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(IJEPC)**[www.ijepr.com](http://www.ijepr.com)**FACTORS INFLUENCING ENGLISH LISTENING  
COMPETENCY: A CASE STUDY OF ESL LEARNERS AT  
O'AMBEL HIGH SCHOOL, BANTEAY MEANCHEY,  
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**Abstract:**

In language learning, there are four macro skills to learn and improve time by time and little by little, on which learners have to acquire. Listening skills play a crucial role in learning a foreign language in general, particularly English language learning, in addition to communication. However, many English learners find listening skills the most difficult in their language-learning journey. Therefore, this paper is conducted to investigate the listening competency of English learners at O'Ambel High School in Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia and to identify the most significant factors affecting their English listening competency. Listening Test and Structured Questionnaires were used to collect the data from 133 students in grade 10 at O'Ambel High School. Multi Linear Regression, T-test, and Descriptive Statistics were used to interpret the data collected. Based on the findings by analysing Multi Linear Regression, the three most significant factors influencing their English listening competency were *Prior Knowledge*, *Accent and Pronunciation of Native Speaker* and *Private Class*. Although Gender was insignificant, the study revealed that the female students got better test scores than the male students.

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Listening; Influencing Factors; English; Cambodia

**Introduction**

In language learning, there are four macro skills to learn and improve time by time and little by little, which learners have to acquire. It seems a big struggle for those who are not natives to gain a new language (L2). In particular, listening is essential in learning a foreign language because it provides input to the learners and plays a crucial role in learners' language knowledge development (Rost, 1994). Pronunciation might be one of the hardest things in learning L2. Every language might have its sound system and a way to pronounce and read words, but sometimes, some languages might have a similar sound system. It would be a big deal that second language learners put effort into learning its sound system, which is different from their language. They should practice at all times if they wish their L2 to be usable. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) insisted that teachers should familiarize their students with the pronunciation rules to assist them hear the different forms of rapid natural speech, allowing them to imitate native speakers' pronunciation. In addition, grammar or structure could be another challenge for L2 learners. For instance, Cambodian learners of English as a second language would face grammatical problems in writing, discourse, or writing system of the L2 itself, which are new for them; however, some grammar is similar to their language, such as some parts of speech of the L2 and their native language. Improving skills time-by-time and bit-by-bit would be a big challenge, or it could be boring for L2 learners if they are not patient enough. Learning the four macro skills of a second language would be complex, and the learners need to practice daily. Patience and struggle are the key sources of successful L2 learners.

Great effort is required in learning a second language (L2) or even teaching, and most for listening skills. "A second language is a language that a person use can speak which is not the first language they learnt naturally as a child.", according to McIntosh (2014). Therefore, they need to overcome every single obstacle in learning to acquire L2 listening skills, which is not as easy as acquiring their mother tongue listening skill. Considering L2 as a passport or for jobs, an international language like French, German, Spanish, or English is chosen as a second language. Edrenius (2018) claimed that listening in English is considered the most challenging skill in the learning journey, compared to reading and writing skills. Moreover, Wilson (1998) expressed that the difficulties regarding listening skills are categorized into four groups: characteristics of the message, the delivery, the listener, and the environment (Wilson, 1998). Achieving a good level of listening would be challenging for English learners.

Therefore, this study is (1) To investigate the English listening competency of grade 10 students at O'Ambel High School, Banteay Meanchey Province and (2) To identify the main factors affecting their listening competency.

## Literature Review

### *Frequency of Practice*

Learning a foreign language, particularly English, requires a lot of practice to be good at the four macro skills reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Specifically listening skills, the more students practice, the better their listening level is. In this sense, students have a variety of ways and techniques to practice their listening skills in English.

Live listening is a popular way of certifying clear communication, where the teacher and/or visitors to the class speak to the students. This way of interaction has a genuine benefit that allows students to practice listening skills through face-to-face interaction. Four live listening forms: reading aloud, story-telling, interviews, and conversation (Harmer, 2007).

Students and teachers might not consider teacher talk as a way to practice listening skills. Students themselves might not know even if they are practising listening skills during the class when their teacher talks; however, there are no marks or tasks assigned. It is important for learners trying to get used to the sounds of the new language (Wilson, 1998). Buck (2001) mentioned about speech rate that all L2 learners, perhaps, have experienced listening to something and not quite understanding due to the speed fast, and they might feel they could have understood it if the speed of the speech is rather slower. Buck (2001) revealed that the faster the speech, the more difficult it is to comprehend.

