

Exploring Vocabulary Wheel Spin As An Authentic Assessment For Word Recognition Among Second-Grade EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of the vocabulary wheel spin as an authentic assessment tool for measuring word recognition ability among second-grade elementary school students. Employing a qualitative descriptive case study design, the research involved 15 students with varying levels of English proficiency. Data were collected through classroom observations, focus group interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that students responded positively to the vocabulary wheel spin, describing it as enjoyable, interactive, and less stressful than traditional written assessments. Observation results also indicated high levels of student engagement and learning motivation throughout the activity. Although some challenges were found, particularly related to unfamiliar vocabulary and pronunciation, the results suggest that careful vocabulary selection can improve the effectiveness of the assessment. Overall, the vocabulary wheel spin is a practical, engaging, and developmentally appropriate authentic assessment tool for evaluating young learners' English word recognition ability while promoting active classroom participation.

Keywords: *Vocabulary Wheel Spin; Authentic Assessment; Word Recognition; Game-Based Learning; Second-Grade Students.*

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1. Introduction

English as a Foreign Language learning requires strategies that can enhance student engagement in the learning process. Vocabulary mastery becomes the main foundation in language skills development. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, students experience difficulties in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding texts. Vocabulary learning requires a concrete approach that is engaging and appropriate to students' cognitive development stage (Aswad et al., 2019; Weda et al., 2021; Anggriyani et al., 2026). Game-based learning media has become one of the commonly

used alternatives to increase student engagement in language learning (Adipat et al., 2021).

The use of games in English language learning has been proven to increase student motivation and participation. Games create a more active, interactive, and less stressful learning atmosphere. Game-based methods help students recognize words through direct experience and enjoyable activities. Previous research shows that vocabulary games can improve students' understanding and memory of new words (Baimbetova, 2020). This indicates that game-based learning plays an important role in strengthening English vocabulary in the classroom.

Spinning wheel learning media has been widely developed in various learning contexts. This media is used to create engaging and varied learning activities. The use of spinning wheel in learning has been proven to improve student learning outcomes through visual and interactive approaches. The development of this media has also been applied in writing instruction and other subjects at the elementary school level with positive results (Bambang et al., 2024; Weda et al., 2022). This shows that game-based media can be applied in various language skills.

Visual media such as flashcards also play an important role in vocabulary learning. Flashcards help students connect words with images directly, making the learning process faster and more effective. This media has been widely used in basic education to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The use of visual media provides cognitive stimulation that supports long-term memory in word recognition (Hayati, 2021; Ko et al., 2025). This strengthens the importance of visual media in English vocabulary learning.

Student learning motivation is an important factor in vocabulary learning success. Students with high motivation tend to be more active in learning activities. Learning motivation is influenced by the teaching methods used by teachers in the classroom. Engaging learning activities can increase students' attention and participation in the learning process. Strong motivation contributes to better overall learning outcomes (Fernando et al., 2024; Karubaba & Rahman, 2025; Youngsun et al., 2024).

The use of technology-based and game-based learning media also influences students' cognitive and affective development. Media such as videos, digital games, and interactive tools can increase student engagement in learning. Attractive learning media helps students understand materials more easily. This shows that the selection of learning media plays an important role in English language teaching (Herminingsih et al., 2022).

Although the studies reviewed above demonstrate that spinning wheel media and other game-based tools are effective in improving vocabulary learning outcomes, motivation, and classroom engagement, most of them share the same underlying limitation. They position game-based media primarily as instructional tools rather than as assessment tools. Herwin et al., (2023), Bambang et al., (2024), and Laila et al., (2023),

for instance, examined how spinning wheel media improved learning outcomes, critical thinking, and writing skills, but none of these studies investigated how such media could be systematically used to assess students' language ability. Similarly, studies on flashcards (Hayati, 2021) and on technology-based media (Herminingsih et al., 2022) focused mainly on improving learning outcomes rather than exploring their potential as assessment tools.

Consequently, vocabulary assessment in elementary classrooms continues to rely heavily on conventional written tests that do not fully reflect students' actual word recognition ability. This is supported by the classroom-based review conducted by Fatimah & Masduqi, (2021) which found that vocabulary assessment in EFL settings is still largely carried out through paper-and-pencil quizzes and word lists. The authors further noted that teachers have limited practical alternatives for assessing young learners' vocabulary knowledge in a more direct, authentic, and performance-based manner.

