THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IEPC STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AT SMAN 10 SOLOK SELATAN

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of the IEPC strategy and to find out the effect of the IEPC strategy (imagination, elaboration, prediction, and confirmation) in improving student's reading comprehension and learning activities at grade XI SMAN 10 Solok Selatan. This research was a Classroom Action Research (CAR) with two cycles of Kemmis and McTaggart's design. The subjects of this study were students of grade XI IIS SMAN 10 Solok Selatan in the 2022/2023 academic year. The data were collected through tests and observation sheets. Data were analyzed by using quantitative descriptive analysis. The results revealed that the average pre-test score was 58.5, the average post-test score in cycle I was 69.5, and the average score of post-tests in cycle II was 73.5. From the observation sheet, the average score of students' activities in cycle I was 62%, and in cycle II was 72%. It was concluded that the implementation of the IEPC strategy improves students' reading comprehension and activities in learning English. Thus, the teacher is suggested to apply this strategy to improve students' reading comprehension.

Keywords: IEPC Strategy, reading comprehension, students' learning activities

INTRODUCTION

Mastery of English language skills is an absolute requirement that must be possessed in the current VUCA era. VUCA stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity, which describes the situation in the world today. Rapidly changing situations, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity are realities that exist and will continue to exist. Teachers must prepare students to adapt to the problems of the VUCA era. Thus, English language skills are needed by students as a bridge to face various challenges of global life today and in the future. Reading is one of the four language skills that students need to develop. Fairbairn (2001) says reading is essential for students to gain information and knowledge, stay up to date, and get lots of ideas for writing. In addition, Reading is one of the language abilities that students must acquire to upgrade themselves, with various rapid and drastic changes. Students are assumed to master reading skills, and they will be able to read articles, journals, and books as additional insight into their lives. Reading comprehension also impacts students' educational opportunities, participation in society, and quality of life in general (Wigfield et al., 2016). To achieve this, understanding reading text is very important for students.

Although reading comprehension is crucial, students' reading comprehension at SMAN 10 Solok Selatan still needs improvement. It can be seen from the results of students' tests; the average score was below the minimum score. The analysis of students' answer sheets shows they have lower scores in reading monologue texts than in transactional texts. Students' comprehension of the material needs to be improved since they are unable to distinguish between different sorts of monologue texts. In addition, students need more motivation in reading monologue texts. Some students have tried to understand the text by reading it repeatedly but are still unable to understand it. This is because the students need more vocabulary to understand the reading. As a result, students become demotivated to read. Besides, the problem for students in reading

comprehension is understanding the main idea. Finding the main idea takes work because it requires a gradual analysis of the text. Some of the main ideas are even stated indirectly. Students must determine it by finding a topic related to all the mentioned details. For some students, this is confusing. As a result, it leads to a lack of understanding.

According to Bell (2001), reading is about comprehension. Reading is a receptive skill that provides the means to observe, explore, generate ideas, and create. This theory ensures that reading is a productive activity even though it is a receptive skill. Reading also provides an excellent opportunity for readers to carry out complex thought processes. Reading does not mean reciting the text and knowing its meaning. In this case, the reader must be involved in the text to explore the information obtained from the text and to understand the text. In the same vein, Sheng (2000) provides a specific explanation of comprehension. He states that comprehension is understanding the meaning of material and includes conscious strategies that lead to understanding. Sheng not only insists on understanding the information in the text, but also on the reader's understanding of how they comprehend the text. This opinion really needs to be considered by teachers. They should note that comprehension is also influenced by the reader's strategies to understand the text. Therefore, teachers should train students to read with the right strategies to gain reading comprehension.

Therefore, the lack of students' reading comprehension does not only come from students, but also the teacher's role in teaching. The majority of the teaching and learning process is still teacher-centered, which only permits students to retain a small portion of what they learn (Emaliana, 2017). Thus, it is pivotal for teachers to make reading activities optimal for the students. Harmer (2007) outlines one of the concepts of the teaching of reading. Reading, he underlined, is not a passive activity. Teachers must motivate students to read actively. The teacher can ask students to guess what words mean, look at pictures, and understand arguments. The teacher should reflect on this principle. Teaching reading should not make students passive learners who wait for the teacher to translate the meaning of words and provide clues to answers to reading questions only. Students must engage with what they read. Students who are not actively interested in what they are doing and have little interest in the reading material will not gain from it. Therefore, teachers must choose interesting topics and appropriate strategies.