### *Private Class*

Private class refers to the class outside of state hours. In the context of Banteay Meanchey Province, particularly in Serei Saophoan Municipality, students from medium-income or high-income families can attend extra classes at private language centres or schools. However, a few non-profit organizations are providing extra classes free of charge to children from disadvantaged families. For instance, AEC-Foyer Lataste, a non-profit organization based in Serei Saophoan, runs a tutoring centre, where extra classes, including English, are offered free of charge to around 4 00 disadvantaged children (AEC-Foyer Lataste, 2024), while Children of the Mekong (Enfant du Mékong), another non-profit organization sponsoring around 2 600 children from vulnerable families to access education, also runs education centre where private classes, including English, are provided for free (Children of the Mekong, 2024). Those students can grab the opportunity to take English extra hours.

In the general context, not being supported by non-profit organizations, low-income families cannot afford payments for their children to study English classes at a private language school. On the other hand, medium- or high-income families can send their children to a private language centre, so their children can practice more in learning English than those who are not. Regardless of the socio-economic of the family, private classes could be a key factor affecting the students' competency or performance in learning English. Research by Ha & Harpham (2005) demonstrated that higher-income and more educated families in urban areas spend more on private tutoring classes if compared to other families in more remote areas. The same research revealed that tutoring classes or extra classes are believed to enhance students' performance because the students have more opportunities to practice and get familiar with the language.

Another study by Dang (2007) on the determinants and impact of private tutoring classes in Vietnam demonstrated a significant impact on a student's academic performance, but the effects are more for lower secondary school students. On the contrary, research on the effect

of pupil factor on Mathematics achievement in urban primary schools by Chhinh (2003) showed that extra class found no significant correlation with the achievement of the students in urban primary schools in Cambodia that there was no different mean score among the students taking private class and those who did not.

### **Gender**

Gender can be one of the main factors affecting students' achievement regardless of previous research. Tannen (2001) stated that men and women have very distinct communication styles that influence how they listen. The result of a research study by Esther & Akintemi (2014) revealed gender was one of the main factors among others affecting listening skills. Similarly, another research illustrated that girls performed better than boys in language learning (Soeung et al. 2012).

### **Prior Knowledge**

Wilson (1998) mentioned that listening is difficult for many reasons. While determining the difficulties, the researchers have tended to use two models to indicate the process of listening: **bottom-up** and **top-down**. The bottom-up model expresses the utilization of prior knowledge to make inferences about the content. The top-down model is based on the listener; much of the comprehension depends on what appears in the mind before the listening has begun, but the bottom-up approach relies on the sounds heard (Wilson, 1998).

Research was conducted by Sadighi & Zare (2006) with two groups of students: an experimental group and a control group, by testing a 50-item TOEFL listening comprehension test. Two consecutive sessions included five topics: *student housing, the Ice Age, old architecture, coffee drinkers and photography* were discussed by the experimental group. Before coming to the class, the students were asked to make themselves ready. After, the first session was divided into two forty-five-minute halves and two topics: *students' housing and coffee drinkers*. The second session was divided into three thirty-minute parts to discuss the three topics: *the Ice Age, old architecture, and photography*. Through the discussion, the information was elicited from the students. After the end of each discussion, the researcher summed up the topic and gave adequate information on the basic materials in the listening test. The third session was devoted to the test. Plus, the control group test was held simultaneously. The result showed that the experiential group, whose two consecutive sessions were given by the researcher, had a better performance on the listening comprehension test as compared with the control group (Sadighi & Zare, 2006). This study indicated that the group of students, who had prior knowledge, had a better result than those whose prior knowledge was not in mind.

According to the journal article, Stevens (1980) claimed that background knowledge is seen as what someone already knows about a subject and Biemans & Simons (1996) indicated that all learners have when entering a learning environment, that is significant relevant for gaining new knowledge.

### **Teaching Techniques**

Listening is a highly-complex solving activity in which listeners interact with a speaker to construct meaning, within the context of their experiences and knowledge (Pourhosein Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). When students are made aware of the factors that affect listening, the levels of listening, and the components of the listening process, they are more likely to recognize their listening abilities and engage in activities that prepare them to be effective listeners. Karakas (2023) stated that listening activities try to prevent failure so that they can

support the learner's interpretation of the text. Listening activities are usually subcategorized as pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities.

