



## Teaching English Speaking in Myanmar: A Phenomenological Exploration of Teachers' Experiences

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**Abstract**

*This study investigates the lived experiences of five non-native English teachers responsible for teaching speaking skills at a high school in Myanmar. Using a descriptive phenomenological approach, it examines how these teachers perceive and navigate the complexities of speaking instruction within a multilingual, resource-limited, and politically unstable environment. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and a focus group, providing rich insights into their instructional practices and coping strategies. Teachers reported challenges such as low confidence in oral English, limited training in communicative methodologies, inadequate resources, and systemic pressures that prioritize exam-oriented learning over spoken proficiency. These constraints often lead to reliance on translation, rote memorization, and traditional drills, with only sporadic attempts at interactive or student-centered approaches. Despite these limitations, teachers actively negotiate their roles and adapt strategies to foster speaking skills where possible. The findings highlight the urgent need for targeted professional development and institutional support that enable teachers to implement communicative, context-sensitive approaches to speaking instruction in Myanmar's high schools.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary globalized context, proficiency in English has become a crucial gateway to academic, professional, and economic advancement. Myanmar, a nation in transition, reflects this global trend as it seeks to engage more fully with international systems of commerce, education, and diplomacy (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006). English, as a global lingua franca, now plays a pivotal role in these efforts, particularly in urban centers and educational systems. However, challenges persist, particularly in the instruction of English-

speaking skills, which remain underdeveloped due to systemic, pedagogical, and infrastructural barriers (Hu & McKay, 2012; Oo & Deocampo, 2025).

English language instruction in Myanmar has undergone significant evolution since colonial times. During British rule, English was the dominant medium of instruction; however, post-independence reforms prioritized Burmese, leading to a temporary decline in English usage (McCormick, 2019; Kirkpatrick, 2017). In recent years, the resurgence of English in education, prompted by foreign investment and policy reform, has elevated expectations for students and educators alike (Hayden & Martin, 2013; Lwin, 2020). As demand for English-speaking competency increases, the responsibility placed on English teachers has intensified, particularly in terms of fostering spoken fluency among learners with minimal exposure to authentic language environments (Nunan, 2003; Pennycook, 2017).

Despite the growing emphasis on English-speaking proficiency, English teachers across Myanmar, particularly at Basic Education High Schools, face numerous obstacles that impair their instructional effectiveness. The foremost issue is the lack of sufficient teacher training in methods that emphasize communicative pedagogies, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Noom-ura, 2013), and approaches that support oral interaction. This deficiency is compounded by limited oral proficiency among teachers themselves, which undermines classroom instruction and reduces confidence in implementing English-only lessons (Faez & Valeo, 2012; Ven, 2019).

### **1.1.Challenges in Teaching English Speaking**

Myanmar's extensive linguistic and cultural diversity, encompassing over 135 ethnic groups and languages, presents significant challenges for English-speaking instruction. One major difficulty involves pronunciation, as Burmese and several other local languages lack the English consonants /v/, /f/, /r/, and /ʒ/, leading learners to substitute sounds for these missing phonemes (Zaw et al., 2025). As a result, some teachers themselves exhibit pronunciation errors that are inadvertently passed on to students, thereby reinforcing inaccurate pronunciation and grammatical patterns (San & Soe, 2016; Zitouni et al., 2021; Zaw et al., 2025). Teachers must also manage multilingual classrooms while encouraging students to use English rather than relying on their home languages (San et al., 2021). Compounding these difficulties, many students have limited opportunities to practice English beyond the classroom, which contributes to diminished motivation and weak communicative competence (Lase, 2024; Pannasami, 2019). In conflict-affected areas, these obstacles are further intensified by political instability and inadequate infrastructure. Teachers working in such contexts frequently lack essential pedagogical resources for speaking instruction, including conversation prompts,

audio materials, videos, and other technological tools needed for oral practice (Lankara et al., 2024).

Further exacerbating the issue are linguistic and cultural diversity, which necessitate differentiated instruction across language proficiencies and cultural expectations (San et al., 2021). Teachers often encounter difficulties managing multilingual classrooms, particularly when students suffer from anxiety and default to their mother tongues rather than practising English (Shoaib & Ayaz, 2021). Additionally, a disruptive classroom environment, compounded by standardised test pressures, diverts attention away from communicative competence and toward rote memorization (Belouahem, 2020; Saeki et al., 2018).

