

Original Article



EFL students' perceptions of teaching strategies, motivation, and learning strategies: Evidence from an NGO school in Siem Reap, Cambodia

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Abstract

This study aims to examine Cambodian EFL students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching strategies, their own motivation for learning English, and their learning strategies. The study employed a web-based survey administered through Microsoft Forms and used a simple random technique for sample selection. Based on 175 responses from Cambodian EFL students (60.6% = female), the results showed that these students had positive perceptions of their teachers' teaching strategies. The results also revealed that the students held positive motivation for English and moderately high levels of learning strategies for learning English. Further analysis showed that there were significantly positive relationships between teachers' teaching strategies and students' motivation ($r = .276, p < .01$) and between teachers' teaching strategies and students' learning strategies ($r = .271, p < .01$). It was also shown that there was a strong positive relationship between students' motivation and their learning strategies for English ($r = .601, p < .01$). These results suggested that effective teaching strategies were significantly associated with students' motivation and learning strategies. The study concludes with a discussion of limitations and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Teaching strategies; motivation; learning strategies; English as a foreign language; Cambodian EFL students

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Introduction

English has become a global lingua franca, playing a crucial role in communication, education, business, and economic development (Heng, 2020; Tes & Heng, 2024). Nowadays, there are approximately 1.5 billion people who speak English worldwide (Salomone, 2022). Like in other non-English-speaking countries in Southeast Asia, English in Cambodia is perceived as essential for academic success, career prospects, and economic development (Kirkpatrick, 2020; Tes & Heng, 2024). Consequently, English has increasingly gained interest at all educational levels, as Cambodian children start to learn English from an early age (Hum & Heng, 2024; Moore & Bounchan, 2020). In Cambodia, English language education is generally viewed as English as a foreign language (EFL) (Seng, 2023) and a popularly learned language among Cambodian students (Moore & Bounchan, 2010, 2020). In light of the growing importance of English, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) has included English in the general education curriculum since Grade 4 (Tes & Heng, 2024).

English language teaching and learning faced significant challenges in Cambodia (Boy & Water, 2023; Em, 2022) despite students' positive motivation in learning it (Em et al., 2022; Seng, 2023; Sor et al., 2022). Key challenges concern limited teacher quality, outdated learning programs, ineffective learning and teaching materials, unconducive classroom activities, large class size, and students' negative self-learning attitude (Em, 2022; Oeun & Heng, 2024). Other challenges were associated with insufficient resources, limited physical facilities, outdated textbooks/curricula, and a lack of teacher professional development (Boy & Water, 2023).

Despite the increasing significance of English language teaching in Cambodia, few studies have examined teachers' teaching strategies (Touch, 2023), although such studies are found in other countries in the region, including Indonesia (Andjani et al., 2024; Firharmawan & Heriyanto, 2023) and the Philippines (Adilon & Sabdani-Asiri, 2024; Sugabo et al., 2024). Touch (2023), who conducted a literature review on differentiated instruction in English language classes, argued that differentiated instruction was an effective strategy for meeting students' diverse learning needs. Studies such as Heng (2017) and Seng and Khleang (2014) on EFL university students and Nhem (2019) on EFL high school students have examined students' learning strategies for learning English. University EFL students were found to employ learning

strategies to enhance their speaking skills, such as talking in front of a mirror and watching English-language movies (Heng, 2017). There is, however, a lack of empirical evidence on how teachers use teaching strategies in English classes. The relationships among teaching strategies, student motivation, and learning strategies in non-governmental organization (NGO) schools in Cambodia remain underexplored. As Wood et al. (2006) and Comber (2018) noted, community-based or NGO-based schools play a vital role in enhancing students' academic achievement through English language learning. Sultana (2023) noted that NGO schools provide learners with diverse learning materials and use varied content to make study materials more engaging. Teachers may adopt different teaching strategies to help students become more engaged in their studies (Sultana, 2023). Thus, the present study aims to bridge these gaps by examining Cambodian EFL students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching strategies, their own motivation, and their learning strategies for studying English at one NGO in Siem Reap province, Cambodia.

