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(IJEPC)**www.ijepr.com**LEARNING CHALLENGES AND MOTIVATIONS TOWARDS
SPOKEN ENGLISH SKILLS AMONG CAMBODIAN TESOL
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DOI: 10.35631/IJEPC.956011**This work is licensed under** [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)**Abstract:**

The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between difficulty in speaking English and motivation for spoken English proficiency. The influence of individual differences such as age, gender and L2 proficiency level on speaking difficulties and motivations were examined. A mixed methods approach was used, with a quantitative design, a sample of 159 participants from a population of 250, using a purposive sampling method. Independent sample T-test, one-way ANOVA and Pearson coefficient were used for data analysis. In addition, among 159 participants, interviews were conducted with 8 students to collect qualitative data. Data collection tools included the Learning Challenges into Spoken English Skills Questionnaire (LCSESQ) and the Motivation into Spoken English Skills Questionnaire (MSESQ), adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) and classroom motivation (intrinsic value). Based on a literature review, an interview question (IQ) was also developed to determine the learning challenges and motivation for spoken English proficiency among undergraduate students. The results showed that although students had significant difficulties with spoken English, they remained highly motivated to learn the language. However, the study found no connection between difficulty speaking English and motivation.

Keywords:

Motivation, Linguistic Obstacles, Speaking Difficulties, English, Cambodia

Introduction

Since English is the working language of the ASEAN Economic Community, Cambodia's membership has encouraged more Cambodians to learn English. Government officials at all levels must communicate clearly and effectively in English during discussions and negotiations. This requirement poses a challenge for ASEAN member states where there is a shortage of talented English-speaking government officials due to limited capacity or lack of international experience. The main challenge that countries in the Association are struggling to achieve is the capacity development to strengthen and reinforce integration, particularly as related to the constant emphasis on English use in governmental, educational and business activities (Stroupe & Kimura, 2015). The Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) has recognized the importance of the English language and made English lessons available to all school children. The main goal is to provide students with basic communication skills so that they can become productive citizens (MoEYS, 2014). However, in Cambodia, as in other countries, the focus on grammar rules often hinders students' ability to speak and understand English (Brooks, 2015).

In some cases, teachers have difficulty teaching English (Phin, 2014), resulting in students resorting to their native language in daily conversations. As a result, their spoken English skills suffer. They also have difficulty understanding the appropriate use of sentences or phrases in certain contexts, such as greeting, criticizing, inviting, arguing, etc. These problems often occur in countries where English is a foreign language and the opportunities to practice English are limited. The challenge of teaching English to a large enough population is enormous. Therefore, it is unsurprising that students have weak speaking skills due to insufficient practice time. These results may be influenced by factors such as age (Dunlap & Weisman, 2006), gender (Nyikos, 2008), and level of English proficiency (Genesee et al., 2006). These issues also affect TESOL students who want to become English teachers but have difficulty speaking English. Despite their motivation for future prospects, they face major challenges in spoken English. In addition, the curriculum does not adequately support oral English skills as oral exams are not included in the final exam. Most tests focus on reading, vocabulary, grammar and writing rather than listening and speaking. These tests do not promote the development of oral skills. As a result, the challenges and difficulties students face when using spoken English are not identified and improvement solutions are not pursued. There is also a lack of research on the challenges and motivations for spoken English proficiency. This study aimed to understand the real challenges that TESOL students face in improving their spoken English skills and the motivation they develop to overcome them.

Literature Review

Challenges in ESL/EFL

Learning another language is a challenging undertaking for many foreign-language learners. Over the years, SLA scholars have attributed a multitude of reasons as to why learning another language is an immensely complex phenomenon (Mitchell & Myles, 2001). This section reviewed the literature regarding difficulties ESL students encounter in their university academic studies. The challenges ESL students face also call attention to the influence of individual differences and English-speaking difficulties. The differences that one can explore are Age, Sex, Aptitude, Motivation, Learning Styles, Learning Strategies, and Personality

(Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). However, the individual differences in this study focus only on age, gender and level of L2 proficiency as follows:

Individual Differences

Age

Muñoz (2007) indicates that it is important that classroom practice activities capitalize on the very different strengths in memory and analytical ability of children and adults by being adaptive to their age. Muñoz (2006) summarized the effects of age on foreign language learning in the following generalizations: adults proceed through early stages of syntactic and morphological development faster than children (where time and exposure are held constant) and acquirers who begin natural exposure to second language during childhood generally achieve higher second language proficiency than those beginning as adults because at a certain maturational point the L2 learners are no longer capable of achieving native-like levels of proficiency, require markedly more effort than before this point, and they are no longer subserved by the same mechanisms that subserve child language acquisition (Singleton, 2003). Many older learners fear failure more than their younger counterparts, maybe because they accept the stereotype of the older person as a poor language learner or because of previous unsuccessful attempts to learn a foreign language (Dunlap & Weisman, 2006). Griffiths (2008) noted that if older and younger students are to be successfully integrated into the same classroom, however, the teacher needs to pay conscious attention to the following aspects of class management, including attractive age-targeted materials and activities, tolerance for face-saving mechanisms, and allowing students to employ idiosyncratic strategies matching their learning style or beliefs about how to learn well. Learners of different ages and stages of L2 learning used different strategies, with certain strategies often being employed by older or more advanced learners. Overall, the older and the more advanced the learner, the more sophisticated the strategy used (Leaver et al., 2005; Oxford, 1989) to infuse them with fun and understanding.

