

Reading Buddy Strategy Assisted by an Interactive E-Big Book for Elementary School Reading Literacy

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Reading Buddy strategy assisted by interactive E-Big Book media in elementary school reading literacy. The research employs a literature review approach, analyzing books and scientific articles related to reading literacy, peer-assisted learning, and interactive digital media in primary education. Findings indicate that the Reading Buddy strategy enhances student engagement by facilitating peer interaction, discussion, and collaborative reading. Meanwhile, interactive E-Big Book media improves comprehension and motivation through multimodal features, including text, illustrations, audio, and animations. The integration of these two approaches provides a student-centered, meaningful, and contextual reading experience, supporting both cognitive and social development. This conceptual study offers practical guidance for educators to design effective reading literacy instruction in elementary schools, emphasizing collaboration, interactive learning, and digital literacy.

Keywords: reading literacy, reading buddy strategy, interactive E-Big Book, peer-assisted learning, elementary education

INTRODUCTION

The introduction Reading literacy is a fundamental competence in primary education as it serves as a foundation for student success across various subjects. In the context of elementary education in Indonesia, reading literacy encompasses not only the ability to recognize letters and words but also the capacity to comprehend, interpret, and use information from texts meaningfully (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Strengthening reading literacy from an early age is considered a strategic priority in national education policy.

Despite ongoing efforts, studies indicate that reading literacy among Indonesian elementary students still faces several challenges. The National Assessment results reveal that many students struggle with deep comprehension, particularly in drawing conclusions and connecting

information within and across texts (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). International assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) similarly place Indonesian students' reading proficiency in a category requiring improvement compared to the OECD average (OECD, 2019). These findings highlight the need for innovative, student-centered reading instruction that actively engages learners.

Traditionally, reading instruction in classrooms has been teacher-centered and individually focused. This approach may limit students' active involvement in constructing text comprehension independently or collaboratively. According to social constructivist theory, learning becomes more meaningful when students engage in social interactions, exchanging knowledge and building understanding through collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, pedagogical approaches that promote peer interaction are highly relevant to reading literacy development in elementary schools.

One such approach is peer-assisted learning, exemplified by the Reading Buddy strategy. This collaborative reading method involves pairing students to read together, provide feedback, and discuss text content. Research in Indonesia indicates that peer-assisted reading can increase student engagement and support learners with lower reading proficiency through guidance from more capable peers (Wulandari & Priyanto, 2022). These findings reinforce the importance of social interaction in fostering reading literacy among elementary students.

In addition to instructional strategies, learning media play a significant role in supporting reading development. Media that is engaging and developmentally appropriate can enhance students' attention and understanding of texts. Big Books, widely used in elementary reading instruction, have been shown to improve students' reading skills through large print and attractive illustrations, facilitating comprehension (Maharani, 2023). With technological advancements, Big Books have evolved into interactive digital formats known as E-Big Books. These digital tools integrate text, visuals, audio, and animation, offering a richer reading experience. Studies demonstrate that E-Big Books can increase student motivation and learning outcomes, while also promoting digital literacy as part of 21st-century competencies (Nurjani, Adlani, & Suwarno, 2024; Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

Considering both theoretical and empirical evidence, integrating the Reading Buddy strategy with interactive E-Big Book media emerges as a promising approach to elementary reading literacy. The Reading Buddy strategy facilitates peer collaboration and interaction, while E-Big Books provide multisensory learning experiences that enhance comprehension and engagement. This conceptual integration aligns with social constructivist principles, emphasizing the critical role of social interaction in learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Therefore, this study aims to conceptually examine the implementation of the Reading Buddy strategy assisted by interactive E-Big

Book media in elementary school reading literacy, based on a synthesis of relevant literature. This research is expected to provide a practical conceptual framework for educators seeking effective strategies to foster meaningful, collaborative, and technology-supported reading literacy among elementary students.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a literature review research design. The literature review was selected because this article does not involve field research but relies on a conceptual analysis and synthesis of previous empirical studies relevant to elementary school reading literacy. This approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Reading Buddy strategy assisted by interactive E-Big Book media, based on theoretical and empirical findings published in reputable sources.

The research design follows a narrative literature review, involving a systematic examination of multiple scholarly sources without conducting statistical meta-analysis. The research activities were carried out in several stages: (1) defining the focus of the study according to the research objectives, (2) identifying and searching relevant literature, (3) selecting and classifying literature based on relevance and credibility, (4) analyzing the content of the selected sources, and (5) synthesizing the findings to support conceptual discussion.

The scope of this study includes the Reading Buddy learning strategy, interactive E-Big Book media, and reading literacy in elementary school students. The focus is limited to the context of elementary education in Indonesia, while also considering relevant international research to strengthen theoretical perspectives.

Since this is a literature-based study, the population and sample are academic sources rather than human subjects. The population comprises all scientific publications discussing reading literacy, peer-assisted learning, Big Book or interactive E-Big Book media. The sample includes national and international journal articles, academic books, policy reports, and official government documents, selected based on relevance, credibility, and recent publication date.

