TEACHING MULTIMODAL LITERACY TO YOUNG LEARNERS USING DIGITAL DECODABLE BOOKS ON PADLET

Damar Muhamad Syawal Nugraha[1], Epi Yulianti [2], Muhammad Bugi Darmawan[3], Risa Meta Anpa Puri[4]

Syawaldamar055@gmail.com[1]
Yuliantiepi61@gmail.com[2]
bugidarmawan2512@gmail.com[3] risametaa@gmail.com[4]

Suryakancana University, Cianjur, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Reading is a fundamental skill that must be mastered by young learners in learning English as a foreign language. However, many elementary school students still experience difficulties in reading comprehension when learning materials are presented in conventional and less engaging ways. This study aims to examine the implementation of multimodal literacy instruction through digital decodable books using Padlet and to identify the challenges and opportunities experienced during the learning process. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design. Data were collected through classroom observation, interviews, documentation, and students' learning activities. The study involved third-grade students at SDN Pasarsuuk Cianjur. The findings indicate that the integration of digital decodable books on Padlet enhances students' reading engagement, motivation, vocabulary development, and multimodal comprehension. According to Serafini and Gee (2021), multimodal texts support learners in constructing meaning through the integration of visual, auditory, and linguistic modes, which was evident in students' active participation during reading activities. Despite some challenges related to technological access and time limitations, the use of Padlet provided meaningful opportunities for interactive and student- centered learning. Therefore, Padlet-based digital decodable books can be considered an effective alternative medium for fostering multimodal literacy among young EFL learners.

Keywords: Multimodal Literacy, Digital Decodable Books, Padlet, Young Learners, Reading Comprehension

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed literacy instruction in elementary classrooms. Literacy learning is no longer limited to printed texts but now involves multiple modes such as written text, images, audio, and interactive digital media. This approach is commonly referred to as multimodal literacy. According to Serafini and Gee (2021),

multimodal literacy enables learners to construct meaning through the integration of various semiotic resources rather than relying solely on written language. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, particularly at the elementary school level, young learners often experience difficulties in reading comprehension due to limited vocabulary, low motivation, and minimal exposure to engaging English texts. Conventional reading instruction that relies heavily on printed textbooks may not sufficiently support young learners' needs. Dalton and Proctor (2020) emphasize that digital texts enriched with multimodal features can enhance early reading development and increase student engagement.

Based on preliminary observation conducted at SDN Pasarsuuk, Grade 3, English reading instruction was predominantly carried out using printed materials with limited integration of digital media. As a result, several students showed low participation and hesitation during reading activities. This condition indicates the need for innovative teaching strategies that can support students' reading development and engagement(Helmie 2022). Digital decodable books are designed to support beginning readers through controlled vocabulary and phonics-based patterns. When integrated with digital platforms such as Padlet, these books provide multimodal features including audio narration, visual illustrations, and interactive response activities. Padlet also allows students to interact with learning materials and share their responses digitally. According to Trust and Whalen (2021), digital platforms like Padlet can facilitate collaborative and reflective learning environments. Therefore, this study aims to explore the implementation of digital decodable books on Padlet in teaching multimodal literacy to young learners at SDN Pasarsuuk, Grade 3, and to identify the challenges and opportunities experienced during the learning process. The research questions guiding this study are as follows: How are digital decodable books on Padlet implemented to teach multimodal literacy to third-grade students at SDN Pasarsuuk? And What challenges and opportunities are experienced by teachers and students in using digital decodable books on Padlet?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the implementation of digital decodable books on Padlet in teaching multimodal literacy to young learners. A qualitative approach was selected to gain an in-depth understanding of classroom practices and students' responses within a natural

learning environment.

The research was conducted at SDN Pasarsuuk, an elementary school in Indonesia. The participants consisted of third-grade students (Grade 3) and one English teacher who acted as the main facilitator during the learning process.

Data were collected using classroom observation, analysis of students' learning tasks and responses uploaded on Padlet, and semi-structured interviews with the teacher. Classroom observations focused on students' engagement, interaction, and use of multimodal elements during reading activities. Students' digital responses, such as audio recordings and written comments on Padlet, were analyzed to understand their multimodal literacy development. Interviews were conducted to explore the teacher's perceptions of the implementation, challenges, and benefits of using digital decodable books.

Data triangulation was applied to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2021). The collected data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of digital decodable books on Padlet to teach multimodal literacy

In the beginning, opening activity was carried out. The teacher opens Padlet and displays the cover of the digital decodable book. Students are asked guiding questions such as: *"What do you think this story is about?"* and *"What do you see in the picture?"* to activate prior knowledge. According to Serafini and Gee (2021), visual prompts support students in predicting meaning before reading.