One strategy to solve this problem is using the IEPC (Imagine, Elaborate, Predict, and Confirm) strategy in teaching reading. The IEPC strategy introduced by Wood & Harmon (2001) is designed to motivate students' interest in reading and increase their ability to understand the text. To put it another way, this method can assist students in improving their reading comprehension. The IEPC strategy encourages students to explore their imaginations when reading the materials. Wood (2002) adds that The IEPC strategy might inspire students to utilize visual representation to deepen their knowledge of the topic. This strategy is effective compared to other strategies in improving reading comprehension. The IEPC strategy has three activities before reading, namely imagining, elaborating, and predicting that will increase students' interest in reading and stimulate their thinking about a topic before understanding the content of the reading, and confirm after reading in order to see what extent their predictions match with the text that they have read.

Previous researchers have conducted studies on using the IEPC strategy to improve reading comprehension. Research conducted by Setiawan (2016) on the effectiveness of the IEPC strategy to improve reading comprehension found a significant difference before and after treatment in the experimental class. The results showed that the IEPC strategy gave positive results on students' reading comprehension. Furthermore, Nurwandani (2018) applies the IEPC strategy to improve the reading skills of SMK students. With the classroom action research design, there was an improvement between cycle 1 (69.37%) and cycle 2 (86.25%). Next, the research by Putri et al. (2020) on the effect of the IEPC strategy and students' reading motivation on students' reading comprehension. This quasi-experimental research revealed that the t-count value 1.725 was more significant than the t-table value of 1.668. Therefore, the IEPC strategy on

students' reading comprehension had a better achievement than implementing Small Group Discussion.

Therefore, the researcher finds a gap that previous studies focused on using this strategy in type of experimental research, a large number of students, and different genres of the text. While this study concerns with classroom action research with a limited number of students and uses explanation text as a genre to be taught. So the researcher was interested in research to improve students' reading comprehension by using the IEPC strategy. This strategy has been proven able to make students active in learning, motivate them to study, and encourage them to think critically, be imaginative, make predictions, and prove their predictions (Zulianti et al., 2022). The objective of this study is to explain the IEPC Strategy's implementation to improve students' reading comprehension as well as to determine the influence of the IEPC Strategy in improving student's reading comprehension and learning activities.

METHOD

This study used classroom action research with Kemmis and McTaggart's CAR design. This study consisted of two variables: the independent variable, i.e., IEPC strategy, and the dependent variable, i.e., reading skill. Classroom action research is a class instruction process with a cycle consisting of plan, implementation, observation, and reflection stages was carried out in two stages consisting of seven meetings with a time allocation of @2X45minutes. The pre-test was carried out at the first meeting, while the post-test was carried out at the fourth and seventh meetings. The research was conducted with the topic of an analytical exposition text.

In this study, data were derived using the IEPC strategy for reading, the outcomes of students reading comprehension examinations, and students' learning activity observation sheets. The subject of this research was all students of grade XI SMAN 10 Solok Selatan consisting of ten students. Based on the data and sources of data, the instruments used in this classroom action research were reading comprehension tests and observation sheets. The test aimed to measure the level of students' success, in the form of grades or scores. The procedure carried out by the researcher were: determining the type of the test, designing the items, validating the instrument, conducting the test, and presenting the test results. The reading comprehension test used in this study were arranged based on the indicators by Hughes (2003). They identify topics, the main idea, details, references, and vocabulary in context. The researcher confirmed the research instrument with the expert to obtain a valid instrument.

The observation sheet aimed to determine the improvement of student learning activities throughout the learning process using the IEPC strategy. In this study, the researcher was the teacher and was helped by a research assistant to observe student activities in the learning process. The indicators in the instrument used in this study were developed based on Harisandy (2015) and have been adjusted to the researcher's needs. The following are indicators to determine the improvement in student learning activities: focusing on the teacher's explanation, giving opinions/answering questions, asking questions, working together in groups, and doing the task.

In conducting the research, the researcher designed an action plan based on the cycle stages in the CAR. The stages in the CAR carried out by the researcher were as follows: first, in the planning stage, the researchers did several things, namely: determining the subject in the research, preparing a lesson plan, creating the handout of IEPC strategy as media in learning, preparing the test and observation sheets. Then, in the stage of action, the IEPC strategy was implemented. According to Putri et al. (2020), the implementation of the IEPC strategy in reading skills consists of a pre-reading stage; (including the imagination phase, the elaboration phase, and the prediction phase), the reading stage, and the last stage, post-reading stage which focusing on a confirmation phase. The most crucial stage of learning is the pre-reading phase. At this stage, to obtain the students' background knowledge, the teacher develops background information that students have and sets reading goals. In the imagination phase, the teacher asked students to investigate the

pictures in their heads about the topic. This activity encourages students to use sensory experiences by imagining feelings, sights, and surroundings, then asks them to write it in column “I” provided by the teacher on a different piece of paper for each activity.

