Social Psychological Impacts on Language Use: Anxiety among Cambodian University Students

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Abstract

Since its conception as a situation-specific construct, foreign language anxiety has been extensively investigated and expanded to account for the complex nature of language learning and teaching. This study aims to identify the underlying dimensions of beliefs about target language use, motivation, and the frequency of target language use. It also seeks to explore the extent of their impacts on the language use anxiety among Cambodian university students. Based on a survey of 129 students in two departments, the study revealed that three main factors (i.e., beliefs about the student's use of target language, the frequency of target language use in formal contexts, and the frequency of target language use in informal contexts) significantly predicted the language use anxiety among the students. Implications for classroom instruction and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: language anxiety, frequency of language use, motivation, university students, Cambodia

Introduction

Despite appearing to be a well-established field of research, foreign language anxiety (FLA) has continued to be at the locus of attention among applied linguists, sociologists, and social psychologists. Since it was empirically conceptualized as a situation-specific anxiety construct (Gardner, 1985; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), FLA has been extensively investigated and further expanded by numerous researchers to account for the complex nature of language learning and teaching. Among those earlier studies, the focus was mainly to examine the relationship between specific measures of language anxiety and language achievement (e.g. course grades) in a range of instructional contexts with different target languages (Aida, 1994; Saito & Samimy, 1996). Other studies have examined language anxiety in relation to instructional conditions (Steinberg & Horwitz, 1986; Young, 1990, 1991), teacher-student interactions (Young, 1990, 1991), different language skills (Elkhafaifi, 2005; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Oh, 1992; Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999), learners' beliefs and perceptions (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999; Young, 1991), and overseas language experience (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). These studies produced both consistent and contradicting results, thus suggesting the multifaceted nature of foreign language anxiety. Horwitz's (1986) assertion over 20 years ago that "we [researchers] do not yet know how pervasive foreign language anxiety is, nor do we comprehend its precise repercussions in the classroom" (p. 131) may still, in fact, hold true even with such an abundance of literature about the topic.

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While a number of studies examined foreign language anxiety as a factor associated with learners' achievements (Horwitz, 2001), relatively few studies investigated factors that may explain why learners become anxious. And those that did either explored the relationship between an individual factor and the language anxiety or investigated the way or to what extent foreign language anxiety differed between or among different learners (Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008; Levine, 2003; Young, 1990). Even fewer were studies that investigated a combination of factors that may contribute to or explain foreign language anxiety (Cheng, 2002; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). Given the multidimensional, situation-specific nature of language anxiety, more studies are needed in order to examine various other factors that together contribute to foreign language anxiety. The present study thus seeks to examine the experiences of college students enrolled in the Core English and the Advanced English courses—i.e., to develop English language proficiency in the four macro skills—in a large public university in Cambodia by examining the social and psychological factors that contribute to the prediction of their target language use anxiety.

English Language Education in Cambodia

In order to understand the current state of English language education in Cambodia, it is useful to examine its unique historical context of foreign languages. During the French colonial rule (1864-1953), French was used alongside Khmer (i.e., Cambodia's national language) to facilitate the colonial administration (Clayton, 1995). This period also saw the introduction of the Vietnamese language as a result of the French employment of Vietnamese civil servants and teachers from Vietnam to fill the vacancies in Cambodia. After the independence from France, the system of mass education was still based on the French model, and French was still used at various levels of education (Clayton, 2008). Up until the early 1970s, the education system was fully functioning, and the universities were operated throughout the urban areas and provincial towns. Khmer was used more widely in primary education. This period also saw the opening of private schools that catered to children from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Chinese, Vietnamese, European, Muslim and other religious groups (e.g., Roman Catholics). The languages taught in those schools were Chinese, Vietnamese, French, English, and Khmer (Neau, 2003).

During the Khmer Rouge, aka the Democratic Kampuchea regime (1975-1979), the institutional and physical infrastructure in Cambodia was almost completely devastated (Kiernan, 2008). Literacy beyond the lowest grade was deemed unnecessary and thus abolished, and the learning of foreign languages was prohibited (Clayton, 2002). From 1979 to 1989, under a new Vietnamese-backed government called the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), education was the top priority of the government, in particular during the earlier part of the regime. The study of Vietnamese or Russian language was compulsory from the beginning of the secondary level. German and Spanish were also taught as short-term courses at the University of Phnom Penh, currently known as the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) (Pit & Roth, 2003). The learning of English was banned or illegal (apparently since the Khmer Rouge regime) until the mid-1980s when the PRK government approved the first Australian-funded English teacher training project in Cambodia.

