Snowball Throwing Method to Increase Students' Reading Comprehension and Learning Interest

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Abstract: This study investigates the effectiveness of the Snowball Throwing Method in improving students' reading comprehension and learning interest among tenth-grade students of Assalam IBS. Conducted as classroom action research, the study involved 30 students from class X.C over two cycles. Data were collected through reading comprehension tests, learning interest questionnaires, observations, and interviews. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis for quantitative data, which includes the results of the reading comprehension test and the learning interest questionnaire. Meanwhile, qualitative data, which consists of observation and interview results, were analyzed using descriptive narrative data analysis techniques. The findings reveal significant improvements across both cycles. In Cycle 1, the average reading comprehension score was 67.67, with an average learning interest score of 98.80. By Cycle 2, these scores increased to 77.75 for reading comprehension and 112.30 for learning interest. The result was also supported by data of observation and interview to the students related to learning activity by using snowball throwing method. The results indicate that the Snowball Throwing Method effectively enhances both reading comprehension and student engagement. This method encourages active participation and collaborative learning, fostering a more interactive and stimulating classroom environment. The study concludes that the Snowball Throwing Method is a practical approach to address challenges in reading comprehension and learning interest among high school students.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Learning Interest, Snowball Throwing, and Classroom Action Research.

Introduction

Reading, as a core language skill, involves interpreting and understanding text through an interactive and purposeful process. Scholars like Alderson (2000) describe reading as an exchange between the reader and text, requiring cognitive engagement and prior knowledge to decode and comprehend the author's message. This dynamic process is categorized into types like intensive, extensive, aloud, and silent reading, each serving specific purposes—whether for acquiring knowledge, fluency, or enjoyment. Comprehension, the essence of reading, entails understanding word meanings, sentence structures, paragraphs, and overall text

coherence, as emphasized by scholars like Burn et al. Effective reading also fosters academic success, supports language proficiency, and enhances vocabulary and critical thinking. Ultimately, reading is a multidimensional skill that integrates linguistic knowledge and cognitive strategies, underscoring its indispensable role in education and lifelong learning (Rakhimova, 2024).

In the other discussion, Learning interest, crucial for student engagement and success, is shaped by key theories. Hidi and Renninger (2006) differentiate situational interest, which is short-term, from enduring individual interest. Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (2000) highlights intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, driven by autonomy, competence, and

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relatedness. In the other emphasizes mastery experiences and active participation in boosting self-efficacy, while Eccles and Wigfield's Expectancy-Value Theory (2002) links motivation to confidence and task value. These theories, combined with strategies like relevance, choice, varied methods, and curiosity, provide a foundation for fostering meaningful and sustained learning engagement (Li, et al., 2024).

The way to increase reading comprehension and learning interest in learning can be done through applying an interactive method (Hayati, et al., 2020). One of them is snowball throwing method. The Snowball Throwing method is an interactive and collaborative teaching strategy rooted in educational theories (Lestari, et al., 2019). Johnson and Johnson (2009) highlight its basis in cooperative learning, promoting positive interdependence and individual accountability. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development, aligning with the method's focus on peer collaboration to construct knowledge. Bonwell and Eison (1991) advocate for active learning, which this method exemplifies by engaging students in creating, exchanging, and discussing ideas through dynamic activities. By fostering critical thinking, inclusivity, and active participation, the Snowball Throwing method enhances learning outcomes, making it an effective tool for teaching reading comprehension and increasing student engagement (Iswati & Ridha, 2023).

In the other way, related to reading comprehension, Putri et al (2022) stated that there was a relationship between verbal linguistic intelligence and reading comprehension of narrative texts. It more explained the level of verbal linguistic intelligence of students in order to make it easier for students to understand a reading or text, especially narrative text. Meanwhile, students' achievement in learning related all skills can be improved by implementing cooperative learning in the class (Suhardi, 2022).

Related to the problem of students' reading comprehension, many students in class X.C at Assalam Islamic Boarding School face significant challenges in reading comprehension, particularly with narrative texts. These texts, rich in literary elements, often pose difficulties in understanding key aspects such as plotlines, characters, and themes. As a result, students struggle not only in English but also in other subjects that require strong reading comprehension skills. Observations and discussions with students indicate two primary concerns: their comprehension level is generally low, and their interest in learning is minimal. Many students disengage from reading lessons, showing little motivation to improve their skills. Additionally, previous assessments have shown that only 36.67% of students met the minimum competency criterion (KKM) of 70, while 63.33% failed to reach the standard. The lowest recorded score was 30, while the highest was 80, highlighting a widespread issue in reading proficiency among students.

