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Development of word booklet learning media to improve early reading ability in elementary school

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ABSTRACT

The cognitive development stages of early-grade students must begin with strengthening early reading skills as a fundamental foundation for subsequent learning. This study aims to develop a word booklet learning media that is valid, practical, and effective in improving the early reading abilities of first-grade students at SDN 014640 Sei Kepayang Tengah. The research employed a Research and Development (RnD) method using the ADDIE development model, which includes five phases: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. The study involved 16 first-grade students as research subjects. Data collection instruments included validation sheets from media, content, and language experts; pretest and posttest reading assessments; and practicality questionnaires for teachers and students. The data were analyzed using N-Gain tests and the Likert scale. The results indicate that the word booklet is highly valid, practical, and effective, with high scores across all assessment aspects. Therefore, this instructional media holds potential for sustainable use and further development through integrating technology, incorporating color, images, audio, and animated visuals that are contextually relevant to the students' environment. This media may serve as a preventive and effective solution for continuously enhancing early reading skills among lower-grade students.

ABSTRAK

Tahapan perkembangan kognitif pada siswa kelas awal harus dimulai dari penguatan kemampuan membaca permulaan sebagai fondasi utama dalam pembelajaran lanjutan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan media pembelajaran word booklet yang valid, praktis, dan efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan membaca permulaan siswa kelas I di SDN 014640 Sei Kepayang Tengah. Metode yang digunakan adalah Research and Development (RnD) dengan model pengembangan ADDIE, yang terdiri atas lima tahap: analysis, design, development, implementation, dan evaluation. Subjek penelitian melibatkan 16 siswa kelas I. Instrumen penelitian meliputi lembar validasi ahli media, ahli materi, dan ahli bahasa, serta tes kemampuan membaca (pretest dan posttest), dan angket kepraktisan untuk guru dan siswa. Data dianalisis menggunakan uji N-Gain dan skala Likert. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media pembelajaran word booklet memenuhi kriteria sangat valid, praktis, dan efektif, dengan skor tinggi pada seluruh aspek penilaian. Oleh karena itu, media ini berpotensi digunakan secara berkelanjutan dan dikembangkan lebih lanjut melalui integrasi teknologi yang menampilkan warna, gambar, audio, serta elemen visual bergerak yang kontekstual dengan lingkungan sekitar. Media ini dapat menjadi solusi preventif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan membaca permulaan siswa kelas rendah secara berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: booklet kata; kemampuan membaca; sekolah dasar

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INTRODUCTION

Reading ability is very closely related to students' academic achievements. Almost all school subjects require reading skills as the main prerequisite for understanding the content of teaching materials (Sepyantari et al., 2021). In other words, low reading ability can directly impact students' level of understanding in receiving and processing learning information optimally. Reading is the main bridge for students to access the meanings and concepts contained in each subject (Ardilla et al., 2022).

At the elementary education level, both in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) and Elementary School (SD), reading skills are an integral part of four interrelated language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Anas & Sapri, 2021). Reading has a strategic role among these four skills because it is the foundation for developing other skills, especially in formal learning. Therefore, the mastery of reading skills cannot be ignored, considering that its success directly affects the overall academic achievement of students (Pramesti, 2018).

Difficulty understanding the content read certainly impacts students in identifying and collecting important information from a text (Brugar & Roberts, 2018). This shows that reading skills are not just the activity of recognizing letters, but are cognitive processes that start from recognizing symbols to understanding meaning in the context of writing (Yusnaldi, 2018). Therefore, the ability to read in learning is essential, because it is not only understanding the text but also the context in which it is read (Pratama, 2022).

The current data highlights the urgency of addressing reading proficiency issues in Indonesia. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) report in 2022 shows that the average reading ability of students in Indonesia ranks 11th out of 81 other countries, with an average score of 359. Similarly, the Program in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) indicates that Indonesian students' reading achievement is 42nd out of 45 other countries, scoring 428.

