

Exploring Challenges in Teaching English Through Literature Curriculum in Myanmar Higher Education: Insights from Stakeholders

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The objectives of this qualitative research were: (a) to analyze the challenges faced by English literature teachers in teaching English through literature curriculum in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms of Myanmar; and (b) to examine the insights from stakeholders towards teaching English through literature curriculum in EFL classrooms of Myanmar. The samples were composed of 27 English literature teachers from specific Arts and Science Universities, six government officials and three local business leaders. They were selected through a purposive sampling method. The research conducted through a semi-structured interview, classroom observation, and focus group discussion. Content analysis and document analysis were used to analyze the data. The findings suggest that challenges can be categorized into three groups: student-related, teacher-related, and external factors. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of students' language proficiency, linguistic, and stylistic complexity of texts, and cultural familiarity in influencing the teaching-learning process. The results contribute to a better understanding of the challenges faced by English literature teachers in Myanmar, offering insights for the improvement of teaching practices in this context.

Keywords: challenges, English literature curriculum, Myanmar Higher Education, insights from stakeholders

Introduction

A literature curriculum shapes English specialization students' exploration of diverse literary forms in Myanmar. This curriculum is designed for English specialization students in Myanmar Higher Education, focusing on prose, short stories, poetry, novels, and dramas to facilitate structured exploration and analysis of these literary genres at the tertiary level, aiming to improve instruction and comprehension within the English specialization context in Myanmar. Scholars, like Carter and Long (1991), Bist (2018), Nagayar, Abdul, and Kanniah (2015), Emadi (2017), Karlsson (2018), and Kaowiwattanakul (2021) highlight literature's pivotal role in language acquisition, advocating for its integration into English language teaching (ELT). This research investigates stakeholders' insights to enhance literature education, focusing on English literature teachers' challenges in Myanmar's English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms.

Literature Review

The following are the previous studies related to the current research.

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Challenges in the Teaching of English Literature

Al-Seghayer (2014) emphasized the centralized structure of the education system and the absence of collaborative partnerships, which have impeded progress in curriculum development and teacher training initiatives. Additionally, Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) noted a scarcity of opportunities for English language practice beyond the classroom setting. Furthermore, Shah, Hussain, and Nassef (2013) identified constraints such as restricted instructional time and overcrowded classrooms. These limitations collectively hinder the efficacy of educational efforts in their respective contexts. According to Nawi and Nor (2023), the challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of English Literature can be categorized and discussed based on three categories: students, teachers, and external. The following previous studies illuminate these associated challenges.

Student-Related Challenges

There are several recurrent challenges that are related to students, such as attitude, personality, language competency, and basic literary knowledge. A significant challenge in teaching English literature lies in students' negative attitudes towards the subject, as identified by multiple scholars. The primary reason for this negativity is often traced back to students' low motivation to engage with foreign literature, a sentiment echoed by Tayib and Hassan (2020), Gatdula et al. (2022), Dar, Kamran, and Asad (2021), Dahiru (2020), and Hussein and Al-Emami (2016). Gatdula et al. (2022), Hussein and Al-Emami (2016), and Dahiru (2020) further highlight how students' lack of cultural and social background can distance them from literary texts, particularly foreign ones, leading to emotional and historical disconnect. Additionally, cultural prejudice towards foreign literature, as mentioned by Tayib and Hassan (2020), can contribute to this negative perception. Furthermore, scholars like Ugwu (2022), Farhanah and Hadina (2022), Harun and Samat (2021), and Gatdula et al. (2022) emphasize that students' disinterest in literature lessons and undervaluation of literature as a school subject also play significant roles. Negative attitudes may also stem from students' own lack of interest in reading and poor reading habits, as noted by Ugwu (2022) and Dar et al. (2021). Addressing this challenge requires teachers to cultivate positive attitudes towards literature, serve as inspirational role models, and emphasize the long-term benefits of studying literature, as suggested by Noraishah et al. (2015). Teachers can enhance students' motivation by making literature relatable, focusing on cultural elements, and employing diverse and engaging teaching strategies, as advocated by Yahya (2017) and Harun and Samat (2021). Moreover, motivating students can lead to better assumptions, problem-solving skills, improved performance, and reduced comprehension anxiety, as highlighted by Jannah, Sahiruddin, and Rusmawati (2022).

