

## The Effectiveness of E-Trilingua Dictionary Learning Media to Improve the Vocabulary of Students with Special Needs at Baiturrahman Special Needs School, Bima

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### Abstract

*Vocabulary mastery is one of the fundamental aspects in language skills, especially for students with special needs (SBK) who have limitations in accessing information verbally. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the ETrilingua Dictionary learning media, a Trilingua-based electronic dictionary (Bima-Indoensia-English) in improving students' vocabulary at Baiturrahman Bima as a special need school. Penelitian menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan kuantitatif sederhana melalui observasi, wawancara, serta tes pre-test dan post-test. Hasil data menunjukkan rata-rata peningkatan nilai vocabulary dari 48% pada pre-test menjadi 82% pada post-test, dengan kategori peningkatan tinggi (N-Gain = 0.65). This increase proves that the E-Trilingua dictionary is effective in improving vocabulary mastery of students with special needs at Baiturrahman Bima special needs school. The implication is that the interactive E-trilingua Dictionary media is suitable to be used as medium into language learning at SLB.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary mastery is an important foundation in language learning. Without adequate vocabulary mastery, students will have difficulty in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This challenge is even greater for students with special needs (SBK), such as deaf and intellectually retarded, who require adaptive and multisensory learning methods. At SLB Baiturrahman Bima, vocabulary learning is still dominated by conventional methods such as word cards and teacher-led verbal explanations, which tend to be less interesting and motivating for students because they limit the opportunity for independent, engaging learning. coupled with the condition of SLB students who face learning difficulties classically. Students need several methods and approaches, as well as the use of media, to increase not only self-confidence but also motivation in learning. Learning motivation can be obtained if the learning media are adapted to the conditions of students. SLB Baiturrahman students who are dominated by mentally retarded students need media that can stimulate them in the learning process. Based on the results of observations and interviews with English teachers who teach at the SLB, many of the students are hampered in understanding the material taught by the teacher due to several things, including the teacher's media that is not very interesting, the class conditions that are not very comfortable, media that does not activate students in learning and the adaptation of technology that is still not used by teachers in carrying out the learning process in the

classroom. Another thing that was expressed by the teacher, students are actually very happy with the use of several technology-based media, for example, watching videos (YouTube) and several short films in English. However, if this continues to be done in every meeting without modification, students will also tend to get bored. The E-Trilingua 3-language dictionary is present as an innovative technology-based solution with three languages (Bima-Indonesian, English), equipped with attractive images and based on local wisdom, and interactive games. The E-Trilingua 3-language dictionary is based on several aspects, including the integration of the curriculum and materials taught at school, context analysis tailored to the needs of students, and analysis of SLB students' course adjustment to the type of disability, so that the stimulation can be adjusted to the conditions of students. The material content in the Trilingua E-dictionary is adjusted to the language aspect that contains identity (local wisdom), based on Ramli (2024). The integration of local wisdom in learning can provide stimulation for students in the learning process and strengthen students' understanding of local cultural aspects. In addition to the regional language aspect, several other cultural reinforcements include strengthening historical cultural values and folk tales that are full of moral values. In addition, Rijal (2024), the use of flashcards as a learning medium about local wisdom can maintain several cultural aspects, because local wisdom is increasingly eroded by time. The presence of the Trilingua E-Dictionary is a very effective and communicative learning medium, because it can stimulate students in the learning process. The cultural understanding contained in the Trilingua E-Dictionary is also very effective in providing an introduction to cultural understanding in the aspects of language, cultural and moral values, and simplified material with interactive presentations, of course, adapted to the dominant disabilities in SLB, namely the Mentally Disabled.

Vocabulary learning for students with special needs requires different strategies and media than regular learning. Many students in special needs schools experience difficulties in understanding abstract symbols, remembering new vocabulary, and pronouncing English words. Therefore, visual, auditory, and interactive learning media are essential. The E-Trilingua dictionary is a digital dictionary containing vocabulary in Indonesian, English, and regional languages, complete with supporting images and pronunciation audio. The combination of these three elements is in accordance with the principles of multisensory and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), thus potentially facilitating students with special needs. This study aims to measure the effectiveness of using E-Trilingua on improving the vocabulary of students with special needs at the Baiturrahman Bima Special Needs School using a mixed approach (qualitative and simple quantitative).