In 1989, when the Vietnamese withdrew from Cambodia, English was officially introduced as one of the two foreign language options (i.e., French and English) in public secondary schools. The popularity of English and English language teaching continued to grow rapidly as the country made a transition from communism to democracy in the early 1990s. Today, English is the most preferred foreign language, compared to French, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese, as it plays an important role in such areas as employment, education, and international communication. Since 2014, the teaching of English has begun from the 4th Grade in the primary schools, with students receiving four hours of English instruction per week (Mao, 2013). In the lower secondary level (Grades 7-9), students receive five hours of English instruction while only four hours are provided in the upper secondary level (Grades 10-12) (Neau, 2003). It is worth noting that, over the past decade, a number of private K-12 schools have been established throughout the country, particularly in the populous cities and provincial towns. These schools provide varying amounts of English instruction per week to their students. At the tertiary level, except within the English teacher education programs, Khmer is used mainly as

the medium of instruction in most public and private universities, with students receiving about three hours of English instruction per week (Mao, 2013). The learning of English also takes place after regular school hours in an increasing number of private English language schools—a popular practice among the urban, middle-class families in Cambodia.

Since English language teaching first took shape in Cambodia in the 1980s, a number of teaching approaches have been introduced. Despite the Ministry of Education's effort to promote communicative language teaching (CLT), the most common and influential method has been the Grammar-Translation method, reflecting the traditional and habitual use of rote learning and memorization (Neau, 2003). The popularity of this method may be attributed to the many constraints related to the current provision of English education in public schools, including limited access to updated curriculum, inadequate instructional materials, a high student-teacher ratio, students with mixed proficiency levels, inadequate teacher preparation, etc. (Mao, 2013). Neau further pointed out that Cambodian people have a relatively different way of thinking from Western people and, when learning a language, are eager to learn the written forms from the very beginning. Moreover, teachers are familiar with the Grammar-Translation method and do not need much time to make lesson plans or preparations. Nonetheless, the opposite is true for many private language and educational institutions, in which the implementation of CLT and/or other instructional methods such as task-based language teaching (TBLT) is highly promoted or required. Given the changing social, economic, and political atmospheres in Cambodia (Clayton, 2006; see also Hashim, Leong, & Pich, 2014), the importance of effective communicative ability in English among the Cambodian people has only intensified—a phenomenon that has a significant consequence for the teaching and learning of English in Cambodia in general and in public educational institutions in particular.

Foreign Language Anxiety and Achievement

Although research examining the affective experiences of learners began over four decades ago, FLA research may be traced back to Horwitz et al.'s (1986) study which culminated in the conceptualization of the construct of foreign language anxiety and the corresponding development of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Horwitz et al. (1986) viewed foreign language anxiety as a "distinct complex self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the learning process" (p. 128). Their study, which was conducted on students in the beginning foreign language classes at the University of Texas, suggested that many students in foreign language classrooms underwent significant language anxiety in response to at least some aspects of foreign language learning. This situation can have significant repercussions on foreign language learners' performance such as simply procrastinating over completing their school work, avoiding speaking in class, or, worse yet, changing their majors to avoid foreign language study. Based on their findings, Horwitz et al. called for improvement at all levels of foreign language teaching by recognizing, coping with, and eventually overcoming debilitative foreign language anxiety that can adversely impact learners' experiences in foreign language learning.

Since its original development, FLCAS has been used by a number of researchers to examine foreign language anxiety (FLA) and learner achievements in a variety of language aspects, instructional conditions, and geographical locations (Aida, 1994; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Young, 1990). However, while the scale has been important in giving more momentum in FLA research literature, there has, as of yet, been no consensus among applied linguists on whether it is valid and reliable enough for comparative analyses across different settings. Despite its goal of measuring a unique form of anxiety specific to foreign language learning, the scale included items that appeared to be general and mostly pertained to the oral language components. This limited scope of the scale has resulted in attempts to construct skill-specific scales, such as the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) and the Second Language Writing Apprehension Test (SLWAT) (Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999; Saito et al., 1999), and the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLA) (Elkhafaifi, 2005).

As mentioned above, many of the earlier studies on foreign language anxiety investigated how this construct was associated with learning achievement. Steinberg and Horwitz (1986) studied the effects of induced anxiety on the content of oral description of stimulus pictures in the second language. They found that the content of L2 speech produced by Spanish-speaking learners in an intensive English program differed according to whether they were describing the pictures under anxiety-inducing or relaxed conditions. In other words, learners in the anxiety conditions produced significantly less personal and interpretive speech. In their study of affective variables among English-speaking students of French, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) found that classroom and language use anxiety had a significant negative relationship with several outcome measures of students' French performance (cloze and composition tasks and an objective test). Language anxiety was also found to associate with a poorer performance at the input, process, and output stages of language learning, with the processing and output stages having the strongest relationships (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). MacIntyre and Gardner suggested that language anxiety appeared to interfere with both the development of students' language proficiency and their ability to meaningfully produce the language learned.

