



Snowball Throwing: An Active Learning Strategy to Improve Vocabulary

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Abstract. *This study employed a quantitative approach with an experimental research design to examine differences in students' learning motivation. The sample consisted of two groups, Class V A and Class V B, with a total of 36 fifth-grade students. Data were collected using pretest and posttest instruments to measure students' motivation levels before and after the treatment. The data analysis techniques included validity and reliability tests, normality and homogeneity tests, the Mann-Whitney test, and the correlation coefficient test. The results showed that the control class obtained a mean score of 22.55, with the highest score of 39 and the lowest score of 6. The median was 24.00, and the standard deviation was 10.076, indicating a low level of learning motivation. In contrast, the experimental class achieved a mean score of 58.48, with scores ranging from 45 to 68. The median was 60.00, and the standard deviation was 8.072, reflecting a good level of learning motivation.*

Keywords: *Improving; Learning Strategy; Snowball Throwing; Students' Learning Outcomes; Vocabulary.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a very important part for us in learning English. It is because of vocabulary is an essential element of foreign language learning which contributes at every level to communication and comprehension in the target language.1 It means that vocabulary has big contribution to supporting people to communicate with another people and comprehend in target language (Nikolov, 2009). Furthermore, without grammar very little can be conveyed but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed (Harmer & Thornbury, 2012). It means that the first thing that has to be mastered by language learners in learning language is vocabulary and learning vocabulary cannot be separated from the other language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. According to Sherrie (2002), words are tools of our trade: word we use in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In listening, students' vocabulary influence their understanding toward teacher's speech, class discussion, and other speeches. The words that they choose in speaking affect how well they deliver a message. In reading, students' vocabulary affects their ability to understand and comprehend a text. In addition, dealing with writing, students' vocabulary also influences how clear they convey their thought to the reader (Wida et al., 2024). Furthermore, learning vocabulary is very important because in order to communicate well in a foreign language, students must acquire an adequate number of words and must know how to use them accurately. The acquisition of vocabulary will help people in gaining, understanding, and also enhancing the process of knowledgeable transferred (Rismawati et al., 2023).

The young learners do not have to acquire all four language skills just like higher grade learners. Young learners at the beginning level especially elementary students do not require

excessive explanations or grammar rules in learning English. As their brain development is still in the concrete operational stages, young learners are incapable of learning abstract norms (Tasaufi et al., 2024). To successfully acquire a language, students must increase their vocabulary size. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of (Clenton & Booth, 2020). According to (Kagan et al), vocabulary is the thousands of lexical building pieces available to the average language user. As we believe in teaching vocabulary, it is important to reiterate that lexical items are fundamental to all four skills; therefore, vocabulary is not a "skill" in the conventional sense. Whereas, according to Harmer & Thornbury (2012), there are at least four types of vocabulary. There are adverb, adjective, noun and verb. Those can be described as follows; adverbs are words that describe or modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs, adjective is modify noun and pronoun, then noun is the name of person, thing, quality, concept, or condition, and verb is words that describe the action or state of being of the subject (Clenton & Booth, 2020). It means that vocabulary has many types and it refers to adverb, adjective, noun, and verb. Based on the idea above, the researcher concludes that the vocabulary is collection or a list of words and an essential element of learning a foreign language that should be learnt to help the students use language to communication well without learning abstract norms.

