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Digital SIBI Non-Textbooks for Color Vocabulary in First-Grade EFL: Usage, Challenges, and Teacher Strategies

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to (1) describe the use of the non-textbook SIBI, *Luna's Red Seeds*, in teaching English reading to first-grade elementary school students, (2) identify the obstacles that arise during its use, and (3) explore the strategies teachers use to overcome these obstacles. This study used a descriptive qualitative method, with data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. Analysis was conducted using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's interactive model for data reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions, with validity ensured through triangulation. The results show that SIBI non-text books serve as the primary medium for teaching color vocabulary. Observations indicate that 10 of 12 students actively interacted with the illustrations and pronunciation, while 9 of 12 successfully matched the colors on the worksheet. The obstacles encountered include difficulty matching pages in the book (reported by 2-3 students), limited color variation, phonological difficulties, and technical barriers. Teachers overcame these challenges through adaptive strategies, including page markers, supplementary media, repetition, and scaffolding. Findings indicate that *Luna's Red Seeds* can support early English reading in resource-limited environments, with success highly dependent on the teacher's pedagogical strategies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Early reading skills are a fundamental component of learning, especially for students in their first years of elementary school when they begin to develop essential literacy skills that connect symbols, sounds, and meanings (Snow et al., 2021). Strong reading skills at this stage are critical to supporting academic progress across subjects. Recent studies show that early reading functions as an emergent literacy process that enables children to recognize letters, sounds, and meaningful vocabulary before achieving a complete understanding of written text (Hikmah et al., 2024). Similarly, literacy habits in lower grades have been proven to foster a positive attitude toward reading and strengthen students' basic literacy competencies (Oktaviani & Kaltsum, 2023). In a global context, strengthening basic literacy is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, particularly SDG 4, which emphasizes the importance of inclusive quality education and equitable mastery of basic skills for all learners (Haßler, 2022). The latest international reports confirm that literacy skills at the early stages are an important indicator of educational success in the future, especially in multilingual learning environments and with limited resources (Crawford et al., 2025). It is in this context that this research was conducted at SD Negeri Suruh 02 which has early grade characteristics with similar literacy support needs.

In the era of globalization, English has become an increasingly important language for young learners. English language teaching in early elementary school classes is expected to not only introduce basic vocabulary

but also foster students' confidence and interest in engaging with the language. However, many young learners still struggle with early English reading comprehension due to limited phonological awareness and inadequate contextual understanding. This is in line with the research Cahyani et al., (2022), which shows that the reading ability of elementary school students is still relatively low when students are not actively involved in learning and are not supported by developmentally appropriate media. Darus et al., (2024) emphasizes that effective teaching strategies are needed to support English language learning among elementary school students. Common difficulties, such as misrecognizing letters, words, and simple sentences, further demonstrate the mismatch between existing teaching approaches and the developmental characteristics of early grade students (Wayan & Suartini, 2022).

One of the factors contributing to this challenge is the lack of engaging and developmentally appropriate learning media. Conventional methods that rely on memorization or decontextualized vocabulary lists often fail to capture children's attention or promote deep understanding. Research shows that passive learning models can inhibit student participation and reduce comprehension (Palupi et al., 2025). For first graders, who have limited attention spans and are still in the concrete thinking stage, visual learning media with simple narrative structures can serve as cognitive supports that aid the language comprehension process. Various studies show that visual-based reading sources, including picture books and non-text narrative media, can increase motivation and support early reading comprehension more effectively than conventional texts (Aquatika et al., 2022; Bang & Hong, 2024).

Based on observations conducted at SD Negeri Suruh 02, it was found that most first-grade students had difficulty developing English reading skills. These difficulties were evident in the students' low ability to recognize letters, connect sounds with symbols, and understand simple words. This problem attracted the researcher's attention to investigate the use of SIBI non-text books as an alternative strategy for learning English reading. The researcher was interested in finding out how this media could help students support their early reading process, as well as understand the obstacles and possible solutions that might arise in its use in the classroom.