Among the most persistent challenges are overcrowded classrooms, limited instructional time, and a lack of authentic materials (Botes et al., 2020; Liu & Yin, 2021). These environmental constraints undermine teachers' efforts to provide individualized attention and oral practice. Compounding these issues are negative student attitudes, lack of motivation, and overdependence on teachers, often resulting in minimal student engagement in speaking tasks (Fatiloro, 2015; Simasiku et al., 2015; Nuraini, 2016).

### **1.2.Teacher Frustration and Burnout**

Teachers' frustration and burnout often discourage them from implementing interactive speaking activities, leading many to revert to lecture-based instruction (Al-khresheh & Alanzi, 2025). Research identifies burnout as a widespread issue among EFL teachers, resulting in reduced instructional effectiveness and negative student outcomes, such as lower participation and diminished fluency development (Klusmann et al., 2018; Seis, 2023). For instructors of English speaking, emotional strain frequently translates into decreased motivation and heightened exhaustion, which undermines both the quality of speaking-focused teaching and overall learner progress (Oo & Deocampo, 2025)

### **1.3.Instructional Theories and Pedagogical Approaches**

Several theoretical frameworks, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), guide speaking instruction by emphasizing fluency, interaction, and authentic oral communication. CLT focuses on interaction, fluency, and meaningful communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Savignon, 2002), while TBLT organizes learning around practical communicative tasks (Bygate, 2015). However, the effective application of these approaches is hindered by contextual challenges such as large class sizes, insufficient resources, and examination-centered instructional policies (Hasnain & Halder, 2023; Qasserras, 2023). Nevertheless, existing literature suggests that when teachers

incorporate collaborative learning strategies, task-based interaction, or interactive game activities into speaking lessons, students show improvements in pronunciation, fluency, and overall confidence in oral communication (Nurhadi et al., 2024).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive phenomenological approach to investigate the experiences of English teachers instructing speaking skills at a high school in Myanmar. Grounded in the belief that individuals construct meaning through their subjective experiences (Creswell, 2013), this design is well-suited for exploring the personal and professional realities of educators. It aims to uncover the deeper significance behind their instructional choices, challenges, and actions. Among various phenomenological methodologies, this study specifically adopts descriptive phenomenology, which seeks to reveal the essence of lived experience without relying on theoretical interpretation (van Manen, 2017).

### **2.1. Participants**

Five full-time non-native English teachers from a Myanmar High School, teaching grades 8 through 10, were purposively selected. This aligns with Creswell's (2013) recommendation that phenomenological studies typically include between five and twenty-five participants. Teachers selected varied in professional experience, ensuring a rich diversity of insights. The selection criteria required that all participants be active, in-service teachers working within the same institution.

### **2.2. Data Collection and Analysis**

Data was collected through semi-structured individual interviews and one focus group discussion. Open-ended interview questions were aligned with two core research questions regarding instructional challenges and prevailing pedagogical practices (Table 1). Interviews were conducted in English and Kachin, with translation provided when needed. All participants were asked to sign a consent form that informed them of their rights before the interviews. Each participant was given a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. All interview sessions were conducted in the Kachin language to ensure the full participation of participants. The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed and translated into English. The focus group was used as a triangulation method to validate insights from the individual interviews (Nyumba et al., 2018).

Table I. Interview Question

Research Question 1	Interview Questions
What challenges do English teachers face when they teach English speaking?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What motivated you to be an English teacher?</li> <li>2. What parts of speaking English do you enjoy?</li> <li>3. What challenges do you face in teaching English speaking?</li> <li>4. How often do you use your local language to explain words or assignments when you teach English?</li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. How often do your students speak in the Kachin language in the classroom in response to questions?</li> </ol>
Research Question 2	Interview Questions
What are your experiences with the prevailing pedagogical methods for teaching English?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the way you teach English speaking.</li> <li>2. How do you ensure your teaching is working or not?</li> <li>3. Which part or way of teaching works best, and which does not?</li> <li>4. Discuss English teaching resources you have for your classroom</li> <li>5. What support do you get for teaching how to speak English?</li> <li>6. What kind of support do you expect to be provided by the school administrator or organization?</li> </ol>

Thematic analysis was used to identify both individual and shared experiences across interviews. Initial coding was done manually by reviewing transcripts, generating preliminary codes, and grouping similar responses. These were then organized into thematic clusters, guided by axial coding techniques (Charmaz, 2006). Transcripts were shared with participants for verification to ensure accuracy and avoid researcher bias (Creswell, 2013).