This study aims to examine Cambodian EFL students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching strategies, as well as students' motivation and their learning strategies. The study is guided by four research questions:

1. What are Cambodian students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching strategies in the EFL classrooms?
2. What are the levels of Cambodian students' motivation for learning English?
3. What learning strategies do Cambodian students use in studying English?
4. Are there relationships between teachers' teaching strategies, students' motivation, and students' learning strategies?

Literature review

Teachers' teaching strategies

Teaching is not an easy task, especially in the EFL context, requiring teachers to employ effective teaching strategies (Aleccia, 2017; Firharmawan & Heriyanto, 2023). According to Firharmawan and Heriyanto (2023), language teaching strategies refer to planned collections of pedagogical procedures that teachers employ to support student learning and ensure the acquisition of the target language, involving techniques that assist learners in understanding desired course content and achieving good learning outcomes. The use of teaching strategies is crucial for enhancing language instruction practices in the

classroom, as teachers and learners engage actively in the learning process (Lakew et al., 2025; Sugabo et al., 2024). Sugabo et al. (2024) noted that an effective teacher must employ diverse teaching methods and techniques to inspire students and promote learning outcomes. The effective use of teaching strategies is essential for students in many ways, including enhancing students' engagement and learning outcomes (Dursun & Aykan, 2025), fostering their motivation for English language learning (Sumar & Mahawati, 2025), and creating learning environments tailored to students' needs (Zaid et al., 2019).

Studies across different social and geographical contexts underscore the effectiveness of diverse teaching strategies in enhancing students' academic outcomes (Adilon & Sabdani-Asiri, 2024; Cardino & Cruz, 2020; Lakew et al., 2025; Sibomana et al., 2022; Sugabo et al., 2024). In Burundi, for example, Sibomana et al. (2022) showed that teachers' teaching strategies influenced students' academic achievement in national exams. Teachers used cooperative learning, which allowed students to interact and share ideas in pairs or small groups (Sibomana et al., 2022). These findings were supported by Lakew et al. (2025) in the context of Ethiopia regarding the use of cooperative learning as a teaching strategy. Additionally, teachers were also reported to use other teaching strategies, such as task-based learning, project-based learning, differentiated instruction, and technology integration in EFL classrooms (Lakew et al., 2025).

In the Philippines, many studies, including Adilon and Sabdani-Asiri (2024), Cardino and Cruz (2020), Pillado et al. (2021), and Sugabo et al. (2024), have examined teaching strategies used by teachers. Sugabo et al. (2024) identified three common teaching strategies: conceptual understanding, game-based learning, and collaborative learning. Cardino and Cruz (2020) also found cooperative learning to be one of the teaching strategies influencing students' academic performance. Specifically, Adilon and Sabdani-Asiri (2024) showed that teachers used teaching strategies to enhance students' academic performance, including providing clear explanations on complex concepts, designing suitable lessons for different learning styles and abilities, encouraging students to ask questions, and providing constructive feedback. Other teaching strategies were also found to be used, such as having fun activities, relating lessons to real-life situations, and encouraging students to ask questions (Pillado et al., 2021).

In the context of Indonesia, [Zaid et al. \(2019\)](#) showed that there were four teaching strategies commonly used by English teachers, such as active learning, collaborative learning, discussion, and the use of humor. Likewise, [Andjani et al. \(2024\)](#) revealed that group discussions, reading aloud, games, and differentiated instruction were key strategies to enhance student participation in EFL classrooms. Particularly, [Firharmawan and Heriyanto \(2023\)](#) found that teachers used different teaching strategies to enhance students' English-speaking skills, such as role-play, storytelling, group discussion, picture description, and information gap completion.

In Cambodia, on the other hand, pedagogical reform is set to replace traditional, teacher-centered types of pedagogies with new, student-centered, active-learning pedagogies, and teachers are encouraged to learn the set of teaching strategies through monthly meetings ([Ogisu, 2022](#)). [Ouch's \(2022\)](#) review study argued that teachers were familiar with the student-centered approach, with a specific understanding of some teaching strategies, such as inquiry-based learning and problem-based learning, and confidence in applying them.