To address the need for accessible learning materials, the Indonesian Ministry of Education has developed the Indonesian Book Information System (SIBI), a national digital platform that provides free and curated learning resources, including non-text books. This platform offers a variety of picture stories and graded reading materials designed to support flexible and equitable access to learning. Globally, the use of digital learning resources has been shown to contribute to increased engagement and access to early literacy, particularly in the context of primary education with limited print resources (Bautista et al., 2024). SIBI has been recognized as an innovative resource that helps schools with limited availability of printed books (Maratussholihah et al., 2024). The visual representations embedded in these digital nontext books can support students' understanding of vocabulary and sentence structure through contextual cues, in line with evidence showing the effectiveness of visual aids in improving concept understanding and digital media in creating interactive learning experiences (Rathore et al., 2023).

Although SIBI has the potential to be a source of digital learning, its integration into English language learning for young learners is still limited. Schools still face technological constraints, and teachers often report a lack of digital literacy skills to make the most of these devices. Fadilah, (2024) argues that digital literacy should be a core component of early childhood education to prepare students for the demands of the Society 5.0 era, highlighting the need for better support systems and teacher training in technology-based learning. At SDN Suruh 02, this situation is also evident in the developing use of technology and the suboptimal use of digital media in English language learning.

Research by Aquatika et al., (2022) shows that graded non-text books effectively increase elementary school students' interest and understanding of reading through visual illustrations that reinforce the relationship between images and meaning. The results of this study confirm that non-text media can serve as an important support tool in early reading. On the other hand, the study by Maratussholihah et al., (2024) highlights the potential of the Indonesian Book Information System (SIBI) as a digital literacy platform that provides a variety of learning resources, including non-text books that can support learning in early grades. Although both studies provide an important basis for the effectiveness of non-text media and the relevance of SIBI, neither has specifically examined the use of SIBI non-text books in English reading instruction for first-grade students. This gap is the main basis for this study.

Although various studies have explored the use of children's storybooks and multimedia resources in reading instruction, empirical research on SIBI non-text books, particularly in the context of English language learning for first graders, remains limited. The existing literature focuses mainly on printed storybooks or commercial digital media, resulting in a gap regarding how government-provided digital non-text books can support English reading comprehension in resource-limited environments. Unlike previous studies conducted Nurhidayah & Wibowo, (2025) it states that the effectiveness of printed storybooks or commercial digital media, this study highlights the use of the non-text book SIBI, *Luna's Red Seeds*, in English language learning

for first-grade elementary school students. Previous research has shown that visual and multimedia media can increase motivation and reading comprehension , but few studies have examined how SIBI non-text books can be used directly in early grades to support English vocabulary and sentence structure acquisition (Nasir et al., 2023). With a focus on the integration of SIBI in real-world practice, this study not only describes the use of media but also identifies teachers' challenges and strategies to overcome them, thereby providing a more practical perspective compared to previous studies.

Based on the background and research gaps described above, this study aims to answer the following research questions: (1) how SIBI *Luna's Red Seeds* non-text books are used in English reading instruction for first-grade elementary school students, (2) what obstacles arise during the use of SIBI *Luna's Red Seeds* non-text books in learning, and (3) what strategies teachers use to overcome obstacles in English reading instruction based on SIBI *Luna's Red Seeds* non-text books. The formulation of these research questions is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the practice of using non-text digital learning media in the context of early grades and its contribution to the development of early English literacy.

2.   METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to examine in depth the use of the non-textbook SIBI *Luna's Red Seeds* in English reading lessons for first-grade students at SD N Suruh 02. This study involved 12 first-grade students and 1 English teacher as the main participants. This approach was chosen because the study focused on the learning process, classroom interactions, and teacher strategies in utilizing visual media, rather than on measuring learning outcomes numerically. The qualitative descriptive approach allowed researchers to describe pedagogical practices contextually and holistically based on empirical data obtained in the field.