## **2. LIBRARY REVIEW**

### **2.1 Vocabulary Learning in Special Schools (SLB)**

Vocabulary learning is a crucial part of language education in Special Needs Schools (SLB). Vocabulary is not only related to language skills, but also to students' connection to their environment, their ability to understand instructions, and their support for independence in daily life. This aligns with several previous studies, including Ummah, A. H. (2025), said that mastery of students' vocabulary using the ROWVPT method can provide stimulation to students with special needs so that they can respond to the teaching material provided by the teacher in the learning process, besides that the process of strengthening students' vocabulary which tends to use multisensory power so that the flashcard method used by Anngraeni (2020) and Pertiwi, D. A. (2023). In the English learning process, it is able to provide strengthening of understanding for students with special needs. The same thing is also strengthened by the results of research conducted by Pande (2017) and (2016) that the development of the Audia Vocabulary Braille dictionary in English learning can

provide stimulation for students with special needs in the English learning process. However, another thing that is no less important is the consideration of the mental condition of students with special needs, which must also be taken into consideration. Therefore, based on the results of research conducted by Al Sean, R. (2025) there is a relationship between parental motivation and the motivation to learn of students with special needs, with the motivation to learn of students with special needs at school, so that the motivation given by teachers at school cannot be used as a benchmark so that students with special needs can be more motivated to learn in class. While other factors that also need to be considered are the level of intelligence of students with special needs, with various considerations of the type of disability, in order to provide information for teachers to provide several different treatments for these students. Vocabulary mastery in students with special needs tends to require special strategies due to obstacles in cognitive, language, behavioral, and sensory aspects.

### **1. Characteristics of Special Needs Students in Vocabulary Learning**

Vocabulary learning in Special Needs Schools (SLB) has unique characteristics because the students served are children with special learning needs. Each special needs group has a different cognitive, language, social-emotional, and sensory development profile. Therefore, vocabulary learning strategies cannot be equated with learning in regular schools. As research by Al-Khairiyyah (2024) has shown, the reinforcement needed during teaching is the reinforcement of vocabulary concepts and adaptation to the conditions of students with special needs. Sakkir, G. (2024). Reinforcement is needed to ensure that teachers are able to use various strategies in the English language learning process. Teachers need to understand the characteristics of their students in depth so that vocabulary learning can be effective, meaningful, and tailored to each child's needs. Broadly speaking, SLB students have the following characteristics in the vocabulary learning process:

#### **a. shorter attention span**

Many special needs students—especially those with intellectual disabilities, autism, and ADHD—have limited attention spans. They are easily distracted and require learning that is concise, concrete, repetitive, and uses visual media.

#### **b. Varied language processing capabilities**

Some students understand language concepts slowly, so they need repetition, clear visual stimuli, and real examples (real objects).

#### **c. Dependence on concrete media**

Children with special needs tend to understand vocabulary more easily through pictures, symbols, real objects, videos, and interactive applications such as e-trilingual.

#### **d. Fluctuating learning motivation**

Motivation can be influenced by internal factors (emotions, anxiety, sensory sensitivity) and external factors (environment, methods, rewards). Using engaging media can significantly increase motivation.

#### **e. Uneven cognitive development**

Language development, memory, and association skills often vary. Teachers need to conduct individual assessments to determine vocabulary levels.

### **2. Characteristics Based on Type of Special Needs**

#### **a. Students with Intellectual Disabilities**

Characteristics of vocabulary learning: Limitations in short-term and long-term memory, Difficulty generalizing vocabulary concepts, Requires intensive repetition, Easier to understand concrete objects than abstract concepts, Needs

gradual learning from simple words → compound words, so that it requires some reinforcement and effective teacher strategies to implement the ideal learning process, including the use of clear images, realia, flashcards, and audio-visual applications, repeated practice, simple instructions and positive reinforcement (rewards).

#### **b. Students with Autism (ASD)**

The characteristics of vocabulary learning are: Difficulty in social communication, a Tendency to focus on details but difficulty in the overall meaning, Language responses can be delayed or different from neurotypical children, Sensory sensitivity (sound, light, texture), and Visual learning patterns are very strong. So the right strategies used are the use of visual schedules, pictograms, and colorful images, digital media such as videos, e-learning applications, or audio-based dictionaries, routine and consistent learning structures, and repetitive activities to strengthen word understanding.