Several research studies have been conducted to address these reading challenges in Indonesia, with varying approaches and results. Previous research has identified several challenges related to reading proficiency among elementary school students. Around 85% of lower-grade students experience difficulties in reading (Kusno et al., 2020). Many also struggle to recognize vowels, consonants, and syllables, affecting their comprehension of sentences or paragraphs (Huduni et al., 2022).

Studies on educational media for reading improvement have shown promising results. Word booklet media has positively influenced reading literacy, with student learning outcomes ranging from 61 to 95 (Nainggolan et al., 2024). The same study found that using word booklet media in writing lessons improved completeness by 87%, while the media also demonstrated an attractiveness of 93.3% (Firiani & Fadhilawati, 2022; Lupita et al., 2024). Based on the literature review and problem identification, this study hypothesizes that developing specially designed picture story book media will effectively improve the early reading skills of SD No. 014640 Sei Kepayang grade I students. The picture story book media in this study will develop practical, effective media based on children's metacognition, which is expected to overcome students' difficulties in recognizing letters, reading syllables and words, and reducing errors in omitting letters when reading sentences.

Based on the results of observations conducted at SDN 014640 in January 2025, most of the studies used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method. They did not include learning media that could effectively support the development of reading skills of lower-class students. Furthermore, this study did not explicitly focus on improving students' reading skills.

Through direct observation, the author found that several students in the first grade of SD Negeri No. 014640 Sei Kepayang experienced difficulties in reading. The reading problems encountered included students being unable to recognize letters, struggling with syllables and words, and often omitting letters when reading sentences. This condition is exacerbated by the limited literacy activities in the school, without efforts to provide proper stimulation, students consider literacy habituation activities as a routine agenda to encourage students to train their cognition and stimulate their interest in reading at the early stages (Soleha et al., 2022).

The research gap identified in this study is the lack of specially designed educational media that addresses the specific reading challenges of first-grade students while incorporating children's metacognitive development. Previous research has not fully explored how word booklet media can be tailored to meet the unique needs of beginning readers in the specific context of SD No. 014640 Sei Kepayang. In particular, this study seeks to answer the research question: How can a valid, practical, and effective word booklet media be developed to improve the early reading ability of first-grade students at SD No. 014640 Sei Kepayang Tengah.

This study aims to: 1) develop a valid word booklet media based on experts' evaluation; 2) test the practicality of the word booklet media in early reading learning; and 3) evaluate the effectiveness of the word booklet media in improving early reading skills in the first grade at SDN 014640 Sei Kepayang Tengah. The success of each objective will be measured through expert validation scores, teacher and student practicality assessments, and pre-post reading ability tests, respectively.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Early Grade Students' Reading Ability

Reading is a receptive language skill that enables individuals to acquire information, learn, and gain new experiences by comprehending written systems, ranging from letters, syllables, and words to sentences and complete texts (Harianto, 2020; Pandey, 2023). The reading process involves the recognition of written symbols and interpreting meanings conveyed by the author, making it an active and meaningful cognitive activity (Hasibuan, 2017; Suparman & Nurfisani, 2021).

In elementary schools, students' reading abilities generally develop through two stages. The first is emergent reading, which focuses on letter recognition, syllable formation, and translating written symbols into meaningful sounds, forming the foundation for more complex language skills. This stage is typically mastered by first- and second-grade students (Gading et al., 2019). The second stage is advanced reading, wherein students enhance their ability to understand the content of texts more deeply, including recognizing linguistic structures, identifying, and classifying textual elements to form a coherent meaning. Students usually achieve this stage from third to sixth grade (Simamora & Rambe, 2024).

Understanding emergent reading skills requires careful consideration of cognitive development stages, particularly for first- and second-grade students (Rahmasari et al., 2022). Based on Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children aged six to eight years are in the concrete operational stage. Children can think logically about concrete objects at this stage but struggle with abstract concepts (Hayat et al., 2024). They understand new ideas through direct experiences, tangible examples, and concrete visual aids. Therefore, teaching early reading must align with these cognitive characteristics. Instructional media should offer concrete stimuli that reinforce the connection between letters, sounds, and meanings, thus facilitating the' gradual and natural internalization of reading skills' (Hanayanti et al., 2024).