Field observations in several elementary schools also indicate that lower-grade students often appear anxious, hesitant, or reluctant to respond during written vocabulary tests. Such conditions raise concerns about whether conventional assessment methods genuinely capture what young learners are able to do with the vocabulary they have learned. Despite the growing use of game-based media in language learning, little is known about how a vocabulary wheel spin can function as an authentic, performance-based assessment tool, particularly for young learners who are not yet developmentally ready for paper-and-pencil testing.

The present study addresses this gap by repositioning the vocabulary wheel spin not merely as a teaching aid but also as an authentic assessment instrument for measuring second-grade students' word recognition ability. In doing so, this study extends the existing literature, which has focused predominantly on the instructional role of game-based media, by examining its underexplored assessment function. Therefore, this study provides novel empirical evidence to support the development of authentic assessment practices in young learner EFL classrooms.

This study focuses on the use of vocabulary wheel spin as an authentic assessment tool to measure word recognition among second-grade students. This study aims to describe the implementation of this media in vocabulary assessment processes. This study also aims to evaluate its effectiveness in helping teachers assess students' word recognition ability in a more natural and engaging way. The focus of this study lies in the application of game-based media in English language assessment in lower-grade classrooms.

The contribution of this study is expected to provide benefits for English teachers in developing more innovative assessment strategies. This study can also serve as a reference for curriculum developers in designing game-based learning approaches. In

addition, this study is expected to contribute to future researchers in developing authentic assessment-based learning media at the elementary education level.

2. Literature Review

Authentic assessment refers to the direct examination of student performance on meaningful, real-world tasks rather than reliance on indirect, decontextualized test items (Wiggins, 1990). Wiggins, (1990) argues that authentic tasks generate directly observable evidence of what students can actually do with the knowledge they have acquired, in contrast to traditional tests that primarily measure recall and recognition out of context. In the field of language education, O'Malley and Valdez Pierce (1996) further define authentic assessment as any form of assessment that requires learners to perform, produce, or demonstrate language use in ways that reflect real-life communication, rather than simply selecting an answer from a fixed set of options. This view is echoed by Brown & Abeywickrama, (2010), who describe performance-based assessment as an approach in which learners are asked to actually demonstrate their language ability through observable behavior-such as speaking, responding, or interacting-rather than through paper-and-pencil tests alone.

Closely related to authentic assessment is the concept of assessment for learning, which positions assessment not merely as a tool for measuring outcomes but as an integral part of the learning process itself (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Black & Wiliam, (1998) emphasize that when assessment is embedded within meaningful and engaging classroom activities, it can simultaneously provide information about student ability and reinforce learning. Taken together, these perspectives provide the conceptual foundation for the present study, which positions vocabulary wheel spin as a form of performance-based, authentic assessment that captures second-grade students' word recognition ability through direct, spontaneous, and contextualized verbal responses, while at the same time functioning as part of the learning process itself.

Vocabulary learning in English language education forms a fundamental basis for developing overall language proficiency. Vocabulary functions as a core component in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. At the elementary level, vocabulary acquisition requires concrete, engaging, and developmentally appropriate approaches. Vocabulary learning is not limited to memorization of words but involves meaningful recognition and contextual understanding. Game-based learning is widely applied to increase student engagement in English learning environments (Laila et al., 2023).

Game-based learning emphasizes active student participation in learning activities. Game-based learning creates interactive, enjoyable, and low-anxiety learning environments. Students tend to understand learning materials more easily through direct experience. Vocabulary games support word recognition through meaningful classroom activities. This approach increases student participation in English language learning processes (Baimbetova, 2020).

Spinning wheel media is one form of game-based instructional media applied in various educational contexts. Spinning wheel is designed to create varied and engaging learning activities. Spinning wheel provides visual and interactive learning experiences. The use of spinning wheel improves student learning outcomes through active engagement in classroom activities (Herwin et al., 2023).

Previous research indicates that spinning wheel media increases student learning interest at the elementary level. Game-based activities create more dynamic classroom environments. Students show higher participation in learning activities. Spinning wheel supports better understanding of learning content through enjoyable learning experiences (Hikmawati et al., 2023). Spinning wheel media is also used for vocabulary learning development. Spinning wheel assists students in recognizing words through direct classroom interaction. Students demonstrate better vocabulary retention through interactive experiences. Spinning wheel increases student engagement in English vocabulary learning activities (Laila et al., 2023).