Based on the preliminary research at MI Al Fatah Bumiharjo, the researcher conducted an interview with one of the English teachers and some five grader students there. When the researcher interviewed the English teacher, he said that most of the students especially in the fifth grade have low achievement of the vocabulary. Furthermore, some students said that they felt difficulties in memorizing word, to find the meaning and pronunciation. Besides, the students did not interest in vocabulary materials because they got difficulties when they wrote and spelled the vocabularies. Thus, it is important to have an interesting technique to make the students being active and interested to learn English vocabulary. One of cooperative learning models that is considered both effective and enjoyable is Snowball Throwing. This model actively engages students in creating and throwing question "snowballs" made of paper to their classmates to be answered. Thereby, it can increase interaction and involvement in the learning process. This activity can stimulate students' participation, enhance their self-confidence, and strengthen vocabulary mastery through repetition and engaging contextual practice. Snowball throwing is the development of discussion learning model and part of cooperative learning (Shoimin, 2021). Thus, from these researches above, the researcher interested to conduct research dealing with vocabulary mastery by using snowball throwing.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are so many aspects in learning English such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Burns et al., 2015). Introducing English vocabulary to young learners probably will face some obstacles since it is their foreign language. Most primary students have problems acquiring English. The results of teaching and learning English were unsatisfactory because there is a limited opportunity for students to engage with their environment using the language (Wianto & Firdaus, 2025). According to (Lightbown & Spada, 2021), the astounding rise of vocabulary is one of the most remarkable linguistic developments of the early school years. Children have interest in vocabulary when they start to communicate with their friends intensively (Tobing, 2020). This is related to the students who can communicate fluently with their friends. The interest in mastering vocabulary can be facilitated by implementing an active learning such as playing game individually and in a group (Clenton & Booth, 2020). It is better to teach simple vocabulary such as objects or things which are familiar for them. So, the students do not only know the name of the object but also understand the concept and are able to describe the function.

Using playing method to the students in elementary school will give a good implication for the success of learning purposes (Wright et al., 2006). Snowball Throwing is a cooperative learning model that emphasizes student activities in exchanging ideas, asking questions, and finding meaning through social interaction. This strategy supports students to learn collaboratively through question and answer activities packaged in the form of educational games (Mufida, 2021). Snowball throwing is a learning method that divides student into some groups. One group consists of 5 to 7 students. In practice, students are divided into several small groups. Each student writes one question based on the material that has been studied on a piece of paper, rolls it into a ball (snowball), then throws it to another friend to answer (Aliah et al., 2023). The paper ball will be randomized. The student who catches the ball will be pleased to open the paper ball and read the vocabulary in English, then tell the meaning in Bahasa Indonesia. By using this method, the teacher can stimulate students' vocabulary mastery which is appropriate to their pre-operational stage (Amalia, 2023). Snowball throwing is a learning method that uses question ball which is made from a paper then shaped like a ball. The question ball will be thrown consecutively to the members of the group (Wright et al., 2006). The question will be made by the students and it should be related to the material that has been learned before in order to stimulate students in expressing question based on the topic discussion (Islamiati et al., 2024). Besides making questions, students are also trained to answer the questions from their friends properly (McCarten, 2007). The teacher then facilitates the

discussion based on these questions and answers. This activity creates a fun and challenging learning environment, as each student has an active role, either as a questioner or an answerer (Adawiyah et al., 2025). In addition to improving text comprehension, this strategy also helps develop a sense of responsibility, courage to speak, and critical thinking skills (Kusumaningrum et al., 2020).

There were some preliminary studies dealing with this research such as research conducted by (Kusumaningrum et al., 2020) which the research showed that snowball throwing can be used for improving students' vocabulary mastery and psychomotor mastery in English subject. Another research also conducted by (Islamiati et al., 2024) that the use of snowball throwing technique effectively enhanced the reading skill of class VIIIA students of MTsN 1 Sidrap. On the other hand, Tasaufi et al (2024) also conducted a research about snowball throwing for primary students' vocabulary. In their research, the students were able to work well in groups and displayed excellent teamwork skills by using snowball throwing.

Based on some researches above, this study aims to know the influence of the Snowball Throwing strategy in knowing the effectiveness of vocabulary mastery of fifth-grade students at MI Al Fatah Bumiharjo, as well as to determine the extent of improvement in student learning outcomes after this strategy is applied. In practical terms, it is hoped that the results of this study will have a direct positive impact on students, namely by encouraging them to be more active in the English class, increasing their confidence when discussing, making their critical thinking skills related to things surround them.

3. METHOD

A quantitative research was applied in this study and focused on an experimental research. This research gained a numerical data to assess hypotheses and derived statistical inferences. The process of data collection incorporated various research instruments such as observation, pretest and posttest, and documentation to evaluate students' vocabulary. This research used 2 group classes; control and experimental group as the subject to be employed. The subjects of this research were the students of fifth grade. They were VA and VB and it was 19 students of each class. Non-probability sampling and purposive sampling were used to decide the sample in this research.

