

Fostering Students' Vocabulary: Spin Wheel or Talking Stick Game?

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Abstract

Investigating the relationship between gender and students' language achievement in junior high level is the purpose of this research. Ex-post facto (quantitative research) was used as the research design of this study. The participants of this study were 48 students (N=25 male and N=23 female) and an English teachers at one of the junior high schools in East Java, Indonesia. The researcher used two instruments in this study: tests and questionnaires. The test was delivered to the students in the last meeting of the second semester (final exam) whereas the questionnaires were given to the English teacher which consisted of two open and six closed questions. Quantitative analysis using statistical measurements such as descriptive statistics, Independent T-test, and Pearson correlation were conducted in this study. The result of the findings indicated that there is no correlation between students' achievement and gender was reported in this study.

Keywords: *Vocabulary, Spin Wheel, Talking Stick, Game.*



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Introduction

The development of technology had infected the education especially in teaching-learning process. Many teacher moves from traditional teaching method to modern method such as blended learning. The utilization of technology assists the teacher and the students in enhancing the goal of teaching-learning process. However, the teachers and students in rural area do not have computer and internet access. It makes them cannot utilize them. This situation sues the teacher to use an appropriate teaching method in teaching English without internet connection and computer.

English is an international language that is learned by students in the world started at the elementary level until the university level. This subject has different difficulties when it compares to other subjects because in many countries English is a foreign language. For EFL learners, learning a foreign language has high difficulties such as difficulties in pronunciation, reading, writing, speaking, grammar and memorizing vocabulary (Allehyani, 2025; Alzahrani, 2025; Yousif, 2025).

Vocabulary is the basic foundation of learning English as a foreign language. It supporting all skills in English and became the main aspect of language teaching and learning (Garofano & Nand, 2023; Geist & Erickson, 2022; Liu & Yen, 2025). Vocabulary will support students' ability in mastering listening, reading, speaking and writing (Garofano & Nand, 2023). Lack of vocabulary will obstruct students' language production and comprehension (Subon & Unin, 2021; Wiseheart & Altmann, 2018). To intensify students' language production and comprehension, the teacher should have an effective strategy in teaching English. The effective way of teaching vocabulary is through the game (Chen et al., 2023; Hidayat, 2016; Hsu, 2025).

The game can be an alternative way of improving students' vocabulary. It creates a meaningful language communication atmosphere in the classroom during applying it (Chamsuparoke & Charubusp, 2021; Elsa et al., 2021; Zou et al., 2021). This situation will help the students to comprehend language. The game also eases the serious and dry situation in teaching-learning process, intensifying students' enthusiasm, increasing their confidence and shyness (Canella et al., 2025; Kuimova & Karpacheva, 2016; Sar et al., 2015). Furthermore, games encourage students to cooperate with their friends when it is done in a group (Challco et al., 2018; Hanghøj & Karnøe, 2024; Sulbaran Reyes et al., 2026). Many studies have been done by the researchers which discussed about the implementation of game on vocabulary (Abrams & Walsh, 2014; Ashraf et al., 2014; Bakhsh, 2016; Derakhshan & Khatir, 2015; Taheri, 2014; Umasugi et al., 2018; Wahyuni & Syafei, 2016).

However, the consideration to select games in improving students' vocabulary is still needed. The English teacher should choose the game which relevant to the students' background, level, situation and facilitation in the classroom. Therefore this study offers games in teaching English words by using talking stick and spin wheel games to develop students' vocabulary and to compare the result of both of them. This study wants to analyze the comparative of spin wheel and talking stick games used in improving students' vocabulary.

Research Question



1. Do talking stick and spin wheel games lead to greater students' vocabulary achievement of junior high level?
2. Is there a significant difference between talking stick and spin wheel games to develop students' vocabulary achievement of junior high level?
3. What are students' perceptions toward talking stick and spin wheel games?

Hypothesis:

First hypothesis:

H1: Talking stick and spin wheel games improve students' vocabulary achievement.

H0: Talking stick and spin wheel games do not improve students' vocabulary achievement.

Second Hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant difference between talking stick and spin wheel games on the students' vocabulary achievement of junior high level.

H0: There is a significant difference between talking stick and spin wheel games on the students' vocabulary achievement of junior high level.