### ***Listening Materials***

Teaching materials are important to enhance students' competency in any subject, particularly teaching English listening skills. They are also crucial for teachers in their teaching process. It is a fact that in teaching listening teachers might be able to have different kinds in their teaching hour(s). According to research by Safranji (2015) on students in Serbia found that many students believe that movies can have some advantages in learning to listen. Moreover, the students also believed that they could obtain more information with both audio and visual channels than just one single channel. Furthermore, the research precisely showed that using films is a vital effective way for students to advance their listening ability and get better insight into English culture, a majority among them enhanced listening competency and responded with favourable attitudes towards watching films (Safranji, 2015).

### ***Vocabulary Mastery***

In listening exercises, knowing vocabulary in context before listening track can be useful for students to get higher scores. If so, it would be a factor that could affect the listening achievement of the students.

Buck (2001) considered listening comprehension to be a process of recognizing the sounds of the language. He recommended that the elements used to measure listening comprehension are segmental phonemes, stress, intonation, grammatical structure and vocabulary (Buck, 2001).

### ***Accent and Pronunciation of Native Speaker***

Accent and pronunciation of speakers even native might be one of the main difficulties that students face in listening to English. Different speakers might have different accents and pronunciations influenced by their teachers or the people surrounding them. Even a native English speaker could have a different accent and pronunciation, too.

In speaking, it is simple that different groups of people pronounce words in characteristic ways, and a person has an accent. The listener will encounter words pronounced in a non-standard manner when listening to speakers with unfamiliar accents. The most common accents seem to connect with geography. Buck (2001) revealed that Australians pronounce English as part of Americans. Wilson (1998) claimed that it is important for the students to get used to the sound of a new language.

Listening has always played a vital role in communication Lynch & Mendelsohn (2013) revealed time spent on communicating, listening is up to 40%-50%, speaking 25%-30%, reading 11-16%, and writing about 9% (Abbas & Mohammad, 2011). Anderson and Lynch (1998) stated that understanding is not something that happens due to what a speaker says: the listener has an important part to work in the process, by activating lots of kinds of knowledge, and by applying what he knows to what he hears and trying to understand what the speaker means (Anderson & Lynch, 1988).

### ***Research Methods***

The researchers used a random sampling method to select 133 samples from 427 among grade 10 students at O'Ambel High School. The researchers utilized a listening test to determine students' English listening competency and structured questionnaires to study possible factors affecting their listening competency.



### Data Collection

The research was conducted at O'Ambel High School, located in Sangkat O'Ambel, Serei Saophoan Municipality, Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia. The students choosing English as a second language were classified into ten different classes: class 10 "A", class 10 "B", class 10 "C", class 10 "D", class 10 "E", class 10 "F", class 10 "G", class 10 "H", class 10 "I", and class 10 "J". There was an average of 42 students (23 females) in each class. The researchers used a random sampling method to select 133 samples from 5 amongst 10 classes of grade 10 students to conduct the research – Class 10 "C": 23 participants, Class 10 "D": 22 participants, Class 10 "G": 18 participants, Class 10 "H": 28 participants, and Class 10 "J": 42 participants.

*Listening Test* by Lisa & Jack (2004) was distributed to each participant to measure their English listening competency. The listening test audio was played twice. To avoid any inconvenience or confusion, the researchers read the instructions of the listening test and translated them into Khmer. After reading the instructions, the participants were allowed thirty seconds to read the information about the listening.

*Structured Questionnaires* were distributed to every participant to survey the possible factors affecting their English listening competency, after the listening test. The questionnaire was translated into Khmer, and together with the participants, the researchers read one by one question with the explanation of technical words in Khmer when required.

### Data Analysis

SPSS Version 23 for Windows was used to analyse the data collected by the researchers. Multi Linear Regression, T-test, and Descriptive Statistics were used to interpret the data collected. Multi-Linear Regression was used to analyse the factors affecting English listening competency, whose dependent variable was the listening test, and the independent variables were the eight possible factors as Gender, Private Class, Frequency of Practice, Accent and Pronunciation of Native Speaker, Vocabulary Mastery, Listening Materials, Teaching Techniques and Prior Knowledge. Before putting all the variables into the SPSS to generate the results, the average score of each variable is calculated, except gender and private class, because these are dichotomous variables.

### Results

With a sample size of  $n=133$ , Listening Test Scores have a mean score of 15.20 with a standard deviation of 5.37 while Private Class shows a mean score of 0.69 with a standard deviation of 0.46 as shown in Table 1 below. With the same sample size ( $n=133$ ), Accent and Pronunciation of Native Speaker have a mean score of 2.19 with a standard deviation of 0.73, while Prior Knowledge have a mean score of 3.70 with a standard deviation of 0.74.