Students' motivation for learning English

Motivation refers to the process whereby goal-oriented activities are established and maintained ([Cook & Artino, 2016](#)). According to [Dörnyei \(2001\)](#), motivation explains people's decision to engage in a particular activity, including how long they remain in it and how much perseverance they put into achieving it. Motivation is "the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process" ([Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117](#)). [Gopalan et al. \(2017\)](#) noted that motivation and learning are intertwined, as students' level of motivation reflects on their engagement and contribution in a learning environment. Based on Gardner's social-educational model, motivation can be classified as integrative and instrumental motivation ([Gardner, 2001; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003](#)). Integrative motivation refers to the passion to study a language, as learners appreciate its culture, encouraging students to communicate with foreign speakers and understand their culture ([Masgoret & Gardner, 2003](#)). On the other hand, instrumental motivation is the desire to learn a language for social and economic goals, such as career, education, and finance ([Masgoret & Gardner, 2003](#)).

Motivation can also be intrinsic and extrinsic (Deci et al., 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vallerand et al., 1992). Intrinsic motivation is “the fact of doing an activity for itself, and the pleasure and satisfaction” (Vallerand et al., 1992, p. 1004). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is “a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 60). For instance, a student tries to do assignments at home to avoid his or her parents' sanctions (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Kim (2025) found that South Korean students were extrinsically motivated to learn English, as it is a vital language for higher education, employment opportunities, and professional advancement. Hussain et al. (2020) found that Saudi Arabian EFL students were both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to study English due to a passion for self-improvement, academic achievement, an exciting learning environment, and social recognition.

In China, Zheng et al. (2019) found that university students had the motivation to learn English because they perceived English as a leading international language. Thus, being proficient in English can bring them benefits, such as achieving a good grade point average (GPA), staying competitive in the job market, and understanding English-speaking movies (Zheng et al., 2019). Jiao and Liang's (2022) study showed that the English learning motivation of high school students was mainly driven by intrinsic interest (like English literature or language learning), learning situation (enjoy English classes, recognize the quality of English classes, or like English textbooks), social responsibility (get a good job or go abroad for educational and job opportunities), and personal development (a sense of accomplishment or using English as an important tool). It was also shown that intrinsic interest and personal development had a significant positive impact on students' English achievement (Jiao & Liang, 2022).

In Indonesia, Fiddiyasari and Pustika's (2021) research found instrumental and extrinsic motivation to be the dominant form of students' learning motivation, as they wanted to master English skills for their future career and got encouragement from their English teachers. Dwinalida and Setiaji (2022) indicated that integrative motivation influenced high school students' motivation for English learning, as they want to communicate with foreigners, become digital literates, and understand English literature, arts, and other cultures. Similarly, Purmama et al. (2019) showed that 8th-grade students were

motivated to study English due to their personal preference, and they thought that studying English enabled them to associate with different people, become knowledgeable people, be prepared for future jobs and studies, and understand English-speaking films, books, or news.

In the context of Vietnam, [Nguyen et al. \(2023\)](#) showed that university students were highly motivated to learn English due to gaining practical knowledge and skills from lessons, career prospects, good academic performance, dedicated lecturers with effective teaching methods, or styles. Another study by [Nguyen and Habók \(2021\)](#) revealed that university students had high motivation, as they showed a strong desire for English and willingness to take opportunities to enhance their English abilities. They realized the importance of learning English for their academic studies, future careers, and as a means of communication.

In the context of Cambodia, [Em et al. \(2022\)](#) showed that Cambodian high school students were mainly extrinsically motivated to study English due to different purposes, such as career prospects, travel, higher education, and a means of communication with foreigners. Likewise, [Sor et al.'s \(2022\)](#) research on Cambodian high school students found similar results. However, a study by [Seng \(2023\)](#) found that university students' motivation for learning English was primarily driven by integrative motivation. Students reported that studying English enables them to understand English books and movies and to interact with foreign people ([Seng, 2023](#)).