#### **c. Deaf Students**

The characteristics of vocabulary learning are: Limited spoken vocabulary due to hearing impairments, More reliance on sign language, the Ability to read lips or text can be a challenge, and Difficulty understanding abstract words without a visual representation. So based on the analysis of these needs, teachers must be able to use strategies including the use of sign language as a bridge, pictures, videos, illustrations, large and clear writing, and the use of interactive visual-based applications.

#### **d. Physically Disabled Students**

Another type of disability that must be considered is physical disability. This type of disability has several characteristics, including: Cognitive abilities are usually normal, but physical obstacles affect motor fluency when writing or pointing, and physical fatigue can reduce learning focus. Therefore, it requires a teacher's concentration to provide this type of treatment to these students. These include implementing several strategies for easily accessible digital media, activities that do not require fine motor skills, and flexible, audio-visual-based learning.

#### **e. Students with Behavioral and Emotional Disorders**

One type of disability that teachers must take into special consideration is this type of disability, namely behavioral and emotional disorders. Students with special needs must maintain emotional stability during the learning process. The characteristics that can be seen from students with this type of disability model are easily distracted, difficulty following long instructions, and a need a safe and calm learning environment. So it requires several strategies that must be carried out by teachers during the learning process, namely only implementing a learning process that has short and focused sessions, providing positive rewards and punishments in order to provide motivation in the learning process. And the most important thing is to use media that attracts attention, such as animation or interactive applications.

### **3. Implications of Characteristics for Vocabulary Learning**

#### **a. Learning media must be multisensory**

The use of multisensory learning media must be maximized to provide reinforcement for student understanding in the learning process. Students with special needs must receive different treatment so that with this initial understanding, teachers can maximize student participation in the learning

process. A similar thing happens in the English language learning process, especially in vocabulary learning. To make it easier for students to understand vocabulary, teachers need to use a combination of visual (pictures, videos, colors), audio (pronunciation), and kinesthetic (holding real objects).

#### **b. Repetition is key**

Reinforcement in the form of repetition is one of the things considered in the learning process at SLB. By carrying out repetition activities in the learning process, teachers can provide space so that students can easily remember the material taught. SLB children require more repetition than regular children. Vocabulary must be introduced repeatedly in different contexts. The vocabulary learning process relies on mastery not only of pronunciation models that include aspects of pronunciation, stressing, and intonation, but most on the articulation of English students in spelling words in English. Sutejo, E. (2020) emphasized that repetition can also improve students' character to appreciate the process in the classroom, listen more, and express after understanding completely through repeated listening.

#### **c. Learning must be individualized**

Learning in special schools must be able to provide maximum benefit in every process carried out by students, because even though students have the same type of disability, the absorption capacity will be very different in each material taught. So that the learning objectives of each child are different based on: the level of obstacles by analyzing the types of obstacles that the student has, then analyzing the initial abilities possessed by students to be able to map the types of tests and types of treatment given, another thing that is no less important is the learning style of each student, this provides opportunities for students to learn according to their respective learning styles. To support these learning styles, teachers must be able to meet sensory needs that are integrated in the media used in the learning process.

### **4. Theories of Vocabulary Learning in Special Needs Schools**

#### **3.1 Mayer's Multimedia Theory**

The English learning process in SLB, especially vocabulary learning, can be done with various methods and approaches. Richard Mayer emphasized that effective learning occurs when students receive input through images (visual), sound (auditory), and in the form of text (verbal). These three approaches are very relevant because SLB students need multisensory stimulation. By maximizing these three things, the learning process will be more understandable. Based on research conducted by Husein, M. A. (2025), emphasizes strengthening learning models that are tailored to the material orientation and type of students, so this research focuses on gamification. In addition, teachers must also be able to create a fun learning process that can reduce students' stress levels. Yukania (2025), learning must have an impact on creating a joyful learning process so that students can be more relaxed and motivated in learning. Supena (2021) also emphasizes strengthening joyful learning with the integration of a behavioristic approach, the behaviorist process supports students to become more independent RIZKINA, H.S., 2024).