Students' personalities can present challenges in literature classrooms, as noted by Farhanah and Hadina (2022), Yahya (2017), Yulnetri (2018), and Tayib and Hassan (2020). Passive attitudes and reluctance to engage in discussions hinder meaningful analysis, as highlighted by Farhanah and Hadina (2022), and Yahya (2017). Additionally, shyness and lack of confidence, as found by Yulnetri (2018) and Tayib and Hassan (2020), can impede students' participation in activities like acting out scenes or reciting poems. To address these challenges, teachers must patiently help students build confidence, provide guidance, and encourage participation, as suggested by Tayib and Hassan (2020). Creating smaller group settings can also alleviate the pressure and enhance interaction among students during discussions, as recommended by Tayib and Hassan (2020).

Several studies underscore students' English language proficiency as a significant factor affecting English literature lessons, as noted by Farhanah and Hadina (2022), Yahya (2017), Noraishah et al. (2015), Yulnetri (2018), Ugwu (2022), Istiyani (2014), Tayib and Hassan (2020), Gatdula et al. (2022), Dar et al. (2021), Hussein

and Al-Emami (2016), and Dahiru (2020). Poor reading and speaking skills, difficulty in understanding deeper meanings due to limited vocabulary, and pronunciation issues contribute to students' struggles with literary texts. The necessity of referring to dictionaries elongates the reading process, impacting syllabus coverage, as highlighted by Farhanah and Hadina (2022), Ukat and Hanita (2022), Harwati and Mohamad Asyraf (2019), Yahya (2017), Harun and Samat (2021), and Yulnetri (2018). Ultimately, low English proficiency hampers students' ability to critically analyze and appreciate literature, underlining the importance of language competence for effective engagement in literature lessons, as emphasized by Dahiru (2020). Teachers are urged to consider text complexity, adapt materials to students' abilities, and provide guidance and motivation to improve language proficiency, as suggested by Yulnetri (2018) and Tayib and Hassan (2020).

The last challenge related to students is their basic knowledge of literature. Noraishah et al. (2015) reported that one of the issues faced by students in learning the literary text is that they lack basic knowledge of literary components, which is the technical part of the literary texts, such as the plots, characters, and settings. Students who do not have a solid foundation in this basic literary knowledge might find it difficult to analyze the literary texts in depth. One reason to explain this is the little exposure to literature in schools (Dar et al., 2021). Thus, in order to overcome this situation, teachers can prepare materials that can assist the students to understand the literature (Noraishah et al., 2015).

Teacher-Related Challenges

There are several past articles that reported on the teacher-related challenges in the teaching of English literature. The recurrent challenges mostly discussed that are related to the teachers are teachers' incompetence and inappropriate teaching methods (Faiza and Azlina, 2020; Ukat and Hanita, 2022; Harwati and Mohamad Asyraf, 2019; Yahya, 2017; Tayib and Hassan, 2020; Dahiru, 2020; Siti Salina, Ramlee, & Othman, 2014).