In the elaboration phase, the teacher asks students how to use their visual images, add details and other information, and write their responses in column “E”. Then, in the prediction phase, the teacher asked students to convey one of their predictions based on the previous visual image. If necessary, the teacher had students analyze some images or titles linked to the reading topic and use keywords to lead their guesses to the material in the text. After that, students wrote their responses in column “P”. In the reading stage, the teacher guided students through reading, students were asked to read and retell the segments to their partners or group members and engage in whole class discussions. After completing the reading, students were asked to confirm where predictions were re-examined and analyzed. This data was examined and synthesized, and the new information was incorporated with the previous data. The teacher asked students to write their responses in column "C" and state whether their predictions were in accordance with the contents of the reading or not.

Furthermore, in the observations stage, the researcher carried out the test and observed student activities in the classroom. Through this observation, researchers can discover the shortcomings in implementing the action. In other words, observations are made to collect evidence of the results of actions so that they can be evaluated and used as a basis for reflection. Finally, in the reflection stage, the researcher examined all the information obtained from the research, identified the activities during the learning process, analyzed the data, and determined the next action based on the results of the reflection.

To analyze the data, the researcher used a quantitative analysis. The researcher used a descriptive statistical analysis to analyze data by describing it without intending to make generalizations. The data were analyzed to see whether they reached the indicators of success in this study which are as follows: students’ understanding of the analytical exposition texts, is indicated by students’ test results passing the KKM (Minimum Competency Criteria) with a score of 65 as determined by the school and the percentage of students' completeness reached 75% (good category) with a score above the KKM 65.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data of this study obtained from the results of students' reading comprehension tests and student activity observation sheets were analyzed quantitatively. This research was conducted in two cycles consisting of a plan, action, observation, and reflection.

Cycle I

The first cycle of implementing the IEPC strategy began after conducting a pre-test for students. The results of the analysis on the pre-test were used as an initial description of students' reading comprehension and to find out whether there was an improvement in students' reading skills after implementing the IEPC strategy in the first cycle. Learning at this stage was carried out in two meetings with different analytical exposition materials in each meeting. When learning took place, the researcher as a teacher was assisted by a researcher assistant to observe students’ activities. After the learning phase was complete, the post-test was carried out. The post-test results were analyzed to measure students' reading skills and whether the learning process using the IEPC strategy improved students' reading skills. The following are the stages carried out in the first cycle.

First, at the planning stage, the researcher prepared the subject matter according to the syllabus. In this case, the researcher chose several topics relevant to the student's condition to raise their enthusiasm for learning and be more useful in real life. The researcher also prepared media to support the implementation of the IEPC strategy by making IEPC handouts from coloured paper. The researcher used a reading test using multiple choice questions to measure students' reading skills. Multiple choice tests were chosen based on several considerations: easy, consistent, and practical. In addition, the researcher used a student activity observation

sheet to observe students' activities during the learning process.

Second, implementing the IEPC strategy in the classroom was carried out in two meetings that 10 students attended. The teacher opened the lesson by greeting them, conditioning students' readiness, and checking their attendance. Before the lesson started, the teacher gave an apperception by asking students questions to activate their knowledge (background knowledge) about the material to be studied at the meeting that day. In the core activity, the teacher gave IEPC handouts for students to fill out. The teacher explained that the IEPC strategy is to improve students' reading comprehension. The teacher divided the students into groups and distributed coloured paper to them. Each group got several coloured papers, each with a different color according to their activity. There were 4 coloured papers for each activity, red paper for the imagination activity (I), yellow for the elaboration activity (E), green for the predictive activity (P), and blue color for the confirmation activity (C). After the handout was written, students presented it on the wall, so other students could read it and give feedback. In the final activity, the teacher and students concluded the lesson and reflected on the learning activity; students were asked to provide feedback on the strategies used to read analytical exposition texts. Finally, the teacher closed the lesson by giving thanks and greetings.

Third, in the observation phase, the teacher gave the students reading comprehension tests. Data on students' learning outcomes were obtained from reading tests on analytical exposition texts containing 20 question items. The correct answer was given a score of 5, and the wrong answer was given a score of 0. The maximum score was 100. Based on descriptive statistical analysis, the data obtained in the pre-test were; the average score was 58.5, the highest score was 75, the lowest score was 35, the percentage of completeness was 30%, and the data obtained in the post-test were the average score was 69.5, the highest score was 85, the lowest score was 50, the percentage of completeness was 70%.

