

**EFFECTIVENESS OF THE REFLECTION-BASED RECIPROCAL
TEACHING APPROACH FOR READING COMPREHENSION
ACHIEVEMENT IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL IN MYANMAR**

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of the reflection-based reciprocal teaching approach in enhancing reading comprehension achievement among upper secondary school students in Myanmar. The reflection-based reciprocal teaching approach is a pedagogical strategy that promotes active engagement, collaborative learning, and metacognitive awareness among students.

The research employs a quasi-experimental design, involving a treatment group that receives instruction using the reflection-based reciprocal teaching approach and a control group that receives traditional instruction. The study examines the impact of the intervention on students' reading comprehension skills, as measured by pre- and post-tests, and explores students' perceptions and experiences with the intervention through qualitative methods.

Preliminary findings suggest that the reflection-based reciprocal teaching approach significantly improves students' reading comprehension achievement compared to traditional instruction methods. Moreover, qualitative data reveal positive perceptions among students regarding the approach, highlighting its efficacy in enhancing comprehension strategies, fostering critical thinking, and promoting collaborative learning.

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on innovative teaching methods for improving reading comprehension outcomes in diverse educational settings. The findings have implications for curriculum development and instructional practices aimed at enhancing students' reading proficiency and overall academic success in Myanmar's upper secondary schools.

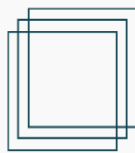
Keywords: reflection-based reciprocal teaching (RBRT), quasi-experimental design, critical thinking, knowledge acquisition, rote memorization, constructivism, metacognition, metacognitive awareness, inferencing, text structure awareness, behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, content validity index (CVI), Likert scale, structural equation modeling (SEM).

Introduction

Reading comprehension skills are fundamental to academic achievement and lifelong learning, serving as the cornerstone of effective communication, critical thinking, and knowledge acquisition. Proficient readers not only extract information from texts but

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also engage in higher-order thinking processes such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Consequently, individuals with strong reading comprehension abilities are better equipped to succeed academically, navigate complex information landscapes, and participate fully in society.

Despite its importance, reading comprehension remains a challenge for many students, particularly in diverse educational contexts such as upper secondary schools in Myanmar. Factors such as limited access to resources, language barriers, and instructional practices that focus primarily on rote memorization often hinder students' development of robust comprehension skills. Addressing this challenge requires innovative pedagogical approaches that empower students to actively construct meaning from texts, monitor their understanding, and apply effective comprehension strategies.

One such approach is the reflection-based reciprocal teaching method, which draws on the principles of social constructivism and metacognition to enhance reading comprehension. Rooted in the work of Palincsar and Brown (1984)¹, this approach involves four main strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Through collaborative interactions between students and teachers, reciprocal teaching fosters metacognitive awareness, strategic reading behaviors, and deeper comprehension of texts.

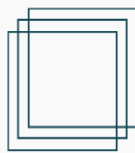
Despite its theoretical promise, the implementation and effectiveness of the reflection-based reciprocal teaching approach in Myanmar's upper secondary schools remain underexplored. Thus, the research problem addressed in this study is twofold: first, to investigate the effectiveness of the reflection-based reciprocal teaching approach in improving reading comprehension achievement among upper secondary school students in Myanmar; and second, to explore students' perceptions and experiences with this instructional method.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To assess the impact of the reflection-based reciprocal teaching approach on students' reading comprehension skills, as measured by pre- and post-intervention tests.
2. To examine students' perceptions of the reflection-based reciprocal teaching approach, including their attitudes towards the approach, perceived benefits, and challenges.
3. To explore the experiences of students and teachers in implementing the reflection-based reciprocal teaching approach in the Myanmar upper secondary school context.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform educational practice and policy by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the reflection-based

¹ Palincsar, A. S., & Brown, A. L. (1984). Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-fostering and comprehension-monitoring activities. *Cognition and Instruction*, 1(2), 117-175.



reciprocal teaching approach in a context where traditional instructional methods predominate. By elucidating the impact of this innovative approach on reading comprehension achievement and student engagement, the study aims to contribute to the enhancement of teaching and learning practices in Myanmar's upper secondary schools and beyond.