Students' learning strategies

Learning strategies refer to certain techniques and methods taken by language learners, making learning more convenient, self-directed, effective, and enjoyable ([Oxford, 1990](#)). According to [Oxford \(1990\)](#), learning strategies are classified into two types: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies refer to the activities that directly influence the learning process, such as applying or taking notes in the target language. However, indirect strategies are the activities that have an indirect influence on the learning process, such as paying careful attention while teachers or classmates are talking in the target language ([Oxford, 1990](#)). Learners use learning strategies to understand information and tackle linguistically related issues ([Paudel, 2019](#)). An effective use of learning strategies allows learners to have better control of their learning by enhancing language competencies and developing confidence and

motivation in the learning process (Shi, 2017). Research on language learning strategies has been studied by researchers (Paudel, 2019; Safitri et al., 2018), with some research in the context of China showing that successful English learners used three major strategies: cognitive, affective, and resource management strategies (Wen, 2023; Zha & Liu, 2023). Chinese EFL students employed learning strategies, such as discussing assignments with classmates, engaging in online English learning activities, sharing English articles with classmates, practicing English after class, and seeking support from classmates (Wen, 2023).

In the context of Indonesia, Safitri et al. (2018) found that EFL students used learning strategies for learning English, including paying attention to teachers' explanations and other classmates' performances, setting English learning schedules with specific goals, seeking opportunities to practice, and asking teachers or friends for better understanding of materials. Basalama et al.'s (2020) study showed that Indonesian EFL students employed various learning strategies in English-speaking classes, with taking notes, finding opportunities to practice speaking with friends, and asking friends to correct mistakes being the most frequently used.

In Cambodia, research has investigated students' language learning strategies at different levels, such as Nhem (2019) on students in general English programs and Seng and Khleang (2016) on university EFL students. Seng and Khleang (2016) found that metacognitive strategies were most used by students. Nhem (2019) showed that cognitive and metacognitive strategies were often employed by students. The students used different ways to acquire the English language, such as practicing speaking English with others, writing letters or messages in English, reading English books, listening to English music, or watching English movies. The students also sought opportunities for practicing English with teachers and made schedules or plans for learning and monitoring their learning progress (Nhem, 2019). Despite these studies, research on Cambodian EFL students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching strategies, their own learning motivation, and their learning strategies remains underexplored.

Research methodology

Research design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to investigate Cambodian EFL students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching strategies, their own learning motivation, and their learning strategies. It employed a web-based survey utilizing Microsoft Forms (Cohen et al., 2018). As Denscombe (2010) noted, a web-based survey provides a less costly and faster alternative to other forms of surveys, such as postal and telephone surveys. According to Phong et al. (2016), over two-thirds (76%) of Cambodians owned phones, and almost half (48%) of them had access to the Internet. Thus, this research design and data collection method were considered suitable for the present study.

Research setting

This research was conducted at the Teacher Development Support Organization (TDSO), located in Siem Reap province, Cambodia. TDSO, an accredited non-governmental organization (NGO) established in 2017, works to provide continuing professional development training, such as pedagogy and English language skills, for both in-service and contract teachers in public primary schools. Besides, TDSO also provides English-language classes for children and students in the community. According to TDSO student statistics for the 2024-2025 academic year, 458 students enrolled in English classes. The researcher chose the targeted NGO for the study due to the convenience of accessibility, as he is an employee there. According to Marshall and Rossman (2010), when the researcher knows the place well, he or she has a much better chance of gaining access to the research site. Thus, the targeted NGO offered an ideal setting to examine Cambodian EFL students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching strategies, their own learning motivation, and their learning strategies for studying English.

Sample and sampling strategy

A simple random sampling strategy was employed to select the participants for the study. The students studying at this NGO are students from different high schools and universities in Siem Reap province. They were selected based on voluntary responses to an online survey. There was a total of 175 student participants, female (60.5%), male (36.6%), and preferred not to say (2.9%), who responded to the survey. Their ages were diverse, ranging from below 15 to 26,

with the age group of 15 to 18 being the most (45.1%). Regarding education, the participants were classified into four major groups: lower-secondary level (41.1%), upper-secondary level (34.9%), and bachelor's degree level (17.1%), while 6.9% were those who had finished high school but not yet begun university. Their levels of English proficiency ranged from elementary (24.6%) to advanced (9.1%), with the largest proportion at the intermediate level (30.3%). Table 1 presents demographic information about the participants.