The main materials consist of written documents, including journal articles, books, and policy reports. The tools employed are literature analysis sheets and synthesis tables, which help map the focus, methods, and key findings of each source. Literature searches were conducted through scientific databases such as Google Scholar, Garuda, SINTA, as well as official websites of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) and OECD.

Data collection was conducted using a document study technique, by compiling and reviewing relevant written materials. The collected data include conceptual information, empirical research results, and

recommendations related to the implementation of the Reading Buddy strategy and the use of interactive E-Big Book media in elementary reading literacy learning.

Operational definitions in this study focus on conceptual understanding rather than measurable variables. Reading literacy is defined as the ability to comprehend and interpret texts meaningfully. The Reading Buddy strategy is defined as peer-assisted reading instruction, while interactive E-Big Book media is defined as a digital Big Book equipped with interactive elements.

Data were analyzed using content analysis, which involves examining, comparing, and synthesizing findings from various sources to draw conceptual conclusions relevant to the research objectives. This analytical procedure ensures that the discussion is grounded in both theory and empirical evidence, providing a robust conceptual framework for understanding the integration of Reading Buddy strategy and interactive E-Big Book media in elementary reading literacy instruction.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the main findings based on the literature review and synthesis of previous research related to reading literacy learning in elementary schools. The results are organized according to the research focus: students' reading literacy, the implementation of the Reading Buddy strategy, the use of Big Book and interactive E-Big Book media, and the potential integration of the strategy and media in reading literacy instruction.

1. Findings on Elementary Students' Reading Literacy

Literature indicates that reading literacy among Indonesian elementary students still faces challenges, particularly in intermediate and higher-level text comprehension. The National Assessment reports that some students struggle to identify main ideas, draw conclusions, and connect information across text sections (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). These findings show that students' reading comprehension skills are not fully developed. Similar results were reported in national studies: Sari and Rahmawati (2021) noted that reading instruction still emphasizes mechanical skills, such as fluency and pronunciation, rather than comprehension. Internationally, PISA results indicate that Indonesian students' reading skills require improvement compared to the OECD average (OECD, 2019).

2. Findings on the Reading Buddy Strategy in Reading Instruction

The Reading Buddy strategy, a peer-assisted reading approach, demonstrates potential to enhance reading literacy in elementary students. Wulandari and Priyanto (2022) found that peer-assisted reading increases students' engagement and provides support for lower-achieving readers through guidance from more capable peers. Rahman and Suyanto (2020) also reported that collaborative reading increases students' confidence in reading and discussing texts. Peer interaction facilitates exchange of understanding,

clarification of meaning, and social learning that supports deeper text comprehension.

3. Findings on the Use of Big Book and Interactive E-Big Book Media

Learning media play a strategic role in supporting reading literacy. Maharani (2023) reported that Big Book media helps students understand text content due to large print and engaging illustrations, enabling teachers to guide group reading effectively. With technological advancements, Big Book has evolved into interactive digital E-Big Book media, combining text, visuals, audio, and animation. Nurjani, Adlani, and Suwarno (2024) found that interactive E-Big Book increases student motivation and learning outcomes. Additionally, interactive digital media aligns with the enhancement of digital literacy, a key 21st-century skill (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

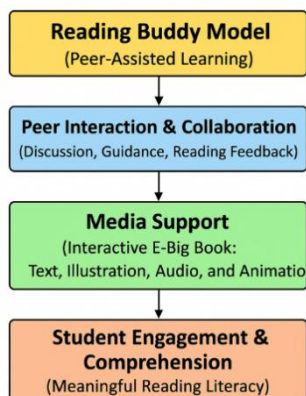
4. Synthesis of Findings on Integration of Reading Buddy and E-Big Book

Integration of the Reading Buddy strategy with interactive E-Big Book media shows strong potential for elementary reading literacy. The Reading Buddy strategy promotes interaction and collaboration among students, while interactive E-Big Book enriches reading experiences with visual and interactive features. Conceptually, this integration aligns with social constructivist theory, emphasizing the importance of social interaction in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Studies reviewed indicate that combining collaborative approaches with interactive media increases student engagement and supports meaningful reading comprehension.

Table 1:
Summary of Previous Studies on Reading Buddy and E-Big Book

No	Researcher	Research Focus	Key Findings
1	Wulandari & Priyanto (2022)	Reading Buddy in Elementary School	Increases engagement and peer reading support
2	Rahman & Suyanto (2020)	Collaborative reading instruction	Enhances comprehension and confidence
3	Maharani (2023)	Big Book media	Supports text comprehension through visuals
4	Nurjani et al. (2024)	Interactive E-Big Book	Improves interest and reading outcomes

Figure 1:
Conceptual Framework of the Integration of the Reading Buddy Model and Interactive E-Big Book in Reading Literacy Instruction



The diagram illustrates that the success of reading literacy instruction is not determined solely by the strategy or media separately, but by the integration of both within a comprehensive learning process.