Literature Review

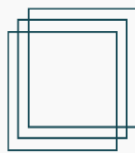
Reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process that involves the interaction of various skills and strategies, including decoding, vocabulary knowledge, inferencing, and text structure awareness. Numerous pedagogical approaches have been proposed to enhance reading comprehension, among which reciprocal teaching has garnered significant attention.

Reciprocal teaching, initially proposed by Palincsar and Brown (1984), is a collaborative instructional method aimed at improving reading comprehension through four key strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. This approach emphasizes the active involvement of students in constructing meaning from texts and engaging in metacognitive monitoring of their comprehension processes.

Research on reciprocal teaching has demonstrated its effectiveness in improving reading comprehension outcomes across diverse educational contexts. For example, a meta-analysis by Hattie, Biggs, and Purdie (1996) found that reciprocal teaching had a moderate to large effect size on reading comprehension achievement. Similarly, a study by Rosenshine and Meister (1994) reported significant gains in reading comprehension skills among elementary school students who received reciprocal teaching instruction compared to control groups.

While reciprocal teaching has shown promise in improving reading comprehension, recent studies have identified certain limitations and challenges associated with its implementation. For instance, Fuchs, Fuchs, and Kazdan (1999) found that while reciprocal teaching had positive effects on comprehension, its effectiveness varied depending on students' prior knowledge and instructional support. Furthermore, researchers have highlighted the need for adaptations and modifications to reciprocal teaching to address the diverse needs of students, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Vaughn et al., 2003).

Despite the extensive research on reciprocal teaching, there is a paucity of studies examining its effectiveness in the context of upper secondary education in Myanmar. Given the unique linguistic and socio-cultural characteristics of Myanmar's educational landscape, there is a need for empirical research to explore the applicability and efficacy of reciprocal teaching in this context. Additionally, previous studies have primarily focused on the quantitative outcomes of reciprocal teaching interventions, with limited attention to students' perceptions and experiences with the approach. Addressing these gaps in the literature, the present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the reflection-based reciprocal teaching approach in improving reading comprehension



achievement among upper secondary school students in Myanmar, while also exploring students' attitudes and experiences with the instructional method. By doing so, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the potential of reciprocal teaching as a pedagogical tool for enhancing reading comprehension in diverse educational settings.

Tun Zaw Oo, Andrea Magyar, Anita Habók's research

This research explores the effectiveness of the reflection-based reciprocal teaching (RBRT) approach in enhancing reading comprehension skills among upper secondary school students in Myanmar, specifically in the context of English language learning. Drawing from the reflective teaching model proposed by Oo and Habók (2020), the RBRT approach integrates elements of reciprocal teaching, including questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and predicting.

Employing cluster randomized trials, the study compared the outcomes of two groups: an experimental group exposed to RBRT instruction and a control group receiving traditional teaching methods. Results indicate a significant positive impact of the RBRT approach on students' English reading comprehension achievement. Post-test scores of the experimental group demonstrated a notable increase, with a high effect size observed. Furthermore, the study highlights the role of teachers' reflection on instructional practices in fostering students' reading comprehension skills.

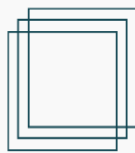
These findings underscore the potential of the RBRT approach as an effective pedagogical tool for improving English reading comprehension among upper secondary students in Myanmar. By integrating reflective practices and reciprocal teaching methods, educators can create a conducive classroom environment conducive to enhancing students' language proficiency and comprehension abilities.

Theoretical Background

Reciprocal Teaching Method

Reciprocal teaching is a strategy designed to enhance students' reading comprehension skills by guiding them through four key comprehension-building and monitoring techniques (Navaie, 2018). These techniques include:

- (1) generating questions based on the text,
 - (2) summarizing the text in their own words,
 - (3) clarifying any uncertainties or misunderstandings, and
 - (4) predicting what will happen next in the text.
- However, the methodology of reciprocal teaching extends beyond mere group discussions among students. Ostovar-Namaghi and Shahhosseini (2011) advocate for teachers to model the process of forming and participating in groups, demonstrating various roles students can take on during the learning process.



Regarding students' roles within reciprocal teaching, they include questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and predicting. During the questioning stage, students identify key information and themes from the text and formulate questions in their own words, aimed at deepening their understanding of the text's content (Rodli & Prastyo, 2017). The clarifying step involves addressing unknown words, resolving comprehension difficulties, and ensuring a clear understanding of the text's meaning. Stricklin (2011) recommends the use of additional tools, such as dictionaries or thesauruses, to aid in this process.