Method

The research method of this study was quantitative using experimental design. 48 EFL students of an Islamic school in Gresik East Java became participants of this study. The age range of the participants was 12 to 15 years old. The participants were divided into two groups: talking stick as experimental group and spin wheel as a control group. The talking stick group consisted of 25 students and the spin wheel group consisted of 23 students.

In this study, the researcher used tests and questionnaires to collect the data. A pre-test was set in the beginning meeting before the participants got the treatment, while the post-test was set in the last meeting after the participants got the treatment. The questionnaires were delivered by the researcher to 48 students from both groups. The questionnaires consisted of six questions adapted from Hidayat (2016).

Table 1. The Items of Questionnaires

Items	Student's respond	
	Yes	No
I like talking stick/spin wheel game that implemented in my class.		
The talking stick/spin wheel game makes me happy in attending the class.		
The talking stick/spin wheel game makes me enjoy the teaching-learning process?		
The talking stick/spin wheel game motivates me in learning English?		
The talking stick/spin wheel game assists me to memorize English words?		
The talking stick/spin wheel game supports me to understand English easier?		

In this study, the researcher divided the procedure of games implementation into two parts: the implementation of talking stick game as experimental group and the implementation of spin wheel game as experimental group. The procedure in implementing the games was same between talking stick group and spin wheel group. The difference was only in the game itself.

The talking stick game group was an experimental group. In the first meeting, the researcher did pre-test and introduced the talking stick game to enhance students' vocabulary achievement. For second to fifth meetings, the researcher implemented talking stick game inside the classroom. The students' activities in the classroom explained in 5 steps: the students got materials explanation from the English teacher in the classroom, the students made groups into 4 groups which consisted of 4 until 5 students; the English teacher implemented the talking stick game in the classroom, the students discussed the materials with their group and present it in the classroom and the English teacher gave feedback. In the sixth meeting, the researcher did the post-test and delivered the questionnaires.

The spin wheel game group was a control group. Similarly, with experimental group, the procedure had six meetings. All of the procedure for control group was same with the experimental group except the game. The control group applied the spin wheel game whereas the experimental group implemented talking stick game. To analyze quantitative data, the researcher used a statistical tool (SPSS) to find a comparison between talking stick and spin wheel games. The researcher also used it to reveal the significant effect of those games on students' vocabulary achievement by comparing the result of pre and post-test. For the questionnaires, the researcher delivered to the students and the English teachers to get the information about their responses about them. After that, the result of questionnaires, and tests were compared to take the conclusion of this study.

Results

Before answering the first question, the researcher analyzed the students' normality. To organize it, the researcher used a pre-test result and analyzed it by using descriptive statistics. This step must be done by the researcher to determine which statistic calculation that will be used by the researcher (parametric or nonparametric). If the data was normal, the researcher used independent T-test to analyze students' differences between the experimental and control group, if the data was not normal, the researcher used Mann Whitney U to analyze it. The result of the normality test was presented in table 2.

Table 2. The Result of Normality Test

	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Pre Test	talking stick	,144	25	,191	,885	25	,009
	Spin Wheel	,159	23	,135	,944	23	,221



Table 2 asserted that the result of Sig. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk were higher than 0.05. It pointed that the data were normal. Because the data were normal parametric calculation was used by the researcher to analyze the data.

To answer the first research question (Does talking stick and spin wheel games lead to greater students' vocabulary achievement?) the researcher used the outcome of pre and posttests from both groups. The result of pre and posttests means of talking stick and spin wheel groups were presented in table 3.

Table 3. Pre and Posttest Score of Talking Stick & Spin Wheel

Group	Talking Stick		Spin Wheel	
Test	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Means	59,2	67,6	61,7	73,5

Based on table 3 explained that the talking stick group increased 8,4 and the spin wheel group increased 11, 8. The result of means from both groups was improved. This result indicated that the score of both groups was increased. It implied that talking stick and spin wheel games lead to better students' achievement.

To respond to the second research question (Is there any significant difference between talking stick and spin wheel games to develop students' vocabulary achievement of junior high level?) the researcher used parametric calculation (Independent T-test). the result of independent t-test calculation as illustrated in Table 4.