In this research, researcher needed 5 times meetings to conduct this research for each class. The first meeting was used to deliver a pretest to each class. Then, the second until the fourth meeting were used to do the treatment for experimental class. Whereas, the control class weren't given a treatment. After that, the fifth meeting was used to deliver the posttest for each

class to know the differences between the control and experimental class after given a treatment. The validity and the reliability were also used to know that the instruments were valid and reliable before they delivered to the respondents. The frame of thinking, the writer formulates the hypotheses as follows:

- a. H_0 = there is no significant influence of using snowball throwing towards students' vocabulary mastery at the fifth grade of MI Al Fatah Bumiharjo
- b. H_a = there is significant influence of using snowball throwing towards students' vocabulary mastery at the fifth grade of MI Al Fatah Bumiharjo.

Furthermore, the data analysis was also gained by using prerequisite test such as normality test and homogeneity test, and the hypotheses test.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Validity and Reliability Instruments

Validity Result

The validation test used the factor correlation value, applying the Product Moment correlation analysis technique with the assistance of the SPSS 25.0 for Windows program. The results were declared valid if the calculated correlation coefficient (r -count) was greater than the r -table value (r -count $>$ r -table). Based on the table ($N = 19$, $df = N - 2$, thus $df = 19 - 2 = 17$) at a significance level of 0.05 (5%), the r -table value was 0.338. The results of the validity test applied in this study were used to select valid items from the 20 question items. To measure the test results of Class VB students at MI Al-Fatah Bumiharjo Glenmore, the 20 validated questions were distributed to 19 students, consisting of 19 students from Class VA of MI Al-Fatah Bumiharjo Glenmore. The validity test was used to determine the extent to which the constructed items were valid and suitable for measuring what they were intended to measure. The results of the item validity calculations for the Pre-Test and Post-Test are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Pretest Validity Results.

Item	r count	r table	Description
1	0.396	0.388	valid
2	0.484	0.388	Valid
3	0.484	0.388	Valid
4	0.484	0.388	Valid
5	0.396	0.388	Valid
6	0.593	0.388	Valid
7	0.455	0.388	Valid
8	0.438	0.388	Valid

9	0.396	0.388	Valid
10	0.456	0.388	Valid
11	0.472	0.388	Valid
12	0.408	0.388	Valid
13	0.430	0.388	Valid
14	0.390	0.388	Valid
15	0.499	0.388	Valid
16	0.425	0.388	Valid
17	0.396	0.388	Valid
18	0.683	0.388	Valid
19	0.438	0.388	Valid
20	0.456	0.388	Valid

Source: SPSS 25.0 Version

Based on the data presented in Table 1, it can be concluded that all 20 items shown above are valid. The instrument is considered valid if the calculated correlation coefficient (r_{count}) is greater than the r -table value ($r_{\text{count}} > r_{\text{table}}$). Therefore, the instrument is appropriate and can be used as a research instrument.

Table 2. Posttest Validity Results.

Item	r count	r table	Description
Soal 1	0.491	0.468	Valid
Soal 2	0.592	0.468	Valid
Soal 3	0.473	0.468	Valid
Soal 4	0.554	0.468	Valid
Soal 5	0.473	0.468	Valid
Soal 6	0.473	0.468	Valid
Soal 7	0.564	0.468	Valid
Soal 8	0.473	0.468	Valid
Soal 9	0.473	0.468	Valid
Soal 10	0.473	0.468	Valid
Soal 11	0.554	0.468	Valid
Soal 12	0.554	0.468	Valid
Soal 13	0.592	0.468	Valid
Soal 14	0.473	0.468	Valid
Soal 15	0.473	0.468	Valid
Soal 16	0.473	0.468	Valid
Soal 17	0.592	0.468	Valid
Soal 18	0.554	0.468	Valid
Soal 19	0.473	0.468	Valid
Soal 20	0.564	0.468	Valid

Source: SPSS 25.0 Version

Based on the data presented in Table 2., it can be concluded that the 20 items shown above are valid. The validity of the instrument is determined when the calculated correlation coefficient (r_{count}) is greater than the critical value in the r -table (r_{table}).

From the table, with $N = 19$, the degrees of freedom (df) are calculated as:

$$df = N - 2$$

$$df = 19 - 2 = 17$$

At a significance level of 0.05 (5%), the r_{table} value for $df = 17$ is 0.468. Since $r_{count} > 0.468$ for all items, the instrument is considered valid and can therefore be used as a research instrument.