Gender

Gender socialization may be a key factor in any relative success that women and men of any age have in language learning. It is, therefore, crucial to emphasize once more that differences in language learning preferences between males and females, although in some cases statistically significant, tend to be slight, with far greater variation between individuals than between the sexes (Nyikos, 2008). Oxford (1999) concluded that the effects of the use of language learning strategies attributed to gender differences might refer to biological and socialization-related causes. As suggested by Oxford (1989), the gender difference may have been associated with “women’s greater social orientation, stronger verbal skills, and greater conformity to norms, both linguistic and academic”. Therefore, gender should be taken into account to reach the effectiveness of learning and teaching by applying suitable teaching approaches.

Level of L2 Proficiency

Higher levels of proficiency are defined as contact with more complex and abstract texts, more general knowledge and more grammar learning (Komorowska, 2014) and vice versa. At the higher proficiency levels, it will be more important for learners to develop precise understanding; however, at lower levels, a general overall understanding is sufficient (Leaver et al., 2005). In that regard, a level of proficiency is extremely important when talking about language learning challenges, for learners who have higher levels of language proficiency tend

to have fewer challenges and vice versa (Genesee et al., 2006). Candlin and Mercer (2001) indicate how language proficiency is defined and measured is difficult to make conclusions about the relationships between individual learner characteristics and second language learning. By adding proficiency as a second independent variable, it can examine if the effects of learning methods (traditional teaching methods) are the same for learners at different proficiency levels (Chen, 2005). In brief, levels of proficiency can be identified, at least in broad terms, as implied by the typical division of classes or course books into 'elementary', 'intermediate' (lower and upper), and 'advanced' levels (Harsch, 2017). Likewise, levels of proficiency here refer to their level of language learning or acquisition at the undergraduate level – year 1, 2, 3 and 4.

English Speaking Difficulties

For English language learners in Cambodian schools, developing proficiency in spoken English skills is essential for academic and future professional and personal success (Nunan, 1991). Developing proficiency in spoken English skills involves acquiring vocabulary, gaining an understanding of grammar, and developing an understanding of the subtle semantics of the English language. In the meantime, acquiring proficiency in English involves learning the way to use the language to communicate successfully and effectively with other speakers of the language. One cannot learn to speak unless one engages in speaking behaviours (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). Hence, if compared with reading, writing and listening, speaking is widely considered a daunting task for most language learners, especially in countries where English-speaking opportunity is limited. Gan (2013) in his empirical research, has found five aspects of English-speaking difficulties as follows: linguistic obstacles, speech processing difficulties, academic and conversational English skills, negative effects and access to speaking opportunities.

Linguistics includes many different approaches to the study of language and many different areas of investigation, for example, sound systems (phonetics, phonology), sentence structure (syntax), relationships between language and cognition (cognitive linguistics), meaning systems (semantics, pragmatics, functions of language), as well as language and social factors (sociolinguistics) (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Speech processing difficulties are one of the language learning shortcomings, for they have to ensure that the language they produce makes sense; otherwise, they will not be able to reach their communicative objectives. It concerns the pronunciation, intonation, fluency and accuracy of the language used under communication constraints such as time and capacity of the human brain (Gan, 2013). Academic and conversational English skills about communicative competence. It is the knowledge of not only if something is formally possible in a language, but also whether it is feasible, appropriate, or done in a particular speech community (Block, 2007). The negative effect of English-speaking outcomes leads to the reluctance to practice and communicate more. For example, learners who learn English, typically, are afraid of making mistakes and then their friends would laugh at them (Yoshikawa & Way, 2008). If their utterance is rejected or teased, then they would be passive and stop producing the language anymore.

Accessing to English speaking opportunities is essential to developing English-speaking proficiency. The challenge is often further compounded in a situation in which learners have rather limited access to the target language both inside and outside the classroom (Pawlak et al., 2011). The research has mentioned the environment could be one of the main causes of language speaking skills (Toomnan & Intaraprasert, 2015). For instance, if learners have only

a classroom as the place where they can practice English speaking, then they will be poor at spoken English skills, for they will not practice much in their daily lives. What they have learned from the class seems to be unrealistic or merely a theory. It is suggested that establishing learning environments that promote motivation and positive attitudes towards learning may foster learners' involvement in learning and develop the likelihood that learners embrace and adopt more effective learning strategies in their persistent effort to learn and comprehend the material (Togia et al., 2012). Toni and Rostami (2012) claimed that in an EFL environment where instrumental motivation is dominantly at work, learners' performance in speaking English is directly and positively correlated with their level of motivation. According to Carole and Jennifer (1988), classroom settings that are learning-oriented (i.e. value the process of learning and the attainment of mastery through effort) encourage students to select and use more learning strategies compared to performance-oriented environments (where the emphasis is on ability, on outperforming the others, and on achievement with little effort). Hence, if the English-speaking environment is very limited to learners that they can only practice speaking English in the class with a limited amount of time because their talking time is insufficient, then they are not motivated to speak or they face a lot of challenges which obsess them to be incompetent in speaking skills.