Further studies show that spinning wheel media improves speaking skills. Students demonstrate higher confidence in English speaking activities. Game-based learning reduces anxiety in classroom oral performance. Spinning wheel increases student willingness to participate in verbal communication (Maya et al., 2022). Spinning wheel media is also applied in writing instruction. Students gain easier understanding of text structures through game-based activities. Writing ideas development improves through interactive learning processes. Spinning wheel supports writing skill improvement at elementary level (Rachmaida & Mutiarani, 2022).

Learning motivation plays an essential role in vocabulary acquisition success. Students with high motivation show higher engagement in learning activities. Motivation is influenced by teaching strategies implemented in classroom environments. Interesting learning media increases student motivation and participation in English learning processes (Hidayat et al., 2021). Gamification studies highlight that digital game-based learning improves student engagement in English vocabulary learning. Students become more active in game-based learning environments. Gamification increases motivation and vocabulary learning outcomes. Game elements contribute positively to English language learning achievement (Rojabi et al., 2022).

Digital media use in learning environments also enhances student learning experiences. Technology-based media improves student participation and positive attitudes toward English learning. Students understand learning materials more easily through interactive media. Technology plays an important role in modern language education practices (Rojabi et al., 2022). Previous studies consistently focus on game-based media for improving learning outcomes, motivation, and engagement. Most studies emphasize instructional function rather than assessment function. Research on spinning wheel media as an authentic assessment tool remains limited. Vocabulary assessment in elementary education is still dominated by traditional written tests that do not fully represent students' actual word recognition ability.

This study differs from previous studies in its focus on assessment function. Previous research mainly discusses learning improvement and motivation. This study explores vocabulary wheel spin as an authentic assessment tool grounded in the theoretical perspectives of Wiggins, (1990), O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, (1996), and Brown & Abeywickrama, (2010). This study examines how game-based media can be used to assess word recognition ability of grade 2 students in a more natural and interactive way.

This study is relevant to the need for more contextual assessment models in English language learning. Authentic assessment is required to represent students' real language ability in meaningful contexts. Game-based assessment provides an alternative approach that fits elementary students' characteristics. This study is expected to contribute to the development of innovative assessment strategies in English classroom practice.

3. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design to explore the use of vocabulary wheel spin as an authentic assessment tool for measuring word recognition ability among second-grade elementary school students. According to Yin, (2018), a case study design is appropriate for investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. This approach was selected because the study did not seek to test hypotheses but rather to gain an in-depth understanding of students' experiences, classroom interactions, and learning processes during the implementation of vocabulary wheel spin as an authentic assessment activity.

The research was conducted in an elementary school that implements English language learning in the lower grades. The participants consisted of 15 second-grade students with varying levels of English proficiency, while one English teacher served as an additional informant to provide complementary information regarding the implementation of the assessment. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, which, according to Patton, (2002), enables researchers to choose participants who possess characteristics relevant to the objectives of the study. The selected students had directly participated in vocabulary learning activities using the vocabulary wheel spin.

Data were collected through classroom observation, focus group interviews, and documentation. Classroom observation was conducted to examine students' performance during the vocabulary wheel spin activity, including their ability to recognize vocabulary, respond to questions, participate actively, and demonstrate engagement throughout the assessment process. Focus group interviews using open-ended questions were conducted after the activity to explore students' perceptions, learning experiences, challenges, motivation, and feelings toward the use of vocabulary wheel spin as an authentic assessment tool. Documentation, including students' learning

records and classroom activity notes, was also collected to support and complement the observation and interview findings.

The implementation of the vocabulary wheel spin followed a structured classroom procedure. The wheel was divided into several sections containing vocabulary items that had previously been introduced during English lessons. Students took turns spinning the wheel and were asked to read, pronounce, or identify the meaning of the selected vocabulary item. When necessary, the teacher provided follow-up questions to clarify students' responses. Throughout the activity, both the researcher and the classroom teacher recorded students' performances using an observation sheet.

Student performance was assessed using a performance-based assessment rubric adapted from the principles proposed by (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). The rubric consisted of six assessment aspects, namely vocabulary recognition, answer accuracy, student response, engagement, learning motivation, and self-confidence. Each aspect was rated using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high), with clear behavioral descriptors developed to ensure consistency in scoring across all participants.