Reliability Result

A variable is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.60. The results of the reliability analysis of the pre-test and post-test instruments can be seen in the following table.

Table 3. Reliability Pretest Results.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.810	20

Source: SPSS 25.0 version

Table 4. Reliability Posttest Result.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.916	20

Source: SPSS 25.0 version

Based on the results of the reliability test, it can be seen that the Pre-Test instrument using the Cronbach's Alpha formula obtained a coefficient of 0.810, which is greater than 0.60 ($0.810 > 0.60$). Meanwhile, the Post-Test result was 0.916, which is also greater than 0.60 ($0.916 > 0.60$).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the test instrument is reliable and can be used to measure the learning outcomes in the English subject for Grade V students at MI Al Fatah Bumiharjo Glenmore.

The Effectiveness of Snowball Throwing toward Students' Vocabulary

The research implementation began on October 24, 2024, at MI Al-Fatah Bumiharjo Glenmore. In this study, the researcher employed cluster sampling because the sampling referred to group divisions that had already been determined by the institution. The test method was used to determine students' learning outcomes in the English subject. The test consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions, all of which had undergone validity testing. The research started on October 24, 2024, with a pre-observation stage. Subsequently, on December 17, an observation of the teaching and learning activities was conducted in both the control and

experimental classes. The study continued with the administration of a Pre-Test to the control class on January 21, 2025.

At the first meeting, held on February 4, 2025, different treatments were applied to the control and experimental classes. Class V B, as the control class, was taught using the lecture method, while Class V A, as the experimental class, received instruction using picture media. The second meeting was conducted on February 11, 2025. In Class V B (control class), the session focused on material reinforcement or continuation of the lesson. Meanwhile, in Class V A (experimental class), the reinforcement of the material was carried out using picture media that had been completed by the students during the first meeting. At the third meeting, held on February 18, 2025, a Post-Test was administered to Class VB as the control class and Class VA as the experimental class. The Pre-Test and Post-Test results were then used as instruments to collect data on students' English learning outcomes, which served as the research sample. This research was conducted in accordance with the Lesson Plan that had been prepared by the researcher beforehand, as attached. The following are the Pre-Test and Post-Test results data.

Table 5. Pre-Test and Post-Test Result Control Class.

Control Class V B				
No	Students' Name	KKM	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	AF	70	70	90
2	AGF	70	75	90
3	AKA	70	70	65
4	AJAR	70	75	75
5	BS	70	80	75
6	CSA	70	70	70
7	DLAH	70	90	70
8	DJA	70	85	75
9	FZA	70	85	75
10	HAR	70	75	85
11	KAAG	70	90	90
12	KAR	70	80	75
13	KK	70	90	75
14	LOTW	70	80	80
15	MFIW	70	85	70
16	MYS	70	75	85
17	MHAA	70	85	60
18	MKA	70	80	85
19	MSA	70	80	75

Data Source : Researche Data

Table 6. Pre-Test and Post-Test Result Experiment Class.

No	Students' Name	Experiment Class VA		
		KKM	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	ASN	70	90	85
2	LM	70	90	85
3	MAP	70	65	90
4	MRF	70	75	85
5	MYA	70	75	90
6	MAR	70	70	95
7	MK	70	70	85
8	MNR	70	75	85
9	MSA	70	75	85
10	NMD	70	85	90
11	NK	70	90	90
12	NAM	70	75	95
13	NKC	70	75	90
14	RKA	70	80	80
15	SB	70	70	85
16	SAZ	70	85	85
17	UN	70	60	85
18	VSAM	70	85	80
19	ZAR	70	75	80

Data Source: Researcher Data

Normality Test

In this study, the normality test was conducted using SPSS 25.0 for Windows. The normality test employed the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. Through this test, it can be determined whether the data are normally distributed or not.

The criteria are as follows:

- If the significance value is greater than 0.05 (Sig. > 0.05), the data are considered to be normally distributed.
- If the significance value is less than 0.05 (Sig. < 0.05), the data are considered not normally distributed.

The results of the normality test for the relationship between variable X and variable Y are as follows:

Table 7. Kolmogorov-smirnov Normality Test.

