
		6	.49063*	.11865	.000	.2012	.7801
	6	4	-.35968*	.11958	.010	-.6514	-.0680
		5	-.49063*	.11865	.000	-.7801	-.2012
Overall	4	5	-.12001	.11112	.849	-.3911	.1511
		6	.34301*	.11293	.009	.0675	.6185
	5	4	.12001	.11112	.849	-.1511	.3911
		6	.46302*	.11206	.000	.1897	.7364
	6	4	-.34301*	.11293	.009	-.6185	-.0675
		5	-.46302*	.11206	.000	-.7364	-.1897

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As shown in Table 7, the students in Grade 6 were more intrinsically motivated toward learning English than the students in Grade 5. The students in Grade 6 were also more intrinsically motivated toward learning English than the students in Grade 4, and the students in Grade 5 were more intrinsically motivated toward learning English than the students in Grade 4. These results mean that the students in Grade 4 were the least intrinsically motivated toward learning English, while the students in Grade 6 were the most intrinsically motivated.

The students in Grade 6 were more extrinsically motivated toward learning English than the students in Grade 5. The students in Grade 6 were also more extrinsically motivated toward learning English than the students in Grade 4, and the students in Grade 5 were more extrinsically motivated toward learning English than the students in Grade 4. These results mean that the students in Grade 4 were the least extrinsically motivated toward learning English, while the students in Grade 6 were the most extrinsically motivated.

Overall, the students in Grade 6 were more motivated toward learning English than the students in Grade 5. The students in Grade 6 were also more motivated toward learning English than the students in Grade 4, and the students in Grade 5 were more motivated toward learning English than the students in Grade 4. These results mean that the students in Grade 4 were the least motivated toward learning English, while the students in Grade 6 were the most motivated.

Discussion

The current study was conducted at a Buddhist primary school in Kampong Cham town, Cambodia. There were 93 Buddhist monk students participated in the study. They were from Grades 4, 5, and 6. One-way ANOVA and Bonferroni Analyses were utilized during the data analysis process to examine the statistically significant differences among the participants. As a result, there were statistically significant differences among them. The students in Grade 6 were reported as the most motivated in learning English. They were the most intrinsically, extrinsically, and overall motivated, while the students in Grade 4 were the least in all types of motivation including the overall.

The comparison of the current study with the previous studies is not necessary because there has existed no kind of current analysis in the Cambodian context. Thus, this type of data analysis in terms of motivation in learning English is the first one in the Cambodian context, and it paves the way for future studies using Advanced Statistics analysis.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study conducted with 93 Cambodian Buddhist monk students in a Buddhist primary found that the students in Grade 6 were the most motivated toward learning English as a foreign language. The students in Grade 4 were reported as the least motivated in all types of motivation, while the students in Grade 5 stand between those in Grades 4 and 6. As presented in the results, some actions to help those in Grade 4 to improve their motivation in learning English are necessary. Thus, this study also has the following recommendations.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) of the Kingdom of Cambodia should consider the results of the study. There has been no English textbook that helps Buddhist monk students to learn English better. The instructors who teach those students only take the books they want to teach their students. Therefore, making good textbooks for them is essential. After having their textbooks, the students will be more motivated toward learning English, and their learning achievement will be improved (see Em & Nun, 2022a). Besides, MoEYS should include English as a compulsory subject for national exams, not a subject that only serves to earn a surplus anymore. This point benefits all the students, not only the Buddhist monk students. Additionally, Em (2021a) noted that MoEYS is the most important organization looking for funds to upgrade teachers' living standards so that they can turn their focus

completely on students' learning activities, students' motivation in learning, and students' academic achievement.

Education institution is said to be one of the most important characters in improving students' motivation in learning English. Therefore, all educational institutions should encourage students to learn English directly or indirectly. The school leaders can have a date to meet all the students and give some types of awards to those who have done well with their studies, or they can encourage teachers who have worked well and brought fruitful results to the institutions so that those teachers, consequently, help their students to learn well, too. Moreover, Em (2021b) noted that school principals can make an effort to most of the important characters in society, like students' parents or the community chiefs, to inform them to help encourage their children to learn.

The teacher is the most powerful and essential character in the classroom. They can encourage their students to learn English every time they want. Besides, they can conduct action research in their classroom to solve in-hand problems and to improve their students' learning motivation toward great success. The teachers also need to develop their professional competencies through different means to learn new teaching techniques and apply those techniques to their students (see Em et al., 2021).

The limitation of all studies is the norm. The present study is not different from the present studies. The participants in the study were still limited. There were only 93 participants attended the study, and the study was conducted in only one place. Thus, a study with a larger sample size at other educational institutions is recommended. A qualitative study to explore students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language is also recommended.

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