Other studies have examined the relationships between foreign language anxiety and learner achievements measured by both their overall grades and grades on a variety of language skills (e.g. reading, writing, listening, speaking) (Cheng et al., 1999; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Marcos-Llinás & Garau, 2009; Saito et al., 1999; Sparks & Ganschow, 2007). In their study on college students in English majors from four universities in Taiwan, Cheng et al. (1999) found that overall second language classroom anxiety and second language writing anxiety were significantly and negatively correlated with both speaking and writing achievements. Saito et al. (1999) explored foreign language reading anxiety among college students enrolled in first-semester university French, Japanese and Russian courses. The findings revealed that students with high levels of reading anxiety received significantly lower grades than those with lower anxiety levels. Moreover, the levels of reading anxiety varied according to the specific languages, with the learners of Japanese being the most anxious followed by French and then Russian. In yet another study examining the effect of listening anxiety on the students' listening comprehension in an Arabic course, Elkhafaifi (2005) reported somewhat similar results, indicating that foreign language learning anxiety and listening anxiety are separate but related phenomena in that both correlated negatively with achievements. A more recent study by Sparks and Ganschow (2007) also provided consistent results. The authors investigated the relationship between anxiety and language skills, and found that the low anxiety group scored significantly higher than the high anxiety group on all measures of foreign language proficiency (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking) and foreign language aptitude, and also achieved higher foreign language course grades.

While Sparks and Ganschow's study and those of other researchers mentioned above found consistent results, Marcos-Llinás and Garau's (2009) study on the effects of language anxiety on course achievement in three foreign language proficiency levels of Spanish yielded somewhat contradictory results. The authors found that the beginner and the advanced learners experienced significantly different levels of language anxiety, with the latter scoring higher on the anxiety scale. However, they did not necessarily obtain lower final grades than the beginners. The finding may be explained by Tobias's (1985) hypothesis that, although test anxiety may debilitate performance, study or test-taking skills (in this case, of advanced learners) potentially facilitate learning and test performance. The growing body of research on language anxiety also tends to support the claim that foreign language anxiety is language-skill-specific. This phenomenon, to an extent, echoes Alpert and Haber's (1960) study on individual differences in anxiety as it affects the academic achievement performance. Although their research did not examine "language" anxiety per se, the findings revealed that the specific anxiety scales are more often than the general anxiety scales able to account for the difference in academic performance. Cheng et al. (1999) contended that "this trend is encouraging because it foreshadows the development of more sensitive and appropriate measurement instruments that can diagnose learners' anxiety problems more accurately, a prerequisite to more effective interventions" (p. 439).

Factors Relating to or Influencing Foreign Language Anxiety

While numerous studies have investigated the debilitative effects of foreign language anxiety on language learning and achievements, other researchers questioned whether anxiety leads to poor performance or the converse is true, with low achievements or its anticipation serving as the source of anxiety. Sparks, Ganschow, and Javorsky (2000) argued that students' anxiety about foreign language learning is likely to be the result of their learning difficulties and suggested that "any hypothesis that views affective variables as causal factors in learning a FL must be approached with caution" (p. 251). Since Sparks et al.'s caveat, a number of studies have attempted to examine the factors that somehow predicted or correlated with foreign language anxiety (Cheng, 2002; Dewaele et al., 2008; Huang, Eslami, & Hu, 2010; Koul, Roy, Kaewkuekool, & Ploisawaschai, 2009; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Marwan, 2008). In fact, a few earlier studies have examined this phenomenon. For example, Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) investigated what demographic and students' self-perceived variables significantly predicted foreign language anxiety, examining in particular direct measures of self-perception (e.g., perceived intellectual ability, perceived scholastic competence, perceived self-worth, and expected final course average for current language course) as well as measures of constructs that are manifestations of self-perceptions (i.e., social interdependence and study habits). Their findings suggested that students with the highest levels of foreign language anxiety tended to have at least one of these characteristics:

> older, high academic achievers, had never visited a foreign country, had not taken any high school foreign language courses, had low expectations of their overall average for their current language course, had a negative perception of their scholastic competence, or had a negative perception of their self-worth. (p. 227)

The negative self-perception was also reported in Woodrow's (2006) study on second language speaking anxiety. She found that performing in front of classmates and communicating with native speakers were the most reported stressors.

Age and self-rated overall proficiency in English were consistently reported as predictors of language anxiety by Liu and Jackson (2008) who conducted a study on the unwillingness to communicate and the anxiety of Chinese college students of English as a foreign language (EFL). Liu and Jackson found that the more risk-taking or sociable a learner was in English class, the more willing a learner was to communicate orally; or the more frequently a learner contacted his or her English-speaking friends by speaking, the less anxious the learner was in English class. In a similar vein, Levine (2003), investigating the relationship of reported target language use and other personal or classroom variables to target language use anxiety among university students and instructors across the U.S. and Canada, found that students who reported higher target language use in their foreign language classes, expected a higher grade, and expressed a higher motivation to learn the foreign languages tended to report lower levels of anxiety about target language use.

Many other language researchers investigated motivational factors and foreign language anxiety. Cheng (2002) found that four learner constructs (i.e., confidence in English writing, English writing motivation/attitude, extracurricular effort to learn English, and English writing achievement) contributed significantly to the prediction of L2 (i.e. English) writing anxiety among 165 English majors at one university in northern Taiwan. Among these four factors, confidence in English writing and English writing motivation/attitude were the two stronger predictors. The variable of confidence was also reported by Marwan (2008) in his study on factors which learners believed led to their anxiety in their foreign language learning. Marwan's analysis revealed three factors that contributed to their foreign language anxiety: lack of preparation, lack of confidence and fear of failing the class. In yet another study on goal orientations among Thai college students, Koul et al. (2009) found that the motivational goals of Thai college students were associated with self-perceived levels of foreign language anxiety: instrumental goals were associated with increased foreign language anxiety and cultural goals were associated with decreased foreign language anxiety.