N		19
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	4.36463057
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.174
	Positive	.174
	Negative	-.097
Test Statistic		.174
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.131 ^c

- a. Test distribution is Normal.
- b. Calculated from data.
- c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Source: SPSS 25.0 Version

From the table above, it can be seen that if the significance value (Sig.) 2-tailed is greater than 0.05 (Sig. > 0.05), the data distribution is considered normal. Conversely, if the significance value (Sig.) 2-tailed is less than 0.05 (Sig. < 0.05), the data distribution is considered not normal.

The table shows that the data are normally distributed, with a significance value (Sig.) 2-tailed of 0.131, which is greater than 0.05 (0.131 > 0.05). Therefore, the questionnaire data from the control class in this study are normally distributed.

b) Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test was conducted to determine whether the data have equal variances between groups. Since the data were previously found to be normally distributed, the homogeneity test was performed using Levene’s test with the assistance of SPSS 25.0 for Windows, as follows:

Table 8. Homogeneity Test.
Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Kosakata	Based on Mean	7.024	1	36	.012
	Based on Median	4.000	1	36	.053
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	4.000	1	28.658	.055
	Based on trimmed mean	7.567	1	36	.009

Source: SPSS 25.0 Version

From the table above, it can be seen that the significance value in the homogeneity test is 0.12. This significance value is greater than 0.05 (0.12 > 0.05), indicating that the test score data in this study have equal variances, or in other words, the data are homogeneous.

Thus, all the prerequisite tests for data analysis have been fulfilled, and the data can be further analysed using statistical analysis methods.

Hypotheses Test

Table 9. Mann-Whitney U Test.

Mann-Whitney U Test

Mann-Whitney U	67.500
Wilcoxon W	257.500
Z	-3.382
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.001 ^b

a. Grouping Variable: Kelas

b. Not corrected for ties.

Source: SPSS 25.0 Version

Based on Table 8. above, the U value is 67.5 and the W value is 257. When converted to the Z value, the result is -3.382. It is known that the Sig. (2-tailed) value from the Mann–Whitney U Test is 0.001. Since the Sig. (2-tailed) value is less than 0.05 ($0.001 < 0.05$), the hypothesis test results in this study indicate that there is a significant effect of the Snowball Throwing learning model on improving English vocabulary among Grade V students of MI Al Fatah Bumiharjo in the 2024/2025 academic year.

After determining that there is an effect of the Snowball Throwing Learning Model on students’ vocabulary improvement, the researcher then conducted further analysis to determine the magnitude of the effect of the learning model on vocabulary improvement in the English subject for Grade V students of MI Al Fatah Bumiharjo. To measure the extent of this effect, the researcher performed an independent samples t-test, as follows:

Table 10. T-Test.

Group Statistics

	Kelas	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Nilai	Kontrol	19	77.11	8.550	1.961
	Eksperimen	19	86.58	4.426	1.015

Source: SPSS 25.0 Version

Based on Table 4.12, specifically the “Group Statistics” output, it is known that the mean score of students’ learning outcomes in the control class is 77.11, while the mean score in the experimental class is 86.58. The difference in mean scores is $86.58 - 77.11 = 9.47$. Therefore, it can be concluded that the average score of the experimental class is higher than that of the control class. The standard deviation for the control class is 8.550, while for the experimental class it is 4.426. The smaller the standard deviation, the higher the level of data consistency

and statistical significance. Thus, statistically, it can be concluded that there is a difference in the average learning outcomes between the control class and the experimental class.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, the conclusion of this study is that the Snowball Throwing learning model has a significant effect on improving the English vocabulary ability of Grade V students at MI Al-Fatah Bumiharjo. This improvement is evident from the differences in pre-test and post-test scores of students in the experimental class, which show higher gains compared to the control class. This learning model has proven capable of creating an active, enjoyable learning environment and encouraging student interaction, which plays a significant role in enriching their vocabulary.

Based on the research results on learning motivation of Grade V students at MI Al-Fatah Bumiharjo, the control class obtained an average score of 22.55, with the highest score of 39 and the lowest score of 6, a median of 24.00, and a standard deviation of 10.076, which is categorized as low. Meanwhile, the experimental class obtained an average score of 58.48, with the highest score of 68 and the lowest score of 45, a median of 60.00, and a standard deviation of 8.072, which is categorized as good.

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