The research procedure began with preliminary classroom observation to identify the existing condition of vocabulary learning. Afterward, the vocabulary wheel spin was implemented as part of the English vocabulary assessment activity. Once the assessment had been completed, focus group interviews were conducted to obtain students' reflections regarding their learning experiences and perceptions of the assessment activity. All observation notes, interview transcripts, and documentation were subsequently compiled for analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis as proposed by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis began with coding the observation and interview data, followed by categorizing similar codes into themes such as student engagement, vocabulary recognition, learning motivation, classroom participation, and students' responses toward the learning media. These themes were then interpreted to provide a comprehensive description of the effectiveness of vocabulary wheel spin as an authentic assessment tool for young learners.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study adopted the qualitative criteria proposed by (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was established through triangulation of observation, interview, and documentation data. Transferability was supported by providing a detailed description of the research context and participants. Dependability was ensured through systematic documentation of each stage of the research process, while confirmability was achieved by comparing the findings with the collected field data. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming interview results with the participating students to improve the accuracy and credibility of the research findings.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the research findings systematically and comprehensively based on data obtained through three main instruments, namely an observation sheet, a focus group interview, and documentation. The findings are presented in accordance with the three research questions established in this study, covering students' perceptions of the use of vocabulary wheel spin, the benefits and challenges of its use as a word recognition assessment tool, and students' responses toward its implementation in vocabulary learning and assessment activities. To strengthen the empirical grounding of the interpretive narrative below, verbatim excerpts from the focus group interview are presented under each theme using anonymized student codes (S1-S15). As the interview was conducted in Indonesian, all student utterances presented below have been translated into English.

4.1 Students' Perceptions of the Use of Vocabulary Wheel Spin in Word Recognition Assessment

The first research question in this study aimed to identify how second-grade students perceived the use of vocabulary wheel spin as an authentic assessment tool for English vocabulary recognition. Data were obtained through a focus group interview conducted with 15 second-grade students after the vocabulary wheel spin activity was completed. Based on the interview and observation data, four sub-themes emerged.

4.1.1. Reduced Pressure Compared to Conventional Tests

Most students reported that the vocabulary wheel spin activity was enjoyable and created significantly less pressure than conventional written vocabulary tests. They described the activity as providing a relaxed and engaging classroom atmosphere, which contrasted with the tense and intimidating environment they usually experienced during formal assessments. This enjoyable atmosphere made students feel more confident and willing to demonstrate their vocabulary knowledge without fear of making mistakes.

This perception was reflected in the students' own statements. One student explained, *"In regular tests I'm afraid of being wrong, but with this spinning wheel I'm not afraid, so I dare to answer"* (S4). Another student similarly stated, *"It's fun, not like a test that makes me tense"* (S9). These responses were supported by classroom observation notes, which documented students smiling, laughing, and encouraging their classmates throughout the activity instead of displaying the silence and anxiety that typically characterize written vocabulary tests.

4.1.2. Enhanced Vocabulary Retention Through Direct Experience

Several students indicated that the vocabulary wheel spin helped them remember English vocabulary more effectively than the learning and assessment methods commonly used in their classroom. They believed that actively spinning the wheel, recognizing the displayed word, and pronouncing it aloud provided a more

meaningful learning experience than simply memorizing vocabulary from textbooks or completing written exercises. These findings suggest that the vocabulary wheel spin functions not only as an assessment tool but also as a learning medium that promotes vocabulary comprehension and long-term retention.

One student explained, *"I remember the words better because I saw them and said them myself, not just wrote them in a book"* (S2). This statement was consistent with the classroom observation records, which showed that most students were able to recall and correctly identify vocabulary items they had previously found difficult in written exercises once those words appeared on the spinning wheel.

4.1.3. Curiosity and Anticipation Driven by the Element of Surprise

Many students identified the element of surprise as one of the most enjoyable aspects of the vocabulary wheel spin activity. Because they did not know which vocabulary item would appear before spinning the wheel, students became more curious and mentally prepared to respond spontaneously. In addition, the competitive nature of the activity encouraged students to answer accurately and quickly, increasing their enthusiasm and active participation throughout the assessment process.

One student described this feeling by saying, *"My heart was racing waiting for my turn to spin. I didn't know which word would come out"* (S7). Classroom observation notes supported this finding, showing that students consistently leaned forward, watched the spinning wheel attentively, and eagerly waited for their turn. These behaviors indicate a high level of anticipatory engagement and suggest that the element of uncertainty successfully maintained students' attention and motivation during the activity.

