

# “Vocabulary.com” as the Teaching Media to Improve: The Case of Twelfth Grade Students in SMA Negeri 10 Semarang in the Academic Year 2023/2024

Ishaq Nursetyo<sup>1</sup>, Senowarsito<sup>2</sup>, Entika Fani Prastikawati<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia

[senowarsito@upgris.ac.id](mailto:senowarsito@upgris.ac.id), [entikafani@upgris.ac.id](mailto:entikafani@upgris.ac.id)

## Abstract

As a foreign language learner who intend to continue learning foreign languages, particularly English, may face a variety of challenges. Expanding one's vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of learning English. The rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has altered and improved the learning process. The researchers attempted to introduce a web-based media utility as a tool to assist students with their English writing activities based on the students' struggles and learning improvement. "Vocabulary.com" is an online English web-based media with a lot of potential as a tool for assisting students in acquiring English abilities, including writing skills, through vocabulary mastery. Based on the condition, the researchers will use Improving English Writing Ability Using "Vocabulary.com" as the Teaching Media: The Case of Twelfth Grade Students in SMA Negeri 10 Semarang in the Academic Year 2023/2024. The researchers aimed to know students' perception from study design to evaluate the effectiveness and influence of the media "Vocabulary.com" on writing lessons. This study was to provide the students' attitudes and perceptions toward the use of "Vocabulary.com" in the classroom to improve their writing ability by enhancing vocabulary mastery. The study should give another enjoyable and engaging approach to teaching and learning English, which the researcher hopes will benefit all high school students and teachers.

**Keywords:** writing ability, vocabulary building, web-based learning, teaching media, vocabulary.com

## Introduction

English is a widely spoken language that is regularly used in business, academia, and international affairs as a form of communication. As a foreign language learner which seeks to continue learning foreign languages, especially English, the learners may experience a variety of problems, including learning new vocabulary and grammar, improving fluency in speaking and writing, and recognizing diverse accents and dialects. An English learner must acquire four fundamental aspects when studying the English. Speaking, listening, writing, and reading are four fundamental components of English that students must learn and master, especially if English is a foreign language that is generally used in their own country (Parmawati et al., 2020; Dhillon et al., 2020).

# The 3<sup>rd</sup> Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature (ALLURE)

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Writing one of the fundamental aspects mentioned earlier. Writing is complex and sometimes difficult to teach because it requires good mastery not only of the grammatical and abstract tools but also logical and aspects to construct a word in the target language, which is why language teaching especially in writing abilities is different from teaching other component of language abilities (Hermilinda & Corresponding, 2016; Sakkir, 2020).

Writing is also an important form of communication in English, especially in academic and professional settings (Iftanti, 2016) Writing is crucial to our individual lives and cultural identities, and our command of it is frequently used for evaluating individuals. The different goals of writing, its numerous settings of usage, and the diverse backgrounds and requirements of persons desiring to learn it all motivate writing studies into broader domains for investigation and comprehension (Hyland, 2015; Widiati & Cahyono, 2016; Risan & G, 2019).

Acquiring vocabulary is one of the important things in writing (Dakhi & Fitria, 2019). Whoever we must choose, organize, and arrange the use of vocabulary, so it can be easily understood by readers, and to make it look more natural like a native speaker whose language is their genuine language. Vocabulary is widely acknowledged as the primary means of communication. The vocabulary is what language people use to convey their thoughts, ideas, and opinions, which is an expression of the human mind. In comparison to another language aspect, more significantly, from a linguistic standpoint, the vocabulary appears to be more valuable (Jamalipour & Farahani, 2015; Dakhi & Fitria, 2019).

Based on the students' struggles, the researchers and English teacher attempted to introduce use web-based media utility as a tool to assist students English writing activities. In the digital age, technology will be an essential component of education. "Vocabulary.com" is an online English web-based media with a lot of potential as a tool for helping students acquire English abilities, including writing skills. In using "Vocabulary.com" students can improve their vocabulary skills, because in "Vocabulary.com" students can make lists of new vocabulary, test skills in vocabulary comprehension, quiz challenges, dictionaries, tests, daily activity challenges, achievements, scoreboards and rankings. Therefore, it helps students to be able to learn vocabulary and put it in a sentence which will improve students' writing skills. Daily activity challenges and quizzes can represent and motivate students to learn English in an easy and fun way.