Furthermore, in observing students' learning activity in cycle I, the researcher was helped by a research assistant to observe five indicators of students' learning activity. The finding revealed that (1) 75% of students paid attention to the teacher's explanation, (2) 50% of students gave opinions, (3) 35% of students asked or gave answers, (4) 75% of students worked together in groups and (5) 65% of students did the assignment. The average percentage of student activity at the first meeting was 60%. At the second meeting of cycle 1, it can be seen that there was an increase in the first indicator, 80% of students paid attention to the teacher's explanation, 55% of students gave opinions, 45% of students asked questions or gave answers. For indicators 4 and 5, the percentage of student activity has not improved; 75% of students worked together in groups, and only 65% did the assignments. The average percentage of student activity at the second meeting was 64%. It can be concluded that there was an increase in student activity at the second meeting of Cycle I.

Fourth, after the researchers carried out the pre-test, the learning process used the IEPC strategy, and the post-test in cycle 1, the researchers reflected on the results of the observations as follows: (1) Learning to read using the IEPC strategy has been implemented in accordance with the lesson plan. (2) Students are actively involved in the learning process using the IEPC strategy, although a small number of students are still passive. The average student learning activity reaches 64%. (3) The test results have yet to be maximized, only 7 students have fulfilled the minimum score with a 70% completeness percentage. Based on the results of the reflection and referring to the indicators of student mastery of learning material, 75% of students master the material that has been given with the minimum criteria of mastery learning (KKM) 65 according to the school agreement, so it is necessary to do cycle 2 in order to obtain maximum results.

Cycle II

The second cycle of learning using the IEPC strategy begins after reflecting on the first cycle. The action in the first cycle is still not optimal, so it needs to be continued in the second cycle. The reflection results in the first cycle are used as a reference for designing learning activities in cycle II and correcting

deficiencies in cycle I. Learning at this stage was carried out in two meetings with different topics of analytical exposition in each meeting. When learning took place, the researcher was also assisted by a research assistant to observe students' learning activities. After the learning phase is complete, it is continued by carrying out the post-test. The post-test results were analyzed to measure students' reading comprehension and whether the learning process using the IEPC strategy improved students' reading comprehension. The following were the stages carried out in the second cycle.

First, in the planning phase of cycle II, the researcher focused on the problems encountered in cycle I, such as from the results of the observation sheet, there were many students who did not want to ask questions and give answers to questions asked by teachers and students. In this case, the researcher chose several topics and prepared the subject matter according to the syllabus. The researcher gave more questions and answers about the text used orally to build students' confidence in communicating. Then the researcher also prepared media to support the implementation of the IEPC strategy by using coloured sticky notes. To measure students' reading comprehension, the researcher used a reading comprehension test in the form of a reading text followed by multiple-choice questions. This test was different from the previous test in post-test cycle I, so the students were really able to comprehend the text, not just repeat the tests they had done. In addition, to determine students' activities during the learning process, the researcher used a student activity observation sheet.

Second, in the action phase, the IEPC strategy was implemented in classroom instruction for two meetings, which 10 students attended. The teacher opened the lesson by greeting them, conditioning students' readiness, and checking their attendance. Furthermore, the teacher gave apperception by asking questions about the material that has been studied previously to relate with the material being studied that day. The teacher divided students into groups and distributed sticky notes in the main activity. Each group gets several sticky notes, each sticky note is different in color according to the activities carried out. There were 4 colors for each activity, red sticky note for the imagination activity(I), yellow sticky note for elaboration activity (E), green sticky note for the prediction activity (P), and blue sticky note for confirmation activity (C). After the handout on the sticky note was written in full, students read it, and the other students listened to and provided feedback to the presented group. At the end of the lesson, the teacher and students concluded the material and reflected on the learning activities.

Third, in the observation phase, the teacher gave the students a new reading comprehension test. Data on student learning outcomes were obtained from students' reading comprehension tests on analytical exposition texts. The test had 20 question items. The correct answer was given a score of 5, and the wrong answer was given a score of 0. The maximum score was 100. Based on descriptive statistical analysis, the data obtained in post-test II were: the average score was 73, the highest score was 90, the lowest score was 50, and the percentage of completeness was 80%. The improvement in both cycles can be seen in the following figure:

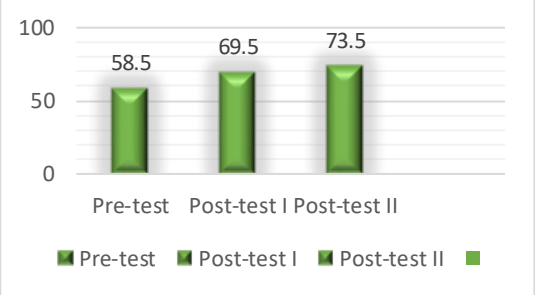

Figure 1. The Mean Score of Students' Achievements.