Summarizing entails identifying essential information from the text and articulating it in one's own words, condensing the material into a concise statement that captures the main ideas (Williams, 2010). Finally, predicting involves comparing prior knowledge with new information obtained from the text and generating statements about future events or developments (Doolittle et al., 2006).

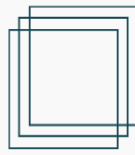
Teachers may offer further feedback to student groups as needed to support effective and interactive participation in the reading comprehension process (Ghorbani et al., 2013). This feedback serves to enhance students' comprehension skills and foster their engagement in the learning process.

Importance of transformative learning theory

In the realm of education, various learning approaches trace their roots back to traditional theories such as behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism (Şahin & Doğantay, 2018). According to behaviorist theory, students acquire new knowledge or behaviors by forming associations between stimuli and responses (Nussbaum, 2019). Cognitivism posits that learning and memory are facilitated through cognitive processes within the mind (Çeliköz et al., 2016). Conversely, constructivism suggests that individuals construct new knowledge based on their existing cognitive structures (Şahin & Doğantay, 2018).

In the context of student learning through reciprocal teaching, which entails the use of strategies such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing (Navaie, 2018), these strategies align with the principles of behaviorist (stimuli and behavioral responses), cognitivist (cognitive functions), and constructivist (constructive processes based on prior knowledge) theories. Therefore, it is evident that reciprocal teaching is supported by all three theoretical frameworks, facilitating students' progress in reading comprehension.

Moreover, Mezirow's transformative learning theory emphasizes the potential for transformative learning to enhance students' educational experiences, albeit not all forms of learning are transformative (Mezirow, 1991). In the rapidly changing landscape of the twenty-first century, where learning processes are increasingly complex and dynamic, transformative learning theory has gained importance, particularly in adult education (Şahin & Doğantay, 2018). This theory advocates for radical shifts in individuals' concepts, assumptions, and expectations, necessitating



critical reflection to construct meaningful understanding (Mezirow, 2006). Therefore, reflective teaching becomes integral to transformative learning theory.

In this study of adult learning, we sought to enhance the reciprocal teaching method by integrating reflective teaching practices, which promote students' transformative learning experiences.

Conceptual framework

The current study adopts the conceptual framework of the reflective teaching model for reading comprehension, as outlined by Oo and Habók (2020) and illustrated in Figure 1. This instructional model comprises four primary stages: planning, acting, reflecting, and evaluating. Within this reflective model, the teacher employs the reciprocal teaching method to foster students' English reading comprehension achievement, forming the basis of the RBRT approach. The key steps of the RBRT approach, depicted in Figure 1, are elaborated as follows.

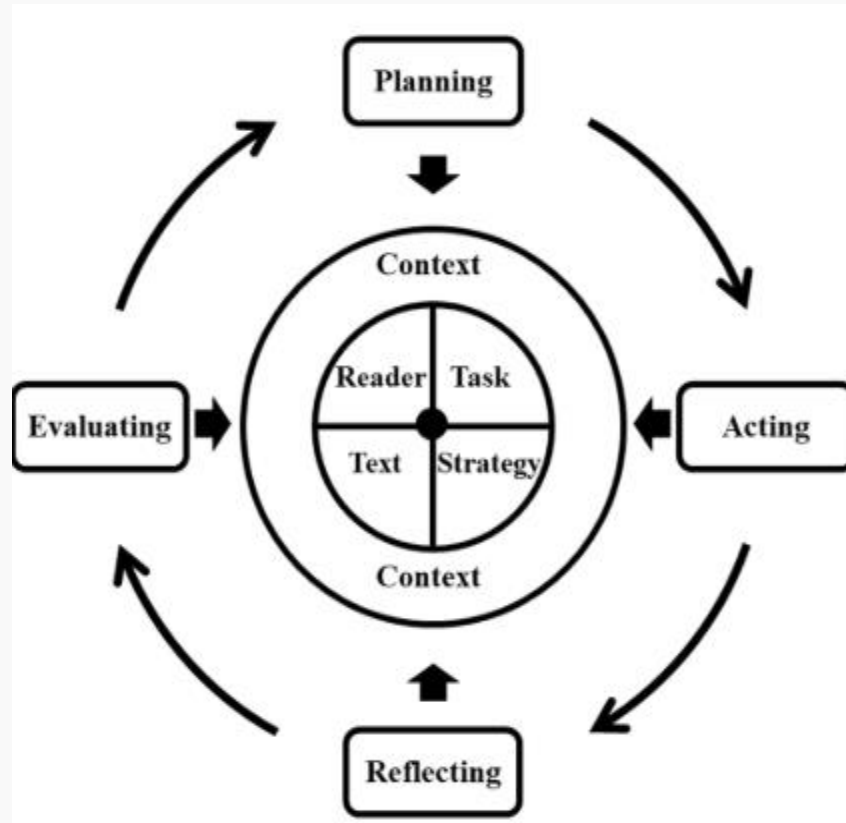
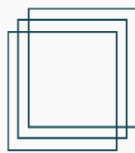