Table 1. *Participants' demographic information (n = 175)*

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	64	36.5
	Female	106	60.6
	Prefer not to say	5	2.9
Age group	Below 15 years old	57	32.6
	15-18 years old	79	45.1
	19-22 years old	26	14.9
	23-26 years old	13	7.4
Education	Lower secondary level (Grades 7-9)	72	41.1
	Upper secondary level (Grades 10-12)	61	34.9
	Finished high school but not yet started university	12	6.9
	Pursuing a bachelor's degree	30	17.1
English level	Elementary	43	24.6
	Pre-Intermediate	23	13.1
	Intermediate	53	30.3
	Upper-Intermediate	40	22.9
	Advanced	16	9.1

Research instrument

The survey questionnaire was developed in both Khmer and English to ensure participants' clear comprehension of the questionnaire items. The survey was designed based on information from the literature review, particularly from those studies of [Adilon and Sabdani-Asiri \(2024\)](#), [Cardino et al. \(2020\)](#), [Nhem \(2019\)](#), [Pillado et al. \(2021\)](#), [Purmama et al. \(2019\)](#), [Sor et al. \(2022\)](#), and [Safitri et al. \(2018\)](#), who developed and validated questionnaire items. The survey has four sections, totaling 21 questionnaire items. The first section is participants'

demographic information (with 4 items). The second section is the teachers' teaching strategies (with 7 items), informed by studies such as [Adilon and Sabdani-Asiri \(2024\)](#), [Cardino et al. \(2020\)](#), and [Pillado et al. \(2021\)](#). The third section is the students' motivation for studying English (with 5 items), informed by studies, including [Purmama et al. \(2019\)](#) and [Sor et al. \(2022\)](#). The last section is the students' learning strategies used to study English (with 5 items), informed by studies such as [Nhem \(2019\)](#) and [Safitri et al. \(2018\)](#). The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, from 1. Strongly disagree to 5. Strongly agree. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, back translation was utilized to ensure accurate meanings between English and Khmer. Prior to the official distribution of the survey, a pilot was conducted with 10 students to examine the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items.

Data collection and analysis

The questionnaire was administered online through Microsoft Forms. The survey link was distributed through various Telegram groups. The researcher sought support from his colleagues to help share the survey link with their students in different classes. The survey was open for responses for two weeks, from 7 July to 21 July 2025. It took the participants approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete the survey. Before the closure of the survey, a few follow-ups were made to encourage more responses.

Table 2. *Reliability test*

	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Teachers' teaching strategies	7	0.90
Students' motivation	5	0.91
Students' learning strategies	5	0.85
Overall	17	0.90

To analyze the collected data, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 was used. The data gathered via Microsoft Forms were first transferred to Microsoft Excel for cleaning and preparation. They were then imported into SPSS for data coding and analysis. An internal reliability analysis was performed, producing Cronbach's alpha of 0.90, demonstrating very good internal consistency across 17 questionnaire items (see Table 2). [George and Mallery \(2020\)](#) suggested that the acceptable alpha value must be greater than 0.70. Both descriptive and inferential analyses were employed, including

frequency, percentage (%), mean (M), standard deviation (SD), and Pearson correlation (r).

Ethical considerations

Ethical standards were maintained throughout the research process. Firstly, the author communicated with the organization's executive director for his approval of the research site and to reveal the institution's name in the study. Secondly, confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, as specific personal information, including names, phone numbers, and email addresses, was not collected, as this could lead to the participants' identification. Lastly, participation in this research was based on a voluntary basis because the participants could fill out the survey at their convenience. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the survey at any time without having to provide any reasons or explanations. Furthermore, although the author is a staff member with the organization, there is no conflict of interest involved or potential risk of harm to the participants. Finally, as the study involved students under 18 years, child safety was very closely followed. Parental consent was also obtained through Telegram groups, as some students used their parents' phones to complete the survey.