Conceptual Framework of Language Anxiety

Researchers have long suggested that foreign language anxiety is a debilitating phenomenon that must be overcome by students in order for them to take full advantage of foreign language instruction (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Young, 1990). Anxiety is believed to exist in almost every aspect of second/foreign language learning and that much of the anxiety is associated with understanding and speaking the target language. Some researchers attempted to examine the various factors that contributed to the prediction of foreign language anxiety, such as age, academic achievement, prior history of visiting foreign countries, prior high school experience with foreign languages, expected overall average for current language course, perceived scholastic competence, and perceived self-worth, English learning history, classroom learning characteristics, and developmental history (Chen & Chang, 2004; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999).

More recent studies examined other dimensions that significantly contributed to language anxiety. These factors involved the social and psychological aspects of foreign language learning that included confidence in English writing, English writing motivation/attitude, extracurricular effort to learn English (Cheng, 2002), language class sociability, language class risk-taking, approach-avoidance, and frequency of contact with English-speaking friends by speaking (Liu & Jackson, 2008). Other researchers also found the frequency of language use (Dewaele et al., 2008; Levine, 2003; Thompson, 2009), motivational goal orientation (Koul et al., 2009), and belief about language use (Levine, 2003) to be associated with foreign language anxiety, although they did not investigate any predictive ability of these factors. The dimensions investigated in these recent studies emphasized the importance of motivational/attitudinal factor, the frequency of foreign language use and beliefs about target language as potential predictors of foreign language anxiety. Young (1990) suggested that any theoretical model would also have to consider those socio/psychological phenomena specifically associated with language learning and possibly language anxiety.

Nonetheless, except in the studies by Cheng (2002) and Liu and Jackson (2008), these social and psychological dimensions have not been fully or empirically tested as to their underlying components and psychometric properties. Cheng in particular only examined motivation as it pertained to English language writing. On the other hand, Liu and Jackson focused on how frequently a learner spoke to his or her English-speaking friends. Given the intricate nature of motivation and language use, the present study aimed to identify the underlying dimensionalities of beliefs among Cambodian university students about target language use, motivation, and frequency of target language use, and determine the extent to which these factors predict their language use anxiety. It was believed that students enrolled in foreign language classes bring with them preconceived beliefs about how a language is learned (Horwitz, 1988). They also come with a range of motivational drives. These social and psychological factors along with their perceptions about the frequency of language use are likely to contribute to the prediction of their language use anxiety.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What are the underlying factors that exist for the measures of the beliefs about the target language, the students' motivation, the frequency of the target language use, and the language use anxiety among Cambodian students in a large public university?
2. To what extent do these factors contribute to the prediction of the target language use anxiety among these students?

Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study were students from two different departments (i.e. English and International Studies) at a large flagship public university in Cambodia. English is a sole medium of instruction throughout

the programs in both departments, except for a few subjects (e.g., Math, environment studies, etc.) in the foundation year (1st year) which are taught in the native language (i.e., Khmer). In fact, in the Department of English, which comprises a much larger proportion of the student population, English language development is one of the core emphases in the program. Since the focus of the present study is on target language use anxiety, the participants were drawn from the Core English (CE) and Advanced English (AE) courses, which emphasize the development of the four-macro skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The CE courses are the general English courses taken by all the students in years 1-3. The proficiency level measures for CE1 (Year 1), CE2 (Year 2) and CE3 (Year 4) are Intermediate, Upper Intermediate, and Advanced, respectively. Each student's proficiency level is measured by a final course grade. For instance, if a student does not pass the course (e.g., CE1), he/she is required to either repeat the course or retake the final course exam the following year. The AE course is an Advanced-level English course designed specifically for senior students majoring in Professional Communication. Using non-probability convenience sampling, the researcher recruited 129 students to participate in the study. During the time of this research, the two departments enrolled over 2,000 students in their programs.

Measurement

Quantitative data were collected using an online questionnaire which contained two main sections designed to measure the components described in the conceptual framework. The first section sought to obtain demographic information about the students. The second section, which elicited the social and psychological aspects related to foreign language learning, was further subdivided into four parts: (1) motivational factors, (2) the extent of language use, (3) beliefs about language use, and (4) feeling/anxiety about language use. Parts 1 to 3 served as the predictor variables while Part 4 was the outcome variable. Questionnaire items in the first part included statements that reflected students' overall motivation about learning English and motivation driven by their teachers. Items in part 2 elicited students' report of their use of English with different interlocutors and in different communication contexts. Part 3 included statements that reflected the students' beliefs about the use of English with different interlocutors and in different contexts. Items in part 4 asked the students to express their feelings with regard to using English with different interlocutors and in different contexts. This final part of the questionnaire served as an outcome measure of the students' perceived language anxiety predicted by measures of beliefs about language use, motivational factors, and the extent of language use.