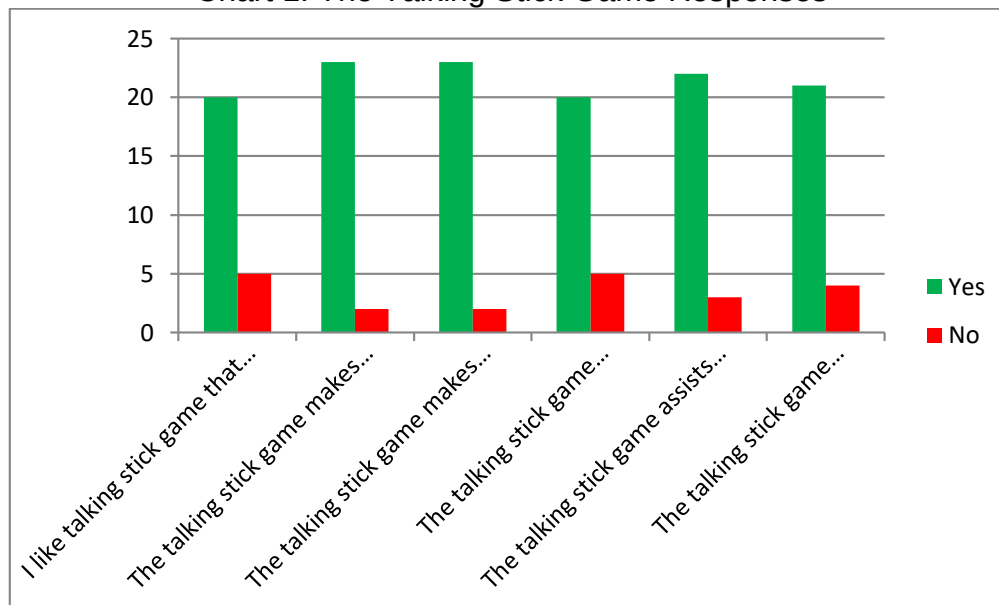
Table 4. Independent Samples Test Result

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	4,587	,038	-1,151	46	,256	-5,87826	5,10803	-	4,40366
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,166	43,827	,250	-5,87826	5,04230	-	4,28497

Based on table 4, described that Sig. (2-tailed) score was above 0.05 (0,256). It acknowledged that no significant difference between talking stick and spin wheel games. However, based on the means score of both groups declared that the spin wheel group got a better score than the talking stick group.

Next, to catch out on the students' perception of the implementation of both games, the researcher utilized the questionnaires that were delivered to both groups after they got the treatment. The results of the students' responses of both groups were illustrated in chart 5 and 6.

Chart 1. The Talking Stick Game Responses



The findings presented in Chart 1 indicate that students showed highly positive perceptions toward the implementation of the Talking Stick game in vocabulary learning. The majority of students responded "Yes" to all questionnaire items, suggesting that they enjoyed the activity and considered it beneficial for their English learning experience. This result demonstrates that the game successfully created an engaging and enjoyable classroom atmosphere, which encouraged active participation and reduced students' anxiety during the learning process.

Furthermore, students perceived the Talking Stick game as an effective tool for enhancing vocabulary acquisition. Most participants agreed that the game increased their motivation to learn English, helped them memorize new words, and facilitated a better understanding of vocabulary. These positive responses imply that incorporating interactive and collaborative games into classroom instruction can promote learners' enthusiasm and support vocabulary development among junior high school students.