4.1.4. Preference for Vocabulary Wheel Spin over Conventional Assessment

When asked about the comparison between vocabulary wheel spin and conventional assessment methods, most students stated that they much preferred vocabulary wheel spin. They expressed that conventional written tests often made them feel tense and unable to demonstrate their true abilities, whereas vocabulary wheel spin provided them with the opportunity to express their vocabulary knowledge more freely and enjoyably. Many students also expressed a desire to use vocabulary wheel spin again in future English learning sessions. As one student summarized, *"I prefer the spinning wheel to a written test, because in tests I often get confused, but with this I can just answer right away"* (S11). This preference was mirrored in the observation data, which showed noticeably higher voluntary participation during the vocabulary wheel spin activity compared to the more passive, hesitant behavior typically observed during written vocabulary quizzes.

4.2. Benefits and Challenges of Using Vocabulary Wheel Spin as a Word Recognition Assessment Tool

The second research question in this study aimed to identify the benefits and challenges encountered in the use of vocabulary wheel spin as a word recognition assessment tool. Data were obtained through direct classroom observation during the implementation of the vocabulary wheel spin activity as well as through the focus group interview conducted with students.

4.2.1. Benefits of Using Vocabulary Wheel Spin

Based on direct classroom observation conducted during the implementation of the vocabulary wheel spin activity, using the six-aspect rubric described in the Research Method section, the following data were obtained:

Table 1. Observation Results of Students' Performance During the Vocabulary Wheel Spin Assessment

No	Aspect Observed	Score	Description
1	Vocabulary recognition	4	Most students were able to mention the word appearing on the wheel spin
2	Answer accuracy	3	Some students provided correct answers while others remained hesitant
3	Student response	4	Most students responded quickly when answering
4	Engagement	5	All students actively participated in the assessment activity
5	Learning motivation	5	Students showed high enthusiasm throughout the activity
6	Self-confidence	3	Some students still appeared hesitant to answer without fear of making mistakes

Based on the observation table above, the aspects of engagement and learning motivation received the highest score of 5, indicating that all students were actively involved and demonstrated an extremely high level of enthusiasm throughout the vocabulary wheel spin activity. This result suggests that game-based media is capable of creating a more participatory and lively assessment atmosphere compared to conventional assessment.

The aspects of vocabulary recognition and student response received a score of 4, indicating that the majority of students were able to recognize and respond to the vocabulary appearing on the wheel spin accurately and quickly. This result indicates that vocabulary wheel spin is effective as a tool for measuring students' word recognition ability directly and authentically in a real classroom context. Unlike written tests that only measure students' ability passively, vocabulary wheel spin encourages students to actively and spontaneously respond to each vocabulary item displayed.

The aspects of answer accuracy and self-confidence received a score of 3, indicating that there are still some students who require further guidance and reinforcement in providing accurate answers and demonstrating confidence. Nevertheless, this score still indicates that the majority of students were able to respond quite well throughout the activity.

In addition to the observation results, data from the focus group interview also revealed various other benefits of using vocabulary wheel spin as an assessment tool. Students expressed that the activity made it easier for them to remember vocabulary they had previously learned because the vocabulary recognition process was conducted through an enjoyable direct experience. They also stated that the activity helped them to be more focused and concentrated during the assessment process because the atmosphere created was far more engaging and dynamic.

Another benefit identified was the ability of vocabulary wheel spin to create an inclusive and non-discriminatory assessment environment. Students with high, medium, or low proficiency levels were all actively engaged in the activity, and none refused to participate. This condition differs from conventional assessment settings, where lower-ability students often feel less confident and reluctant to participate actively.

4.2.2. Challenges of Using Vocabulary Wheel Spin

Despite the various benefits identified, the use of vocabulary wheel spin as an assessment tool also encountered several challenges that require serious attention from teachers. The first and most prominent challenge was the difficulty experienced by some students in answering when the vocabulary appearing on the wheel spin was unfamiliar or had never been previously encountered by them. This condition caused some students to experience confusion and provide inaccurate answers, resulting in the answer accuracy score in the observation sheet reaching only 3.

The second challenge identified was the difficulty experienced by some students in pronouncing certain English vocabulary items considered difficult or that they had never heard before, as also reflected in the excerpt above (S13). This indicates that teachers need to ensure that the vocabulary included in the wheel spin has been adjusted to the phonological and linguistic developmental level of second-grade students before the assessment activity is conducted. If the vocabulary used is too difficult to pronounce, this can hinder the smooth running of the assessment activity and reduce students' confidence in participating.