#### **3.2 Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

Designing a learning model in a regular school can integrate providing various forms of representation, including images, in choosing images teachers must be able to adjust to the conditions and levels of disabilities of students, then the audio chosen as the material taught must be simpler, both in terms of the level of complexity of the material, next is video, in using video, teachers must be able to provide contextual videos that can

provide stimulation both cognitive and psychomotor students in the learning process. In addition, the use of symbols must also be a consideration for teachers in the learning process. Regional context must be one of the considerations in compiling models and approaches used in the learning process; these elements can be in the form of regional languages and other local cultural elements. In general, the methods and media used can be integrated with the theory of behaviorism (Skinner) because in this theory, drill, reinforcement, reward and repetition are carried out in the learning process, so that they can support the learning process in SLB, Ulmi (2013). In addition, constructivist theory can also be used as a support that can be integrated into the learning process.

### **3.3 E-Trilingual Dictionary**

The learning process in the digital era must be adapted to the needs of students; the learning process must also be able to represent the needs as well as the vision and mission of the school. In a special school environment, learning materials must be able to provide reinforcement of the concepts and practices of learning within the scope of SLB. Differences in types of disabilities require that the media be able to cover the media used. English learning in SLB must begin with strengthening simple things, namely, vocabulary, as one of the initial steps in language mastery. The E-Trilingua Dictionary is a trilingual dictionary, namely Bima, Indonesian, and English, which is used as a learning medium at SLB Baiturrahman. This E-Trilingua Dictionary is adapted to the conditions of student disabilities at the school. This E-Trilingua Dictionary is designed to strengthen Bima cultural elements, with several elements contained in the dictionary, including elements of Bima cultural characteristics such as buildings, traditional clothing, and several Bima folk tales that are used as materials and included in the E-Trilingua dictionary. The E-Trilingua dictionary is designed with a simple model, which prioritizes efficiency in use, such as with a simple language model, short videos, and several uncomplicated instructions, so that SLB students can more easily understand the material and some instructions contained in the dictionary. This E-Trilingua dictionary can be accessed using a smartphone and offline so that if students are at home, they can access it with the help of parents in the independent learning process at home, the material contained in the E-Trilingua dictionary is adjusted to the material and syllabus that teachers teach at school so that this learning media can maximize the teaching materials of teachers at school.

## **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

The qualitative descriptive method is supported by quantitative data (pre-test & post-test). The subjects of this study were 10 students of Baiturrahman Special Needs School, Bima, consisting of mentally retarded students. The instruments used in this study were a vocabulary test (20 items), an observation sheet, and a teacher interview guide.

### **RESEARCH PROCEDURE**

The research procedure includes several aspects of the series, including:

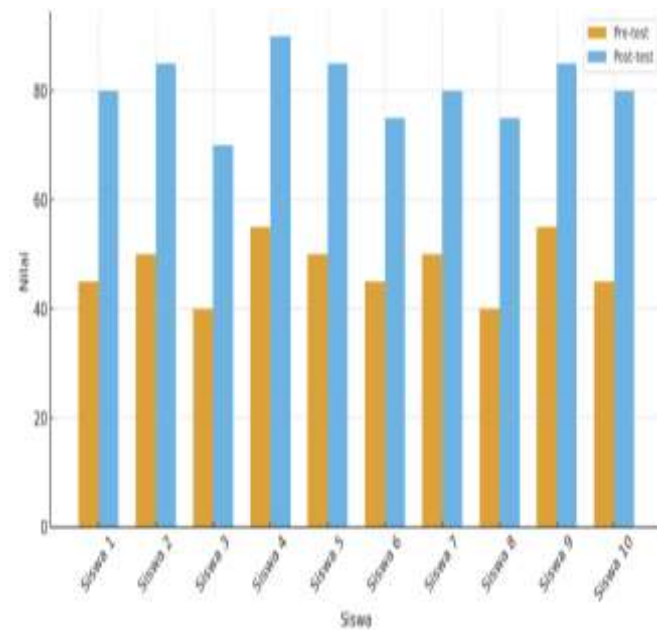
1. A pre-test is given before using E-Trilingua.
2. Learning using E-Trilingua for 4 meetings
3. Post-test is given after the treatment
4. Data were analyzed using percentage and N-Gain.
- 5.

## **4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test, there was an increase in student scores, namely an average of 48 for the pre-test and 82 for the post-test.