The ability to speak English as a second or foreign language well is of paramount importance for many learners (Kawai, 2008). Therefore, though there are numerous challenges in spoken English skills, learners are motivated to learn and practice to anticipate their future prospects.

Motivation in ESL/EFL

Motivation Defined

Motivation, one of the variables of individual differences in language learning, has captured the attention of teachers and researchers in the field of SLA, because it is considered to be among the major factors that affect second language learning success (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei, 1994, 2005; Gass & Selinker, 2001). Motivation is the engine that drives the system and is defined as having a desire to learn the language, enjoyment of the task, and putting forward effort towards learning (Gardner, 1985). Dörnyei (2001) affirms that motivation concerns the direction and magnitude of human behaviour which increase and expand the initiation and persistence of activities that determines whether they will pursue a task (even a difficult one) with enthusiasm or a lackluster attitude. In that regard, the motivation of the learners would best describe the intrinsic value they possess in their learning.

Psychologists define motivation as the process that energizes, sustains, and regulates behaviour (Forgas & Harmon-Jones, 2014) to fulfil a need and goal (Myers, 2010). Motivation is important for its own sake, but it is further essential because of its capacity to determine life outcomes that one cares deeply about, including the quality of our performances and our well-being (Reeve, 2009). Motivation can be considered as an engine that enables learners to overcome challenges and reach the autonomous stage of cognitive and motivational self-regulation (Nakata, 2006). Gardner (2010) observed that language learning motivation is the major focus of the socio-educational model in that it is concerned with accounting for the major processes underlying individual differences in the success that language is acquired. Thus, motivation is generally considered to be one of the dominant causes of accomplishment (Jordan et al., 2008) and failure in second language learning (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Therefore,

understanding a learner's motivation during language learning is indispensable because motivation can influence the L2 learning process and achievement.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivators: factors internal to the individuals that are rewarding in themselves without the need for incentives, for example, self-esteem (Jordan et al., 2008). Intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation to engage in an activity for the sake of enjoyment or the satisfaction which one receives (Bernstein, 2016). People who are intrinsically motivated perform tasks and engage in behaviours happily because they find them enjoyable. Simply involving in the activity is a reward. Likewise, learners who act based on intrinsic motivation participate in the lessons because they are gratifying, and they find them pleasurable.

Generally, intrinsic motivation is more effective and lasting than extrinsic motivation (Gagne & Medsker, 1996). Deborah (2002) demonstrates the advantages of intrinsic motivation according to the theory and empirical research as follows – outside-school learning activity pursuit, selecting challenging tasks for their deep understanding, valuable motivation to promote understanding and conceptual learning, creativity keeping learning engaged and research for their self-actualization, and enjoyable and pleasurable time resulting in more active involvement. In addition, Jordan et al. (2008) found that intrinsic motivation is much more likely to help learners engage in tasks and pursuits on their initiative, resulting in self-directed and self-regulated learning strategies over long periods, to involve themselves in deep rather than surface learning, and experience increased levels of self-satisfaction, self-efficacy and competency.

Thus, it is extremely productive to accelerate students' intrinsic motivation towards their learning process by providing them with activities which are aligned with their favourites.

Extrinsic motivators: factors external to the individuals that motivate them to respond, e.g. high grades, praise or money (Jordan et al., 2008). It refers to taking some action to obtain a reward or good result (Bernstein, 2016). Instead of doing something because it is fun, people who are extrinsically motivated act based on what they gain as a consequence. They are not concerned with the action itself; they are only interested in the rewarding outcome. While intrinsic motivation is based on internal forces, extrinsic motivation is dependent upon external factors and outcomes. Typical extrinsic motivators in ESL / EFL include punishments such as reproof, low grades or rejection, and rewards such as high grades, acceptance and praise (Jordan et al., 2008).

Different things can serve as sources of extrinsic motivation. They are external regulation, introjected regulation, identification and integration regulation (Elliot et al., 2017). Briefly, extrinsic motivation is motivation developed by factors external to the individual. Individuals who are extrinsically motivated to work on tasks due to the fact that they believe their participation will result in desirable outcomes.

Mitchell and Myles (2001) indicated two basic reasons why learners should have to learn a second language. Firstly, developing the knowledge which is intrinsically motivated, and can also contribute to a better understanding of the nature of language and intercultural communication. Secondly, such knowledge will be useful to fulfil learners' prospects in one way or another way. In that regard, learners should possess intrinsic motivation initially and

then establish the incentives towards learning which are the so-called learning goals or expectations driven by extrinsic motivation.