The third challenge identified was that a small number of students still displayed signs of nervousness and anxiety when their turn arrived to answer, even though the activity had been packaged in an enjoyable game format, as expressed by S14 and S15 above. This condition indicates that students' psychological factors, such as anxiety and fear of making mistakes, still need to be carefully considered by teachers when designing game-based assessment activities. Hidayat et al. (2021) emphasized that creating a supportive, non-pressuring, and fear-free learning environment is essential in encouraging the active participation of all students in the classroom.

4.3. Students' Responses toward the Implementation of Vocabulary Wheel Spin in Vocabulary Learning and Assessment Activities

The third research question aimed to describe students' responses toward the implementation of vocabulary wheel spin in English vocabulary learning and assessment activities. Data were obtained through the results of the focus group interview and direct classroom observation conducted during the activity. Four small themes emerged from this analysis.

4.3.1. Enthusiasm and Active Participation

Students demonstrated highly positive responses toward the implementation of the vocabulary wheel spin activity. Their enthusiasm was reflected in their active participation, eagerness to respond to each vocabulary item, and positive emotional expressions throughout the assessment process. Every student willingly participated in the activity, indicating that the vocabulary wheel spin successfully created an inclusive, engaging, and enjoyable assessment environment that encouraged active involvement from all learners.

This finding was supported by students' own comments. One student stated, *"I want to keep playing this, it's so much fun!"* (S6). Classroom observation notes further confirmed that all 15 students voluntarily took their turns, while several students spontaneously applauded and cheered for their classmates as they waited to participate. These observations suggest that the activity fostered not only individual engagement but also a supportive and collaborative classroom atmosphere.

4.3.2. Preference over Conventional Assessment Methods

Students consistently expressed a clear preference for the vocabulary wheel spin over conventional vocabulary assessment methods. They perceived the activity as more enjoyable, less intimidating, and more effective in allowing them to demonstrate their vocabulary knowledge. Compared with traditional paper-based tests, the vocabulary wheel spin provided a more relaxed and natural assessment experience, enabling students to respond with greater confidence.

One student explained, *"This is nicer than a test because there's no paper and it doesn't make me confused"* (S8). This perception was supported by document analysis

of students' previous written vocabulary quiz results, which showed that several students who obtained relatively low scores on paper-based assessments were nevertheless able to recognize and pronounce the same vocabulary items accurately during the vocabulary wheel spin activity. These findings indicate that the activity may provide a more authentic representation of students' actual vocabulary knowledge than conventional written assessments.

4.3.3. Competitive Spirit and Energetic Participation

Students' positive responses were also evident in the competitive enthusiasm that emerged naturally during the vocabulary wheel spin activity. Students felt motivated to answer correctly and quickly when vocabulary appeared on the wheel spin, resulting in an assessment atmosphere that was highly dynamic and energetic. This condition demonstrates that the competitive element present in vocabulary wheel spin was capable of motivating students to deliver their best performance without feeling burdened or pressured.

One student remarked, "I wanted to be the fastest to answer, so I was really excited waiting for my turn" (S10). Observation notes recorded audible cheering and friendly competition among students each time a peer answered correctly, without any visible signs of the discouragement or embarrassment sometimes observed during competitive classroom activities.

4.4.4. Desire for Continued Use

Students' positive responses were also reflected in their desire to use vocabulary wheel spin again in future English learning sessions. They reasoned that the activity made them more enthusiastic about learning English vocabulary and did not make them feel pressured during the assessment process. This condition indicates that vocabulary wheel spin successfully transformed students' perception of the assessment process from something frightening and burdensome into something enjoyable and eagerly anticipated.

As one student put it, "I want this every time we learn English, no more written tests" (S1). Several other students expressed similar sentiments during the focus group, and the teacher-informant noted that students asked when the activity would be repeated even after the session had ended.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1 Students' Perceptions of Vocabulary Wheel Spin in Word Recognition Assessment

The findings of this study as a whole indicate that vocabulary wheel spin holds tremendous potential as an innovative authentic assessment tool for measuring the word recognition ability of second-grade elementary school students. The predominantly

positive perceptions expressed by students indicate that game-based assessment can effectively reduce the anxiety that typically arises during conventional assessment processes, while simultaneously creating conditions that are more conducive for students to demonstrate their true vocabulary ability. These findings carry significant implications in the context of developing English language assessment practices at the elementary school level, where more authentic, contextual, and child-friendly assessment approaches are greatly needed to replace the dominance of conventional written tests that often fail to fully represent students' actual language ability.