Two key factors contribute to these difficulties. First, the teaching methods used in reading lessons are often monotonous, relying heavily on teacher-centered instruction. This approach limits student engagement and fails to provide interactive or stimulating learning experiences. Without opportunities for discussion and collaboration, students become passive learners, which negatively impacts their comprehension skills. Second, the complexity of narrative texts further discourages students, as they find the language and literary devices too challenging to grasp. Feeling overwhelmed and frustrated, many students lose confidence and motivation, creating a cycle of disengagement. To address this issue, more interactive teaching strategies, such as the Snowball Throwing Method, can be introduced. This cooperative learning technique encourages active participation, peer collaboration, and critical thinking, making reading lessons more engaging and effective. Research suggests that this approach not only improves comprehension but also fosters a positive learning environment, helping students regain interest and confidence in reading. Students' learning interest has close relation to the students' achievement in learning, (Zulfikar et al, 2022) especially in reading comprehension too.

Given the effectiveness of the Snowball Throwing method in previous studies, this research aims to implement it in class X.C with the goal of improving both students' reading comprehension and their learning interest. It has difference with the previous study because this study focus on two variables will be improved they are reading comprehension and learning interest. By applying this interactive and engaging approach, the study seeks to address the identified issues and enhance the overall learning experience for students. So, this research will focus on increasing students' reading comprehension and learning interest by using snowball throwing students at the tenth grade of Assalam IBS.

Method

This study utilized a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, a form of action research aimed at solving educational challenges and improving teaching and learning practices. Action research, as described by Mills (2011) in Creswell (2012), is a structured process that enables teachers to gather information about their educational environments and enhance their

instructional strategies. The research employed both qualitative and quantitative methods: qualitative techniques captured data from natural settings (Eyisi, 2016), while quantitative methods provided precision through tabulated or visual data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The study applied Kemmis and Taggart's (2013) four-step CAR process—planning, action, observation, and reflection—to improve tenth-grade students' reading comprehension and interest using the Snowball Throwing method.

In the planning phase, the researcher prepared lesson plans and necessary tools such as observation sheets, interview guidelines, and tests. This phase involved observing classroom conditions and organizing plans to ensure alignment with study objectives. In the action phase, the researcher implemented the Snowball Throwing method, actively teaching narrative texts to engage students in collaborative learning. Observations were conducted to monitor classroom dynamics, student engagement, and the effectiveness of the teaching method. Finally, during the reflection phase, the researcher analyzed the results, identifying successes or areas needing improvement for subsequent cycles, until the predefined criteria of success were met.

Data collection utilized various instruments, including observations, interviews, questionnaires, and tests. Observations focused on classroom activities and interactions, with a collaborator reviewing the teaching process. Interviews explored students' interest and responses to the Snowball Throwing method, gathering qualitative insights through open-ended questions. Questionnaires assessed learning interest using a Likert scale, while tests evaluated students' reading comprehension through multiple-choice questions. These tools provided a comprehensive overview of teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.

The study analyzed quantitative data through descriptive statistics to assess learning progress, particularly comparing pre-test and post-test scores across cycles. Qualitative data, such as observations and interviews, were interpreted through narrative analysis to complement statistical findings. By integrating these methods, the research provided a detailed understanding of how the Snowball Throwing method impacted reading comprehension and learning interest, offering valuable insights for improving classroom practices.

Result and Discussion

The results of the research will be presented as the finding of students' reading comprehension and learning interest questionnaire, linked to the snowball throwing method. The study, conducted in class X.C at Assalam IBS in 2024/2025, highlights the method's impact on improving comprehension and engagement, focusing on test performance and interest levels.

In Cycle 1, conducted in two meetings on October 15 and 16, 2024, the researcher applied the Snowball Throwing method to teach narrative texts to 30 students of Class X.C at Assalam IBS. The lessons focused on two texts, *The Legend of Toba Lake* and *The Legend of Roro Jonggrang (Prambanan Temple)*. The cycle began with planning, where lesson plans and materials were prepared collaboratively, including worksheets and a questionnaire to gauge students' interest. During implementation, students read the assigned texts, created questions, and engaged in a snowball-throwing activity to exchange and answer questions. This interactive method encouraged active participation and facilitated peer learning. Each session concluded with a review of answers, discussions, and a summary of the material. A reading comprehension test and a questionnaire on learning interest were administered at the end of the cycle to evaluate the method's effectiveness.