From the observation sheet, the students' learning activity showed improvement too. The average percentage of students' activities at the third meeting was 67% and at the fourth meeting was 77%. The average of students score learning activities in cycle II was 72%. It can be concluded that the students' learning activities have improved. The following figure shows the improvement of the average score of students' learning activities in every meeting of cycle I and cycle II.

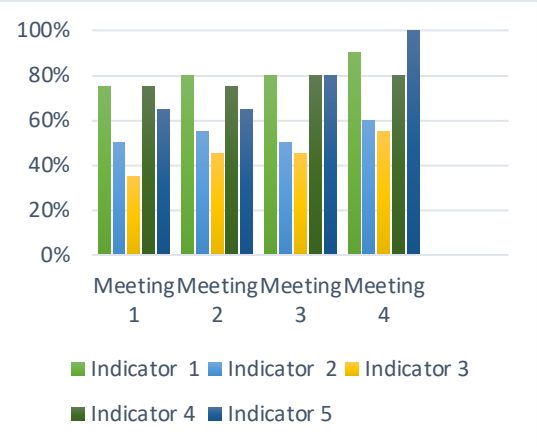

Figure 2. The Mean Score of Students' learning activities.

Fourth, in the reflection phase, based on the mean score of students' reading comprehension test and observation sheet, it can be said that cycle II was successful. The use of the IEPC strategy was better than the cycle I. The indicators of success were fulfilled. There were 8 students who fulfilled the minimum score with 80% completeness percentage. Then, the result was satisfying; the average score of students' reading comprehension test was 73.5 and the average score of students' learning activities reached 72%.

The results of this study were in line with previous research by Nurwandani (2018), where there was an improvement in the average score in cycle 1, namely 69.37% to 86.25% in cycle 2. Students who scored higher than 75 in cycle 1 were 15, with a percentage of 46.87%; students who scored higher than 75 in cycle 2 were 32, with a percentage of 100%. The findings of this study proved that the IEPC strategy improved the reading comprehension of high school students.

Based on the findings and discussion above, the IEPC strategy is appropriate for teaching reading comprehension to the XI Grade Students of SMAN 10 Solok Selatan. This strategy can improve students' reading skills and has great potential to stimulate students to use their critical thinking skills. Wood (2002) states that by closing their eyes and using their senses to imagine, students will become active in the learning process, and students can explore a topic based on their thinking process abilities. This interpretation aligns with the study by Sulistyowati & Marbun (2015).

They found that this strategy involves students in active reading activities. This strategy can assist students in engaging with the text. Students are expected to complete all phases of the approach, including the Imagine, Elaborate, Predict, and Confirm phases, to have a deeper understanding. During the imagining phase, students are taught to use their imagination on themes assigned by the teacher to build their thinking style as part of understanding the essence of information from the text. The students utilize critical thinking to predict what will happen in the text during the prediction phase. Next is the confirmation phase, where students can conclude from what they have done during the reading stage. Students carry out these steps sequentially to achieve learning objectives in reading skills. In conclusion, the researcher assumes that the steps in implementing the IEPC strategy significantly improve students' reading comprehension and learning activities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn: (1) Implementing the IEPC strategy can improve students' reading skills in analytical exposition texts at grade XI of SMA Negeri 10 Solok Selatan. The improvement can be seen from the pre-test and post-test results in both cycles, which were analyzed quantitatively. The average student learning outcomes in the pre-test were 58.5 with 30% completeness percentage, the post-test average in the first cycle was 69.5 with 70% completeness percentage and the post-test average in the second cycle was 73.5 with 80% completeness percentage. (2) Implementing the IEPC strategy can increase students' activities in learning analytical exposition text. The analysis of the observation sheet showed an improvement in student learning activity for each cycle. The average of the five indicators of student learning activity at the first meeting was 60%, the second meeting was 64%, the third meeting was 67%, and the fourth meeting was 77%.

Even though this research was conducted accurately and carefully based on the procedure, it still has limitations. The result may vary depending on the sample size. Moreover, for further researchers, the results of this study can be a reference in the use of the IEPC strategy in reading skills. Researchers can develop this research by integrating this strategy with the digital technology used.

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