Instrumental and Integrative Orientations

Gardner and Lambert (1972) explained two types of motivations – instrumental and integrative. Some scholars have claimed that integrative and instrumental orientations are synonymous with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, respectively (Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2002). Instrumental motivation to acquire or preserve a language is mostly self-oriented, individualistic (Baker, 1992) and often related to the need to achieve success (Oxford, 1999). Instrumental orientation indicates personal self-enhancement, self-development or basic security and survival will be the utilitarian; it is a pragmatic need of an individual (Baker & Jones, 1998). With this type, language becomes a tool (or instrument if you will) that allows one to achieve some goal such as passing the English exam or getting a job promotion (Oxford, 1999). It is advantageous for teachers to realize learners' motivation in order to plan and prepare lessons which are interesting and support their instrumental orientations. However, unlike instrumental motivation, integrative motivation is regarding learners who have a personal wish to learn about the language and its speakers. Learners who possess integrative motivation would like to learn a foreign language in order to integrate themselves with native speakers. They are into communicating with people and learning about their culture and language (Brown, 2007). Gardner (2010) suggests that integrative and instrumental orientations can be useful, yet it should not be expected that because an individual possesses a particular orientation while learning a language, he or she necessarily endorses all tasks and activities that might reflect that orientation. Therefore, teachers should be well aware of learners' learning tendencies and strive to encourage them to be passionate towards their individual orientations.

Motivational Teaching Practice

According to John Keller's ARCS Model of Motivational Design Theories, there are four steps for promoting and sustaining motivation in the learning process: Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction (ARCS) (Keller, 2009). Attention can be gained in two ways - (1) perceptual arousal (using surprise or uncertainty to gain interest; for example, using novel, surprising, incongruous, and uncertain events; or (2) inquiry arousal (stimulating curiosity by posing challenging questions to be solved. Captivating learners' attention is significantly important to proliferating their engagement in the learning process. If the class is interesting, then it is helpful to manage and organize lessons which suit their current knowledge and experience which allows them to be more confident and satisfied to learn and think critically. If the four steps for promoting and sustaining motivation in the learning process are going well, then learners' motivation is intensified. Hence, they become more motivated towards their learning even though they confront challenges.

Moreover, Dörnyei (2001b) also proposed the four components of motivational teaching practice in the L2 classroom in order to infuse learners with a good learning environment and intensify their motivation towards the tasks. They are described as Creating the Basic Motivational Conditions (a teacher has to be a model for students by having appropriate behaviours. He should create a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom that makes learners feel comfortable and enjoyable in learning. Then a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms is very important to initiate learners' motivation), Generating Initial Motivation (enhancing the learners' L2-related values and attitudes towards the learning process and increasing the learners' expectancy of success and goal-orientedness; so that they

feel more enthusiastic for the learning achievement. In that respect, a teacher should make the teaching materials relevant for the learners enabling the learning process to flow smoothly and be easy to understand. It will bring to learners with realistic beliefs for their success.), Maintaining and Protecting Motivation (making learning stimulating and enjoyable, and presenting tasks in a motivating way are essential to maintain learners' motivation. It also encourages them to maintain a positive social image along with their specific goals and self-autonomy (Doyle, 2008). The approaches should be implemented to enhance and protect the learners' self-esteem and increase their self-confidence. Finally, a teacher should keep promoting self-motivating strategies and cooperation among the learners; although enhancing motivation can be extremely challenging for EFL teachers, nurturing and maintaining motivation is imperative.), Encouraging Positive Retrospective Self-evaluation (promoting motivational attributions is the smart way to instil motivation into learners gradually (Dörnyei, 2001). In the meantime, learners should be provided with motivational feedback based on the lesson objectives and their goals. Following that it increases learner satisfaction towards their learning and interacting in the learning process. Offering rewards and grades in a motivating manner is very important for motivation. Motivation theories emphasize the importance of learners as people with feelings and identities that teachers need to respect (Jordan et al., 2008) in order to successfully establish, maintain and protect learners' motivation towards their learning.

Research Methodology

Research Design and Sample

This study used a mixed-methods design combining both quantitative and qualitative data to examine learning challenges and motivation for spoken English proficiency. The quantitative design utilized descriptive (survey) and correlational research methods. The survey aims to identify challenges and motivation in language learning. The sample size is calculated based on the method of Bartlett et al. (2001). By using a purposive sampling technique, data are collected from four classes of TESOL undergraduate students, resulting in a representative sample of approximately 151 students from a population of 250. For qualitative data, eight students were selected for interviews based on their academic performance.

The English-speaking difficulties questionnaire, adapted from Gan (2013), and the motivation questionnaire, based on Pintrich and Groot (1990) and Gardner (1985), were used. Both questionnaires were formatted on a 4-point Likert scale. The interview questions are self-developed and focus on understanding learners' learning challenges, individual differences and motivation to learn spoken English skills.

Data Analysis

The mixed methods design combines quantitative and qualitative approaches and uses data from questionnaires and interviews. The data is analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 27. Key analyses in the quantitative study. Descriptive statistics summarize data and understand the central tendency and variability of ratings (Cozby & Bates, 2015). T-test and ANOVA tests to examine significant differences between groups (Gay, et al., 2012; Cozby & Bates, 2015). Correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between variables (Cozby & Bates, 2015). The results of both quantitative and qualitative studies are directly compared, with the first three research questions being answered using both methods, while the last two are only analyzed quantitatively.