"Vocabulary.com" is a web-based English media with a lot of promise as a tool for helping students learn English, particularly writing skills. Students may enhance their vocabulary abilities by utilizing "Vocabulary.com," which allows them to create lists of new vocabulary, test their vocabulary comprehension skills, participate in quizzes, dictionaries, tests, daily activity challenges, accomplishments, scoreboards, and rankings.

As a result, it assists students in learning vocabulary and putting it into sentences, which improves students' writing skills. Daily activity challenges and quizzes may be used to demonstrate and inspire kids to learn English in a simple and enjoyable manner. Not only that, but the challenges and tests available help students not only with exercises, but also with comprehending and meaning of a text. This can help students improve their writing abilities since they are familiar with and comprehend different vocabularies, making it significantly simpler for pupils to construct words and sentences when writing.

According to Prastikawati et al. (2020), instructors should use the process and outcome approach by allowing all writing processes in writing activities that enhance learning in order to engage their students in active learning via writing. The use of technology can help

instructors provide students with new learning possibilities. This is extremely beneficial for kids who struggle to build word and phrase patterns that will be utilized in writing.

Based on the background above, this current study is trying to highlight the students' attitudes toward the implementation of "Vocabulary.com" during the process of teaching and learning English writing in English classroom.

## **Literature Review**

### **Writing Process**

In English, writing is one of fundamental things of learning English and also an essential method of communication, particularly in academic and professional settings. According to Petelin (2022), writing is a method of thinking and learning referred to as the writing-thinking learning connection between them, which is a procedure that yields a communication product that follows to grammatical, syntactical, mechanical, and genre rules.

The process of writing is not one-way as it proceeds from left to right, which is an iterative or dynamic 'back and forth' process between thinking, reading, and writing in which steps can be repeated to polish the text through progressive improvements before generating the final release (Day, 2023; Godfrey, 2022). As a result, writing is never a single step, but rather a sequence of stages.

### **Web-based Learning**

This new age is known as the twenty-first century, and it includes changes in the economy, society, technology, and education (Bedir, 2019; Cakrawati, 2017). Digital technology has been studied and discussed for decades in terms of its educational potential and influence (Taylor, 2023). The fast development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), has changed educational institutions and led to the enhancement of the learning process, particularly the Internet, has given rise to e-learning as a result, web-based e-learning solutions are progressively being created to improve the learning process (Djouab & Bari, 2016; Muhammad et al., 2020).

While the Internet allows for the use of previous technologies like as audio, video, and videoconferencing, it also opens new technical possibilities that have the potential to change many elements of education. The process to access web-based learning is by using an application browser, which is a client program used on a desktop to view and display web content that has been requested from a server running web hosting software. Furthermore, in brief the description of web-based learning can be described as a method of delivering insights to students that makes use of the internet and web-based technology. It is a novel educational strategy that allows students to engage in a range of learning situations.

### **"Vocabulary.com"**

On a browser, smartphone, and mobile app, "Vocabulary.com" offers as an adaptive online vocabulary learning platform. It combines a vocabulary learning game with an English language dictionary. It was created mainly to increase users' academic vocabulary learning in English (Ketola, 2019). Using those option of how application works, it can be very helpful for students when learning English. Moreover, by listing a new vocabulary students can use the words they list to put in the sentence for writing purpose in English, it points out that students improving their vocabulary for writing. In addition, users may participate in activities like brief, individualized online quizzes on the "Vocabulary.com" website or apps and learn or consolidate

their vocabulary by earning useful feedback. This website encourages learning vocabulary in English (Nishioka, 2020).