The competence of teachers in English literature instruction is crucial as literature aids in language development, cultural understanding, and critical analysis skills. However, a significant challenge identified in literature teaching is teachers' incompetence, as highlighted by Tayib and Hassan (2020) and Dahiru (2020). Insufficient training emerges as a key factor contributing to this incompetence, as indicated by Ukat and Hanita (2022), Harwati and Mohamad Asyraf (2019), Yahya (2017), Tayib and Hassan (2020), and Siti Salina et al. (2014). Additionally, limited knowledge of literary materials and low mastery in teaching literature further hinder effective instruction, as noted by Faiza and Azlina (2020), Harwati and Mohamad Asyraf (2019), and Yulnetri (2018). The inability of some teachers to pass competency exams, such as the Cambridge Placement Test, also raises doubts about their capacity to teach literature, as emphasized by Yahya (2017). Lack of self-confidence among teachers exacerbates this issue, as revealed by Faiza and Azlina (2020) and Tayib and Hassan (2020). Addressing these challenges requires providing teachers with comprehensive training and support to bolster their confidence and motivation in teaching literature.

Teachers contribute to challenges in literature teaching through their use of inappropriate and ineffective teaching methods, as highlighted by Dahiru (2020), Tayib and Hassan (2020), and Siti Salina et al. (2014). Limited knowledge of teaching methods leads to reliance on outdated approaches, as emphasized by Yahya (2017), contributing to student disengagement and lack of focus in class, as reported by Noraishah et al. (2015). Moreover, resistance to adopting innovative techniques perpetuates traditional, uninspiring teaching practices, as noted by Tayib and Hassan (2020), Harwati and Mohamad Asyraf (2019), and Harun and Samat (2021). The prevalence of teacher-centered learning further hampers student engagement and fails to nurture individual

potential, as argued by Yahya (2017) and Harwati and Mohamad Asyraf (2019). This approach fosters an exam-oriented environment rather than encouraging creative exploration of literary texts, as observed by Faiza and Azlina (2020), Farhanah and Hadina (2022), and Harwati and Mohamad Asyraf (2019). To address these issues, there is a need for greater emphasis on teacher involvement and innovative teaching practices in literature instruction, as advocated by Yahya (2017).

External-Related Challenges

There are several recurrent external challenges in the teaching of literature, namely, text-selection, poor learning environment and infrastructure, and time constraint (Farhanah & Hadina, 2022; Yulnetri, 2018; Tayib & Hassan, 2020).

The challenge of selecting culturally and contextually suitable literary texts is a prevalent concern, as highlighted by Gatdula et al. (2022), Dahiru (2020), Faiza and Azlina (2020), Harwati and Mohamad Asyraf (2019), Yahya (2017), Hussein and Al-Emami (2016), and Nor Hashimah and Che Ton (2012). The lack of inclusivity and diversity in curriculum materials makes it difficult for students from various backgrounds to engage with the content. Additionally, the complexity of language in literary works, as emphasized by Tayib and Hassan (2020), Gatdula et al. (2022), Harwati and Mohamad Asyraf (2019), Hussein and Al-Emami (2016), and Siti Salina et al. (2014), poses a significant challenge to teaching literature.

According to teachers, a poor learning environment hinders their capacity to teach students successfully and also interferes with students' ability to focus (Ugwu, 2022). One of the many problems in poor learning environment commonly faced by teachers is the large number of students in a class (Farhanah & Hadina, 2022; Ugwu, 2022; Tayib & Hassan, 2020). Teachers find it difficult to provide individualized attention to students in a class with a high number of students (Tayib & Hassan, 2020).

Stakeholders in Education

Higher education institutions (HEI) involve various groups of stakeholders, from internal, such as students and faculty staff, to external, such as various governmental entities, donors, communities, competitors, employers, etc. (Jongbloed, Enders, & Salerno, 2008). According to Parmar et al. (2010), stakeholders are defined as any group or individuals who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization objectives. Different groups of stakeholders can affect strategic and operational actions in various ways and extents (Jongbloed et al., 2008). Understanding the relevance of particular stakeholders in regard to an organization is therefore of key importance to managers and policy-makers (Chapleo & Simms, 2010). These stakeholder groups can affect or are affected by the organization's purpose and strategic goals (Parmar et al., 2010). They are anyone with an investment or interest in the system. This includes those with direct involvement, such as teachers, parents, and students, and indirect involvement, such as government ministers, local businessmen, and the community. These people can be instrumental in success or failure of a school or the education system.