Result and Discussion

The study sample presented the descriptive data for motivational variables (classroom motivation, integrative and instrumental motivation) related to spoken English proficiency among undergraduate students. The questionnaire was distributed to undergraduate students from four classes – Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4. The sample obtained from the four classes includes 157 students. Table 1 shows that there are 75 male and 82 female students, which account for approximately 47.8% and 52.2% of the total sample, respectively. The total sample was divided into four age difference scales. The age of the students ranged from 18 to 22 years old, i.e. 87 students, while the students aged 23 to 27 years, 28 to 32 years old and over 32 years old were 53, 10 and 7 students respectively. The number of students is 39 in the first year, 45 in the second year, 41 in the third year and 32 in the final year.

Table 1: Descriptive Data of the Undergraduate Students' Information

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	75	47.8
	Female	82	52.2
	Total	157	100
Age	18-22	87	55.4
	23-27	53	33.8
	28-32	10	6.4
	32 up	7	4.5
	Total	157	100
Class	Year 1	39	24.8
	Year 2	45	28.7
	Year 3	41	26.1
	Year 4	32	20.4
	Total	157	100

Motivation Towards English Spoken Skills

According to Table 2, the statistics on teaching motivation showed that 61.8% of respondents prefer challenging teaching tasks that facilitate new learning (Item B2). This result is supported by 64.9%, 67.5% and 62.4% of responses to items B5, B6 and B13, respectively, indicating a preference for essential and engaging teaching content. Furthermore, 62.4% found the lessons useful for other classes (item B9), confirmed by 57.9% and 61.2% of responses to items B25 and B33, respectively. Although 34.4% learned from mistakes in oral English tests (Item B17), a remarkable data of 77.1% recognized the importance of oral English skills. Overall, students demonstrated positive motivation to learn spoken English.

The descriptive statistics on integrative orientation show participants' strong motivation to learn spoken English skills. 58.6% recognized the importance of the English language for international communication. In addition, 59.9% value English for interacting with foreigners, 72.6% for understanding and appreciating English art and literature, and 60.5% for participating in activities of other cultural groups. These numbers indicate a high level of motivation to learn spoken English for fun and convenience. Such motivation influences the way they learn and practice the language as it is precisely shown in Gardner's study (2005) on Integrative Motivation and Second language Acquisition that if the individual is highly

motivated to learn another language, then they are likely to be very successful in learning using such language. Oxford and Nyikos (1989) conducted a study on variables affecting the choice of foreign language learners in the academic environment and found that among other variables, learners' motivation had the strongest influence on learners' language learning.

Approximately 63.7% of participants recognized the importance of the English language for future careers, with responses to items B10 (65.6%) and B20 (80.3%) reflecting the perceived value of the English language in acquiring better skills and affirming the security of a good job. Additionally, 57.3% said their English skills could earn them respect. These results highlight external motivations for learning spoken English to meet international needs and personal desires.

Table 2: Descriptive Variable of Motivation and Integrative Orientation

Descriptive	Variable	%				Mean
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Motivation in Classroom	B2	14.60	23.60	43.30	18.50	2.66
	B5	15.30	19.70	40.10	24.80	2.75
	B6	12.70	19.70	43.90	23.60	2.78
	B9	14.00	23.60	39.50	22.90	2.71
	B13	8.90	28.70	47.80	14.60	2.68
	B17	13.40	25.50	34.40	26.80	2.75
	B25	13.40	28.70	40.10	17.80	2.62
	B33	7.00	31.80	42.70	18.50	2.73
Integrative Orientation	B37	7.00	15.90	36.30	40.80	3.10
	B8	14.60	26.80	33.10	25.50	2.69
	B12	19.10	21.00	34.40	25.50	2.66
	B18	8.30	19.10	40.10	32.50	2.97
Instrumental Orientation	B22	12.70	26.80	37.60	22.90	2.71
	B1	12.70	23.60	35.70	28.00	2.79
	B10	12.70	21.70	35.00	30.60	2.83
	B20	3.80	15.90	40.80	39.50	3.16
	B30	13.40	29.30	43.90	13.40	2.57

As shown in Table 2, the interview results illustrated that two students had both integrative and instrumental motivation, five students had instrumental motivation, and one student had an integrative orientation. Most instrumentally motivated students focus on employment opportunities and access to global information. Only a few students are intrinsically motivated and show interest in making foreign friends and participating in international cultural activities. Similarly, the results obtained from the qualitative study suggested that speaking English well will definitely help them to get more opportunities in the competitive job markets. The study result is aligned with Toni and Rostami's study (2012) on the Overall Motivation and the Promotion of EFL Learners' Oral Proficiency, which indicated that in an EFL environment where instrumental motivation is dominantly at work, students' performance in speaking English is correlated with their level of motivation directly and positively. Regardless of the type of motivation, everyone recognizes the importance of oral English skills. Hernández's study (2010) also suggested that student motivation and interaction are essential factors in

shaping speaking proficiency development in both classrooms or at home and study abroad contexts.