Chart 2. The Spin Wheel Game Responses

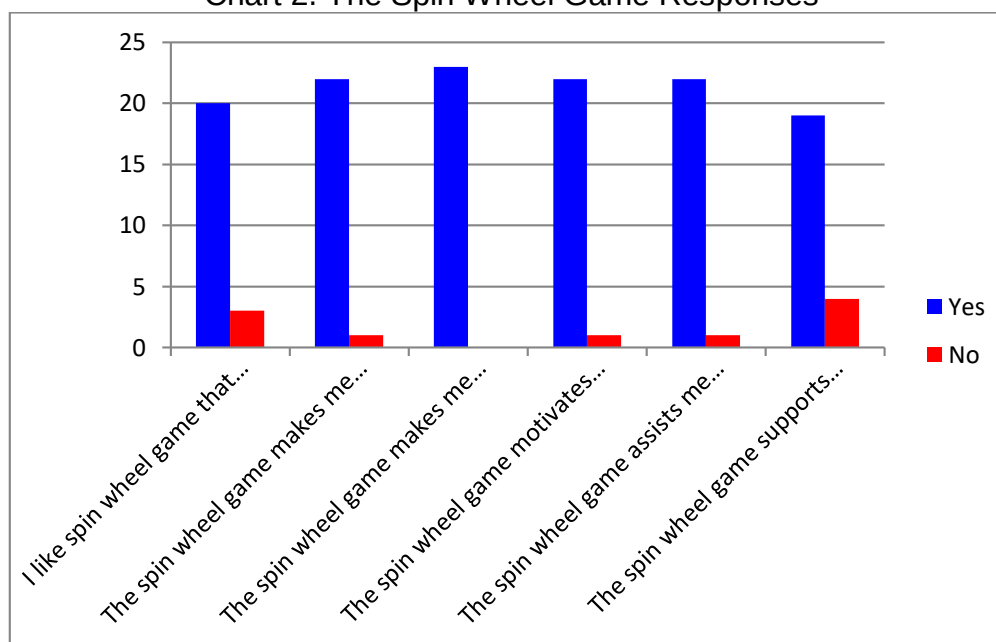


Chart 2 reveals that students also responded positively to the implementation of the Spin Wheel game. Similar to the Talking Stick group, most students selected “Yes” for all questionnaire statements, indicating that they liked the game and found it enjoyable during classroom activities. The high level of positive responses suggests that the Spin Wheel game successfully attracted students’ attention and increased their engagement in the vocabulary learning process.

In addition, the responses indicate that the Spin Wheel game contributed positively to students’ vocabulary learning. Students reported that the game motivated them to participate actively, assisted them in remembering English words, and made learning English easier and more interesting. These findings suggest that the Spin Wheel game can serve as an effective instructional strategy for fostering vocabulary learning by creating a motivating and interactive learning environment.

The findings revealed that both the Talking Stick and Spin Wheel games improved students’ vocabulary achievement, as indicated by the increase in post-test mean scores compared to the pre-test scores in both groups. Therefore, the first alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted, while the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected.

The Independent Samples t-test showed that the significance value was 0.256, which was higher than the significance level of 0.05. This result indicates that there was no statistically significant difference between the Talking Stick and Spin Wheel games in improving students’ vocabulary achievement. Therefore, the second alternative hypothesis (H1) is rejected, and the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted.

Discussion

According to all the data above reflected that the implementation of talking stick and spin wheel games improved students' vocabulary. This finding was in line with the previous studies (Abrams & Walsh, 2014; Ashraf et al., 2014; Bakhsh, 2016; Derakhshan & Khatir, 2015; Taheri, 2014; Umasugi et al., 2018; Wahyuni & Syafei, 2016). which elucidated that the implementation games was effective to teach vocabulary. The vocabulary improvement in this case can be caused by the involvement of emotion in the process of in catching the vocabulary. The students thought that the implementation of those games brought them into comfort zone which make them easier to catch the English word. Besides, the games implementation elaborated their cognitive, affective and psychomotor so that they are convenient to capture the vocabulary. The finding also designated that the implementation of both games were recover students' vocabulary. However, spin wheel game group obtained higher score than talking stick group.

Additionally, the finding also implied that the students' perceptions on talking stick and spin wheel games were positive. It was showed by the result of students' answers in responding the questionnaires. Both groups believed that the utilization of those games were able to improve students' vocabulary achievement. The games assisted the students in memorizing English words, increased students' eagerness in learning English, brought them into ease zone to learn English and reinforced them to recognize English easier. Is was in accordance with previous studies which stated that The effective way of teaching vocabulary is through the game (Chen et al., 2023; Hidayat, 2016; Hsu, 2025). Moreover, The game can be an alternative way of improving students' vocabulary which improves language communication atmosphere in the classroom (Chamsuparoke & Charubusp, 2021; Elsa et al., 2021; Zou et al., 2021).

Conclusion

The implementation of talking stick & spin wheel games had shown that it developed students' vocabulary. It changed the English teaching-learning to be more interesting & interactive. It also helped the students to improve their vocabulary achievement. The implementation of those games motivated the students to learn English, increase students' engagement and assisted them in memorizing English vocabulary easier and understanding English easier. This study also reflected that was no significant difference between talking stick and spin wheel games in students' vocabulary achievement.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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