



Cambodian Teacher Trainees' Motivation for Extensive Reading in English

Kroeun Kruy

English Trainer at the Department of English, Kandal Primary Teacher Training Center, Kandal Province, Cambodia
Ph.D. student at the University of Cambodia (UC)

Abstract

English is the language of communication and education. Even though English is well-known as a foreign language in Cambodia, not everyone knows English well. English needs to be taught correctly. Meanwhile, primary school teachers in Cambodia are encouraged to learn English and teach English to children. They face many challenges and want to find better ways to learn and develop. According to previous research, reading motivation is crucial for trainers, teachers, and relevant education stakeholders. However, not many studies have discussed reading motivations conducted in Cambodia. This study investigates the motivation of Cambodian teacher trainees to read English. Three dimensions of motivation were used: reading efficacy, reading challenges, and reading curiosity. A questionnaire adapted from the 1997 reading questionnaire (MRQ) was used, with 58 trainees at the Kandal Primary Teacher Training Center. The results showed that trainees are highly motivated by reading, believing that it will improve their skills. However, not all trainees read with classmates, indicating confidence in their educational journey. They value reading with provocative questions and are self-motivated to acquire knowledge, even with challenging written materials. Therefore, motivating teacher trainees to read are necessary.

Keywords Reading. Motivation. Efficacy. Extensive. English, Curiosity. Challenges. Teacher trainee

INTRODUCTION

Research shows that teacher quality significantly impacts students' learning achievement, making it crucial for Cambodia's education system to remain relevant and competitive in the global knowledge-based economy (Heng & Sol, 2022). To discover the best way for mutual benefit, communication, observation, and investigation of beliefs and practices are made easier by teacher education programs in Cambodia (Lian et al., 2023). Research trends show that Cambodia's primary school teachers graduate from 18 provincial teacher training centers. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport implemented the Teacher Policy Action Plan 2015–2020, reforming pre-service training from 12+2 to 12+4, and piloting the 12+4 program (Wei et al., 2022).

The shortage of teachers, particularly females, in rural Cambodia's primary schools is a significant issue for education-gender policies. This leads to overcrowding and poor teaching quality. Limited in-service teacher training and financial support from the government are contributing factors. The shortage of female teachers in rural areas highlights gender inequality and demotivates girls to pursue education (Em, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted traditional

teaching and learning in Cambodia, posing challenges for teachers and students, especially in countries with limited technology infrastructure and digital skills (Soeung & Chim, 2022).

Cambodia is recovering from a dark period of poverty and joined the World Trade Organization. English is a common language among ASEAN neighbors, providing more job opportunities for English-speaking Cambodians (Igawa, 2008). The integration of the ASEAN Community in 2015 necessitated a change in the educational system, with English as the working language. The ASEAN Charter requires English to be the working language, and some ASEAN countries are concerned about reforming the English curriculum in primary schools. Cambodia, for example, lacks English in primary education, prompting the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MoEYS) to update its national curricula to provide students with English proficiency beginning in primary school (Chea & Vibulphol, 2013).

Cambodia faces limited literacy achievement due to inadequate instruction, with a quarter and a half of children in low-income countries not achieving basic reading skills. Girls are doubly disadvantaged and are often not afforded equal education (Oakley et al., 2022). Reading plays an important role in knowledge creation, becoming a vital factor in a literate society. It is essential for emotional stability, enjoyable moments, and up-to-date information sharing in educational programs (Sokhet, 2014). Reading English is an essential component of language learning because it aids in the development of other related skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and writing. Reading allows language learners to explore topics and stories of interest (Bostock, 2021).

Extensive reading, in which students extensively read related material within their level of language proficiency, could be a viable input source outside class. The acquisition of new words and improvement of existing word knowledge can be facilitated by extensive reading (Vu & Peters, 2022). Extensive reading (ER) aims to increase students' linguistic competencies and enjoyment in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings by engaging them in reading longer texts in English, thereby fostering their interest in reading (Freiermuth & Ito, 2022).

Expectancy theory is a motivational process that stresses personal assessments of the environment and behaviors as because of those assessments. This implies that expectation is a multiplication of three constructs: performance estimation, development, and incentives (Purvis et al., 2015). Motivation is a crucial factor in language learning and is categorized into instrumental and integrative orientations. Instrumental motivation focuses on pragmatic reasons such as job advancement or passing exams, where integrative motivation identifies with the target language community (Liu et al., 2016). Therefore, Cambodian teacher trainees also need to read English as part of their lifelong learning. This study aimed to determine Cambodian teacher trainees' motivation for reading English.

I. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent of motivation for extensive reading do Cambodian teacher trainees have?
2. What are the similarities or differences among the three dimensions of motivation for teacher trainees in Extensive reading?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Extensive Reading (ER)

According to Day and Bamford (1998) cited in Nakanishi (2015), extensive reading refers to the practice of motivating students to access many English texts to help them become more proficient readers and enjoy the learning process. In addition to reading in class or as an extracurricular activity in language programs, ER involves students selecting simplified materials and reading at their own pace (Van Amelsvoort, 2016). By encouraging students to read different kinds of books, extensive reading programs help students develop a lifetime reading habit. Accordingly, the greatest way to become fluent in a language is to read a lot (Renandya, 2007). Day (2015) proved the top 10 principles of effective reading, which include easy reading material, a variety of topics, learners' choice, reading as much as

possible, reading for enjoyment, information, and understanding, reading as a reward, faster reading speed, individual and silent reading, teacher guidance, and role modeling as a reader. Day and Bamford (2002) list these principles on pages 137–141.

Challenges of Extensive Reading

Educating (in a second language) Teaching second language reading in EFL classes may be challenging for several reasons, including determining students' educational backgrounds and establishing vocabulary, comprehension, reading habits, and evaluation. By altering and strengthening the classroom environment, teachers must address these problems to teach L2 reading effectively (Archer, 2012). Many students lack the desire to read, according to van der Sande et al. (2023), and they do so seldom. poor motivation can compound problems, creating a vicious cycle of poor accomplishment and motivation among struggling students, according to McBreen and Savage (2021). Therefore, successful teaching should focus on both the cognitive and motivational aspects of learning to read. Reading is crucial for success in reading because children should read words to manage texts and stay engaged (Van Amelsvoort, 2016).

Reading Motivation

Beliefs, values, and attribution affect motivation. The self-determination hypothesis contends that competence, environmental connectedness, and autonomy drive people. The expectancy-value hypothesis also reveals that when people anticipate success and value from their work, they are more driven. The purpose of interventions focusing on goals, attributions, self-efficacy beliefs, and value for reading is to increase motivation (McBreen & Savage, 2021). To provide students with a high-quality education and the literacy skills necessary for success in a variety of socioeconomic contexts, teachers must actively encourage students' intrinsic drive to read (De Naeghel et al., 2014). According to research, motivated students read more frequently and comprehend texts better (van der Sande et al., 2023). Many children have trouble understanding texts, which has an impact on both their academic achievement and social interaction. Their objectives, attitudes, and beliefs all have an impact on their desire to read, which contributes to this in part (van der Sande et al., 2023). According to self-determination theory, a teacher's motivational approach can improve the environment in the classroom by supporting students' psychological demands for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (De Naeghel et al., 2014). According to previous studies, there is evidence for a favorable association between reading motivation and reading achievement. Reading routine and motivation can both increase when motivation is a teaching strategy (McBreen & Savage, 2021).

The Importance of an Extensive Reading

Day and Bamford (1998) proposed that one of the purposes of extensive reading is to increase students' enjoyment of reading, which leads to reading development (Nakanishi, 2015). Reading automaticity, developed through ER, which in turn improved noticing of language features in texts. This is widely considered a crucial element in language learning programs (Van Amelsvoort, 2016). Reading literacy is crucial for academic achievement and participation in complex societies, as defined by PISA 2009. Engaging in reading is an integral part of reading skills (De Naeghel et al., 2014). According to Davis (1995), who emphasizes the significance of including extensive reading in foreign language curricula, any English as a second language (ESL), English as a foreign language (EFL), or first language (L1) classroom will be poorer if there is not extensive reading program, and teachers will not be able to promote students' language development as effectively if such a program is not present (cited in Nakanishi, 2015). Reading literature encourages debate, develops vocabulary, and provides students with a starting point for engaging courses. Reading is a useful technique in EFL classes because it introduces intriguing themes, encourages conversation, and elicits creative replies (Archer, 2012).

IV. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, descriptive quantitative methods were used as the research method. Descriptive research is valuable in the age of large datasets because it helps distill data into meaningful dimensions to uncover patterns and inform decision-making. It helps identify relationships among the vast amount of information collected about the education system (Loeb et al., 2017). Descriptive research describes a phenomenon and its characteristics, often using observation and survey tools. Data are collected quantitatively to determine relationships (Nassaji, 2015). Quantitative research emphasizes generalizability and reliability, aiming to apply variables' relationships to the population, thus, selecting a representative sample is crucial for its application (Delice, 2010). The study was conducted quantitatively. Different quantitative design types exist. In this investigation, a survey design was used.