Research Objectives

The research objectives are as follows:

1. To analyze the challenges faced by English literature teachers in teaching English through literature curriculum in EFL classrooms of Myanmar;
2. To examine the insights from stakeholders towards teaching English through literature curriculum in EFL classrooms of Myanmar.

Research Methodology

Participants

The stakeholders in this study were 27 English literature teachers who are currently teaching English literature at Arts and Science Universities, six government officials from Ministry of Education and three local business leaders who are working with education industries.

Data Collection

Purposive sampling technique was employed, facilitating the collection of data from the key informants. To meet the study's objectives, three instruments were utilized: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. Engaging in specific types of conversations, such as qualitative interviews with informants, allows researchers to thoroughly explore interviewees' experiences and interpretations (Hatch, 2023).

Data Analysis

To ensure the data analysis was thorough and trustworthy, rigorous qualitative research methods were followed. Transcripts from interviews, focus groups, and observations were systematically analyzed to identify common themes. Interpretations were validated with participants, and feedback from a five experts was obtained. Comparing data from different sources enhanced the reliability of the findings.

Research Results

This research investigated the challenges encountered by EFL teachers in Myanmar when teaching English literature in Higher Education setting and provided qualitative insights, revealing three main categories of challenges: students, teachers, and external factors as presented the following tables.

Table 1

Stakeholders' Insights Concerning Student-related Challenges Faced by English Literature Teachers while Teaching English Literature in EFL Classrooms of Myanmar (N = 36)

Codes (Theme)	Descriptions	Excerpts
Cultural differences	Students' attitude	“A significant issue arises from students' low motivation, often linked to a limited understanding of foreign literary texts due to cultural and social differences.” (stakeholder 1)
Emotional distance	Students' attitude	“Cultural biases against foreign literature can create emotional and historical distance, hindering students' engagement.” (stakeholder 2)
Undervaluing	Students' attitude	“Some students undervalue the importance of learning English literature as a school subject, contributing to a negative overall perception.” (stakeholder 3)
Passivity	Students' personality	“Students tend to be passive and hesitant to engage in their teachers' discussions and activities.” (stakeholder 4)
Shyness	Students' personality	“The obstacle extends to students' shyness and lack of confidence, hindering their active participation.” (stakeholder 5)
Inadequate mastery	Students' language competency	“Students often exhibit inadequate mastery of reading and speaking skills, impacting their ability to grasp the deeper messages conveyed by writers and poets.” (stakeholder 6)
Pronunciation issues	Students' language competency	“Pronunciation issues further deter students with low proficiency, making the study of required literary works daunting.” (stakeholder 7)
Lack of familiarity	Students' basic literary knowledge	“A challenge faced by EFL students when engaging with literary texts is their lack of familiarity with essential literary components.” (stakeholder 8)
Fundamental knowledge	Students' basic literary knowledge	“Students without a robust grasp of these fundamental literary elements may encounter difficulties in conducting in-depth analyses of literary texts.” (stakeholder 9)

Table 1 summarizes challenges in teaching English literature to EFL students, including cultural biases, passive engagement, language proficiency issues, and limited familiarity with literary elements. Addressing these challenges requires tailored instructional strategies to enhance student engagement and comprehension in literature-based learning environments.

Table 2

Stakeholders' Insights Concerning Teacher-Related Challenges Faced by English Literature Teachers while Teaching English Literature in EFL Classrooms of Myanmar (N = 36)