Although the number of participants was limited, this study was positioned as a context-based exploratory study aimed at obtaining an initial overview of the use of SIBI non-textbooks in first-grade English language learning. The findings of this study are expected to provide initial insights for further research with a wider range of participants.

2.1. Research Design

This study was designed as *a classroom-based* qualitative descriptive *study*. This design was used to describe the use of the non-textbook SIBI *Luna's Red Seeds* in English reading instruction, including how teachers integrated media into the learning process, students' responses to visual content and simple texts, and the dynamics of interaction that emerged during the learning process.

2.2. Research Procedure

The research procedure was carried out in three main stages:
(1) The preparation stage, which includes coordination with the school, determining the classes that will be the location of the research, and collecting learning documents such as lesson plans and teaching materials. At this stage, researchers obtain official permission from the school as the basis for conducting the research.
(2) The implementation stage, which involved collecting data through observation of English language learning using the SIBI *Luna's Red Seeds* non-textbook. The observation was conducted in four learning sessions, each lasting approximately 60 minutes. At this stage, the researcher also conducted semi-structured interviews with English teachers and interviews with students to explore their responses to the use of SIBI non-textbooks during learning. Student interviews were used to complement and confirm the findings of the observation, not to draw independent conclusions.
(3) The post-implementation stage, which includes transcribing interview data, organizing observation notes, and analyzing supporting documents used during learning.

2.3. Research Instruments

The research instruments in this study are qualitative and consist of observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and documentation sheets:
(1) Observation guidelines are used to guide researchers in recording learning activities, the use of SIBI non-text books, and student responses and engagement during the reading process.
(2) The interview guidelines were prepared in two forms. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with English teachers to explore their experiences, learning strategies, and views on the use of the SIBI *Luna's Red Seeds* non-textbook. In addition, interviews were also conducted with first-grade students using simple questions. These interviews aimed to obtain an initial picture of students' responses to the illustrations, colors, and reading activities presented in the SIBI non-textbook. This approach was chosen to suit the developmental characteristics of early elementary school students.
(3) Documentation instruments were used to collect and examine learning documents, including lesson plans and relevant non-text content from SIBI textbooks related to the activities observed.

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2.4. Data Analysis

Research data was collected through direct observation of learning, semi-structured interviews with teachers, interviews with students, and learning documentation. The use of various data collection techniques aimed to obtain complementary data and strengthen understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Rühlmann, 2023). Data reduction was carried out by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives from the results of observations, teacher interviews, student interviews, and documentation. Next, the data is presented in the form of a narrative description supplemented with indicators of student engagement frequency based on classroom observation results to help researchers understand patterns and relationships between data. The conclusion drawing stage is carried out continuously during the analysis process to produce findings that are consistent and validated across data sources (Budhayanti et al., 2024).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
RESULTS

This section of the research results presents field findings that include the use of SIBI non-text books in English reading instruction, obstacles that arose during the learning process, and strategies implemented by teachers to overcome these obstacles.

3.1. The Use of SIBI Non-Text Books in English Reading Instruction

The results of the observation show that the SIBI *Luna's Red Seeds* non-text book serves as the center of learning activities in the stage of introducing English color vocabulary. The teacher begins the lesson by displaying the book on the SIBI platform in front of the class while directing the students to open the same page in the printed book. During the learning process, the students actively follow the teacher's pronunciation, point to the appropriate illustrations, and say the color vocabulary aloud.

Figure 1. The teacher began the lesson by showing illustrations and narrating to the students.

In Figure 1, the teacher is seen presenting narration and illustrations in front of the class while directing students to open the same page in their textbooks. This combination of digital and print approaches creates a multimodal learning experience, where students receive visual input through illustrations and auditory input through the teacher's explanations. During the learning process, 10 of the 12 students actively followed the teacher's pronunciation, pointed to the corresponding illustrations, and verbally mentioned color vocabulary. Learning documentation shows that 9 of the 12 students were able to complete the color matching worksheet correctly.