Trustworthiness was ensured through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Triangulation was achieved using interviews and a focus group. A detailed audit trail was maintained to support dependability and confirmability (Polit & Beck, 2014; Carter et al., 2014).

### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1. Participants' Profiles

The five participants—Naw, Gam, Kaw, Lu, and Roi—bring diverse backgrounds and varying lengths of service to their teaching roles.

Table 2. Participant Profiles

Name	Years of Experience in	Years of Experience
	Teaching English	Teaching
Naw	3	3
Gam	6	6
Kaw	7	18
Lu	4	4
Roi	20	20

Naw, with three years of experience, teaches grade 10 and struggles with students' pronunciation and his own confidence, seeking better materials and lesson upgrades. Gam, teaching grade 9 for six years, is motivated by his students' enthusiasm but feels insecure about his language skills and desires improved teaching aids. Kaw, with 18 years of overall teaching experience and seven years specifically in English, relies heavily on vocabulary memorization and uses her first language, Kachin, extensively due to a lack of formal training. Lu, an 8th-grade teacher with four years of experience and an educational background from India, emphasizes vocabulary development and student confidence-building, striving to create more practical English learning environments. Roi, with 20 years of teaching experience, specializes in reading instruction for grade 10 but finds academic writing and pronunciation particularly challenging, especially with the implementation of new curriculum requirements and persistent resource limitations.

#### **4. FINDINGS FROM THE DATA ANALYSIS**

##### **4.1. Pedagogical Practices and Strategies**

The findings reveal that Myanmar's political climate and limited educational resources significantly shape the learning environment. Teachers report insufficient training opportunities and inadequate teaching materials, which, combined with their own language proficiency challenges, lead to a heavy reliance on traditional teaching methods rather than interactive or communicative approaches advocated by contemporary language learning theories.

###### **4.1.1. Translation Technique Preference**

Teachers predominantly employ translation techniques, consistently switching between English and Kachin to ensure student comprehension. This practice, while addressing

immediate communication needs, reflects deeper systemic issues within the educational framework. Kaw exemplifies this approach by translating complex paragraphs line by line, explaining that direct English instruction often fails to reach students effectively. Roi articulates this challenge clearly: "*When I speak as much English as possible, the students usually do not reply, so I translate for them in Kachin.*" This response pattern indicates that both students and teachers are uncomfortable with sustained English communication. Naw similarly acknowledges this dependency: "*When I teach English, I explain the paragraphs in their mother tongue.*"

The use of translation, while serving as a bridge for teaching and understanding, simultaneously limits students' immersive English exposure, a critical factor in second language acquisition according to Krashen's input hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). Gam observes the students' expectation for translation support: "*They always want me to translate the whole paragraph line by line.*" This over-reliance on translation reflects both the student's and the teacher's lack of confidence in English communication, perpetuating a cycle that hinders authentic language development.

The frequent use of translation in the classroom is not solely a pedagogical choice; it functions as a coping mechanism within a setting where both teachers and students struggle with limited confidence in English proficiency. This dependency signals a deeper sense of vulnerability and serves as a protective measure against potential miscommunication or failure. Rather than dismissing communicative approaches, translation becomes a pragmatic tool that enables instruction in linguistically diverse and resource-constrained environments.

#### **4.1.2. Traditional Teaching Approaches**

Grammar drills, reading aloud, and rote memorization dominate the instructional landscape at this High School. These methods, while practical for managing large classes and accommodating students with varying proficiency levels, often sacrifice communicative skill development for structural accuracy. Roi's typical class structure involves students reading passages aloud, followed by grammatical analysis conducted in Kachin. This approach aligns with traditional Grammar Translation Method principles but fails to develop functional communication skills.