Fig. 1 Reflective teaching model for reading comprehension (Oo & Habók, 2020, p. 133)

During the planning phase, the teacher meticulously designs the instructional context by integrating the reciprocal teaching method, considering factors such as the intended audience (reader), the material to be taught (text), the instructional strategy (strategy), and the desired student activities (task). In the acting phase, the teacher executes the



previously planned components, engaging in reciprocal teaching as outlined beforehand. Initially, the teacher demonstrates the process of predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing the reading text, after which students assume active roles in these activities. Throughout this phase, the teacher serves as a facilitator, offering guidance, monitoring progress, and providing suggestions as needed.

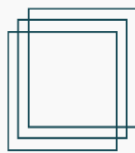
In the reflecting stage, following students' engagement in the four activities, the teacher conducts a comprehensive review of the entire text unit, incorporating relevant exercises and questions. These revision exercises afford students an opportunity to reflect on their learning from the reading text, fostering transformative learning experiences. Additionally, the teacher engages in reflective practices concerning the instructional context, utilizing various tools such as teacher journals, lesson reports, questionnaires, audio/video recordings, classroom observation protocols, and student feedback (Fook, 2015). These reflective tools facilitate an examination of the instructional context encompassing the reader, text, strategy, and task. In this phase of the study, participating teachers utilized peer observation (observation scheme) and student feedback (questionnaire based on learning preferences) in accordance with Brookfield's (2017) framework.

In the final evaluating stage, both formative and summative assessments are employed to evaluate the instructional context, which includes considerations of the reader, text, task, and strategy. Houston and Thompson (2017) emphasize the significance of formative and summative assessments in language learning, describing them as processes for assessing ongoing activities and determining the value of completed activities, respectively. Formative assessment involves evaluating students' reflective feedback via a questionnaire and peer observation through an observation scheme. Summative assessment encompasses a posttest administered at the conclusion of the treatment period (Looney, 2011).

Research background

The study was conducted in Myanmar, a country where significant political and economic changes have greatly influenced the education system. Myanmar's education system operates within a highly centralized and top-down framework, with teachers, schools, colleges, and universities all under government control (Ulla, 2017). The Ministry of Education is responsible for the recruitment, placement, and advancement of qualified in-service teachers (UNESCO, 2020). However, the education system in Myanmar has faced challenges compared to other nations, stemming from economic difficulties over recent decades (Hayden & Martin, 2013). This is evident in the poor state of classrooms, school infrastructure, outdated teaching methods, and inadequate teacher training opportunities.

In response to these challenges, the Myanmar government has partnered with various developed countries, such as the United States (US Institute of International Education; IIE) and the United Kingdom (British Council), to enhance English proficiency among



Myanmar teachers (Goodman, 2013). Additionally, collaborations with Japan (Japan International Cooperation Agency; JICA) aim to modernize the education system (Ulla, 2017).

Drawing from the framework of the RBRT approach, which encompasses planning instruction, implementing reciprocal teaching procedures, reflecting through student questionnaires and observation schemes, and evaluating using formative and summative assessments, a developmental program has been devised to enhance students' English language reading comprehension skills.