Factors Influencing Students' Reading Ability

The development of emergent reading skills in early-grade students is also influenced by various interrelated factors (Öztürk et al., 2020). One primary factor is the child's language development. Children with delayed language skills often struggle to recognize letters, understand words, and grasp the implied meanings within texts (Spaull et al., 2020). Furthermore, motivation and reading interest play a crucial role; children who lack interest in reading activities tend to exhibit lower reading proficiency due to limited exposure to reading materials (Rahmawati et al., 2022).

The learning environment is another significant factor. A scarcity of reading resources at home, low levels of verbal stimulation from parents, and school environments that do not promote a literacy culture can negatively impact children's reading development (Nag et al., 2019). Socio-emotional factors, such as learning anxiety or lack of self-confidence, may also hinder the reading process. Children who feel pressured or anxious during reading lessons often struggle to focus and comprehend reading materials effectively (Ignacio et al., 2024). Physical and health conditions such as hearing impairments, vision problems, or specific neurological issues can further obstruct children's reading skill acquisition. A comprehensive understanding of these factors is essential to design effective instructional media, such as word booklets, that truly meet students' needs in practice. This approach ensures greater effectiveness in supporting the improvement of emergent reading abilities among early-grade students (Maghfiroh & Bahrodin, 2022).

Word Booklet Learning Media

A booklet is a medium to convey information related to a specific topic or field of study. It typically contains text, images, graphics, or illustrations that explain particular concepts or information, aiming to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding. A booklet is designed for a broad audience, ranging from children to adults, and can cover diverse themes such as history, science, health, or other subjects (Fitriani & Krisnawati, 2019).

Meanwhile, a word booklet is a learning medium specifically designed to support the development of early reading skills. This booklet focuses on teaching words, sentences, and language recognition from basic vocabulary, simple sentence structures, and how children connect words to their meanings (Fransiska et al., 2024). The design of a word booklet incorporates memorable and easily recognizable images, closely related to the children's immediate environment. The images must be bright, engaging, and relevant to the words or sentences learned, with text color and size adjusted to match the children's age and developmental stage (Ardhyantama et al., 2022).

Booklets offer several advantages as a learning medium, as they facilitate the clear and accessible presentation of material for students. Word booklets are strategically utilized to support reading instruction, especially for young children (Putri & Saino, 2020). They help address learning difficulties, foster active student engagement, and boost motivation and enthusiasm toward the studied words (Wandini et al., 2022).

According to Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children aged 7 to 12 years are in the concrete operational stage, requiring tangible media to understand new concepts. Therefore, selecting an appropriate learning medium ensures students grasp the material effectively (Alex, 2024). As a physical medium containing images and text, booklets are highly suitable for helping students access and comprehend learning materials directly, while providing a beneficial learning experience to overcome difficulties in early reading acquisition (Mardianto et al., 2021).

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However, to optimize the use of booklets as a reading learning medium, the design of instructional multimedia must be carefully considered. Based on Bruner's enactive, iconic, and symbolic representation theory, the design of a booklet should consider aspects such as color, imagery, text size, and layout to support readability and visual appeal for young children. Bright and contrasting colors can attract students' attention, while relevant images help facilitate understanding of the presented material. Appropriate text sizing and organized layouts make it easier for children to follow the text and improve reading comfort (Sinaga et al., 2022).

Each medium has its strengths and weaknesses when comparing the effectiveness of word booklets to other learning media, such as word cards, posters, or digital applications. Booklets are easy to operate and can be practically designed to match children's developmental abilities. Word booklets often enhance students' reading skills more effectively than other learning media because they offer simple yet engaging content, facilitating a more comprehensive and enjoyable reading experience (Tobar-Muñoz et al., 2017).

Nonetheless, printed word booklets tend to be less captivating than digital ones. Digital booklets provide advantages through dynamic visuals, animations, sound, and interactivity, aligning with the characteristics of today's children who grow up in digital environments. Children are not merely reading but are actively interacting with the material, thus strengthening their cognitive and emotional engagement (Arslan-Ari & Ari, 2022). In contrast, printed booklets are static and rely on simple visual appeal, limiting the depth of children's involvement. Despite this, in contexts where access to technology is limited, printed booklets remain relevant as an early reading learning medium, provided they are attractively and systematically designed (Rakhmawati, 2025).