Naw describes her standard teaching sequence: "*I first let the students read the paragraphs and explain them in their first language.*" This teacher-centered approach positions students as passive recipients rather than active language users. Lu employs what she terms "the question-and-answer method," stating: "*The most common teaching method I use in the classroom is the question-and-answer method.*" While this technique can promote some

interaction, it typically follows predictable patterns that limit the development of spontaneous communication.

Despite the prevalence of traditional methods, some teachers recognize the value of more dynamic approaches. Gam attempts to introduce innovation through activity-based learning: "*I use activity-based teaching methods such as projects and cooperative learning when I teach English.*" However, such attempts remain constrained by systemic limitations, including large class sizes, limited resources, and examination pressures.

Teachers' reliance on rote memorization and grammar drills does not reflect opposition to other innovative strategies but rather results from what is functional and familiar to the teachers. In challenging large classrooms that reflect the varied English-speaking competencies of students, these approaches offer a sense of structure that supports effective classroom management and student engagement. The use of innovative teaching methods can be challenging in these environments if teachers have not received formal training.

#### **4.1.3. Assessment-Focused Strategies**

Testing and examination preparation occupy a central position in the instructional framework at this High School. Teachers dedicate significant class time to reviewing test answers and focusing on correct responses rather than fostering deep learning or communicative competence. Lu spends considerable time analyzing examination questions with students, prioritizing test performance over language development. She states: "*I give them tests and exams to ensure my teaching works.*"

This assessment-centric approach reflects broader educational system priorities that emphasize summative evaluation over formative development. Lu further explains: "*Exam results, which are a very formal way of assessing students, will be my answer to ensuring their understanding.*" While examinations provide measurable outcomes, this focus often neglects the development of practical language skills and the cultivation of learner autonomy.

Gam employs classroom questioning and textbook homework assignments to gauge student understanding but acknowledges that this approach may neglect practical language development needs. The pressure to prepare students for standardized assessments creates a tension between communicative language teaching principles and institutional expectations, forcing teachers to prioritize test performance over authentic communication skills.

#### **4.1.4. Limited Interactive Strategies**

Although less frequently implemented, some teachers attempt to incorporate group work and role-playing activities into their instruction. Gam organizes conversational role-plays

and recognizes their effectiveness: "*Activity-based teaching methods work for the students.*" Lu strives to create interactive classroom environments: "*I try to make the class interactive with activities like role plays and group discussions so students can practice their English in a fun way.*"

However, practical constraints such as large classes and limited resources significantly limit these interactive approaches. Individual attention and group management can be challenging in large classes, while limited resources restrict the variety of activities that teachers can implement. Time constraints imposed by curriculum requirements and examination schedules further reduce opportunities for extended communicative activities.

#### **4.1.5. Student-Centered Efforts**

Lu advocates for student-centered approaches, recognizing their potential for enhancing learner engagement and ownership: "*A student-centered approach works best because it gives students more ownership of their learning.*" She encourages group discussions to foster collaborative learning and peer interaction. However, students' reluctance to communicate in English and their dependency on teacher guidance present significant obstacles to implementing student-centered methodologies. In addition, the cultural context of Myanmar education, which traditionally emphasizes teacher authority and student deference, creates additional challenges for student-centered approaches. Students often wait for explicit teacher direction rather than taking initiative in their learning, reflecting deeply embedded educational cultural norms that prioritize respect for authority over autonomous learning.

Although student-centered instruction is not common in this context, teachers' efforts to incorporate group work and interactive activities demonstrate a strong interest in change. Even if these methods are infrequently used, they suggest that teachers are making an effort to transition from traditional to active student learning. However, the learning environment, which includes cultural challenges, still makes it difficult for teachers to fully incorporate active learning.

#### **4.1.6. Memorization Strategies**

Vocabulary memorization represents a cornerstone of English instruction. Lu regularly quizzes students on memorized word lists, emphasizing recall over contextual understanding: "*Vocabulary is critical in learning English, so I always ask students to read new vocabulary by heart before I teach the lesson.*" This approach, while building students' vocabulary, often fails to develop students' ability to use the vocabulary in meaningful communication contexts. Gam acknowledges the limitations of memorization-based learning: "*While it helps students*

retain information temporarily, it does not foster deeper understanding or practical application of language skills." Despite recognizing these limitations, teachers continue to rely on memorization due to its apparent effectiveness in supporting test performance and its alignment with traditional educational expectations.