The questionnaire was adapted from Levine (2003) and informed by empirical and descriptive data from related literature (Chen & Chang, 2004; Cheng, 2002; Dewaele et al., 2008; Horwitz et al., 1986; Koul et al., 2009; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Macintyre, 2007; Thompson, 2009). To fit the goals and context of the present study, the adaptation involved modifying, rewording and removing some statements from the original questionnaire. To ensure the content validity, the first version of the questionnaire which contained 44 items was read by two independent professionals: one was a former foreign language teacher at the university under study and the other was a professor at a public research university in the U.S. Based on their comments, some statements were reworded and 3 items from part 2 of section 2—the extent of language use—were eliminated. The final questionnaire contained 41 items.

Procedure

The present study adopted a quantitative approach conducted through a closed questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale (Dörnyei, 2007). Because nonprobability convenience sampling was used, no randomization of the sample was warranted. The online questionnaire was administered to the target sample, with a link to the questionnaire posted on the Facebook Group of the students. Four classroom lecturers also helped to disseminate the information about the questionnaire among their students. A cover letter was appended at the beginning of the questionnaire to inform the participants about the purposes of the study, to assure the confidentiality of their responses, and to seek their consent to participate in the study. The data collection took place for a period of two weeks, after which no responses from the questionnaires were used. Two reminders

were sent during the data collection period: one after the first week and the other a few days before the end of the second week.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from the online questionnaire were imported into and analyzed using PASW Statistics GradPack 18. First, an analysis was conducted to examine the distributional properties of the items used to measure the hypothesized dimensions of beliefs about language, motivation, extent of language use, and language anxiety. The data were screened for missing values and outliers, using Mahalanobis distance. Each item was examined for a violation to normality and linearity. Second, factor analyses were conducted to examine the dimensionalities of the social and psychological factors reflected in the questionnaire instrument. Through the analyses, specific factors (or constructs) were derived that either confirmed those dimensions identified in the conceptual framework or established new constructs as measured by items in the questionnaire. Next, the items that loaded on each of the specific factors derived from the principal component analyses were determined for internal consistency, or reliability, using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Finally, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of a number of predictor variables on the measure of students' language use anxiety. The predictor variables were entered simultaneously into linear multivariate regression analysis after ensuring that the assumptions of the test were met. The model's observed effect size (R^2) and significance ($\alpha \leq .05$) were then fully reported according to convention as well as the observed effect size (B, β) and significance ($\alpha \leq .05$) values for the individual predictive factors. As the factors were entered simultaneously, no correction was applied.

Results

A summary of the students' characteristics is presented in Table 1 below. Of the 129 student participants, 36 (27.9%) were male and 93 (72.1%) were female. As for the participants' ages, 60 students (46.5%) were between 18 and 20 years old, 66 (51.2%) were between 21 and 25 years old, and only 3 (2.3%) were between 26 and 30 years old.

Most of the students were in their sophomore (20.9%), junior (46.5%) and senior (25.6%) years while only 9% were freshmen. Students came to the university with a range of language learning experiences, with 65.2% having studied English between 5 to 7 years, 32.5% between 1 to 4 years, and only 2.3% less than one year. Most of them (64.9%) reported that their final grade for the Core English or Advanced English subject was 70 and above, while 27.9% reported received a grade of between 60 and 69, and 7% between 50 and 59.

Social and Psychological Dimensions of Language Learning and Use

A principal component (factor) analysis using varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006) was conducted on each of the dimensions identified in the conceptual framework. It is worth noting that a series of factor analyses were conducted instead of a single analysis that would have fully checked for crossloading. This breach from convention occurred for several reasons. First, the purpose of the analyses was not to explore the underlying constructs, but to test the construct validity of each of the scales (i.e., motivational factors, the extent of language use, beliefs about language use, and feeling/anxiety about language use), informed by the previous literature. Second, the low number of cases or subjects meant that a factor analysis where the survey's items were theoretically operating 7 constructs (reduced to 6) was not possible. It should also be noted, however, that while the analyses may not fully address empirical validation and this limitation should be addressed by future research with larger samples, the observed Cronbach's alpha values provided evidence of good reliability for each factor.

The first analysis was conducted to determine what, if any, underlying structures exist for a measure of the beliefs about the target language use (8 items). The analysis produced a two-factor solution which accounted for 63.18% of the total variance in the original items. Factor 1, which accounted for 46.88%, consisted of four items and was labeled *Beliefs about the Student's Use of the Target Language*. Factor 2, which accounted for 16.30%,

consisted of four items and was labeled *Beliefs about the Teacher's Use of the Target Language*. Each of the components had a Cronbach's alpha of .751 and .820, respectively (see Table 2).