METHODS

This study employs Research and Development (R&D) methodology with the ADDIE model, which was selected for its systematic approach to educational media development. The ADDIE model comprises five phases: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation, based on **Figure 1**.
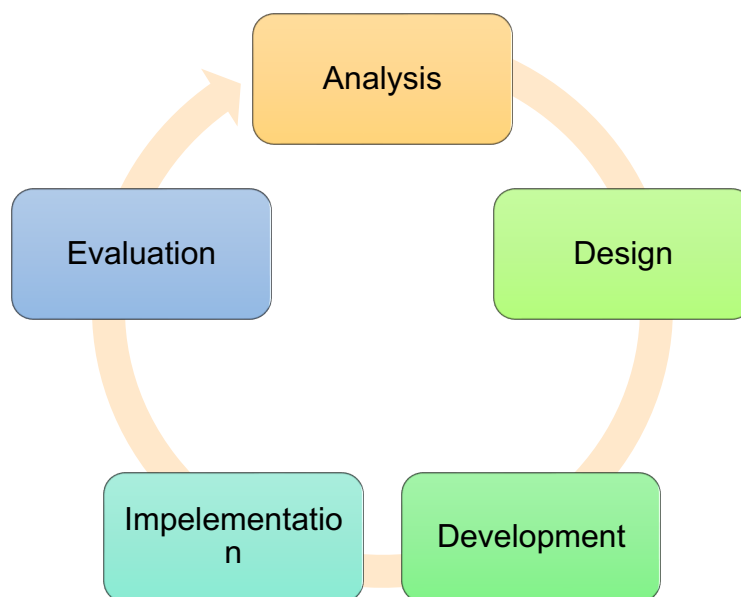

Figure 1. Model ADDIE
Source: Research 2024

This research was conducted at SDN No. 014640, Jl. Perdamaian, Dusun VIII Sei Kepayang Tengah, Asahan Regency, North Sumatera, during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The study population consisted of all 16 first-grade students. Total sampling technique was used due to the small population size, allowing a comprehensive assessment of the media's effectiveness across all students with varying reading abilities.

Each ADDIE phase in this study was implemented systematically. In the Analysis phase, a needs assessment was conducted through interviews with the class teacher to identify specific reading difficulties faced by first-grade students and the requirements for appropriate learning media. The analysis focused on identifying students' reading competency levels and learning preferences. Based on the analysis results for the Design phase, a word booklet media was designed with appropriate content, layout, and visual elements suitable for early readers. The design incorporated basic letter recognition, syllable formation, and simple words with supporting illustrations. During the Development phase, the word booklet media was developed according to the design specifications. This phase included creating content, illustrations, and the physical production of the booklet. In the Implementation phase, the developed media was implemented in classroom reading instruction over four sessions of 35 minutes each. A pre-test was administered before implementation, and a post-test afterward to measure improvement in reading ability. Finally, in the Evaluation phase, the media were evaluated for validity, practicality, and effectiveness based on expert validation, teacher and student feedback, and pre-post test results.

Multiple data collection techniques were employed in this study. Semi-structured interviews with the class teacher were conducted to gather information about students' reading difficulties and learning needs. Validation questionnaires were distributed to experts to assess media validity, and practicality questionnaires were given to teachers and students. Pre-test and post-test were administered to measure students' reading ability before and after using the word booklet media, with tests assessing letter recognition, syllable reading, and simple word reading. Documentation was also used to record the development process and implementation of the media in the classroom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The author's development research results in a product in the form of learning media, a word booklet. This research refers to the ADDIE development model, which consists of five steps, as explained in the following description.

Analysis Phase

Information was gathered regarding the students' initial reading skills and the challenges encountered during the learning process based on an interview with the first-grade homeroom teacher at SDN No. 014640 Sei Kepayang Tengah.