## Data Pre-test dan Post-test

No	Inisial Siswa	Pre-test	Post-test
1	Siswa 1	45	80
2	Siswa 2	50	85
3	Siswa 3	40	70
4	Siswa 4	55	90
5	Siswa 5	50	85
6	Siswa 6	45	75
7	Siswa 7	50	80
8	Siswa 8	40	75
9	Siswa 9	55	85
10	Siswa 10	45	80



## 2. N-Gain Analysis

Formula:

$$N - Gain = \frac{Post - Pre}{100 - Pre}$$

Average N-Gain result:

$$= \frac{82 - 48}{100 - 48} = \frac{34}{52} = 0.65$$

Categories according to Hake (1999):

- 0.7 – 1.0 = **high**
- 0.3 – 0.7 = **currently**
- < 0.3 = **low**

**Result: N-Gain = 0.65 (medium–high category) → shows significant improvement.**

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test that have been conducted, there is an increase in understanding related to student vocabulary, this is indicated by the average value. So, the increase can also be seen from the N-gain value obtained from these results. This provides reinforcement that multisensory media can accelerate student vocabulary understanding, because this method is a combination of visuals, audio, and text contained in the E-Trilingua Dictionary. So, it is oriented towards understanding words, students can also remember longer, and associate words with real objects in life. Students can use their instincts more by remembering objects and several cultural elements. In addition, the cultural reinforcement used in the E-Trilingua Dictionary also provides several reinforcements such as regional language vocabulary that is adapted to images, so students can be more aware of the words and images used. Some of the images are elements and

images related to students' daily lives. Another advantage of the E-trilingua Dictionary is that some of the instructions used are in regional languages, so that students can be helped and stimulated to provide answers and respond to several instructions contained in the learning process, both in the form of activity simulations and commands to answer questions given by the teacher, both in writing and in performance in front of the class.

The E-trilingua dictionary reinforces increasing student motivation in the learning process. This is in accordance with the results of interviews conducted by researchers with teachers. Interview activities were carried out before and after the learning process using the E-Trilingua dictionary. Based on the results of interviews before the learning process using the E-Trilingua Dictionary, student motivation to learn was very low, this was based on the complexity of the material contained in the teaching materials used, student motivation also decreased because some of the media used did not spark students' enthusiasm for learning and sparked students to demonstrate in class, students tended to watch videos on YouTube so that when students had difficulty concentrating and playing in class, to avoid an uncondusive classroom atmosphere, teachers used YouTube videos to calm students even though the YouTube videos had nothing to do with the material being taught. However, after the learning process using the E-trilingua dictionary, students became more motivated, with various features offered by the E-trilingua Dictionary, students became motivated not only to do and follow the instructions given in the E-trilingua dictionary. In addition, in demonstrating several activities or simulations in the E-trilingua dictionary, students become more focused and motivated, although sometimes some students still need assistance in working on questions and simulations contained in the E-trilingua dictionary when demonstrating them in front of the class. The E-trilingua dictionary provides space for students to not only learn but also play, so that focus is maintained, motivation is maintained, and learning objectives can be achieved well.

Another aspect that is more felt by teachers is a more focused and enjoyable learning process, not only for students but also for teachers. Before being introduced to the E-trilingua dictionary learning media, teachers tended to have more difficulty in stimulating students in the learning process, however. After using the E-trilingua dictionary learning media, students can be more easily motivated that which is directly proportional to. Teachers' motivation in teaching, teachers are more enthusiastic in reinforcing the material. Another thing that is no less important that is felt by teachers is good coordination between teachers and parents in terms of lesson material with parents, teachers and parents coordinate very well. Fitriyanti (2024) also emphasized that the role of parents is very important in supporting children's learning process at school. In addition, this E-trilingua dictionary provides space for parents to control and supervise the material studied at school, especially English at home. Teachers coordinate, and parents can follow up at home.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The E-Trilingua Dictionary learning media has been proven effective in improving the vocabulary of students with special needs at SLB Baiturrahman Bima. The use of this media not only improves learning outcomes but also motivates students to learn independently. In addition, the E-Trilingua dictionary learning media can also provide convenience for teachers. It is recommended that SLB teachers utilize interactive digital media for English learning. In addition, the E-Trilingua Dictionary can also be applied to other subjects to facilitate student understanding in absorbing the material taught by teachers in the classroom.



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