Based on interviews with first-grade students, it was found that the use of the non-textbook SIBI *Luna's Red Seeds* helped them understand English color vocabulary. Students stated that the illustrations in the book made it easier for them to recognize the meaning of words and remember the color vocabulary introduced.

One student stated:

"The red one is red, you can see it from the picture."

In addition, students also said that using digital displays together with printed books made learning more interesting and less confusing. Interviews with English teachers showed that they had a positive view of using SIBI non-text books in early English reading lessons. Teachers felt that the illustrations and simple storyline in *Luna's Red Seeds* helped students understand vocabulary without needing lengthy explanations.

Teachers stated:

"When using this book, children understand more quickly because they can immediately see the pictures."
A combination of observational data, interviews, and documentation shows that *Luna's Red Seeds* is not only an additional medium, but is used as the main medium that guides color vocabulary learning activities. This medium features consistent visual illustrations and a simple storyline that is used repeatedly during color vocabulary learning. These findings indicate that SIBI non-text books are used intensively in color vocabulary introduction activities during early English reading instruction. Although this medium supports the learning process, its use is not entirely free from obstacles.

3.2. Constraints in the Use of SIBI Non-text Books

Although SIBI non-text books are actively used in learning, observations show that there are obstacles in their use. About 2-3 students experience confusion in matching the pages between the printed book and the digital display, especially at the beginning of learning. Teachers provide additional instructions so that learning time is used to match the pages before activities continue.

Other obstacles identified through observation and interviews were found in the phonological aspect, particularly in the pronunciation of vocabulary such as brown and green, which some students experienced during initial pronunciation. In addition, the limited color variation in the book made it difficult for students to understand vocabulary that did not appear in the main illustrations. Technical factors such as unstable internet connections also affected the smooth use of the SIBI platform during learning.

Based on interviews with students, it was found that some English vocabulary words were still difficult to pronounce and understand, especially words that did not appear directly in the book's illustrations. Students said they felt confused when the teacher mentioned colors that were not in the book.

One student stated:
"There are colors that are not in my book, so I am confused."
The results of interviews with teachers showed that the limited variety of colors in SIBI non-text books and the short allocation of learning time were obstacles to the implementation of learning. Teachers said that these conditions required them to use additional media to supplement the color vocabulary material.

Teachers stated:
"If the colors are not in the book, I have to find other media, because the time is also limited."
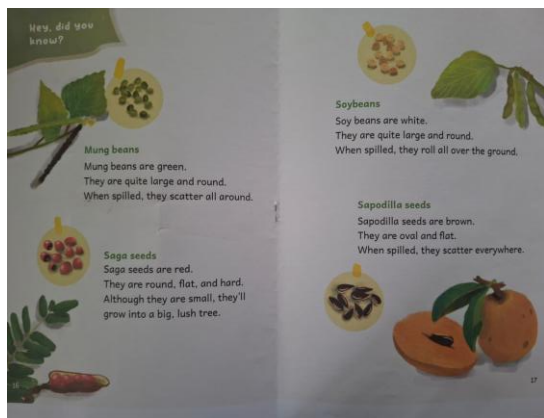

Figure 2. *Luna's Red Seeds* page showing the four primary colors.

Figure 3. Teachers use *flash cards* to supplement vocabulary.

The limited color variation in *Luna's Red Seeds* can be seen in Figure 2, which only shows four main colors, namely green, white, red, and brown. To overcome this, the teacher uses additional media in the form of *flash cards* as shown in Figure 3.

3.3. Strategies for Overcoming Obstacles in Using SIBI Non-Text Book Media

The results of observations and interviews showed that teachers implemented various strategies to overcome the obstacles of using the SIBI *Luna's Red Seeds* non-textbook in English reading lessons. Teachers prepared digital displays before the lesson began and marked the pages in the students' printed books to minimize confusion when matching pages. This step was followed by a decrease in the number of students who experienced confusion, so that only 2-3 students still needed guidance during the lesson.