Table 1
Characteristics of Participants

Characteristics	N	Frequency (%)
Gender	129	
Male		36 (27.9%)
Female		93 (72.1%)
Age range	129	
18-20 years old		60 (46.5%)
21-25 years old		66 (51.2%)
26-30 years old		3 (2.3%)
Years learning English before attending university	129	
Less than 1 year		3 (2.3%)
1-2 years		15 (11.6%)
3-4 years		27 (20.8%)
5-6 years		54 (41.9%)
7 years or more		30 (23.3%)
Years in program	129	
1st year		9 (7%)
2nd year		27 (20.9%)
3rd year		60 (46.5%)
4th year		33 (25.6%)
Final grade (for Core English) earned in previous semester	129	
50-59		9 (7%)
60-69		36 (27.9%)
70-79		48 (37.2)
80-89		33 (25.6%)
90 and above		3 (2.3%)

Table 2
Factor Loadings for Beliefs about the Target Language Use

Items	*Factor 1*	*Factor 2*
Students should use only English the entire time they are in the classroom with both the lecturer and fellow students, even when not working on a specific activity.	.831*	.229
The more students use English in the classroom, the better they will be at communicating in English.	.797*	.122
Students must use English a great deal in the classroom in order to master the language.	.687*	.386
There are no situations in which the first language (i.e., Khmer) should be used in the classroom.	.612*	.083
The lecturer and students should use only English to learn about grammar and usage of English.	.246	.810*
The lecturer and students should use only English to discuss course policies, attendance, and other administrative information.	.030	.807*
Regardless of how much English students choose to use, the lecturer should use English at all times in the classroom.	.268	.780*
The lecturer should use only English when giving directions for activities.	.235	.744*

The second analysis conducted to determine the underlying structures for a measure of students' motivation produced a one-factor solution which accounted for 53.28% of the total variance (5 items). The factor was labeled *Student's Motivation to Learn the Target Language* and had a Cronbach's alpha of .78 (see Table 3).

Table 3
Factor Loadings for Student's Motivation to Learn the Target Language

Items	*Factor*
I regularly seek out opportunities to use or hear English outside of my English class (e.g., at the canteen, with native speakers, English TV or radio).	.764*
I intend to pursue advanced study of English and/or study or work abroad.	.755*
My level of overall motivation to learn English is extremely high.	.739*
My lecturer spent class time working through or discussing communicative strategies that will help students communicate in English.	.710*
My lecturer made expectations regarding the use of English in the classroom explicitly by discussing them with us.	.678*

The third analysis conducted to determine the underlying structures for a measure of frequency of target language use produced a two-factor solution which accounted for 60.28% of the total variance (8 items). Factor 1, which accounted for 42.40%, consisted of four items and was labeled *Frequency of the Target Language Use in Formal Contexts*. Factor 2, which accounted for 17.88%, consisted of four items and was labeled *Frequency of the Target Language Use in Informal Contexts*. The Cronbach's alpha for Factor 1 was .767. For Factor 2, the reliability analysis led to an elimination of one item (i.e., While working with a partner or group in my class, I switch to Khmer as soon as we are through with a particular activity) in order to achieve a higher Cronbach's alpha of . 714 (see Table 4). Overall, the study included five explanatory or predictor variables: (1) Beliefs about the Student's Use of the Target Language, (2) Beliefs about the Teacher's Use of the Target Language, (3) Student's Motivation to Learn the Target Language, (4) Frequency of the Target Language Use in Formal Contexts, and (5) Frequency of the Target Language Use in Informal Contexts.

Table 4
Factor Loadings for Frequency of the Target Language Use

Items	*Factor 1*	*Factor 2*
I use English to communicate about grammar and usage.	.776*	.191
I use English to communicate with my classmates in the classroom.	.775*	.078
I use English to communicate within topic-based/thematic activities.	.728*	.149
I use English to communicate with my lecturer in the classroom.	.694*	.040
I use English to communicate with other students outside of class time (e.g., in the hall, at the cafeteria, etc.)	.206	.790*
* While working with a partner or group in my class, I switch to Khmer as soon as we are through with a particular activity.	*-.439*	*.673**
I use English to communicate about tests, quizzes, and other assignments.	.427	.632*
I use English to communicate with my lecturer outside of class time (e.g., office hours, at the cafeteria, etc.)	.582	.554*

Note. *eliminated item

Language Use Anxiety as an Outcome Measure

It was conceptualized that beliefs about the target language use, motivation, and frequency of the target language use will predict the language use anxiety among the college students. A factor analysis was performed to determine the underlying structures for a measure of language use anxiety (7 items). The analysis produced a two-factor solution which accounted for 68.53% of the total variance. However, the second Factor was variable-specific and was thus eliminated from later analysis. This elimination was justified by the fact that the wording of the item (i.e., I view it as a rewarding or worthwhile challenge when I have to use English to communicate) was somewhat problematic in measuring the language use anxiety. The remaining Factor, which accounted for 53.36%, consisted of six items and was labeled *Language Use Anxiety*. The Factor, with a Cronbach's alpha of . 866, served as the dependent or outcome variable in the study (see Table 5).