Results

Students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching strategies

Table 3. *Cambodian EFL students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching strategies*

Statements	Level of agreement (%)				
	A	SA	A & SA	M	SD
My teacher relates the lesson to real-life situations and practices.	36.57	46.86	83.43	4.25	0.87
My teacher allows me to collaborate with my peers to help me learn better.	32.57	57.71	90.28	4.43	0.81
My teacher designs lessons to meet different learning styles and abilities.	38.86	47.43	86.29	4.31	0.79
My teacher encourages me to ask questions and share ideas during class.	33.14	50.29	83.43	4.31	0.82
My teacher employs various teaching methods to make lessons engaging, such as fun activities and games.	32.57	54.86	87.43	4.39	0.80

My teacher uses teaching strategies that develop critical and creative thinking skills through project-based learning.	38.29	44.00	82.29	4.23	0.81
My teacher gives constructive feedback on my assignments/homework.	32.57	46.29	78.86	4.20	0.90
Overall	34.94	49.63	84.57	4.30	0.83

Note: A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

As presented in Table 3, Cambodian EFL students reported positive perceptions of their teachers' teaching strategies ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.81$). The results showed that the students perceived that their teachers allowed them to collaborate with peers to help them learn better ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.81$), employed various teaching methods to make lessons engaging ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.80$), designed lessons to meet different learning styles and abilities ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.79$), and encouraged students to ask questions and share ideas during class ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.82$). Cambodian students also perceived that their teachers related the lesson to real-life situations and practices ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.87$), used teaching strategies that developed critical and creative thinking skills ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.81$), and provided constructive feedback on students' assignments or homework ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.90$).

Students' motivations for learning English

Table 4. *Cambodian EFL students' motivation for learning English*

Statements	Level of agreement (%)			M	SD
	A	SA	A & SA		
I really like learning English as a foreign language.	45.71	45.14	90.85	4.31	0.80
I study English as it helps me become a more knowledgeable person.	42.86	46.86	89.72	4.32	0.80
I study English because I may need it later for jobs or studies.	32.00	60.00	92.00	4.45	0.88
Studying English enables me to communicate with foreigners.	46.86	41.71	88.57	4.26	0.79
Studying English enables me to understand English-speaking films, books, news, and media sources.	48.00	42.86	90.86	4.30	0.74
Overall	43.09	47.31	90.40	4.33	0.80

Note: A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 4, Cambodian EFL students had high levels of motivation for learning English ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.80$). Specifically, the results showed that the students appeared to agree with most statements regarding their motivation for learning English, such as 'I study English because I may need it later for jobs or studies' ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.88$), 'I study English as it helps me become a more knowledgeable person' ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.80$), 'I really like learning English as a foreign language' ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.80$), 'Studying English enables me to understand English-speaking films, books, news, and media sources' ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.74$), and 'Studying English enables me to communicate with foreigners' ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.79$). Based on the observed mean scores, the students were most instrumentally motivated to learn English due to career and education opportunities ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.88$).

Students' learning strategies

Table 5. *Cambodian EFL students' learning strategies for the English language*

Statements	Level of agreement (%)			M	SD
	A	SA	A & SA		
I pay attention to the teacher's explanation and other students' performance.	64.57	20.57	85.14	4.02	0.71
I plan my English learning by creating structured study schedules with clear learning goals.	52.00	21.14	73.14	3.90	0.79
I often seek opportunities to practice English pronunciation.	56.57	18.86	75.43	3.87	0.81
I find my friends to practice speaking English with.	51.43	21.14	72.57	3.87	0.84
I often ask my teacher or friends if I don't understand any lessons or materials.	53.71	25.71	79.42	3.95	0.90
Overall	55.66	21.49	77.15	3.92	0.81

Note: A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Table 5 presents the results of students' agreement with statements regarding their English language learning strategies. Overall, the results showed that they

used a variety of learning strategies ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.81$). Specifically, they had a moderately high level of agreement with statements, such as ‘I often ask my teacher or friends if I don’t understand any lessons or materials’ ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.90$), ‘I plan my English learning by creating structured study schedules with clear learning goals’ ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.79$), ‘I often seek opportunities to practice English pronunciation’ ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.81$), and ‘I find my friends to practice speaking English with’ ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.84$). The results also revealed that Cambodian students had good learning strategies used for learning English, as they paid attention to the teacher’s explanation and other students’ performance ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.71$).