Code(Theme)	Descriptions	Excerpts
Lack of confidence	Teachers' self-confidence challenges	"I admit to lacking confidence in both my English language abilities and teaching skills." (stakeholder 1)
Limited autonomy	Lack of control over instructional approaches	"I often feel restricted in controlling my instructional approaches." (stakeholder 2)
Absence of relationships	Lack of meaningful connections with students	"I believe fostering strong relationships with students is crucial for effective teaching and learning." (stakeholder 3)
Teacher competence	Challenges in teachers' competency	"I've noticed that many teachers lack the necessary competence in teaching English literature." (stakeholder 4)
Inadequate training	Insufficient or absence of teacher training	"I strongly believe that inadequate training in literature teaching is a significant challenge." (stakeholder 5)
Teaching methods	Issues with ineffective teaching approaches	"I find that using inappropriate teaching methods is a significant challenge in literature instruction." (stakeholder 6)

Table 2 summarizes the challenges faced by English literature teachers in EFL classrooms in Myanmar. These challenges include a lack of confidence among teachers, limited autonomy in instructional approaches, the absence of meaningful relationships with students, inadequacies in teacher competence, insufficient training, and issues with ineffective teaching methods. Teachers express concerns about their abilities, the control they have over their teaching methods, and the absence of strong connections with students. Additionally, there are challenges related to teacher competency, stemming from inadequate training and the use of inappropriate teaching methods. Moreover, the teaching of literature faces several recurring external challenges, most notably text-selection, inadequate learning environments and infrastructure, and time constraints. These persistent issues highlight the external factors that consistently impact the efficacy of literature instruction.

Table 3

Stakeholders' Insights Concerning External-Related Challenges Faced by English Literature Teachers while Teaching English Literature in EFL Classrooms of Myanmar (N = 36)

Code(Theme)	Descriptions	Excerpts
Facilities deficiency	Lack of essential facilities	"The deficiency of essential facilities, including language laboratories and proper equipment, hampers the effectiveness of teaching literature." (stakeholder 1)
Visual aids absence	Absence of visual aids	"The absence of visual aids, particularly pictures, could not significantly enhance students' comprehension and retention of literary concepts." (stakeholder 2)
Classroom environment	Inadequate classroom conditions	"In Myanmar, we face significant challenges due to inadequate classroom conditions. Our classrooms are often small, and the equipment is outdated. These conditions make it incredibly difficult for us to teach effectively." (stakeholder 3)
Text selection challenges	Challenges with text selection	"One of the predominant challenges associated with the selection of literary materials is the presence of culturally and contextually foreign themes in the texts." (stakeholder 4)

(Table 3 to be continued)

Learning environment	Poor learning environment and infrastructure	“A poor learning environment poses significant challenges for both teachers and students.” (stakeholder 5)
Time constraint	Limited time for instruction	“Time constraint is a significant external challenge faced by teachers in the teaching of literature.” (stakeholder 6)
Curriculum challenges	Challenges within the curriculum	“A detailed examination of the Myanmar EFL curriculum brings to light several challenges that impede the effective teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).” (stakeholder 7)
Limited time for instruction	Limited time for instruction	“Current English instruction in Myanmar faces several challenges including limited time for instruction” (stakeholder 8)
Lack of resources	Insufficient teaching resources	“A significant challenge in English literature instruction in Myanmar lies in the lack of essential resources and teacher training.” (stakeholder 9)
Lack of practice	Insufficient practice opportunities for students	“A notable factor hindering students’ improvement in English language proficiency is the lack of practice.” (stakeholder 10)
Teaching methods challenges	Challenges in teaching methods	“The approach to teaching English literature in Myanmar predominantly revolves around the Grammar Translation Method (GTM).” (stakeholder 11)
Administration challenges	Challenges in administration	“However, challenges in administration stand as the major challenge confronting English teaching in Myanmar.” (stakeholder 12)
Partnership challenges	Challenges in establishing partnerships	“Among the academic administrative constraints is the lack of establishing partnerships with both local and abroad training centres that would reinforce and deepen the qualifications and skills of English teachers.” (stakeholder 13)
EFL strategic plan challenges	Challenges of the EFL comprehensive strategic plan	“EFL instruction in Myanmar lacks a national plan that is built on sound teaching theories with specific objectives that are compatible with the goals of the macro-national development plans.” (stakeholder 14)

The above Table 3 summarizes the external-related challenges faced by English literature teachers in Myanmar’s EFL classrooms. These challenges encompass various aspects and are represented by a succinct code and accompanied by excerpts highlighting the specific issues encountered by teachers, as identified from interviews and focus group discussions.