Research instrument

A questionnaire with three dimensions—reading efficacy with four items, reading challenges with five items, and reading curiosity with five items—was used in this study. The Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), created by Guthrie and Wigfield in 1997, contains 54 items and is organized into 11 categories of reading motivation. All 14 items of the questionnaire were adapted from this instrument. The researcher administered a questionnaire to each participant to gather data. To determine the teacher trainees' reading motivation for reading English, a questionnaire was examined. After gathering the data, the researcher used the scores provided by the questionnaire to examine the students' motivation to read. Every question on the survey received a mark (1–5) based on the students' responses using the Likert scale with numbers like 1 denoting "strongly disagree," 2 "disagree," 3 "neutral," 4 "agree," and 5 denoting "strongly agree," (Albaum, 1997). The researcher wants participants to read each statement and mark the number that best describes their position.

Data collection and participation

The current study was conducted at the Primary Teacher Training Center in Kandal Province, Cambodia. Participants were aspiring teachers. The target individuals all approved our study. Then came the data collection phase. Only 58 of the approximately 68 teacher trainees answered.

Data analysis

A small-scale survey of Cambodian teacher trainees' motivation to learn English reading in Kandal Province, Cambodia. The current study's quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 16. The mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of each item were determined, and all items were analyzed with an emphasis on M and SD. Then, for each dimension of reading motivation, all the items were computed and examined, with a focus on M and SD. To determine the level of students' motivation to read English, the three characteristics of motivation were also merged. The minimum (Min) and maximum (Max) values were also examined at all levels of analysis but were not provided.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Teacher trainees' demographic information

TABLE 1. Teacher trainees' demographic information (N=59)

Demographics	Value	N	Frequency%
Gender	Males	16	27.10
	Female	43	72.90
Ages	18-21	4	6.80
	21-23	40	67.80
	24-26	14	23.70
	27-up	1	1.70

According to Table 1, 58 teacher trainees (43, or 72.90%, were females) participated in the study. 4 of the participants, or 6.8%, were between the ages of 18 and 21. 40 participants (67.80%) were between the ages of 21 and 23, 14 participants (23.70%) were between the ages of 24 and 26, and 1 participant was 27 or older.

Teacher trainees' reading motivation: Reading efficacy

TABLE 2. Student reading motivation: Reading Efficacy (N=59)

No.	Reading Efficacy	M	SD	Min	Max
1.	I am confident that I will be able to read well next year.	3.96	.52	2.00	5.00
2.	I am a great reader.	3.84	.61	2.00	5.00
3.	I learn to read more than my classmates.	3.69	.67	2.00	5.00
4.	Reading is one of my favorite subjects compared to other subjects.	3.86	.77	2.00	5.00
Total		3.84	.64	2.00	5.00

According to Table 2, Cambodian primary school teacher trainees were the most motivated in item 1 (M=3.96). This demonstrated that they believe that the more they read, the better readers they will become. Then, with (M=3.86), item 4 revealed that the teacher trainees valued reading in their educational lives. However, according to item 3 (M=3.64), not all teacher trainees read with their classmates as a motivator. In general, most teacher trainees are confident in themselves and hope that reading will positively educate them.

Teacher trainees' reading motivation: Reading challenges

TABLE 3. Student reading motivation: Reading challenges (N=59)

No.	Reading Challenges	M	SD	Min	Max
1.	I enjoy difficult-to-read books.	3.35	.94	2.00	5.00
2.	If the project is fascinating to me, I will read it regardless of its difficulty.	3.94	.57	2.00	5.00
3.	I appreciate that the books I have read provide thought-provoking questions.	4.11	.55	2.00	5.00
4.	I generally learn difficult things through reading.	3.88	.69	2.00	5.00
5.	If the book is intriguing, I will read it regardless of its difficulty it is to read.	4.00	.64	2.00	5.00
Total		3.86	.67	2.00	5.00

TABLE 3 discusses reading challenges. Item 3 (M=4.11) revealed that the teacher trainees reported that they valued reading books or documents with provocative questions that encouraged them to think critically. Furthermore, items 5 (M=4.00) and 2 (M=3.94) demonstrated that even if the books or written materials are important and inspiring but difficult for them, they continue to read or try to read until they finish. In summary, the reported total (M=3.86) revealed that teacher trainees are mostly self-motivated for knowledge through reading, even if written materials are challenging for them.