The positive perceptions reported by students in relation to RQ1 can be explained by several interrelated factors. First, the game-based format used in vocabulary wheel spin is highly consistent with the cognitive and affective developmental characteristics of second-grade students who are at the concrete operational stage, where they tend to learn more effectively through play activities and direct real-world experiences. At this stage, students require learning and assessment approaches that are concrete, engaging, and aligned with their world of play in order for the learning process to proceed optimally. Baimbetova, (2020) states that games in English language learning create a more active, interactive, and low-anxiety learning atmosphere, a condition that is critically important for supporting the success of the assessment process in lower-grade classrooms.

Second, the element of surprise in the spinning mechanism, which prevents students from knowing which word will appear before spinning the wheel, proved capable of stimulating students' curiosity and readiness to spontaneously respond to each vocabulary item. This condition creates an assessment atmosphere that is more dynamic, varied, and full of surprises, keeping students consistently alert and prepared throughout the activity. Hikmawati et al., (2023) similarly found in their study that spinning wheel media increases students' learning interest through varied and non-monotonous learning experiences, a finding that is highly relevant to the conditions identified in the present study.

4.2.2 Why These Benefits and Challenges Emerged, and Their Alignment with Assessment Principles

The high scores obtained in the aspects of engagement and learning motivation in the observation sheet carry significant meaning for RQ2, which concerns the benefits and challenges of using vocabulary wheel spin as an assessment tool. These results indicate that when the assessment process is designed to be enjoyable and interactive, students are not only more willing to participate but are also more motivated to deliver their best performance. Adipat et al., (2021) affirm that game-based learning is capable of increasing student engagement in the learning process by providing meaningful and enjoyable experiences, a principle that has proven to apply equally in the context of game-based assessment such as vocabulary wheel spin.

In addition to engagement and motivation, the visual element present in vocabulary wheel spin also contributed significantly to the benefits identified in this study. Visual media has been proven to provide cognitive stimulation that supports the process of vocabulary recognition and long-term retention in students. Hayati, (2021) affirms that visual media provides cognitive stimulation that supports students' long-term retention in vocabulary recognition, so that the assessment process using vocabulary wheel spin not only measures students' ability but simultaneously reinforces their comprehension of the vocabulary being assessed.

Beyond these contributing factors, the findings of this study are also closely related to the principles of authentic assessment in language education, which emphasize the importance of measuring students' language ability in meaningful, real-world contexts that reflect genuine language use. Vocabulary wheel spin reflects these authentic assessment principles by measuring students' word recognition ability through direct, spontaneous, and natural verbal responses in an interactive and meaningful classroom setting. This approach provides a more comprehensive and authentic picture of students' actual vocabulary ability, as it encompasses not only cognitive aspects but also the affective and behavioral dimensions of students' performance during the assessment process.

The observation results indicating that vocabulary wheel spin was able to measure six aspects simultaneously, namely vocabulary recognition, answer accuracy, student response, engagement, learning motivation, and self-confidence, also reflect the holistic assessment principle that emphasizes the importance of measuring students' language ability in a multidimensional manner. This multidimensional approach is consistent with the principles of authentic and performance-based assessment, which acknowledge that students' language ability cannot be adequately measured solely through limited, one-dimensional written tests. Fernando et al., (2024) affirm that high learning motivation contributes positively to students' learning outcomes, a principle reflected in the high motivation scores obtained in the observation sheet of the present study.

4.2.3 Comparison with Previous Studies on Benefits and Challenges

The findings of this study are broadly consistent with and supportive of various previous studies on the use of spinning wheel media and game-based learning in English language education. Laila et al., (2023) found that spinning wheel games effectively increased junior high school students' engagement in vocabulary learning through meaningful direct classroom interaction, a finding strongly supported by the high engagement scores obtained in the present study, despite being conducted at a different educational level, namely second-grade elementary school students. Herwin et al., (2023) also reported that spinning wheel media increased student engagement and critical thinking ability in learning activities, which is consistent with the active participation demonstrated by second-grade students in the present study.

Maya et al., (2022) further found that spinning wheel-based activities increased students' confidence in responding to questions orally in the classroom and reduced anxiety in oral performance, a trend that was also beginning to emerge in the present study, though a small number of students still required further confidence reinforcement. Rachmaida & Mutiarani, (2022), in their study on the use of spinning wheel games in writing instruction, also found a significant positive impact on students' ability to comprehend and apply learning material, which is relevant to the present study's findings regarding the benefits of vocabulary wheel spin in strengthening students' vocabulary comprehension.