#### **4.1.7. Pedagogical Reproduction Strategy**

Teachers frequently replicate instructional methods they experienced as students, perpetuating traditional approaches without critical evaluation of their effectiveness for contemporary language learning goals. Lu candidly admits: "*I unconsciously followed the teaching strategies my old teacher taught me in my state school.*" This pattern illustrates how adherence to familiar methods, while providing comfort and predictability, can stifle innovation and limit responsiveness to students' evolving needs. The tendency toward pedagogical reproduction reflects insufficient exposure to contemporary language teaching methodologies during teacher preparation programs. Without access to ongoing professional development opportunities, teachers rely on familiar approaches that may not align with current understanding of effective second language acquisition principles.

### **4.2. Challenges and Stressors**

The study identifies five primary categories of stressors that significantly impact teacher effectiveness and well-being.

#### **4.2.1. Perceived Speaking Incompetence**

Teachers consistently report insecurity regarding their English language skills, particularly in pronunciation and speaking abilities. This lack of confidence stems from insufficient training opportunities and limited exposure to native speaker models. Roi articulates this concern: "*My pronunciation is incorrect. The pronunciation I learned during college differs from the dictionary's pronunciation.*" This discrepancy between learned pronunciation and standard pronunciation creates anxiety and undermines teachers' confidence.

Naw expresses even deeper insecurity: "*I even lack the confidence to speak in front of the students.*"

Teachers' doubts about their spoken English skills show that teaching language is personally challenging. Their reflections reveal their vulnerability, which shows the tension between wanting to model good spoken English and worrying about being judged or misunderstood. These feelings have a real impact on how they teach and whether they feel confident trying new methods.

#### 4.2.2. Inadequate Institutional Support

Teachers consistently identify insufficient institutional support as a major impediment to their professional effectiveness. The lack of systematic professional development opportunities prevents teachers from acquiring contemporary pedagogical knowledge and skills. Without access to training in communicative language teaching methods, teachers often default to traditional approaches that may not effectively meet students' communication needs. Several teachers reported that existing training programs are insufficient in quality and frequency. Teacher Kaw noted, "*The school provides training during the summer holidays, but the content is mainly designed for primary level educators and is inadequate for high school teachers.*" Similarly, Teacher Roi expressed dissatisfaction with the impact of training, stating, "*The training did not upgrade me, and I am the same even after the training.*" This misalignment between training content and classroom needs leaves many teachers unprepared to implement effective instructional methods. Teachers emphasize the need for more comprehensive and practical training sessions that address their specific challenges.

The lack of ongoing institutional support results in teachers feeling isolated, professionally limited, and stressed. The data clearly indicates that teachers require mentorship, collaboration, and training. In the absence of these resources, teachers often repeat the same practices, without guidance to support change.

#### 4.2.3. Resource Constraints

Inadequate teaching materials and technological resources significantly constrain instructional effectiveness. Teachers report limited access to supplementary materials, audio-visual equipment, and internet connectivity that would support interactive and multimedia-enhanced instruction. The absence of computers, projectors, and reliable internet limits their ability to implement engaging and interactive teaching strategies. Teacher Gam emphasized this need, stating, "*The school should provide 24/7 internet access for teachers so that we can find more teaching resources online.*" Similarly, Teacher Lu expressed frustration over outdated teaching aids, saying, "*I want the school to provide the most updated teaching aids, including strong and full-time access to the internet, a projector, or a laptop in the classroom.*" These limitations become particularly problematic when curricula require technological knowledge that teachers cannot effectively deliver due to a lack of resources. These resource limitations force teachers to rely on basic textbooks and traditional methods, reducing opportunities for authentic language exposure and engaging activities.

#### **4.2.4. Unfavorable Classroom Conditions**

Overcrowded classrooms present additional challenges, with teachers struggling to provide individualized attention to students and facilitate meaningful interactions among them. Overcrowded classrooms affect the nature of instruction. Large class sizes make it challenging to implement communicative activities while also monitoring individual student progress, leading to frustration and a reduction in instructional quality. Naw stated, “*I hardly do speech activities because it usually takes about one week to do one speaking activity due to the large class size.*” Teachers often pay more attention to classroom management, while the needs of individual learners are often overlooked.