Learning Challenges Towards English Spoken Skills

The Linguistic Challenges in Spoken English Skills (LCSES) include five subcomponents: Linguistic Obstacles, Speech Processing Difficulties, Academic and Conversational English Skills, Negative Affect, and Accessing Speaking opportunities. Language hurdles play an important role here. According to descriptive statistics, 83.4% of students tend to make grammatical errors, 79% have difficulty using complex structures, 56.7% agree, and 24.8% strongly agree that they have difficulty in grammar or the vocabulary gets stuck, while about 82.8% have problems with pronunciation when speaking English. These results highlight the importance of grammar and vocabulary in acquiring spoken English skills among undergraduate TESOL students in Cambodia. Kurita's study (2017) indicates the significant role of vocabulary in decoding and encoding the language comprehensively.

The evaluation of language processing difficulties reveals distinct characteristics in Cambodian students practising spoken English skills. 68.1% of students usually think in their native language before speaking English. Additionally, 63.1% of students reported avoiding using difficult words and structures in English. Additionally, 77.1% of students had difficulty communicating effectively in English with their teachers, which further compounded difficulties in practising spoken English skills.

Table 3: Descriptive Variable of Learning Challenges

Descriptive	Variable	%				Mean
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Linguistic Obstacles	B3	1.30	15.30	66.20	17.20	2.99
	B4	1.90	19.10	62.40	16.60	2.94
	B7	0.60	17.80	56.70	24.80	3.06
	B11	1.90	15.30	67.50	15.30	2.96
Speech Processing Difficulties	B14	2.50	29.30	59.20	8.90	2.75
	B15	2.50	34.40	54.80	8.30	2.69
	B16	0.60	22.30	63.10	14.00	2.9
	B19	0.60	16.60	63.10	19.70	3.02
Academic and Conversational English Skills	B21	4.50	35.00	51.60	8.90	2.65
	B23	1.90	34.40	50.30	13.40	2.75
	B24	5.70	40.80	42.00	11.50	2.59
	B26	6.40	56.10	32.50	5.10	2.36
	B27	7.60	40.10	42.70	9.60	2.54
Negative Effect	B28	8.30	40.80	44.60	6.40	2.49
	B29	5.70	33.10	50.30	10.80	2.66
	B31	10.80	40.80	37.60	10.80	2.48
	B32	13.40	47.10	34.40	5.10	2.31
Access to Speaking Opportunities	B34	4.50	35.70	51.60	8.30	2.64
	B35	6.40	54.10	36.90	2.50	2.36
	B36	5.10	40.80	49.00	5.10	2.54

As shown in Table 3, the descriptive statistics show that 60.5% of TESOL students faced challenges in leading class discussions in English, while 50.3% had difficulty giving speeches in English. However, fewer students (53.5% for whole class discussions and 37.6% for small group discussions) reported difficulty participating in discussions. Additionally, 52.3% felt less confident in casual English conversations. While class discussions and everyday conversations do not pose major problems, leading discussions and giving speeches in English proved to be a challenge for most students. A typical example can be found in the qualitative study as they said that, they know the answer when the teacher asks them, but they hesitate to answer because they are afraid of making mistakes and then others will laugh at them (Mohammadian, 2013); so, they do not have the confidence to practice more. The study on Motivation Factors and Speaking Strategy Factors by Quadir (2014) also revealed learners' potential reluctance to communicate in English. The students are worried about losing face in public or in front of the class while practising spoken English skills. It is supported by Nakata's study (2006) demonstrated that spoken anxiety occurs in L2 speaking thanks to a lack of confidence. Thus, low confidence and high anxiety would seemingly prevent them from being active in speaking English as claimed by Krashen's theory of Affective Filter hypothesis (1989).

As illustrated in Table 3, this study shows that 51% of participants experience anxiety while speaking English, while 49% do not. Additionally, 61.1% are worried about grammar when speaking English, while 38.8% are not. Nevertheless, 51.6% of participants actively participate in class, even if their English language skills are limited, and 60.5% take advantage of every opportunity to speak English in class or outside of class. So, the biggest challenges for students speaking English are nervousness and grammatical problems. The study also shows that 60.1% of participants do not have the opportunity to practice English outside of class, a common problem in non-English speaking countries. However, 60.5% said they had adequate opportunities to speak English in class. The study also found that 54.1% of participants lacked content in speaking English both in and outside of class, indicating limited opportunities for English language practice.

Insights gained from the interview revealed that students face significant challenges in spoken English, including limited speaking ability, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, language use and anxiety. A lack of speaking practice leads to unfamiliarity with the use of language. Participants reported difficulties with pronunciation and vocabulary use as they often translated from their native language, leading to hesitations and errors. Grammatical complications, particularly with tenses, have also been reported, likely due to Cambodian language structures. Finally, limited access to English-language offerings was highlighted as a major barrier. Addressing these challenges could significantly improve students' English skills.

Is There Any Significant Difference Between The Ages Of The Learners And Motivation Towards Spoken English Skills?

In both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests shown in Table 4, the calculated significance levels are $p > 0.05$ (0.200 and 0.545, respectively). Therefore, normality can be assumed. To satisfy the assumption of one-way ANOVA, two conditions must be met. These are normality (the dependent variable is normally distributed) and homogeneity of variance (the groups have approximately the same variance on the dependent variable) (Ho, 2014). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic and the Shapiro-Wilk statistic are tests of normality, and if their significance levels are greater than 0.05, normality is assumed. For both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests shown in Table 4, the calculated significance levels are $p > 0.05$

(0.200 and 0.635, respectively). Dunlap and Weisman (2006) also found that many older learners fear failure more than their younger counterparts, maybe because they accept the stereotype of the older person as a poor language learner or because of previous unsuccessful attempts to learn a foreign language. Therefore, normality can be assumed.