Predicting Language Use Anxiety

A multiple regression was utilized to determine the predictive validity of the social and psychological dimensions from the preceding factor analyses on the student's language use anxiety. All the five predictor variables were entered into the regression equation for the measure of language use anxiety. Prior to the multiple regression analysis, the factors or variables were evaluated to ensure that the assumptions of linearity, normality and homoscedasticity were met. Because the assumptions were not violated, no transformations of the data were necessitated. Regression results indicated that an overall model significantly predicted language use anxiety, $R^2 = .408$, $R^2_{adj} = .384$, $F(5, 123) = 16.926$, $p < .001$. This model accounted for 40.8% of the variance in the language use anxiety. A summary of the regression models is presented in Table 6. A post hoc power analysis was conducted using the software package, G*Power. The sample size of 129, the 5-predictor variable equation and an alpha of .05 were used as a baseline, and the analysis indicated that the power to detect the obtained effect exceeded .99 for the overall regression in the prediction of language use anxiety.

Table 7 presented the regression coefficients and indicated that only three of the five factors made significant unique contributions to the prediction of language use anxiety. Beliefs about the student's use of the target language emerged as the best positive predictor, $\beta = .350$, $t = 4.323$, $p < .001$. This suggested that the stronger the students believed they should use the target language (i.e. English), the more anxious they are about the use of the target language. Second in the predictive ability was the frequency of target language use in formal contexts, which negatively influenced language use anxiety, $\beta = -.312$, $t = -2.970$, $p = .004$. The last significant predictor was the frequency of target language use in informal contexts, which also negatively influenced language use anxiety, $\beta = -.281$, $t = 3.240$, $p = .002$. The two predictors suggested that the more

frequent the students use the target language, either in formal or informal contexts, the less anxious they are. The two non-significant factors included beliefs about the teacher's use of the target language (p = .124) and the student's motivation to learn the target language (p = .210).

Table 5
Factor Loadings for Language Use Anxiety

Items	*Factor 1*	*Factor 2*
I feel uncomfortable or anxious using English when working on, discussing, or asking questions about grammar and usage (e.g. verb conjugations, agreement, idioms, vocabulary, etc.)	.870*	-.098
I feel uncomfortable or anxious using English when working on, discussing, or asking questions about tests, quizzes, and other assignments.	.843*	.058
I feel uncomfortable or anxious using English when discussing or asking questions about administrative information (e.g. office hours, upcoming events, important dates, etc.)	.832*	.212
I generally feel anxious using English.	.823*	-.134
I feel uncomfortable or anxious speaking English during activities about English topics (e.g., family, weather, culture, hobbies, etc.)	.672*	-.130
I generally find trying to communicate in English frustrating.	.667*	.129
* I view it as a rewarding or worthwhile challenge when I have to use English to communicate (rather than resort to Khmer).	-.004	.976*

Note. *eliminated item

Table 6
Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	R^2_{adj}	F	P	df_1	df_2
1	.638	.408	.384	16.926	< .001	5	123

a. Predictors: (Constant), Beliefs about the teacher's use of the target language, Beliefs about the student's use of the target language, Student's motivation to learn the target language, Frequency of the target language use in informal contexts, Frequency of the target language use in formal contexts
b. Dependent Variable: Language use anxiety

Table 7
Coefficients for Model Variables

Factors	B	β	t	p	Bivariate r	Partial r
Beliefs about the student's use of the target language	.423	.350	4.323	< .001	.169	.363
Frequency of the target language use in formal contexts	-.397	-.312	-2.970	.004	-.521	-.259
Frequency of the target language use in informal contexts	-.282	-.281	-3.240	.002	-.472	-.280
Beliefs about the teacher's use of the target language	-.132	-.134	-1.550	.124	-.168	-.138
Student's motivation to learn the target language	-.126	-.108	-1.259	.210	-.281	-.113

Discussion and Conclusion

The current study investigated the social and psychological factors that may have a potential to predict language use anxiety. Results from the study revealed that three main factors (i.e., beliefs about the student's use of the target language, frequency of the target language use in formal contexts, and frequency of the target language use in informal contexts) significantly predicted language use anxiety among undergraduate students in a large public university in Cambodia. These results support the literature that investigated the frequency of language use and linguistic socialization as related to foreign language anxiety (Dewaele et al., 2008; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009), though not specifically investigating the frequency of language use, found the students' experience abroad to have a positive influence on foreign language anxiety. They concluded that the participants with the highest levels of language anxiety tended to be those who had never visited a foreign country. Dewaele et al. (2008) found a linear decrease in the level of communication anxiety and foreign language anxiety across situations (i.e., friends, colleagues, strangers, phone, public) for those who use their languages more regularly and are more linguistically socialized. In the context of higher education in Cambodia, Hashim et al. (2014) found that English is mostly used at the universities in the students' daily lives, and English usage is socially-driven and institutionalized through teacher's influences, everyday conversations in teaching and learning, and interactions between students and lecturers within and outside classrooms. It is also worth noting that while Dewaele et al.'s (2008) study examined language use in contexts other than schools, the formal and informal contexts operationalized in the present study were situated within the school settings. That is, the language use in formal contexts involved communication in the classroom whereas in informal contexts language use took place outside of the classroom, such as in the cafeteria, hallway, teacher's office, and so forth. The finding in the present study thus offers another way of examining the contexts of language use that contribute to predicting language use anxiety. This appears to suggest that, regardless of contexts, the more frequently students are exposed to the target language use, the less anxious they tend to be.