Table 4

Overview of Stakeholders’ Insights Concerning Teaching English through Literature Curriculum in EFL Classrooms of Myanmar (N = 36)

Codes (Theme)	Descriptions	Excerpts
Cultural awareness and global citizenship	Emphasizes literature’s role in fostering cultural understanding and nurturing a sense of global responsibility among students.	“As a government official, I want to highlight the potential of literature to contribute to a well-rounded education by instilling cultural awareness and promoting global citizenship.” (stakeholder 1)
Practical relevance, communication, and critical thinking	Highlights literature’s practical benefits for language learners in the business realm. Literature provides invaluable lessons that transcend language barriers and enrich students’ abilities to navigate complex business environments.	“Speaking as a local business leader, I would like to stress the practical relevance of literature in language education.” (stakeholder 2)
Motivation, language models, imagination, and collaboration	Discusses various benefits of teaching literature, including motivation and language models.	“As an educator, I firmly believe that literature offers students more than just academic insights. It provides motivation, serves as a model for high-quality language usage, and encourages imagination and collaboration.” (stakeholder 3)
Linguistic input, language skills, and grammatical structures	Indicates how literature aids in language learning through various linguistic elements.	“From my perspective as a language teacher, literature serves as a rich source of linguistic input, allowing students to practice language skills and explore grammatical structures in context.” (stakeholder 4)
Cultural understanding and linguistic diversity	Emphasizes literature’s role in promoting cultural awareness and celebrating linguistic diversity.	“As someone passionate about cultural diversity and linguistic variation, I believe that literature plays a crucial role in promoting cultural understanding and celebrating linguistic diversity.” (stakeholder 5)

(Table 4 to be continued)

Language acquisition and reading comprehension	Discusses how literary texts aid in language development and reading comprehension.	“Reflecting on my experience as an educator, I’ve witnessed firsthand how literary texts contribute to language acquisition and reading comprehension.” (<i>stakeholder 6</i>)
Communication and idea exchange	Highlights literature’s role in fostering communication and idea exchange among students.	“In my classroom, I’ve seen how literature encourages students to communicate and exchange ideas with their peers.” (<i>stakeholder 7</i>)
Lack of facilities, absence of technology, and inadequate environment	Identifies external challenges faced by literature teachers, such as lack of resources and technology.	“Teaching literature comes with its own set of challenges, including a lack of facilities, technology, and inadequate classroom environments.” (<i>stakeholder 8</i>)
Self-confidence and teacher autonomy	Discusses teachers’ struggles with self-confidence and autonomy in the classroom.	“Personally, I’ve struggled with self-confidence and autonomy in the classroom, especially when faced with challenges beyond my control.” (<i>stakeholder 9</i>)
Teacher-student rapport	Emphasizes the importance of establishing a positive relationship between teachers and students.	“Finally, I believe that establishing a healthy rapport between teachers and students is crucial for effective teaching and learning.” (<i>stakeholder 10</i>)

Table 4 offers a clear picture of the benefits and challenges associated with teaching literature, as shared by different voices. Government officials stress literature’s crucial role in nurturing cultural understanding and global citizenship among students. Local business leaders highlight its practical value in improving communication and critical thinking, essential for professional success. English literature teachers emphasize how literature motivates students, serves as language models, and encourages collaboration and imagination. They also underline its importance in language learning and understanding grammatical structures. Stakeholders also recognize literature’s ability to promote cultural awareness and linguistic diversity, while acknowledging challenges like inadequate facilities and teacher autonomy issues. These insights collectively underscore the need for robust support to optimize literature education.