According to the teacher, the students' reading abilities were still relatively low, particularly in recognizing letters, spelling, and understanding simple words. The pretest results indicated an average score of 58%, which presents a significant challenge in implementing learning activities, especially in the Bahasa Indonesia subject. The teacher also explained that the school is implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka, which emphasizes differentiated and student-centered learning. However, the teaching materials used are still sourced from conventional textbooks published by general publishers. These materials are often theoretical and lack contextual relevance, thus limiting their effectiveness in supporting early reading skills (R. Haryani, personal communication, January 2025).

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Given these conditions, there is a clear need for simplified, engaging, and contextually appropriate instructional media in the classroom. One potential solution is the development of a word booklet as supplementary learning material. This booklet may be an effective tool to assist students in gradually recognizing and understanding words through a visual and practical approach, aligning more closely with the characteristics and developmental needs of early-grade learners.

Design Phase

The initial design of the word booklet as a learning medium for early reading instruction was systematically developed. The process began with preparing the visual concept and the content to be included in the word booklet. The word booklet was designed using Canva, a design application that helped organize elements such as the cover, page layout, and image selection. The author carefully chose images to match the context of the words intended to be introduced to the students. The selection of words and images was done meticulously, considering the students' cognitive development level and learning needs. The booklet used a "Chewy" font size 155 for headings and 98 for body text. The content of the word booklet focused on introducing the alphabet and basic words, as part of efforts to support students' early reading skills. After the overall design of the word booklet was completed, it was printed in the standard ISO A5 paper size. The initial printed product consisted of 16 pages, which were used as a sample for the initial trial, as shown in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2. Word Booklet Before Revision
Source: Personal Documentation 2024

The feasibility of the word booklet was evaluated using expert validation based on established theoretical criteria. These criteria included content relevance, visual clarity, linguistic appropriateness, and pedagogical alignment with early reading principles. These criteria were derived from educational media development theories emphasizing clarity, age-appropriateness, and instructional effectiveness. Content and media experts validated the results using a structured assessment rubric.

Development Phase

Subsequently, three lecturers who are experts in their respective fields—a subject matter expert, a media expert, and a language expert—validated the development of the word booklet media. These three validators were from the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra.

In the material validation process, the aspects assessed included the content's quality, accuracy, the presentation's completeness, and the appropriateness of language use within the learning context. The media expert's validation focused on evaluating the visual design of the media, the relevance and quality of the images presented, and the readability and consistency of the font type used. Meanwhile, the language expert's validation covered the conformity of the language with the Enhanced Spelling System (EYD), the effectiveness of message delivery, and the clarity of the language used in the word booklet. The results of the validation process and the evaluation of the product by the validators are as follows.

Table 1. Results of Practicality Testing of the Word Booklet, Media Booklet Media

Assessment	Material Expert Validator	Media Expert Validator	Language Expert Validator
Total	64	85	38
Maximum Score	80	90	40
Presentase	80%	94%	95%
Criteria	Haighly	Highly Suitable	Highly Suitable

Source: Data Processed from the Media Expert Word Booklet Learning 2024

Based on the content expert's evaluation results in **Table 1**, several aspects must be improved in the developed word booklet. However, overall, the content is considered aligned with the learning objectives and sufficiently representative in supporting students' early reading skills. The validation results from the media expert highlight several areas for improvement, including the importance of maintaining consistency in word writing within the booklet, adding the author's identity on both the cover and the back of the booklet, and improving some images to make them more relevant and appropriate to the students' visual world.

Meanwhile, the validation from the language expert provided feedback suggesting that the word "kipas" (fan) be replaced with another object or animal that is more contextual, easier for students to recognize, and still begins with the letter "K". The differences between the word booklet before and after revision include three main aspects, as shown in **Figure 3**. First, the image of the chicken, which was deemed unsuitable because it appeared to be eating grass, was revised and replaced with a more straightforward and precise illustration of a chicken. Second, the word "kipas" accompanied by an image of a fan, was considered to have a dual meaning. Therefore, it was revised and replaced with the word "kucing" (cat), which is more familiar to students and still represents the letter "K." Third, in the initial version of the booklet, the author's identity and biography were not included, but this was added in the revised version.