Relationships between teachers’ teaching strategies, students’ motivation, and students’ learning strategies

Table 6. *Pearson correlation coefficient matrix of teachers’ teaching strategies, students’ motivation, and students’ learning strategies*

	1	2	3
1. Teachers’ teaching strategies	–	.276**	.271**
2. Students’ motivation		–	.601**
3. Students’ learning strategies			–

** $p < 0.01$

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationships between teachers’ teaching strategies, students’ motivation, and students’ learning strategies. As shown in Table 6, there were small but significantly positive correlations between teachers’ teaching strategies and students’ motivation ($r = .276$, $p < .01$) and between teachers’ teaching strategies and students’ learning strategies ($r = .271$, $p < .01$). These results indicate that effective teaching strategies are significantly associated with students’ motivation and learning strategies for English study. There was also a strong positive correlation between students’ motivation and students’ learning strategies ($r = .601$, $p < .01$), suggesting that students who have higher motivation in English will adopt more learning strategies.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine Cambodian EFL students’ perceptions of teachers’ teaching strategies. The study also sought to explore students’ motivation and learning strategies for English learning. The results revealed that Cambodian

EFL students held positive perceptions of teachers' teaching strategies. Especially, the students perceived that their teachers employed different teaching methods and strategies, which enabled them to collaborate with their classmates, express their ideas, and enhance their critical thinking and creativity. The students also perceived that their teachers utilized differentiated instruction by designing lessons to meet different types of learning abilities. These results align with previous research in different contexts, such as Cambodia (Touch, 2023), Ethiopia (Lakew et al., 2025), Indonesia (Andjani et al., 2024; Zaid et al., 2019), and the Philippines (Adilon & Sabdani-Asiri, 2024; Pillado et al., 2021). For instance, Touch (2023) found that differentiated instruction was an effective teaching strategy that could serve Cambodian students' diverse learning needs in the mixed-ability classroom. Sibomana et al. (2022) found that Burundian teachers used cooperative learning, which allowed students to interact and share ideas in pairs or small groups.

This study also showed that Cambodian EFL students had high levels of motivation for learning English due to personal preferences and other reasons, including helping them become more knowledgeable people, being beneficial for future jobs and studies, a means of communication with foreigners, and enabling them to understand English-speaking films, books, and news. These results indicate students' understanding of the significant role of English for education, employability, and communication (Tes & Heng, 2024). These results are consistent with previous studies in Cambodia, such as Em et al. (2022), Seng (2023), and Sor et al. (2022). For example, Em et al. (2022) found that Cambodian high school students were motivated to learn English by prospects for personal development, employment, higher education, and communication with foreigners. The results of this study also align with previous studies in different contexts, such as China (Jiao & Liang, 2022; Zheng et al., 2019), Indonesia (Dwinalida & Setiaji, 2022; Purmama et al., 2019), Saudi Arabia (Hussain et al., 2020), and Vietnam (Nguyen et al., 2023; Nguyen & Habók, 2021). Purmama et al. (2019), for instance, revealed that Indonesian high school students became motivated to learn English due to their personal preference, and it enabled them to associate with different people, become knowledgeable individuals, and understand English-speaking films, books, or news.

Regarding learning strategies, the present study showed that Cambodian EFL students had a moderately high level of them. For instance, the students paid close attention to the teachers' explanations and their classmates' performances. They also tended to adopt social/affective strategies by asking their teachers and classmates when they did not understand the lessons and seeking opportunities to practice pronunciation and speaking with their friends. The students also employed a metacognitive learning strategy by creating a structured study schedule with a clear learning goal. These results suggest that students used various active and autonomous learning strategies to facilitate language learning. These results align with previous studies in various contexts, such as Cambodia (Nhem, 2019; Seng & Khleang, 2016), China (Wen, 2023), and Indonesia (Basalama et al., 2020; Safitri et al., 2018).