The Listening Test contains 3 units; each unit was divided into 2 sections. Therefore, there were 6 sections in the listening test. The test contents comprised different topics such as weekend habits, phone calling to reserve a taxi, an interview about the taxi service in different cities in the U.S., and renting vehicles and a car. It contained different listening skills such as listening comprehension, basic information writing, true or false statements, and matching phrases.

**Table 1 – Descriptive Statistics of Variables**

Variable	Definitions	N	Mean	Std.
Total_Score	Total of Listening Test Scores	133	15.203	5.37215
Sex	Gender	133	1.6541	0.47745
Private_Class	Private Class	133	0.6992	0.46032
FP_Score	Frequency of Practice	133	3.4793	0.41291
APNS_Score	Accent and Pronunciation of Native Speaker	133	2.193	0.73192
VM_Score	Vocabulary Mastery	133	2.0752	0.84946
LM_Score	Listening Materials	133	2.3113	0.60923
TT_Score	Teaching Techniques	133	2.7393	0.98417
PK_Score	Prior Knowledge	133	3.703	0.7412

Table 2 shows that Unit 1 Section 1's score ranges from 0 to 5 and its mean score is 1.87 with a standard deviation of 1.14. It is the earliest part of the listening test, whose elementary listening for comprehension skill should be used to choose the correct answer among 3 multiple choices. However, the students could just reach a satisfactory level in this section from their knowledge.

**Table 2 - Descriptive Statistics of Listening Test Score by Section**

Variables	Definitions	N	Mean	Std.	Min.	Max.
Sex	Gender	133	1.6541	0.47745	1	2
U1S1	Unit 1 Section 1	133	1.8722	1.14424	0	5
U1S2	Unit 1 Section 2	133	3.5263	1.27076	0	5
U2S1	Unit 2 Section 1	133	0.7293	1.00851	0	4
U2S2	Unit 2 Section 2	133	2.7293	1.51321	0	5
U3S1	Unit 3 Section 1	133	2.7895	1.91901	0	5
U3S2	Unit 3 Section 2	133	3.5564	1.25779	1	5
Total_Score		133	15.203	5.37215	5	28

Table 3 shows the details of the score gained from Unit 1 Section 1 to Unit 3 Section 2. According to this table, about 50 students get 1 or 2 points for Unit 1 Section 1; meanwhile, there is a dramatic decline from a 3 to 5 score, meaning about 20 students get a 3 score and several students get a full score. Moreover, about 10 students get 0 points in this section.

Unit 1 Section 2 (as illustrated in Table 3) shows that the score ranging from 0 to 5 with a mean score of 3.52 and with a standard deviation of 1.27. In this section, the elementary level of listening for comprehension should be used to choose a true or false statement correctly. It reveals that more than 20 students get scores from 2 to 3; while more than 40 students significantly get 4 scores in this section. Interestingly, it is evident that more than 30 students get full scores in this section. Furthermore, just less than 5 students get a 0 score or 1 score in this section. More, Unit 2 Section 1 ranging from 0 to 4 with a mean score of 0.73, which is the lowest mean score among 6 sections in 3 Unit tests, and with a standard deviation of 1.00. This section's test, listening for number completion, seems the most difficult exercise among other sections. It is clear that more than 70 students get 0 scores in this section; however, about 40 students get only 1 point. Plus, less than 10 students get 2 scores or 3 scores; significantly, just several students get 4 scores, which is the maximum score of this section. Additionally, Unit 2 Section 2 shows that the mean score is 2.72 and the standard deviation of 1.51. This section of the unit test seems easier than the last section of the unit 2 test in which the students

have to listen and tick the correct answers: Good, Okay, Not Good about the taxi service in different cities in the U.S. by a TV reporter. This is evident that a continuous decline in the number of students from about 30 students to 20 students get scores between 2 and 5; whereas, more than 20 students get 1 point and 10 students get the lowest score of 0. Furthermore, Unit 3 Section 1, listening to match the correct answer, shows that the mean score of the students is 2.78 with a standard deviation of 1.91. It shows that most of the students get full scores; while continuously decreasing in number between 30 and 20 students with scores between 1 and 3. Less than 20 students get 0 scores in this section.