Cycle 2, conducted on October 29 and 30, 2024, involved 30 students and utilized the Snowball Throwing method to teach narrative texts, focusing on *The Legend of Banyuwangi* and *Malin Kundang*. The cycle began with collaborative planning, including lesson plans, worksheets, and a questionnaire to gauge student interest. During implementation, students engaged in group discussions, created questions about the texts, and participated in the interactive snowball activity to exchange and answer questions. The sessions emphasized reinforcing narrative text comprehension while maintaining engagement with new stories. After the teaching sessions, a final meeting on November 5, 2024, assessed students' reading comprehension and interest through tests and questionnaires. This cycle built on the foundation of the first, ensuring continued improvement in learning outcomes and student motivation. The result is showed in Table 1.

Table 1: The result of test in cycle 1 and 2

Cycles	Variables	N	Average	Highest	Lowest
Cycle 1	Reading comprehension	30	67,67	90	30
	Learning Interest	30	98,80	117	75
Cycle 2	Reading comprehension	30	77,75	95	40
	Learning interest	30	112,30	141	95

The research demonstrated a notable improvement in students' reading comprehension after

the implementation of the snowball throwing method across two cycles. Initially, students achieved an average score of 58.83, indicating the need for a more effective and engaging teaching strategy. After applying the snowball throwing method, the average score rose to 67.67 in the first cycle, reflecting progress but still falling short of the desired standard. By the second cycle, the average score significantly increased to 77.75, showcasing the method's success in fostering better understanding and active participation. This method encouraged peer collaboration and interaction, making it a valuable tool for improving comprehension.

The snowball throwing method also proved effective in increasing students' interest in learning English. The use of interactive and engaging activities, such as creating and exchanging questions in groups, motivated students and fostered a positive classroom atmosphere. Questionnaire results showed an increase in the average learning interest score from 98.80 in Cycle 1 to 112.30 in Cycle 2. This rise highlights the method's ability to make learning enjoyable and reduce anxiety, leading to greater participation and enthusiasm for learning English. Both high-performing and struggling students benefited, making the strategy inclusive and adaptable to various learning needs.

The research findings highlight the effectiveness of the snowball throwing method in enhancing both reading comprehension and learning interest. The method aligns with theories of interactive and cooperative learning, such as Self-Determination Theory and Engagement Theory, by promoting autonomy, competence, and collaboration among students. It is suitable with the theory of Self-Determination Theory by Deci & Ryan (2000). This theory emphasized that intrinsic motivation, driven by a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness is essential for fostering learning interest. The snowball throwing method aligns with these principles by allowing students to participate actively (autonomy), engage in achievable yet stimulating tasks (competence), and collaborate with peers (relatedness), all of which enhance intrinsic motivation. Not only self-determination theory but also Engagement theory by Guthrie & Wigfield, (2000) talked about developing learning interest. According to this theory, engagement is critical for developing interest and sustaining effort in learning activities. By fostering a supportive and dynamic learning environment, the approach encourages active engagement and improved outcomes. The other previous study by Mufida (2021) also showed that the cooperative learning method involving snowball throwing games improved students' reading skills and facilitated their ability to answer questions. It is also supported by Simanjutak at al (2024), the study showed that Snowball Throwing method can improve students

reading comprehension. It meant that this method is effective enough to be applied for teaching reading. Future implementations of this method could focus on addressing the needs of students who showed limited progress and incorporating varied strategies to sustain engagement. This research underscores the potential of innovative teaching methods to transform language learning experiences, making them more inclusive, enjoyable, and effective.

Conclusion

The Snowball Throwing Method effectively improved both reading comprehension and learning interest among Class X.C students at Assalam Islamic Boarding School. By the second cycle, average reading comprehension scores rose from 67.67 in Cycle 1 to 77.75 in Cycle 2, with the percentage of students meeting the minimum competency criterion (KKM) increasing from 56.67% to 86.67%. These gains were achieved through processes such as active engagement, where students read and created meaningful questions, fostering deeper understanding. Peer-generated questions encouraged critical thinking and diverse text analysis, while repeated questioning, answering, and discussions reinforced knowledge and retention. Collaborative problem-solving further helped students clarify doubts and enhance their comprehension skills.

The method also significantly increased students' interest in learning English, as reflected by questionnaire scores rising from 98.80 in Cycle 1 to 112.30 in Cycle 2. Observations revealed improvements in engagement, enthusiasm, and happiness, with most students actively participating by the second cycle. Key contributors to this rise in interest included the method's dynamic and interactive approach, which replaced traditional teaching monotony, and collaborative activities that fostered a sense of community. The gamified element of "snowball" activities added fun, while allowing students to create their own questions gave them ownership of the learning process. The informal and supportive environment reduced anxiety, encouraging exploration and active participation, ultimately making learning more enjoyable and impactful.

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