Research questions

The primary aim of the research was to assess the efficacy of the RBRT approach for enhancing English reading comprehension among Myanmar students. To address this objective, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Are the tools used for teaching and assessing students' English reading comprehension reliable and valid?
2. To what extent does the RBRT approach contribute to students' reading comprehension?
3. What influence does the teacher's reflection on the instructional context have on students' reading comprehension achievement?

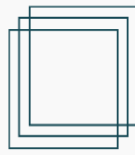
Methods

Procedures

This research followed a three-step approach to investigate the effectiveness of the RBRT approach on students' reading comprehension. Firstly, the content validity of the instruments was established by consulting six content experts, utilizing the content validity index (CVI) to ensure alignment with theoretical content. Secondly, a pilot study involving 83 grade 9 students from a single Upper Secondary School in Myanmar was conducted. This pilot study confirmed the construct validity of the instruments for teaching reading comprehension, informing subsequent modifications for the main study.

The third step involved the main study, which investigated the effectiveness of the RBRT approach using a larger sample size. Five schools from Myanmar were selected using cluster randomized trial methodology. Intact groups within each school were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group. Initially, a pretest was administered to assess baseline levels of reading comprehension in both groups. Subsequently, the experimental group participated in 25 sessions over a five-week developmental period, where they were taught using the RBRT approach. In contrast, the control group received traditional instruction.

During the treatment period, English language teachers in the experimental group followed provided lesson plans and engaged students in reciprocal teaching activities, including predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. After these activities,



teachers revised the text and conducted related exercises to address any student confusion. Reflective action by teachers was facilitated through two perspectives: student feedback via questionnaires to describe their learning preferences and observations by colleagues on the instructional process in the classroom.

To enhance the reflective practices of English language teachers, observers utilized an observation scheme to monitor teaching-learning processes during the intervention period. At the conclusion of the treatment period, both groups completed a posttest assessment.

Instruments

In this research, three primary types of measurement instruments were utilized: pre- and posttests, student questionnaires, and observation schemes. The content validity of these instruments was confirmed through consultation with six content experts in the field of English language teaching. The study presented the results to validate their content validity. Additionally, the construct validity, based on convergent and discriminant validities, was supported through analysis of the results in the findings section.

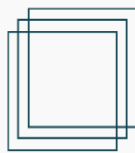
Furthermore, detailed lesson plans were provided to the five participating English teachers to aid them in effectively implementing the RBRT approach in their instruction. These plans were designed to support the teachers in delivering instruction that aligned with the goals and objectives of the study.

Student questionnaire

During the implementation of the RBRT approach with students, teachers reflected on various aspects of their instructional context, including the reader, strategy, text, and task. This reflection was facilitated through a student questionnaire designed to gauge their preferences related to the teachers' instruction. The questionnaire utilized a four-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" and was adapted from Richards and Lockhart's (2005) questionnaire. It was specifically tailored to reflect on the instructional context as defined by Richards and Lockhart (2005). The questionnaire had already been translated into Burmese and validated by Burmese language experts. It comprised a total of 17 items, including five items for reflecting on the 'reader' factor, five items for the 'strategy' factor, four items for the 'text' factor, and three items for the 'task' factor.

Observation scheme

To facilitate English language teachers' reflection on the instructional context, ten peer colleagues were engaged as observers to assess the teachers' instructional process. They utilized an observation scheme adapted from Richards and Lockhart (2005). This observation scheme employed a four-point Likert scale, ranging from "very poor" to



"excellent," and consisted of 14 items. Additionally, observers were provided the opportunity to include open comments as part of their assessment.

Lesson plan

In this research methodology, comprehensive lesson plans were provided to the participating English teachers to guide their implementation of the RBRT approach. These plans were meticulously crafted based on the conceptual framework of the RBRT approach and were tailored to facilitate the teaching of English reading text across a total of 25 sessions for the experimental groups. Each lesson plan intricately outlined the procedures for executing the RBRT approach, including specific time allocations for each step. The duration allotted for each step varied depending on the length of the text units being addressed.