Finally, this study showed that there were statistically significant correlations between teachers' teaching strategies and students' motivation ($r = .276, p < .01$) and between teachers' teaching strategies and students' learning strategies ($r = .271, p < .01$). This study also showed that there was a strong positive correlation between students' motivation and students' learning strategies ($r = .601, p < .01$). These results suggest that effective teaching strategies were significantly associated with the improvement in motivation and learning strategies of the students. These results are consistent with those reported by Dursun and Aykan (2025) in Turkey, Sumar and Mahawati (2025) and Zaid et al. (2019) in Indonesia, and Zhang et al. (2024) in China. For example, Sumar and Mahawati (2025) found that the more Indonesian teachers' teaching strategies were enhanced, the more students' learning motivation would be improved. Likewise, Zaid et al. (2019) revealed that Indonesian students felt motivated in learning when they were actively engaged, as the teachers used various teaching strategies that accommodated students' different learning styles and abilities.

Conclusion and implications

This study showed that students held positive perceptions of their teachers' teaching strategies. It was also found that the students had high levels of motivation for English language learning, and they used various learning strategies. The study also identified positive correlations among teachers' teaching strategies, students' motivation, and students' learning strategies.

In light of these results, this research has a few implications. First, since students positively perceived their teachers' teaching strategies, such as collaborative learning, differentiated instruction, and critical thinking and creativity-oriented activities, it is important that teachers should continue to excel in these teaching methods and share and cascade the best practices among their colleagues through a professional learning community, through peer-to-peer learning, or by delivering a short presentation during related meetings. Leaders or managers of the institutions should provide incentives to teachers who demonstrate best teaching practices, such as outstanding teacher awards.

Second, the students demonstrated strong motivation for English, mainly due to their future careers and studies, being more knowledgeable individuals, personal preferences, and a means of communication with people from diverse geographical backgrounds. It is essential for teachers to design lessons that relate English learning to students' personal interests and create more opportunities for students to communicate in English in classrooms, such as role-play, presentation, pair/group work, and gallery walk.

Third, the study has shown that various learning strategies were adopted by the students, such as creating a structured study schedule (metacognitive learning), seeking opportunities to practice English, and asking for support from teachers or classmates when facing difficulty in understanding materials or lessons (social/affective learning). Thus, teachers should provide more structured guidance on how to effectively utilize these learning strategies, including introducing effective ways to establish a realistic study schedule and achievable learning goals and forming students into diverse groups as well as creating class mentors, thereby providing a conducive environment for students to practice English and building good rapport among their classmates.

Finally, positive correlations among teachers' teaching strategies, students' motivation, and their learning strategies were identified, suggesting that enhancing teaching practices may contribute to higher motivation, which consequently enhances students' learning strategies. It is, therefore, essential for policymakers and institutions to support teacher professional development by providing training workshops or sponsoring teachers to participate in the training to gain innovative teaching methods, thereby benefiting students in the learning process.

The present study has a few limitations. First, as it was a small-scale study conducted at one local NGO in Siem Reap province, it limited the geographic and demographic representativeness of Cambodian EFL learners. Therefore, generalization seems impractical for the broader Cambodian EFL student population across various regions, socioeconomic backgrounds, and school types. Second, this study used a web-based survey that collected data at only a single time. Thus, it could prevent the study from capturing changes in students' perspectives over time.

To address these limitations and contribute to an in-depth understanding of how Cambodian EFL learners perceive their teachers' teaching strategies as well as their own learning motivation and learning strategies for English, future research should extend the scope of this study by increasing the sample size and conducting data collection at different NGOs or community school settings. Future research should also examine the types of effective teaching strategies employed by teachers that influence students' motivation and learning strategies. Future research investigating different aspects of this topic is recommended to employ longitudinal or mixed-methods approaches to gain deeper and more comprehensive insights into the different personal, cultural, and socioeconomic factors that influence students' motivation and learning strategies. Future research should also explore how teachers' teaching strategies influence student engagement and learning outcomes.

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