## Method

This research conducted using descriptive qualitative research design. This design was chosen as this study tries to explore the response, perception, or attitudes of certain participant toward the use of media (Maciejewski, 2020; Rogers & Révész, 2019). In this study, the researcher wanted to know the students' attitudes toward the application of "Vocabulary.com" as the teaching media in writing. To reach this goal, thirty-six students of twelfth grade in SMA Negeri 10 Semarang were asked to participate as the respondent. The students were grouped in X11 IPA 3 as the class in which the English teacher had implemented "Vocabulary.com" as the teaching media in writing session in the classroom.

*Table 1: Questions of Closed Questionnaire*

No	Questions
1.	"Vocabulary.com" improves students writing abilities when they construct sentences in English.
2.	Students may easily use "Vocabulary.com" to expand their vocabulary for writing.
3.	Using "Vocabulary.com" to discover new words and sharpen your writing skills is fun.
4.	"Vocabulary.com" is an accessible resource for students to learn how to increase their writing vocabulary.
5.	The quizzes on "Vocabulary.com" helping students in better word comprehension.
6.	Students find it simpler to write while using "Vocabulary.com" during writing exercises in English class.
7.	For students to practice English writing, "Vocabulary.com" provides resources.
8.	Students' confidence while writing in English is increased through the use of "Vocabulary.com".
9.	Students that use "Vocabulary.com" in English class are motivated to learn as part of writing.
10.	"Vocabulary.com" improves students' English writing by helping them build better sentences.
11.	Students can practice and complete numerous tasks on "Vocabulary.com" to enhance their writing skills.
12.	The website "Vocabulary.com" provides a wealth of materials to help students writing skills, including word lists and sample sentences.
13.	"Vocabulary.com" assists students in better understanding word definitions and use in its proper context, which enhances the clearness of their writing.
14.	"Vocabulary.com" assists students in developing their word choice in writing and extending their vocabulary.
15.	"Vocabulary.com" is a good interactive resource for learning English, especially for expanding your writing vocabulary.

The instruments used in this research was closed-questionnaire with 5-Likert Scale. This questionnaire consisted fifteen items' questions. A successful research approach requires a detailed explanation of the instrument's construction, items, scales, and reports on the reliability and validity of results (Creswell, 2014). To obtain the content validity, the instrument was checked by two experts in English teaching. In collecting the data, the questionnaire was at the end of semester. This is to make sure that the students had experienced with the use of "Vocabulary.com". Finally, the result from questionnaire was analyzed using percentage and

chart to present the whole data result. Furthermore, the researchers interpreted the analyzed data descriptively.

## Finding and Discussion

This study aimed to find out the students' attitudes toward the application of "Vocabulary.com" in classroom to improve their writing ability by enhancing vocabulary mastery. A group were selected to provide students' perception learning through "Vocabulary.com". The respondentsts were the experimental group which consists of 36 students. The experimental group given closed questionnaire to provide the asnwer of statement of problem prior. There were fifteen questions provided by the researchers in form of likert scale. The experimental group took the answer from questions above and provided the answer using google form to collect the data. Afterwards, the data showed the result of students' perceptions learning through "Vocabulary.com" as teaching media to improve students' writing ability by enhancing vocabulary mastery.

Table 2: Distribution of Students' Responses on Closed Questionnaire

Question Item	Responses				
	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Q1	9 (25%)	19 (53%)	8 (22%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q2	5 (14%)	24 (67%)	7 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q3	15 (42%)	20 (56 %)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q4	8 (22%)	26 (72%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q5	5 (14%)	21 (58%)	6 (17%)	4 (11%)	0 (0%)
Q6	4 (11%)	22 (61%)	8 (22%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)
Q7	12 (33%)	18 (50%)	6 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q8	16 (44%)	17 (47%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q9	12 (33%)	20 (56%)	4 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q10	3 (8%)	26 (72%)	7 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q11	4 (11%)	29 (81%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q12	3 (8%)	31 (86%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q13	3 (8%)	31 (86%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q14	7 (19%)	27 (75%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q15	14 (39%)	22 (61%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