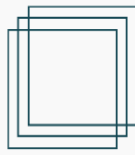
Data analysis

Construct validity, as outlined by Gliner et al. (2017), encompasses two validity measures: convergent and discriminant. Three reliability measures, including Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted, and composite reliability, were employed to assess convergent validity, with recommended thresholds for each metric. Discriminant validity was evaluated by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted with the inter-construct correlation. Statistical analyses, such as t-tests and item response theory (Rasch analysis), were utilized to compare experimental and control groups, assess effect sizes, and examine normality of test distributions. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to measure the association between teacher reflection and student achievement, as well as associations between student questionnaires, observation schemes, and student achievement. Goodness-of-fit indices, including CFI, GFI, and RMSEA, were employed to assess model fit, with specific thresholds indicating acceptable fit.

Results

Q1: Are the instruments reliable and valid for teaching and measuring students' reading comprehension?

To address the research question regarding the reliability and validity of the instruments used in this study for teaching and measuring students' reading comprehension, assessments of both content and construct validity were conducted. Content validity was evaluated using the content validity index (CVI), with input from six content experts in English language teaching. Items with a CVI of .80 or above were considered valid. Construct validity was assessed through convergent and discriminant validity measures. Convergent validity was confirmed by examining alpha values, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE), which largely met recommended thresholds. Discriminant validity was established by comparing the square root of the AVE with inter-construct values. Based on these evaluations, all



instruments demonstrated reliability and validity for measuring students' reading comprehension achievement.

Q2: What is the effectiveness of the RBRT approach on students' reading comprehension?

To evaluate the effectiveness of the RBRT approach on students' reading comprehension, two student groups were compared: one taught with the RBRT approach and the other not. Before assessing effectiveness, Rasch analysis helped estimate students' abilities and item difficulties. Analysis revealed students performed well in lateral and inferential comprehension but struggled with reorganizational and appreciative questions. A pretest showed no significant differences between groups initially. However, after the treatment, the experimental group, taught with RBRT, significantly outperformed the control group. Comparison of pretest and posttest scores within the experimental group confirmed significant improvement due to the RBRT approach, indicating its effectiveness in enhancing student achievement.

Q3: Does the teacher's reflection on the instructional context have an impact on the students' reading comprehension achievement?

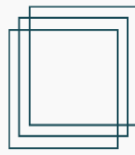
The relationship between the student questionnaire, observation scheme, and students' achievement were analyzed. The model fit indices indicated good fit for both the student questionnaire and observation scheme. The teachers' reflection on instructional context positively influenced students' reading comprehension achievement. Specifically, reflection on the reader and text had significant positive impacts on achievement, while reflection on strategy and task did not. Additionally, the use of an observation scheme positively impacted students' achievement. Overall, teacher reflection significantly and positively influenced students' reading comprehension achievement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigated the effectiveness of the Reciprocal Teaching Model for Reading Comprehension (RBRT) approach on students' English reading comprehension in Myanmar. Through rigorous examination of various aspects including instrument validity, pretest-posttest analysis, and the impact of teacher reflection, several key findings emerged.

Firstly, the instruments utilized in the study, including pre- and posttests, student questionnaires, and observation schemes, were found to be reliable and valid measures for assessing students' reading comprehension achievement. The content and construct validity of these instruments were confirmed through expert evaluation and statistical analysis, ensuring their appropriateness for the study's objectives.

Secondly, the implementation of the RBRT approach demonstrated significant improvements in students' reading comprehension achievement. The posttest results indicated a notable increase in achievement scores among students who received



instruction using the RBRT approach compared to those who did not. This finding underscores the efficacy of the RBRT approach in enhancing students' reading comprehension abilities.

Moreover, the study revealed the importance of teacher reflection in facilitating students' reading comprehension achievement. Through the use of student questionnaires and observation schemes, teachers were able to reflect on their instructional practices and make informed adjustments to optimize student learning outcomes. The positive association between teacher reflection and student achievement highlights the valuable role of reflective teaching practices in enhancing educational effectiveness.

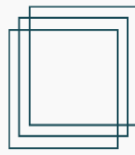
Overall, this study provides valuable insights into effective instructional strategies for improving English language reading comprehension among students in Myanmar. By emphasizing the importance of instrument validity, instructional approaches, and teacher reflection, educators can enhance their teaching practices and ultimately contribute to the academic success of their students. Moving forward, continued research and implementation of evidence-based instructional methods will be essential for fostering literacy development and promoting educational excellence in diverse learning environments.

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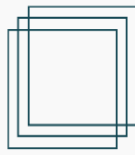
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