To expand the vocabulary of colors, teachers use additional media such as flash cards and real objects around the classroom. In teaching, teachers apply choral repetition techniques, pair exercises, and color-

themed songs to help students pronounce vocabulary words. In addition, teachers prepare printed books as an alternative in case of technical disruptions to the SIBI digital platform.

Based on the interview results, teachers said that the use of additional media such as *flash cards*, real objects, and songs helped students understand color vocabulary better and accelerated the learning process. Teachers stated:

"When using picture cards or objects in class, children grasp concepts more quickly."

Students also revealed that this strategy made it easier for them to remember vocabulary and made learning more enjoyable.

Image1 . The use of *flash cards* and real objects to enrich teaching materials.

To overcome the limitations of color in books, teachers enrich teaching materials with *flash cards* and other real objects, as shown in Figure 4. When introducing the vocabulary word "*blue*," for example, teachers show objects in the classroom that match the word while asking students to match them with the spoken word.

DISCUSSION

Based on empirical findings in the results section, the following discussion interprets the use, constraints, and strategies for using SIBI non-text books within the framework of early reading learning theory.

3.1. The Use of SIBI Non-Text Books in English Reading Instruction

The research results show that *Luna's Red Seeds* functions as a center for learning activities and a pedagogical anchor in introducing color vocabulary. This central role is evident in how teachers use the media to organize the learning process, as seen in activities such as pointing to illustrations and verbal repetition of vocabulary by students. This learning pattern emphasizes the importance of visual media in supporting early reading processes in early learners.

These results are in line with the Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1990), which states that information presented through visual and verbal channels simultaneously is easier to process and remember. In the context of this study, clear color illustrations combined with narrative reading by teachers enabled students to form strong associations between words and meanings. This research is also relevant to the iconic stage according to (Beyazıt & Ayhan, 2020), which emphasizes that early childhood children understand concepts more effectively through concrete representations before being able to process abstract symbols.

The students' enthusiasm in pointing to illustrations and spontaneously mentioning vocabulary indicates that the media not only attracts attention but also encourages active participation. This study supports Serafini, (2020) which shows that picture books help beginner readers recognize language patterns while gradually building meaning associations. With its simple narrative structure and consistent illustrations, *Luna's Red Seeds* provides a safe learning environment for first graders to explore English without excessive cognitive pressure.

The results of this study also reinforce the research of Berg & Klapwijk, (2020); Good et al., (2024); Umami, (2024) which confirms that illustrations in graded books serve as visual scaffolding for early learners. In the Indonesian context, this research is in line with Maratussholihah et al., (2024) which emphasizes the role of SIBI as a provider of relevant visual literacy resources, especially for schools with limited printed teaching materials. Thus, the use *of Luna's Red Seeds* not only supports color vocabulary learning but also demonstrates the potential of SIBI as a contextual and applicable digital literacy ecosystem in early grades.

3.2. Challenges in Using SIBI Non-Text Book Media

Despite its strong pedagogical potential, the results of this study indicate that the use of SIBI non-text books is not entirely free from obstacles. Students' difficulty in matching pages between digital displays

and printed books highlights the limitations of first graders' visual-spatial organizational abilities. This study shows that the integration of digital and print media requires careful instructional management so as not to increase students' cognitive load.

This study is consistent with Cahyani et al., (2022) which states that elementary school students often experience confusion when they have to follow text-based and visual instructions simultaneously. In the context of English language learning, this challenge is exacerbated by the low reading experience and limited attention span of early grade students, so that transitions between media can become obstacles if not intensively guided by teachers.

The phonological difficulties found, especially in the pronunciation of words such as *brown* and *green*, reflect the differences between the sound systems of Indonesian and English. This study is in line with Persici et al., (2024) which confirms that early learners often experience difficulties in producing foreign language phonemes that do not exist in their first language. Liu, (2023) also adds that vocabulary that is not supported by explicit visual representations tends to be more difficult for beginner readers to understand.