Unit 3 Section 2 (as shown in Table 3), listening for comprehension to choose a true or false statement, ranging from 1 to 5 scores with a mean score of 3.55, the highest mean score of the complete test, with a standard deviation of 1.25. More or less than 40 students get 3 or 4 scores in this section, yet less than 30 students get 4 scores. 10 students get 1 score and less than 20 students get 2 scores in this section. Most significantly, none of the students get 0 scores in this section; while there are several or some students who get 0 scores in the 5 other sections of the test.

In general, the conclusion could be drawn that the result of the listening test of the students was not very good, especially in the Unit 2 Section 1 Test, which might be considered the hardest exercise in the overall test.

**Table 3 - Detailed Scores by Section**

Level of Test	U1S1		U1S2		U2S1		U2S2		U3S1		U3S2	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
0	10	7.5	3	2.3	73	54.9	10	7.5	19	14.3	0	0
1	46	34.6	5	3.8	38	28.6	21	15.8	25	18.8	10	7.5
2	44	33.1	23	17.3	9	6.8	30	22.6	21	15.8	16	12
3	21	15.8	24	18	11	8.3	27	20.3	18	13.5	39	29.3
4	8	6	44	33.1	2	1.5	24	18	0	0	26	19.5
5	4	3	34	25.6	0	0	21	15.8	50	37.6	42	31.6
Total	133	100	133	100	133	100	133	100	133	100	133	100

Table 4-5 shows the ANOVA of the analysis to see if the whole study is significant or not to predict the outcome variable. If the ANOVA here shows insignificant, it would be a waste of time to look at the other analysis in the study. However, according to the ANOVA here, the study here is significant. Consequently, the study is statistically significant  $F(8, 124) = 75.537$ ;  $p < .001$ . The result of this study demonstrates the factors affecting listening competency of grade 10 students of O'Ambel High School. To interpret the results of regression, three mechanisms for data reading were considered. First of all, to examine how much each factor contributed to listening test scores, the interpretation is based on the proportion of  $R^2$  which is explained by the model. In the statistical language, proportion represents the number of variances. Secondly, the interpretation went further to examine the values of standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ ) for weighing the order of importance that each significant predictor variable affected the test scores. Finally, the unstandardized coefficient ( $\beta$ ) was used to predict the relationship between the significant predictor variables and the outcome variable (Listening Test Scores).



**Table 4 - Regression Coefficients of Factors Affecting Listening Competency**

Variables	Definitions	Coef.	T-value	P>T
(Constant)	Constant		0.890	0.375
Sex	Gender	.113NS	1.363	0.176
Private_Class	Private Class	.319***	3.848	0.000
FP_Score	Frequency of Practice	.034NS	0.417	0.677
APNS_Score	Accent and Pronunciation of Native Speaker	.185*	2.277	0.025
VM_Score	Vocabulary Mastery	.029NS	0.348	0.728
LM_Score	Listening Materials	-.169NS	-1.952	0.053
TT_Score	Teaching Techniques	.025NS	0.300	0.765
PK_Score	Prior Knowledge	.178*	2.142	0.034
(Constant)	Constant		0.890	0.375
No.of obs.		133		
R-squared		0.263		
Adj R-squared		0.21567261		

Multi Linear Regression was conducted with the main purpose of knowing the variance which can be used to explain the outcome variable. Table 4-5 shows the estimation of the three variables: Private Class, Accent and Pronunciation of Native Speaker and Prior Knowledge, which statistically influenced student's English listening competency. Among these variables, the Private Class factor was the most positive effect on student's listening competency ( $\beta = .319$ ,  $p < .001$ ), followed by Accent and Pronunciation of Native Speakers and Prior knowledge, which were identified to be the influential factors in students' English listening competency. Overall, the influential factors mentioned above accounted for 26.3 per cent of the variance in the factor affecting the listening competency of the students ( $R^2 = .263$ ).

**Table 5 - Result Shown by ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1002.694	8	125.337	5.537	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	2806.824	124	22.636		
Total	3809.519	132			

a. Dependent Variable: Total\_Score

b. Predictors: (Constant), PK\_Score, Sex, VM\_Score, FP\_Score, APNS\_Score, Private\_Class, TT\_Score, LM\_Score

Meanwhile, Gender, Frequency of Practice, Vocabulary Mastery, Listening Materials and Teaching Techniques significantly show that the student's listening competency was not influenced by these four factors. On contrary, as illustrated in Table 7, the female students achieved a 1.77 mean score higher than the male students. It is evident that female students were better in listening competency.