Table 4: Explore Analysis of Tests of Normality Output.

Tests of Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Stat.	df	Sig.	Stat.	df	Sig.
Motivation Total	0.057	157	.200*	0.992	157	0.545
Learning Challenges	0.042	157	.200*	0.993	157	0.635

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

However, Andreou and Vlachos' study (2005) on "Affecting Factors in Second Language Learning" found that Sex played an important role in Second language learning; in particular, females performed better than males in both syntax and semantics confirming earlier studies which found a female advantage for verbal skills (Stumpf, 1995). The assumption of homogeneity of variance is checked for equality of variances using the Levene test. In Table 5, the Levene statistic is $p = 0.087 > 0.05$. Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated. The assumption of homogeneity is checked in SPSS by the Levene test (Hinton et al., 2004). Table 5 reported that there is homogeneity of variances in Sig. The value is .306; This means that the population variance is the same in each group.

Table 5: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Motivation Total	1.028	3	153	0.382
Learning Challenges	1.216	3	153	0.306

As shown in Table 6 below, $p=.135$, $p>.05$. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the motivation score between the four age groups of the respondents. Pallant (2016) suggested that if the Sig. Value is less than or equal to 0.05, there is a significant difference in the mean of the dependent variable for the four groups. However, if it is greater than 0.05, there is no significant difference. As shown in ANOVA Table 4.20 below, $p=.637$, $p>.05$. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the assessment of English proficiency between the four age groups of respondents.

Table 6: Analysis of ANOVA Output

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Motivation Total	Between Groups	137.745	3	45.915	1.88	0.135
	Within Groups	3736.612	153	24.422		
	Total	3874.357	156			
Learning Challenges	Between Groups	88.143	3	29.381	0.567	0.637
	Within Groups	7923.564	153	51.788		
	Total	8011.707	156			

Is There Any Significant Difference Between The Genders Towards English Speaking Difficulties?

The study's purpose was to investigate whether there is any significant difference between the genders among the undergraduate students towards English speaking difficulties, which they have encountered during their studies. Since there are only two groups within the independent variable; therefore, the independent sample t-test is used to measure the mean score between them (Ho, 2014). An independent samples t-test was used when the researcher would like to compare the mean score, on some continuous variable for two different groups of participants. The result of the test informs whether there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores for the two groups (Pallant, 2016).

The two groups (male and female) of students' so-called gender are the independent variable, whereas the English-speaking difficulties are the dependent variable.

Three conditions are required to meet the independent sample t-test assumption. They are independence (the two groups are independent of one another), normality (the dependent variable is normally distributed) and homogeneity of variance (that is, the distribution of the dependent variable for one of the groups being compared has the same variance as the distribution for the other group being compared). To begin with, during data collection, it can be ensured that the observations in one group are independent of the observations of the other group. According to Table 3, the normality can be assumed. Finally, the table of the significant level of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances reported $p = .683$ ($p > 0.5$). Thus, it indicates that the variances of the two male and female students are equal in the population. Therefore, the assumption of the independent sample t-test of this research question is met.

Table 7: Independent Sample t-test Analysis (Selected) Output.

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Learning Challenges	Equal variances assumed	.167	.683	.949	155	.344	1.08732	1.14538	-1.17525	3.34989
	Equal variances not assumed			.947	152.239	.345	1.08732	1.14769	-1.18015	3.35478

As the significant level of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances is larger than 0.5 ($p = .683$), the t-test for equality of Means in the first line of the Table 7 would be used. The Sig. (2-tailed) value is .344 ($p > 0.5$), which means the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Therefore, there is no significant difference between male and female students towards English speaking difficulties.

Is There Any Significant Difference Between The Levels Of L2 Proficiency And Motivation Towards Spoken English Skills?

The assumption is fulfilled because the dependent variable is normally distributed, as described and shown in Table 8. In addition, the assumption of homogeneity of variance is checked by the Levene statistic, which tests the hypothesis that the population variances are equal. As shown in Table 8, the Levene statistic is $F = .767$, and the corresponding significance level is high ($p = .514 > .05$). Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of variance is not violated. The study aims to determine the significant difference in English speaking difficulties between L2 proficiency levels (Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4). Since the levels of the independent variables are more than two, one-way ANOVA is used. The assumption is met because the dependent variable is normally distributed (Table 8), and the groups have approximately the same variance of the dependent variable, as in Table 8 (table for testing the homogeneity of variances). Reported the Sig. The value is .315 ($p > .05$). The null hypothesis of this research question is: "There is no significant difference in ratings of English proficiency between the four levels of respondents' L2 proficiency."

On the contrary, the findings obtained from the qualitative study depicted the significance of levels of L2 proficiency. Seven of eight students were confident to claim that as they go to the next level, their learning challenges become less since they would certainly learn a lot of words and grammar points, and more importantly, they are exposed more the English speaking. Thus, their spoken English skills are developed gradually. The result of the qualitative study is strongly supported by Genesee et al. (2006). They suggested learners who are at higher levels of language proficiency tend to have fewer challenges and vice versa.