1. Reading Literacy as a Social Interaction Process

Reading literacy in elementary students is not merely an individual skill but a social process involving interaction, communication, and collaboration. According to social constructivist theory, learning becomes more meaningful when students engage in activities that allow exchange of meaning and understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). The Reading Buddy strategy provides a pedagogical structure for this social engagement. Through paired reading, discussion, and peer feedback, reading becomes collaborative, enabling students to co-construct understanding.

2. Role of the Reading Buddy Strategy in Enhancing Reading Engagement

The effectiveness of the Reading Buddy strategy is evident in increased student engagement, both physically in reading activities and cognitively and affectively, including confidence in expressing ideas and willingness to discuss text content. Peer-assisted reading creates a safe environment, allowing natural development of comprehension skills. Differentiation occurs naturally: stronger readers provide guidance, while struggling readers receive direct support. This aligns with the concept of zone of proximal development, emphasizing social assistance in learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

3. Contribution of Interactive E-Big Book Media

Interactive E-Big Book media provides a richer reading experience than conventional print books, integrating text, visuals, audio, and animation. This multimodal presentation supports multiple sensory pathways, aligning with developmental characteristics of elementary students. Digital interactive media also enhances motivation and attention, enabling students to focus on text and understand content more easily. It serves both as a learning tool and as a means to cultivate reading interest and enjoyable experiences.

4. Meaning of Integrating Reading Buddy and Interactive E-Big Book

Integration combines pedagogical approach and learning technology. Reading Buddy ensures social interaction and collaboration, while E-Big Book supports the process with interactive and visual resources. This integration enables contextualized, meaningful reading learning. Social interaction in Reading Buddy is reinforced by audiovisual features of E-Big Book, making discussion and comprehension more concrete. Reading learning thus emphasizes understanding, interpreting, and actively discussing content, not just finishing text.

5. Implications for Teachers and Elementary Schools

The literature review suggests practical implications. Teachers should consider collaborative strategies like Reading Buddy for student-centered reading instruction. Interactive E-Big Book media can increase engagement and reading interest. Schools can integrate both into literacy culture,

supporting 21st-century competencies, particularly in reading and digital literacy.

6. Limitations of the Study

As a literature review, findings depend on the quality and scope of prior studies. This study does not directly observe classroom implementation of Reading Buddy strategy with interactive E-Big Book. Future empirical research is needed to examine effectiveness in practice.

CONCLUSION

This study conceptually explored the implementation of the Reading Buddy strategy assisted by interactive E-Big Book media to support elementary school reading literacy. The literature review highlights that Indonesian elementary student continue to face challenges in reading comprehension, particularly in identifying main ideas, drawing conclusions, and connecting information across texts. Traditional teacher-centered instruction often emphasizes mechanical reading skills, which limits meaningful understanding. The Reading Buddy strategy addresses these gaps by promoting peer-assisted learning, enabling students to read collaboratively, exchange ideas, and provide mutual feedback. Stronger readers guide peers with lower proficiency, supporting confidence, engagement, and the zone of proximal development.

Learning media also play a critical role in enhancing reading literacy. Big Books have been effective in supporting comprehension through large print and engaging illustrations. Interactive E-Big Book media further enriches the learning experience by integrating text, visuals, audio, and animation. This multimodal approach increases attention, motivation, and engagement while introducing students to early digital literacy. By interacting with digital content, students develop critical thinking skills and enjoy a more meaningful and enjoyable reading experience.

The integration of the Reading Buddy strategy with interactive E-Big Book media creates a synergistic effect. Peer collaboration is reinforced through interactive digital features, making discussions more concrete and enhancing comprehension. This approach aligns with social constructivist principles, emphasizing that learning is more effective when students engage in social interaction and co-construct understanding. The combined use of collaborative pedagogy and interactive media provides a holistic reading experience, supporting cognitive, social, and emotional development simultaneously.

Practical implications for educators include adopting the Reading Buddy strategy in student-centered reading instruction, grouping students heterogeneously to optimize peer interaction, and integrating interactive E-Big Book media to enhance engagement and motivation. Schools are encouraged to embed these strategies into literacy programs and provide professional development to help teachers facilitate effective and enjoyable reading activities. Selecting media appropriate to students' reading levels

and interests is essential to maximize learning outcomes.

This study has several limitations. Being a literature-based conceptual analysis, it does not provide empirical evidence from classroom implementation, and the effectiveness of the integration may vary based on teacher readiness and school resources. The focus on fourth-grade students limits generalization across other grades or educational contexts. Moreover, while the study emphasizes reading skills, motivation, and engagement, qualitative aspects such as creativity, emotional responses, and long-term literacy habits require further investigation.

In conclusion, the Reading Buddy strategy assisted by interactive E-Big Book media offers a promising strategy to improve elementary reading literacy. It enhances comprehension, motivation, confidence, and peer interaction, while also fostering digital literacy skills. By combining collaborative learning with interactive technology, students experience meaningful, enjoyable, and contextualized reading activities. Future research should empirically evaluate this integration, explore its application across different grade levels, and examine its influence on broader literacy skills, including writing, critical thinking, and creative expression.

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