The limited color variation in *Luna's Red Seeds* shows that although non-text books are effective in building initial understanding, limited material coverage can reduce vocabulary learning flexibility. This study is in line with Wayan & Suartini, (2022) which states that a lack of visual material variation can hinder understanding when students do not find concrete representations of the concepts being studied.

In addition, technical constraints such as unstable internet connections reinforce the research of Godwin et al., (2022); Haerunnisa et al., (2024) that the effectiveness of visual media is greatly influenced by infrastructure readiness and classroom management. Zhao et al., (2023) also note that the simultaneous integration of visuals, text, and instructions can increase the cognitive load of early learners, especially when the material is not fully aligned with the developmental needs of students.

3.3. Strategies for Overcoming Obstacles in Using SIBI Non-Text Media

The results of the study indicate that the role of teachers is a key factor in determining the successful use of SIBI non-text books. Strategies for preparing digital displays and using page markers in printed books are effective forms of instructional adaptation in reducing students' visual confusion. This study is in line with Padang & Sitepu, (2023) which emphasizes that the effectiveness of media is greatly influenced by how teachers organize and facilitate its use in the classroom.

The use of flash cards and real objects to supplement color vocabulary demonstrates the application of a multimodal approach consistent with Dual Coding Theory. This strategy allows students to associate verbal input with concrete visual experiences, thereby reinforcing meaning formation. This research supports Saji et al., (2020) assertion that the use of physical objects helps children connect abstract concepts with direct experiences.

Pronunciation strategies through choral repetition, pair practice, and color-themed songs demonstrate a gradual approach that is appropriate for the characteristics of early learners. This research is in line with Durongbhandhu & Suwanasilp, (2021); Huseynova, (2025) which shows that interactive verbal exercises and language games can improve students' pronunciation accuracy and confidence. The integration of music also supports the research by Li & Zhang, (2025) regarding the improvement of vocabulary retention through rhythm and intonation.

From a technical and cognitive perspective, the use of scaffolding in the form of brief demonstrations, verbal examples, and guided exercises reflects the application of the Zone of Proximal Development principle (Puntambekar, 2022). This strategy enables students to complete learning tasks in stages with the support of teachers, as seen in the practice of demonstrations, joint exercises, and verbal guidance during the activities.

Overall, these findings confirm that the successful use of SIBI non-text books is not only determined by the quality of visual material, but also depends heavily on the teacher's pedagogical strategy in adapting the media to the developmental needs, cognitive readiness, and technical conditions of the classroom. This reinforces the argument that the integration of digital media in early reading instruction must always be accompanied by an active and reflective facilitative role of the teacher.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the use of the non-textbook SIBI *Luna's Red Seeds* plays an important role in supporting English reading learning in first-grade elementary school students. This medium facilitates the introduction of color vocabulary through the integration of visual illustrations, simple storylines, and a combination of digital and print formats. Findings from observations, interviews, and documentation confirm that students are better able to recognize vocabulary, follow teacher instructions, and actively participate in learning, thereby confirming the pedagogical value of digital non-text books in the context of early literacy.

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This study also identified obstacles, including student confusion when comparing digital and printed pages, limited color vocabulary variation, phonological challenges, and technical barriers to using digital platforms. These findings confirm that the successful use of SIBI non-text books is highly dependent on the active role of teachers in designing adaptive instructional strategies, including the use of supporting media, page markers, and multimodal learning approaches.

In practical terms, this study implies the need for systematic support for teachers, both through training in the use of SIBI and strengthening digital literacy in early grades. This study has limitations due to the number of participants and the research context being limited to one school, so the findings cannot yet be generalized. Further research is recommended to involve a broader context and use a quasi-experimental design to assess more measurably the impact of using SIBI non-text books on students' English reading skills. Thus, further research can provide a stronger empirical basis for the development and application of national digital learning resources in early literacy learning.

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