Beliefs about the student's use of the target language were found to be the strongest predictor of all the three factors. The construct of beliefs as conceptualized in this study focuses on those beliefs related to the extent of the target language use. For example, two of the questionnaire items that reflected this construct were stated as "Students must use English a great deal in the classroom in order to master the language" and "Students should use only English the entire time they are in the classroom with both the lecturer and fellow students, even when not working on a specific activity." The finding indicated that the stronger the students believed they should use a great deal of the target language (i.e. English), the more anxious they were about the use of the target language. This finding may be explainable in light of the context of English language learning and teaching in Cambodia. As discussed earlier in the literature review, grammar-translation has been the most common and influential method, and Cambodian students are eager to master the written forms and vocabulary. As Neau (2003) stated, when encountering new words, the students "immediately want to know the real meanings of those words by doing the direct translation of those words into their native language" (p. 266). This means that Cambodian students tend to have limited opportunities to use the target language to communicate and interact with others in the classrooms. As a result, these students are likely to experience anxiety when they believe that they must use a great deal of the target language.

What is interesting, though, is a somewhat paradoxical nature of this finding, which seemed to stand in contrast to the significant results of the frequency of the target language use discussed above. As mentioned earlier, the high frequency of the target language use in both formal and informal contexts contributed to lower levels of language use anxiety. A general argument that can be made about this finding is that the beliefs held by the students contribute in some way to their foreign language anxiety, whether they be positive or negative. This argument supports Horwitz et al.'s (1986) assertion that students' tension and frustration in a language classroom can be attributed to certain beliefs they hold about language learning. Moreover, these somewhat contrasting results suggest that an espoused belief might not always translate into an actual behavior (i.e., perceived language anxiety). Future research examining the relationship between students' beliefs about language learning and their actual behaviors in the classroom may offer useful insights to illuminate the findings of the present study.

Beliefs about the teachers' use of the target language and motivational factors were not found to be significant predictors of language use anxiety. An explanation for the former construct may be that language use anxiety was more about the student's psychological experience and, therefore, the teacher's use of the target language (frequent or not) may not have been the cause of concern for the students. What was surprising was the non-significant finding related to the latter construct (i.e., motivation). Previous studies have addressed the roles of motivation in relation to language anxiety (Cheng, 2002; Koul et al., 2009; Levine, 2003; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). Cheng (2002) argued that to develop a more comprehensive model of language anxiety, one should integrate a complex system of social, contextual and learner variables, including motivation, self-confidence, learner's beliefs, and L2 proficiency, among others. Similarly, Horwitz et al. (1986) and Onwuegbuzie (1999) affirmed that it may be helpful to identify the specific motivational beliefs or goal orientations that are associated with high levels of foreign language classroom anxiety when considering effective interventions for foreign language anxiety. Levine (2003) and Koul et al. (2009) respectively found that higher motivation and cultural goals to learn a foreign language were associated with decreased foreign language anxiety.

The present study offers some useful implications for pedagogy and research. First of all, the students' beliefs about the target language use and language learning, in general, should be taken into account. Language teachers are encouraged to identify specific students' beliefs regarding foreign language use and learning at the beginning of language programs. Knowing what students believe to be optimal conditions for their learning allow teachers to cater to their needs in a timely and appropriate manner. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the students' beliefs should always supersede those of the teachers. In cases where such beliefs may contradict, teachers' professional training and experience should enable them to make better and more informed decisions in response to the issue. Moreover, it is advisable to develop and promote conducive environments where students have access to and opportunities for extensive use of the target language. Horwitz et al. (1986) maintained that when it comes to using the language in a formal school setting, anxiety tends to continue to develop. Extensive exposure to the use of the target language, particularly in a range of contexts, therefore, enables students to feel more comfortable in using it, thus reducing their tension, frustration, and anxiety. As mentioned earlier, future research could benefit from examining the relationship between the students' beliefs and their actual language use performance. It would also be worthwhile and illuminating to include other predictor variables in the regression equation (e.g. learner's attributes, language learning background, etc.) that may play a role in predicting language use anxiety.

Several possible limitations of this study should be noted. The first limitation concerns the generalizability of the results. Because the study took place at only one institution, the results may not be generalized to other institutions or all adult language learners in Cambodia. The sample was drawn using a nonprobability convenience sampling method, with the participants self-selecting (i.e. volunteering) to fill out the online survey. Moreover, the language of the survey was not the students' native language, thus it could have been difficult for some to process. Given the total number of students in the school, the small sample size obtained may call the results into question. Another limitation was the fact that this present study investigated only a small number of variables as predictors of language use anxiety. The inclusion of other covariates such as learner attributes and other social and institutional factors may yield more valid and justifiable results in explaining language use anxiety. The constructs used in the conceptual framework should also be taken into consideration when attempts at generalization and interpretation are made. Although factor analyses were used to derive the underlying latent constructs, attention to the actual statements used in the questionnaire should be called for when interpreting each of the constructs. This does not suggest that the questionnaire items or derived constructs are invalid; rather, efforts should be made to ensure valid generalization.

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