Then it was continued with main activity (25–30 minutes) that provided the students with several activities:

a. Reading the Digital Decodable Book

The teacher plays the audio reading from the digital book while students follow along in a shared reading activity. The teacher emphasizes sight words and phonics patterns. According to Dalton and Proctor (2020), audio-supported digital texts enhance decoding and pronunciation skills.

b. Multimodal Exploration

Students interact with Padlet through multiple modes: listening to audio, observing illustrations, rereading texts, recording their reading voices, and completing matching or drawing activities. This aligns with Kalantzis and Cope (2020), who argue that learning by design encourages students to construct meaning through multiple representations.

c. Comprehension Tasks

Students answer comprehension questions on Padlet, such as identifying

characters, sequencing events, and choosing correct images. The teacher facilitates discussion and provides scaffolding. According to Leu et al. (2022), interactive digital tasks support deeper comprehension and engagement.

As a closing activity that was conducted in 5-10 minutes, the teacher reviews vocabulary and phonics patterns learned during the lesson. Students upload one response (audio or video) to Padlet, and the teacher provides positive feedback. This reflective activity supports students' confidence and autonomy (Trust & Whalen, 2021).

In assessing the students, the teacher focused on attitude assessment including cooperation and discipline in using digital devices, knowledge assessment including story comprehension and identification of multimodal elements, and skills assessment including reading aspect, multimodal response, and Padlet use. Furthermore, as final student products there are audio recording of reading, and comprehension responses on Padlet-Drawing or visual response of characters.

Challenges and Opportunities in Using Digital Decodable Books on Padlet

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of digital decodable books on Padlet positively influenced students' engagement and multimodal literacy development at SDN Pasarsuuk. During reading activities, students showed high enthusiasm and active participation. They responded to visual illustrations, listened attentively to audio narration, and confidently participated in reading aloud activities. This finding supports Dalton and Proctor's (2020) claim that multimodal digital texts can increase learners' engagement in early literacy instruction.

Table 1. Findings and Description

No	Observation Aspect	Findings	Description
1	Student Enthusiasm	Active	15 out of 25 students actively answered teacher's questions, while others paid attention quietly.
2	Student Enthusiasm	Passive	10 students tended to remain silent and only copied notes.
3	Teaching Method	Method	The teacher used short explanations followed by Q&A and demonstrations.

4	Teaching Media	Media	Audiovisual media were delivered through Padlet.
5	Teacher–Student Interaction	Positive	The teacher rovided verbal praise and encouraged participation.
6	Teacher–Student Interaction	Needs Improvement	Some students became hesitant after being corrected publicly.
7	Group Activities	Active	Students were more engaged during small group discussions.
8	Individual Activities	Passive	Some students appeared hesitant to read or respond individually.

In terms of multimodal literacy development, students were able to integrate textual, visual, and auditory information to construct meaning from the stories. The presence of images and audio support helped students decode unfamiliar words and understand story content more effectively. This result aligns with the principles of multimodal literacy, which emphasize meaning-making through multiple modes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021).

However, several challenges were identified during the implementation. Some students demonstrated limited digital literacy skills and required additional guidance when using Padlet. Technical issues, such as unstable internet connections, also affected the smoothness of the learning process. Additionally, time constraints limited the completion of all planned activities within one lesson.

Despite these challenges, the use of digital decodable books on Padlet provided significant opportunities. Students showed increased motivation, improved vocabulary acquisition, and greater confidence in reading English texts. The interactive features of Padlet encouraged students to actively engage with the learning materials and express their understanding through various modes. These findings are consistent with Leu et al. (2022), who highlight the role of digital environments in supporting meaningful and interactive literacy learning.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the use of digital decodable books integrated with Padlet can effectively support the teaching of multimodal literacy to young learners, particularly third grade students at SDN Pasarsuuk. The integration of textual, visual, and audio elements encourages active student engagement and enhances reading comprehension. Although challenges related to digital literacy

skills, technical issues, and time management were encountered, the opportunities provided by this approach outweigh the limitations. Digital decodable books on Padlet offer an innovative and meaningful alternative for English reading instruction in elementary schools. Future research is recommended to involve larger participant groups and examine the long-term impact of this approach on students' literacy development.

REFERENCES

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2021). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.). SAGE Publications. Dalton, B., & Proctor, C. P. (2020). The changing landscape of literacy: Digital, multimodal, and connected learning. Routledge.

Gee, J. P. (2021). Introducing discourse analysis: From grammar to society (3rd ed.). Routledge. Kalantzis, M., & Cope, B. (2020). Learning by design (2nd ed.). Routledge. Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2021). Reading images: The grammar of visual design (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Helmie, Jauhar. 2022. "Virtual Reality-Supported Drilling Strategy In Teaching English Vocabulary To Young Learners." *Acitya: Journal of Teaching and Education* 4(1): 88–100.

Leu, D. J., Forzani, E., Rhoads, C., Maykel, C., Kennedy, C., & Timbrell, N. (2022). The new literacies of online research and comprehension: Rethinking the reading achievement gap. Reading Research Quarterly, 57(1), 1–20.

Serafini, F., & Gee, J. P. (2021). Multimodal literacies in digital environments. Routledge.

Trust, T., & Whalen, J. (2021). Should teachers be trained in emergency remote teaching Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Journal of Technology and Teacher Education, 29(2), 189–199.

UNESCO. (2021). Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education.