Table 8: Test of Homogeneity of Variances Output

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Motivation Total	0.767	3	153	0.514
Learning Challenges	1.192	3	153	0.315

Pallant (2016) suggested that if the sig. value is greater than 0.05, there is no significant difference. As shown in the ANOVA (Table 9), $p < .05$ ($p = .001$). Therefore, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant difference in motivation to learn spoken English skills between L2 proficiency levels (Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4). The result analysis in Table 9 shows that the motivation to speak English has a significant influence on the level of L2 competence, $F(3,153) = 5.497$, $p < 0.05$. As shown in the ANOVA table below (Table 9), $p = .494$, $p > .05$. Therefore, there is no significant difference in English proficiency ratings between respondents' four L2 proficiency levels.

Table 9: One-Way Analysis Output

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Motivation Total	Between Groups	376.99	3	125.663		
	Within Groups	3497.367	153	22.859	5.497	0.001
	Total	3874.357	156			
Learning Challenges	Between Groups	76.894	3	25.631		
	Within Groups	7934.813	153	51.862	0.494	0.687
	Total	8011.707	156			

Relationship Between English Speaking Difficulties And Motivation Towards Spoken English Skills

The final research question in this study examines the relationship between English speaking difficulties and motivation for spoken English proficiency among undergraduate TESOL students. The null hypothesis assumes that there is no significant relationship between these two variables. The values of the Pearson correlation coefficient range from -1 to +1, where 0 indicates that there is no significant relationship between the variables. A positive correlation represents a simultaneous increase in the variable, while a negative correlation indicates an inverse relationship, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Output Selected of Correlation Analysis

		Learning Challenges	Motivation Total
Learning Challenges	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.080
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.321
	N	157	157
Motivation Total	Pearson Correlation	-0.080	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.321	-
	N	157	157

With a significance value greater than .05 ($p=.321$), the analysis does not reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between difficulties in English speaking and motivation to achieve oral English proficiency in TESOL students.

In the “Multiple Comparisons” table (Table 11), in the “Mean Difference (I–J)” column, the asterisked mean difference values indicate which year the students significantly differ from each other at the 0.05 significance level. The results show that first-semester students do not differ significantly from second-semester students; However, first-year students are significantly different from third and final-year students. Furthermore, second-year students do not differ significantly from final-year students, but they do differ significantly from third-year students.

Table 11: The Motivation Total of Dependent Variable in Multiple Comparisons

(I) A3. Class	(J) A3. Class	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	P-Value
Year 1	Year 2	0.660	1.046	1.000
	Year 3	3.558***	1.069	0.007
	Year 4	3.230**	1.140	0.031
Year 2	Year 1	-0.660	1.046	1.000
	Year 3	2.899**	1.032	0.034

	Year 4	2.570	1.106	0.128
Year 3	Year 1	-3.558***	1.069	0.007
	Year 2	-2.899**	1.032	0.034
	Year 4	-0.329	1.128	1.000
Year 4	Year 1	-3.230**	1.140	0.031
	Year 2	-2.570	1.106	0.128
	Year 3	0.329	1.128	1.000

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

This study has uncovered significant linguistic barriers that impede students' development of spoken English skills. The main problems identified include vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, as evidenced by 83.4% of students making grammatical errors, 79% struggling with complex structures and approximately 82.8% having problems with pronunciation. In addition, 68.1% of students usually think in their native language before speaking English and 63.1% avoid using difficult words and structures. Challenges also exist in academic and conversational English skills: 60.5% of students have difficulty leading class discussions and 50.3% have difficulty giving speeches in English. Fear of making mistakes, reported by 34.4% of students, is a major deterrent and prevents them from fully engaging in oral English language practice. Limited opportunities to practice English outside of the classroom, noted by 60.1% of students, further exacerbate these challenges.

Despite these difficulties, it is notable that students continue to be positively motivated to learn spoken English skills. For example, 77.1% recognized the importance of spoken English skills and 63.7% recognized its importance for future careers. This motivation persists even when faced with significant learning challenges, suggesting that students have a strong desire to overcome these barriers and improve their spoken English.

The results of this study have significant implications for the Department of Education, universities, curriculum developers, educators, lecturers and students. Understanding the root causes of difficulties in spoken English, such as grammatical errors, pronunciation problems, and limited practice opportunities, paves the way for developing effective strategies to improve students' communication skills. Thus, this research provides valuable insights into improving the oral English skills of undergraduate TESOL students.

Recommendation

This research examines students' challenges and motivation to use spoken English through interviews and questionnaires and provides recommendations for future studies:

- Cambodian researchers should consider the results of this study and plan longitudinal studies that include larger, more diverse samples from across Cambodia.
- Universities, particularly those involved in curriculum development, should examine the effectiveness of their curricula in improving spoken English skills. Teaching and assessment of spoken English courses should be carefully managed to ensure student competency.

- While the quantitative study highlighted five major difficulties in learning spoken English, the qualitative results highlighted additional underlying factors. For example, teachers often dominate class time, leaving students with limited opportunities to practice speaking English.

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