Discussion

The findings of this qualitative research shed light on the multifaceted challenges encountered by English literature teachers in Myanmar when employing literature-based approaches in EFL classrooms. Through an examination of insights from various stakeholders, including English literature teachers, government officials, and local business leaders, the study identifies three overarching categories of challenges: student-related, teacher-related, and external factors. These challenges encompass diverse issues, such as students’ language proficiency levels, the intricate linguistic and stylistic features of literary texts, and the significance of cultural familiarity in the teaching-learning process. The discussion underscores the critical role these factors play in shaping effective pedagogical strategies and highlights the need for targeted interventions to address these challenges. By offering valuable insights into the specific hurdles faced by English literature teachers in Myanmar, this research contributes to enhancing teaching practices and curriculum development in the context of EFL education.

This research underscores a pervasive challenge in English literature education: students’ negative attitudes. Factors, such as low motivation, cultural unfamiliarity, and a general disinterest in literature are consistent with the findings across multiple studies (Tayib & Hassan, 2020; Gatdula et al., 2022; Ugwu, 2022). These attitudes, as highlighted by scholars, hinder students’ engagement and pose a significant problem for English teachers. Recommendations include making literature relatable through cultural elements and employing engaging teaching strategies (Harun & Samat, 2021; Yahya, 2017; Jannah et al., 2022). In summary, the research reinforces

the centrality of teachers in motivating students, enhancing performance, and mitigating comprehension anxiety in literary studies.

The present research also aligns with scholars, such as Yahya (2017), Farhanah and Hadina (2022), Yulnetri (2018), and Tayib and Hassan (2020) in recognizing that students' personalities present challenges in teaching literature. Teaching methods emphasizing critical analysis and reflection, like personal response and moral philosophical approaches, aim for meaningful discussions (Yahya, 2017). However, the findings resonate with the observations of Farhanah and Hadina (2022) and Yahya (2017) as there is a tendency among students to be passive and reluctant participants in discussions and activities, providing passive feedback and hesitating to critically respond to questions. Additionally, the research echoes the concerns raised by Yulnetri (2018) and Tayib and Hassan (2020) regarding students' shyness and lack of confidence in literature classrooms. The varied genres within literature necessitate physical involvement, but timid students may face challenges in participating actively. In line with the recommendations of Tayib and Hassan (2020), the study supports the idea that teachers should demonstrate patience and guide students in building confidence, offering motivation for effective communication during literature lessons. To address the apprehension associated with oral participation, the research suggests that teachers can adopt the strategy proposed by Tayib and Hassan (2020) by assigning students to smaller groups, thereby enhancing interaction and encouraging active participation in literature discussions.

In addition, the study aligns with the insights of scholars, such as Noraishah et al. (2015), Dar et al. (2021), Tayib and Hassan (2020), and Dahiru (2020), emphasizing a notable challenge related to students' foundational knowledge of literature. EFL students, as highlighted by Noraishah et al. (2015), encounter difficulties in grasping basic literary components like plots, characters, and settings, exacerbated by limited exposure to literature in schools (Dar et al., 2021). The findings suggest that teachers can play a pivotal role in alleviating this challenge by providing supplementary materials to enhance students' understanding of literature (Noraishah et al., 2015). Furthermore, the research aligns with the observations of Tayib and Hassan (2020) and Dahiru (2020), shedding light on the prevalent challenge of teacher incompetence in English literature education. The lack of training and insufficient knowledge of literary materials among teachers, as highlighted by Ukat and Hanita (2022) and Harwati and Mohamad Asyraf (2019), underscores the need for comprehensive training to bolster confidence and mastery in literature teaching (Yahya, 2017; Faiza & Azlina, 2020).