#### **4.2.5. Community and Parental Influence**

Community attitudes toward English education, as well as varying levels of parental involvement, significantly influence student motivation and learning opportunities. In some cases, parents and community members may not understand the importance of English proficiency, as they prefer the Chinese language due to Myanmar’s proximity to China. Naw explained, “*In our society, English is not used much; the community favors Chinese, so it becomes hard for students to relate to the language and use it effectively.*” Additionally, the resources available to support their children’s language learning are limited. This lack of community support creates additional challenges for teachers who must motivate students without external reinforcement.

Conversely, some parents have high expectations for their children’s English proficiency but may not understand the challenges teachers face in developing these skills within existing constraints. Managing these diverse expectations while working within systemic limitations creates additional stress for teachers.

### **4.3. Factors Influencing Teacher Well-being**

Multiple factors contribute to teacher stress and reduced well-being, including low compensation, political instability, and personal life pressures. Inadequate salaries force teachers to seek additional income sources, reducing the time available for lesson preparation and professional development. The political situation in Kachin State creates additional uncertainty and stress, affecting both personal security and educational continuity. The combination of professional demands and personal challenges creates a cycle of stress that undermines teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction. Without adequate support systems and

improved working conditions, teachers struggle to maintain the energy and motivation necessary for effective instruction.

#### **4.4.Teachers' Sense of Purpose**

Despite ongoing challenges, teachers consistently express a deep sense of responsibility and pride in their roles. Their reflections suggest that teaching English is more than a professional task—it is a meaningful mission to equip students with skills for future opportunities. Such dedication, even under difficult conditions, highlights the strong personal and professional value they place in their work.

### **5. DISCUSSION**

The experiences of English teachers in a Myanmar High School reveal a complex interplay of personal, institutional, and systemic challenges that significantly affect the quality of English language instruction. This discussion examines five key dimensions: teaching practices, resource disparities, teacher confidence, examination pressures, and teacher resilience.

#### **5.1.Instructional Strategy Choices**

Teachers predominantly rely on traditional translation-based methods, not out of pedagogical preference, but due to necessity and institutional limitations. Although many acknowledge the benefits of student-centered and communicative approaches, the reality of limited training, inadequate support, and large class sizes restricts their implementation. Serrano and Fallado (2025) found that such constraints—especially lack of resources and teacher overload—often drive educators to revert to familiar instructional practices. Similarly, Mina and Oraiz (2024) reported that teachers feel unsupported and ill-prepared to adopt innovative methods, reinforcing their dependence on conventional techniques.

#### **5.2.Inadequate Resources**

Resource shortages represent a major barrier to equitable education, particularly in low-income and rural areas. Insufficient funding results in outdated textbooks, a shortage of teaching materials, and limited access to digital tools. These conditions hinder interactive teaching and reduce student exposure to modern instructional methods. The absence of resources perpetuates educational disadvantages (UNESCO, 2022). Institutional support, including investment in learning materials, infrastructure, and training, is critical to bridging these gaps (Seno & Paglinawan, 2024).

### **5.3.Teacher Confidence and Professional Development**

Teacher confidence plays a vital role in delivering effective language instruction. Farrell (2016) and Horwitz (2013) highlight language anxiety as a key issue among non-native English-speaking teachers, which often results in a retreat to translation and grammar-based teaching. These methods may feel safer, but they may limit authentic student engagement. Professional development is central to reversing this trend. Sien (2022) emphasizes the need for targeted training among Myanmar teachers. Similarly, Suksawas and Yiemkuntitavorn (2022) demonstrate that training, particularly in digital and online methods, enhances teacher skills and adaptability. In Korea, Lee, Ahn, and Lee (2022) confirmed that sustained professional development boosts both confidence and English proficiency. Ultimately, teacher training requires strong institutional backing to be effective and sustained.

### **5.4.Exam-Driven Instruction**

Emphasis on exam performance often shapes instructional practices in many schools, thus reflecting systemic priorities that conflict with the goals of communicative language teaching. While standardized tests provide measurable outcomes, they can restrict opportunities for students to develop practical, real-world language skills and suppress their learning potential (Jiang, 2024). Teachers are caught between institutional expectations to deliver test results and the pedagogical need to foster English language speaking competence. This tension complicates their ability to implement more dynamic, learner-centered methods.