Student reading motivation: Reading curiosity

TABLE 4. Teacher trainees' reading motivation: Reading Curiosity (N=59)

No.	Reading Curiosity	M	SD	Min	Max
1.	If the trainer mentions something fascinating, I may be able to learn more about it by reading more about it.	4.10	.51	2.00	5.00
2.	I read to stay current on written materials I am interested in.	4.10	.71	2.00	5.00
3.	To learn more about my favorites, I read about them.	4.08	.53	2.00	5.00
4.	I enjoy learning new books and articles.	4.18	.60	2.00	5.00
5.	I enjoy reading books about people from many walks of life.	4.05	.68	2.00	5.00
Total		4.10	.60	2.00	5.00

Table 4 shows that Cambodian teacher trainees expressed very high motivation for items 4, 1, and 2 ($M=4.18$, $M=4.10$, and $M=4.10$). The table demonstrates the importance of contemporary and written materials to them. If somebody guides them, they will look for written works to read. In summary, this table shows that the teacher trainees have a strong desire to learn new things, and reading is the best way for them.

Teacher trainees' Overall motivation in three dimensions: reading efficacy, reading challenges, and reading curiosity

TABLE 5. Teacher trainees' overall motivation in the three dimensions (N=59)

No.	Motivation	M	SD	Min	Max
1	Reading Efficacy	3.84	.46	2.50	5.00
2	Reading Challenges	3.86	.52	2.20	5.00
3	Reading Curiosity	4.10	.48	2.00	5.00
4	Overall	3.91	0.49	2.23	5.00

This research worked on only three dimensions of motivation among many others, and the study involved 58 participants out of 68 people in promotion 36 at Kandal Primary Teacher Training Center, Cambodia. According to TABLE 5, Cambodian teacher trainees are very curious. As told in number 4 with ($M=4.10$), they wanted to learn English or learn more English through reading. This shows that they are very well-informed through reading. Then, as told in number 2 ($M=3.86$) the teacher trainees are easily pushed to learn through reading because they are strongly committed to reading even though the written materials are so hard for them. Finally, as reported in number 1 ($M=3.84$) of reading efficacy, the teacher trainees are self-believed. They feel that reading is very encouraging.

Discussion

According to the current study, the students were motivated to read in English. There may be several significant elements that influence their motivation. They may be knowledgeable about new written materials because they will soon be teachers at the main state school. Another point is that they will teach the students English as a separate course on their own. Without a doubt, they must read most books in English if they want to learn more. In addition, even though the reading materials are challenging for them, teacher candidates may never give up if they have a strong sense of conviction and devotion. This is due to the reading's important message.

The findings of this study agree with those of Marfuatin and Ridwan (2022). With a questionnaire and 15 participants, the study found that 53.33% of students were motivated to read English to learn new information about interesting topics. Their study also proved that 33.33% of the participants were excited to read, especially the written materials that interested them. The result of reading curiosity from this study is also similar to that is expressed by Deci and Ryan's (2000) research on motivation and human needs, revealing that high autonomy and intrinsic motivation increase reading motivation. This is because of the need for knowledge and new information that teacher trainees need. Based on the result of reading challenges from this study, the teacher trainees are committed to reading English written materials because of their importance and interest. This is in line with the study of Wigfield and Guthrie (1997). Their study involved 150 Grade 4 and 5 children from a mid-Atlantic state, with mixed socioeconomic backgrounds. It found that motivation significantly predicted the amount of reading that children engaged in, and the variety of reading materials they chose. It highlighted the importance of intrinsic motivation in promoting reading behaviors. Similarly, the teacher trainees read English extensively even though the materials were difficult because they were motivated to do more.

CONCLUSION

The current study reveals that teacher trainees are more likely to read because they like exploring additional knowledge since they will become teachers and walk through the long-life journey. Then, they are trained and committed to extensively reading more and more critical English books or documents. Finally, with the power of belief in self-efficacy, the teacher trainees are self-motivated and pursue their educational dream of a job as primary school teachers.

Schools, such as teacher training centers or educational faculties, should create a record book on what the teacher trainees are selecting to read themselves. This makes the teacher trainees feel recognized or positively noticed for their daily tasks. This shows that teachers influence relatedness in classrooms, allowing students to read self-selected material. The pleasure reading instructional intervention fostered this by involving teachers in reading activities (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Moreover, trainees become more motivated to read or explore reading. What is more, there should be an event for readers of the years that goes together with the Extensive Reading Program.

Recommendations for future research

The sample of the current study was small and was conducted at the Kandal Primary Teacher Training Center. A study on a larger scale and at other schools in Cambodia should be conducted. Students' motivation according to gender and students' motivation to read using other dimensions of motivation, such as involvement, competition, recognition, grades, compliance, and work avoidance. Finally, qualitative and mixed-methods designs are highly recommended.

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