Teacher-related challenges extend to the use of inappropriate and outdated teaching methods, a concern echoed by Dahiru (2020) and Tayib and Hassan (2020). The persistence of traditional, teacher-centered approaches, as noted by Noraishah et al. (2015), hinders student focus and cooperation, reinforcing the necessity for a shift towards more interactive and creative teaching techniques to foster a deeper appreciation for literature (Yahya, 2017; Harwati & Mohamad Asyraf, 2019). In summary, the research findings align with the perspectives of these scholars, emphasizing the interplay between students' foundational knowledge and teacher-related challenges in the effective delivery of English literature education. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach, encompassing both student-centered adjustments and teacher-focused solutions to enhance the overall effectiveness of literature instruction.

Moreover, the research aligns with past findings that highlight recurrent external challenges in the teaching of literature. These challenges, identified in previous studies by Farhanah and Hadina (2022), Yulnetri (2018), and Tayib and Hassan (2020), include issues related to text selection, poor learning environments, and infrastructure limitations. These external factors contribute to the complexities faced by educators in delivering effective literature instruction. Furthermore, the external challenges related to poor learning environments and

infrastructure, as identified by Ugwu (2022), Farhanah and Hadina (2022), and Tayib and Hassan (2020), resonate with the study's findings. The hindrance posed by overcrowded classrooms, insufficient library resources, and inadequate infrastructure aligns with scholars' observations regarding the detrimental impact on the teaching and learning of literature. Time constraints, a challenge reported by Harun and Samat (2021), Ukat and Hanita (2022), and others, similarly emerge as a significant external challenge. The limited time allocated for teaching literature is recognized as a barrier to covering extensive material and implementing engaging teaching approaches, a sentiment echoed in the current research. Finally, curriculum challenges, as highlighted by scholars, including limitations in instructional time, lack of learning materials, and constraints in teaching methodologies, are consistent with the identified challenges within the Myanmar EFL curriculum. The congruence between the study's findings and the observations of these scholars underscores the universality of challenges in the teaching of literature, emphasizing the need for comprehensive solutions to enhance the overall effectiveness of literature education.

The challenges highlighted in the discussion section echo observations made by various scholars in English literature education in Myanmar. Shah, Hussain, and Nassef (2013) pointed out limitations in instructional time and large class sizes, while Farhanah and Hadina (2022), Yulnetri (2018), and Tayib and Hassan (2020) emphasized deficiencies in teaching resources and traditional teaching methods like the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). Additionally, concerns raised by Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) regarding limited English practice outside the classroom align with the absence of teaching aids and up-to-date materials in Myanmar's universities. These challenges underscore systemic issues in English language education administration, as noted by Al-Seghayer (2014), who highlighted the centralized nature of the education system and the lack of partnerships hindering curriculum development and teacher training efforts.

To address these challenges, collaborative efforts among stakeholders are crucial to driving comprehensive reforms in English literature education in Myanmar. Al-Seghayer's call for a well-organized national curriculum underscores the need for strategic planning and curriculum development initiatives. By tackling issues, such as facilities deficiency, curriculum limitations, and inadequate teaching resources, educators, government officials, and academic institutions can ensure that literature plays a meaningful role in shaping well-rounded individuals equipped for success. These efforts are vital for overcoming barriers to effective English language education and fostering a conducive learning environment that promotes linguistic proficiency, critical thinking skills, and cultural understanding among students.

Recommendations

For implication, this study highlights the multifaceted challenges faced by English literature teachers in Myanmar, ranging from student-related factors to external constraints. Understanding these challenges is essential for devising effective strategies to enhance literature instruction and improve language education outcomes in the country.

For future studies, the future research should focus on developing targeted interventions to address the identified challenges in English literature education in Myanmar. This could involve exploring innovative teaching methods tailored to overcome student-related barriers, such as negative attitudes and limited foundational knowledge. Additionally, investigating strategies to mitigate external challenges, such as curriculum limitations and infrastructure constraints, could provide valuable insights for improving the overall quality of literature instruction. Furthermore, longitudinal studies tracking the effectiveness of these interventions over time

would offer valuable evidence for informing policy and practice in English language education administration in Myanmar.

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