Figure 3. Word booklet after revision
Source: *Personal documentation 2024*

Implementation Phase

The implementation includes the following steps: First, the lesson begins with an apperception activity, where the teacher introduces the letters of the alphabet both verbally and visually. This is done to help students connect the letters with the correct sounds. The teacher can point to letters in the word booklet, pronounce them loudly, and encourage students to repeat them together.

Second, the teacher guides the students in reading word by word from the word booklet. Each word is accompanied by an illustrative image that helps students understand its contextual meaning. The teacher can ask students to identify each letter, combine them into syllables, and finally form a complete word. This technique, known as synthetic phonics, is particularly effective for early reading instruction.

Third, the teacher adopts an individualized approach with students still experiencing reading difficulties. These students are given exceptional guidance, such as pointing to letters and pictures while being read aloud, and encouraging students to repeat after them. The teacher may also use drill and repetition methods to strengthen the students' memory of the letters and words.

Fourth, the teacher engages students in simple question-and-answer activities based on the content of the word booklet. For example, after reading the word "cat," the teacher might ask, "Who has a cat at home?" or "What color is the cat in the picture?" This technique aims to build connections between the text and the students' real-life experiences while developing their oral language skills.

Fifth, the teacher concludes the lesson with a brief reflection, such as asking which word the students liked most from the word booklet and requesting them to repeat it. This activity reinforces memory and boosts students' confidence in articulating the words they have learned.

Table 3. Results of Effectiveness Testing of the Word Booklet Media

Assessment	Student Response	Teacher Response
Total	743	119
Maximum Score	800	125
Percentage	92%	95%
Criteria	Highly Practical	Highly Practical

Source: Data processed from student and teacher response testing word booklet learning 2024

Based on the data presented in **Table 3**, the total score of student responses toward using the word booklet media was 743 out of a maximum score of 800, resulting in a percentage of 92%. Meanwhile, the total score of teacher responses reached 119 out of a maximum of 125, yielding a percentage of 95%. The high percentages from both groups indicate that students and teachers perceive the booklet media as highly practical in supporting early reading learning. Overall, these results categorize the booklet learning media as "highly practical" according to the interpretation criteria of the Likert scale used. Below are the pretest and posttest results, as shown in **Table 4.**

Table 4. Results of Effectiveness Testing of the Word Booklet Media

No	Type of Test	Average Score
1	*Pretest*	58
2	*post test*	89
3	*Skor N-Gain*	0,77%
4	Criteria	Effective

Source: Data processed from pretest and posttest word booklet learning 2024.

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The effectiveness test results show a significant improvement in students' reading ability, with an average pretest score of 58 and a posttest score of 89. The N-Gain percentage of 0.77 falls within the high category. Therefore, the developed word booklet media has proven effective in enhancing students' reading skills.

Evaluation Phase

Based on the assessments from the experts in content, language, and media, the word booklet learning media has been evaluated, along with the challenges that emerged during its implementation. One of the challenges faced in using this media was the lack of participation from some students who seemed reluctant to engage in the learning process. This issue was related to the students' comfort level and motivation in learning. However, the author successfully overcame this obstacle through a personalized approach, getting to know the students' characteristics better and building emotional closeness to make them feel more comfortable and motivated to participate actively, leading to a more optimal learning experience in the classroom.

Discussion

The increase in the N-Gain score of 0.77, categorized as high, indicates that the visual and contextual approach applied in the word booklet media effectively enhances students' ability to associate letter symbols with their corresponding phonemes. This finding reinforces Piaget's cognitive development theory, which states that early-grade students are preoperational, meaning that learning will be more optimal when supported by concrete visual stimuli (Ondog & Kilag, 2023). The increase in the average score from the pre-test of 58 to the post-test of 89 demonstrates that providing visually rich and contextually meaningful material aligns with the developmental needs of early readers. This also aligns with the Whole Language approach, which emphasizes the importance of a meaningful and contextual learning environment to support literacy development.