However, the challenges identified in the present study, particularly those related to unfamiliar vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties, add a more critical dimension to the use of spinning wheel media as an assessment tool. Bambang et al., (2024) emphasize that the selection of appropriate materials that are suited to students' ability level is a crucial factor determining the success of spinning wheel media use, a consideration that receives greater attention in the present study compared to the majority of previous studies that have focused primarily on the positive impacts of using this media.

4.2.4 Students' Responses toward the Implementation of Vocabulary Wheel Spin

The overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic responses that students exhibited toward vocabulary wheel spin, reflected in the high level of voluntary participation, spontaneous cheering, and energetic competitiveness observed during the activity, indicate that the tool succeeded in transforming assessment from a source of apprehension into an experience students actively looked forward to. This pattern is consistent with Herwin et al., (2023), who reported that spinning wheel media increased student engagement and active involvement in learning activities, and with Baimbetova, (2020), who found that game-based activities foster a more active and low-anxiety classroom atmosphere. The competitive spirit that emerged naturally, in which students were motivated to answer quickly and correctly without appearing burdened by the competition, further suggests that when playful challenge is embedded within an assessment activity, it can energize rather than intimidate young learners, a dynamic rarely achieved in conventional paper-based testing.

Students' clear preference for vocabulary wheel spin over conventional written tests, together with their expressed desire to use it again in future lessons, points to a shift in how young learners perceive the assessment process itself. Rather than viewing assessment as an isolated, high-pressure event, students came to see it as a continuation of enjoyable classroom activity, a shift consistent with Rojabi et al., (2022), who found that gamification in vocabulary learning significantly increases student motivation and engagement, and with Maya et al., (2022), who reported that wheel-based activities increase students' confidence and reduce anxiety in oral performance. Taken together, these responses suggest that vocabulary wheel spin does not merely

make assessment more tolerable for second-grade students, but actively cultivates a more positive disposition toward English language learning as a whole.

4.2.5 Implications for English Language Teaching and Assessment (RQ1-RQ3)

The findings of this study have several important and practical implications for the development of English language teaching and assessment practices at the elementary school level. First, English teachers in lower-grade classrooms are strongly encouraged to seriously consider the use of game-based authentic assessment tools such as vocabulary wheel spin as a more innovative and effective alternative to conventional written vocabulary tests. Rojabi et al., (2022) affirm that gamification in vocabulary learning has been proven to significantly increase student motivation and engagement, a benefit that equally applies in the context of game-based assessment.

Second, the challenges identified in this study emphasize the importance of thorough and systematic preparation prior to the implementation of vocabulary wheel spin as an assessment tool. Teachers need to ensure that the vocabulary included in the wheel spin has been carefully selected and adjusted to the linguistic development level and phonological ability of second-grade students. Hidayat et al., (2021) emphasize that creating a supportive and non-pressuring learning environment is essential in increasing the active participation of all students in the classroom, a principle that needs to be consistently applied in the implementation of vocabulary wheel spin as an authentic assessment tool.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the use of the vocabulary wheel spin serves as an effective authentic assessment tool for measuring word recognition ability among second-grade elementary school students. The findings reveal that students generally perceived the activity as enjoyable, interactive, and less stressful than conventional written assessments, enabling them to recognize vocabulary in a more natural and engaging learning environment. The observation results also indicate high levels of student engagement and learning motivation, suggesting that game-based assessment encourages active participation while reducing anxiety commonly associated with formal testing.

Despite these positive outcomes, several challenges were identified during the implementation, particularly students' difficulties with unfamiliar vocabulary items, pronunciation, and self-confidence when answering independently. These findings highlight the importance of selecting vocabulary that is appropriate to students' proficiency levels and creating a supportive classroom atmosphere that encourages participation without fear of making mistakes. Overall, the vocabulary wheel spin not only functions as an assessment instrument but also promotes meaningful learning experiences by integrating assessment with enjoyable classroom interaction.

This study contributes to the development of authentic assessment practices in English language teaching by providing empirical evidence that game-based assessment can be an innovative and developmentally appropriate alternative for evaluating young learners' vocabulary recognition. However, the study was limited by its relatively small sample size and the use of a qualitative descriptive case study design involving only one elementary school, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are therefore recommended to involve larger and more diverse participant groups, employ mixed-methods or experimental research designs to examine the effectiveness of vocabulary wheel spin quantitatively, and explore the integration of digital or technology-assisted vocabulary wheel applications to support English vocabulary assessment in both face-to-face and online learning environments.

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