### **5.5.Classroom Conditions and Instructional Constraints**

Overcrowded classrooms and persistent resource shortages further limit teaching effectiveness. These conditions compel teachers to adopt pragmatic strategies focused on classroom control and basic content delivery rather than best pedagogical practices. Interactive approaches, which often require smaller groups and specialized materials, become difficult to implement (Vakili et al., 2024).

### **5.6.Teacher Resilience and Professional Commitment**

Despite these challenges, one of the most salient findings is the resilience and dedication of teachers. Many continue to serve their students with creativity and flexibility, adapting their methods within constrained environments. Their professional commitment signals a strong foundation for improvement, provided they receive adequate support, recognition, and resources.

### **5.7.Implications and Recommendations**

The findings from this study have significant implications for multiple stakeholders in Myanmar's education system. For school administrators, the results suggest the need for comprehensive teacher support systems that address both professional development and personal well-being. Investing in teacher training programs that focus on contemporary language teaching methodologies, classroom management strategies for large classes, and language proficiency development could significantly improve instructional quality.

Educational policymakers should consider the systemic nature of challenges identified in this study. Addressing issues such as class size, resource allocation, and teacher compensation requires policy-level interventions that recognize the interconnected nature of educational challenges. Developing policies that support teacher well-being and professional growth, while also improving educational infrastructure, can create more conducive learning environments.

For teacher preparation programs, the study highlights the importance of practical training that prepares teachers for the realities of classroom instruction in resource-constrained environments. Including modules on large class management, multilingual classroom strategies, and building teaching confidence could better prepare new teachers for their roles.

Finally, the research suggests the need for ongoing professional development opportunities that help teachers integrate contemporary pedagogical approaches with practical classroom realities. Creating networks for teacher collaboration and peer support can help address the issues many teachers experience, while fostering innovation and sharing best practices.

### **5.8.Limitations and Future Research**

This study's scope is limited to five participants from a single school in a specific geographical region, which may limit the generalizability of findings to broader Myanmar contexts. The volatile political environment in Kachin State necessitated the use of online communication methods, which may have affected the depth and authenticity of participant responses. Additionally, the use of translation during interviews may have resulted in the loss of important nuances in participants' expressions and experiences.

Future research should expand its geographical scope to include teachers from diverse regions and contexts across Myanmar, enabling a comparative analysis of challenges and strategies across different educational environments. Longitudinal studies could provide

insights into how teachers' experiences and practices evolve over time, particularly in response to policy changes and professional development interventions. Research examining the effectiveness of different professional development approaches for English teachers in Myanmar contexts could inform the design of support programs. Additionally, studies investigating student perspectives on English instruction could provide valuable insights into the learning experience and complement teacher-focused research.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

This phenomenological study of English teachers' experiences in high school provides valuable insights into the challenges and practices of English language instruction in Myanmar's complex educational landscape. The findings reveal that while teachers demonstrate dedication and resilience, their effectiveness is constrained by systemic barriers, including inadequate training, limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient institutional support.

The predominant reliance on traditional teaching methods and translation strategies reflects both practical necessities and missed opportunities for developing students' communicative competence. While teachers recognize the value of more interactive approaches, their implementation requires systemic changes that address resource limitations, class size issues, and professional development needs.

The study contributes to understanding teaching English language speaking in conflict-affected and resource-constrained environments. It highlights the importance of contextual factors in shaping educational practices. The voices of teachers offer authentic insights into the realities of English instruction in Myanmar, providing valuable perspectives for educators, policymakers, and researchers working to improve the quality of language education. In addition, addressing the challenges identified in this study requires comprehensive approaches that recognize the interconnected nature of educational issues. By supporting teacher development, improving resource allocation, and creating more conducive learning environments, Myanmar's education system can better serve both teachers and students in achieving English language proficiency goals. The resilience and dedication demonstrated by these teachers, despite significant challenges, offer hope for positive change when appropriate support systems are in place.

The experiences documented in this study represent not just individual struggles but systemic challenges that require coordinated responses from multiple stakeholders. By understanding and addressing these challenges, Myanmar can strive to create more effective

and equitable English language education opportunities for all students, particularly those in marginalized and conflict-affected communities.

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