The effectiveness of this media can be analyzed from three main aspects: First, from a visual and design perspective, the booklet is designed with an engaging, colorful appearance and uses images relatable to children's world (Hadiapurwa et al., 2021; Kusno et al., 2020). Images serve not only as visual triggers but also as tools to link the sounds of words through concrete and memorable experiences. This aligns with findings indicating that media with strong visual appeal can improve children's perception and memory during reading activities (Alfitriani et al., 2021; Nurfadhillah et al., 2021).

Second, from a linguistic aspect, the vocabulary used is tailored to the language development level of young children. Using large fonts and easily recognisable letter shapes greatly helps children differentiate letters from (Azizah et al., 2022). The presentation of words is reinforced through methods such as singing or vocalising with distinctive intonations, making it easier for students to remember and enriching their phonological experience. This aligns with the findings regarding the importance of listening and observing in mastering early vocabulary (KavithaPriya, 2018).

Third, in terms of flexibility and continued use, the booklet is practical and easy to carry, allowing for independent learning. However, a challenge was inconsistent student engagement. The lack of participation could be due to low intrinsic motivation caused by a lack of media variation or activities that stimulate students' needs for autonomy and competence based on Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Therefore, future developments could focus on dynamic media such as animations or short videos, which are more interactive. Furthermore, the role of the teacher is crucial in bringing the learning atmosphere to life through rhetorical improvisation, voice manipulation, and body movements (Sajnani et al., 2020).

This word booklet media can also be linked to Vygotsky's scaffolding theory, which emphasises the importance of temporary assistance to help students move from the zone of proximal development to the zone of proximal development. The visualisation of images, phonological support through voice, and the contextualization of meaning within the booklet form concrete scaffolding that accelerates students' transition to reading independence. Thus, students can strengthen multimodality in learning, which combines text, images, sound, and movement, and is highly effective for beginner readers. This aligns with studies that found that multimodal media enhances students' reading literacy (do Amaral Barros et al., 2024; Januarty & Nima, 2018; Nainggolan et al., 2024). However, this study offers an additional advantage in emotional involvement, as reflected in students' enthusiasm for using the booklet independently.

The limitations of this study include the small sample size (16 students), so the study's results must be generalised with caution. Measurement of reading ability also only focused on letter and phoneme recognition, without covering overall reading comprehension. Thus, practical implications that can be developed, for example, teachers design learning media that consider visual aspects, linguistic aspects, and more modern uses. To support elementary school students' early reading skills (Sal'aty et al., 2025). Thus, early reading can help students recognise letters, pronounce them correctly, and develop an initial understanding of the meaning of written texts (Anggraeni & Alpian, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of this research, it can be concluded that developing the word booklet as a learning medium has successfully met all research objectives. The word booklet developed through the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) has proven to be highly valid according to expert assessments, with validity test percentages of 95% from media and language experts and 80% from material experts, categorizing this media as "very valid" for teaching early reading skills. Implementation tests demonstrate that the word booklet is highly practical for classroom use, with a practicality test score of 95% from teachers and a 92% positive response rate from students at SDN 014640 Sei Kepayang Tengah. The application of the word booklet has shown significant effectiveness in improving students' early reading skills, achieving an N-Gain score of 0.77, which falls into the "high" effectiveness category. The research successfully answers how a valid, practical, and effective word booklet media can be developed to improve early reading ability. Within the framework of the Kurikulum Merdeka implementation, this research highlights that teachers' mastery of technology and ability to design adaptive teaching media using platforms such as Canva are key factors in addressing elementary school students' low early reading abilities. The right teaching media facilitates students' learning needs and strengthens the teacher's role as an innovator in the basic literacy education process. For future research, it is recommended to conduct studies with larger samples from multiple schools, perform longitudinal research to examine long-term effects, develop enhanced versions with digital technology integration, investigate effectiveness on more comprehensive reading aspects, examine the influence of individual differences and learning styles, explore adaptations for students with special educational needs. Study teacher training programs focused on developing contextually relevant literacy materials.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Please write a statement that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. And the author also asserts that the article is free from plagiarism.

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