The scoring system of the test is from 0 to 30 points, which means 5 points in each section. As shown in Table 6, the score is ranging from 5 to 28 points. The mean score is overall 15.20 with a standard deviation of 5.37. According to the mean score, it could be generalized that the performance of the students is fairly good for the average level of score.

**Table 6 - Descriptive Statistics of Total Listening Test Score**

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std.
Total Score	133	5.00	28.00	15.2030	5.37215
Valid N (listwise)	133				

As shown in Table 7, female students get a mean score of 15.81 with a standard deviation of 5.37; meanwhile, male students get a mean score of 14.04 with a standard deviation of 5.21. Accordingly, the average result of the female students seems better than the average result of the male students. However, it doesn't have enough power to reach the significant level at 95% or ( $p = 0.5$ ). There is no significant difference in the scores for male students ( $M = 5.21$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ) and female students ( $M = 15.81$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ) conditions,  $t(131) = -1.82$ ,  $p = 0.70$ . It displays on the T-test.

**Table 7 - Result of the Students' Listening Test by Sex**

Total_Score		N	Mean	Std.	T-value	P>T
Sex	Male	46	14.0435	5.21944	-1.826	0.07
	Female	87	15.8161	5.37983		
Private_Class	No	40	11.85	3.97137	-5.158	0.00

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify the significant factors affecting the English listening competency of grade 10 students at O'Ambel High School in Banteay Meanchey Province. The results are being discussed with other related previous studies or similar research. In general, the result found that Gender, Teaching Materials, Vocabulary Mastery, and Teaching Techniques were not the influential factors on the English listening competency of the learners. Meanwhile, this study found three significant influential factors: Private Class, Prior Knowledge, and Accent and Pronunciation of Native Speaker. Although Gender was insignificant, it is evident that female learners get better test scores than male learners.

**Gender:** although the result showed that female students got higher average scores than males, gender was not a significant factor affecting the listening competency of the learners. The female students got a 1.77 higher average score in listening achievement than the male students, which is similar to the result of a research study by (Esther & Akintemi, 2014; Soeung et al., 2012).

**Private Class** was the most crucial factor that affected the student's listening competency, which is similar to the result of the research by Dang on Determinants and Impact of Private Tutoring Classes in Vietnam that it was a significant impact on a student's academic performance (Dang, 2007). In the context of Banteay Meanchey, there are many English private classes or schools where the students could attend. Moreover, there are also non-profit organizations where English tutoring classes are offered for free to disadvantaged students. To gain better achievement of listening competency, the students prefer to join their English private class after their state school hours. Meanwhile, most of the students studying in the Serei Saophoan, Banteay Meanchey might have more opportunities to register to have English private classes than those studying in rural areas of the province due to either fewer private English schools or unaffordable fee payments.

**Prior Knowledge** was one of the crucial influential factors in listening competency. The result of this study on Prior Knowledge is similar to the result of a research study by Esther & Akintemi (2014), in which cultural background was claimed one of the affecting factors on listening ability. The students having prior knowledge had better listening competency than those who didn't. Therefore, prior knowledge or background knowledge was found as one of the main key factors affecting listening competency.

**Accent and Pronunciation of Native Speaker** was found the influential factors in listening competency. According to Buck (2001), the most common accents seem about geography. Americans pronounce English as part of English and Australians do. In a similar sense, Wilson (1998) demonstrated that it is important for the students to get used to the sound of a new language. It is a fact that the accent and pronunciation of native speaker are one of the key challenges for students in learning a language, especially English. A study by Hein et al. (2020) found that 56% of the undergraduate EFL Learners at YUFL mentioned a speaker's accent as one of the significant factors affecting listener comprehension. Similarly, research revealed that an important reduction in comprehension can be caused by too many accented speeches (Munro & Derwing, 1999).

### Conclusion & Recommendation

This study attempts to investigate the English listening competency of grade 10 students at O'Ambel High School, Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia, and the factors influencing their listening competency. The findings reveal that the students face challenges in listening problems related to *Prior Knowledge*, *Accent and Pronunciation of Native Speaker*, and *Private Class*, which were found significantly crucial factors influencing their listening competency. Although Gender is insignificant, the study demonstrates that female students get better listening scores than male students.

This paper is essentially important for both learners and teachers to understand the factors affecting the listening skills of ESL learners. The findings of this paper crucially contribute to the development of learning and teaching English listening skills for learners, teachers, in particular, researchers or policy-makers.

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