According to table 2, most of respondents (51%) agreed that "Vocabulary.com" enhanced the students' writing in composing sentence (Q1) while some of them (22%) were neutral with the idea. In expanding their vocabulary for writing (Q2) respondents (24%) agreed and (19%) gave neutral answer toward easily use of "Vovabulary.com". When using "Vocabulary.com" to give students new words to learn and improved (Q3) there were (56%) agreed and (3%) least neutral respondents answer which meant the media assisted the students' in vocabulary mastery. In addition to its used as a tool for new words learning, it also gave students resources to seek knowledge for improved writing (Q4) with (72%) positive and (6%)

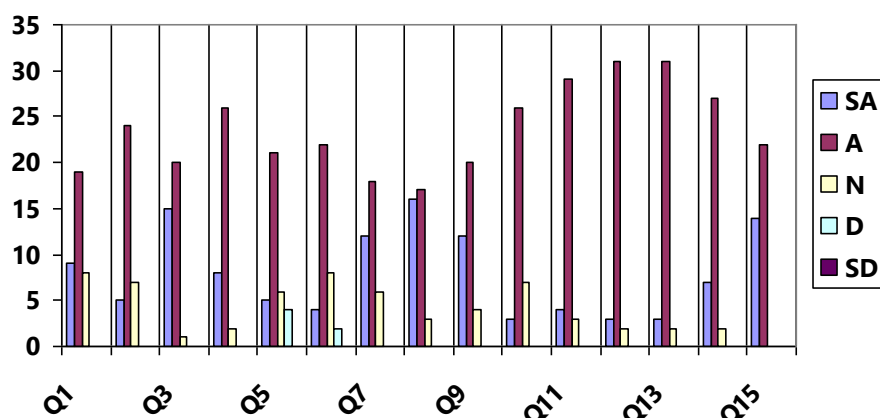
# The 3<sup>rd</sup> Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature (ALLURE)

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equitable responses. Every day learning on “Vocabulary.com“ in form of quizzes boosted students’ grasp (Q5) with (58%) liked replies and (17%) plain thoughts over the quizzes, but it had high odds (11%) in perception. Also “Vocabulary.com“ took place in students’ perception of better word chosen were respondent believed comfortable (Q6) by giving (61%) agreed responses with (22%) neutral, even so still some of respondent (2%) gave opposite insight over the questionnaire prior. Resources given by “Vocabulary.com“ impressed in students’ drill (Q7) had impact over (50%) acceptable and (17%) ordinary responses.

Figure 1: Descriptions of Students’ Attitude on “Vocabulary.com“



In addition, it seemed that the range of respondentststs answers were looked satisfying and had a positive impact. On provided students' confidence while writing in English through the use of "Vocabulary.com" (Q8) had most potetials of feedback (44%) followed positive perceptions (47%) also neutral thoughts (8%). As part of writing, “Vocabulary.com“ gave motivations to students’ learning process (Q9) together with agreed (56%) and neutral (11%) perceptions. Assisting the students’ in improving sentence construction (Q10), “Vocabulary.com“ could give the students’ needs with directive used of words, and most of them were agreed (72%) followed by neutral (19%) perceptions. “Vocabulary.com“ provides a service for learning by giving students a large number of practice questions in the form of quizzes, which students can easily access (Q11), with agreed (81%) and neutral (3%) responses. While “Vocabulary.com“ could give wealth sample of materials and proper understanding in definitions and use of words (Q12 and Q13), it seemed interesting with most highest well responses from respondents (86%) with a fewest of fair (2%) responses. In other conditions, "Vocabulary.com" helps students perfect sentences by selecting words that suit their needs (Q14), so it attracted good responses (75%) from the students even though there were some neutral (2%) responses. The rest, "Vocabulary.com" was an interactive media for learning English, especially when students needed to expand their vocabulary mastery (Q15), most of them responded very well (39%) to this and gave a satisfactory positive opinion (61%) of the statement.

# The 3<sup>rd</sup> Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature (ALLURE)

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So far, there were 0 response for Strongly Disagree, 6 responses for Disagree, 61 responses for Neutral, 353 responses for Agree, 120 responses for Strongly Agree. The results showed that learning English writing by enhancing vocabulary mastery using "Vocabulary.com" had significant impact to students' perception. The media worked well and boosted students motivation in learning English especially in writing. "Vocabulary.com" brought positive vibes and new way to learning English well. The students liked the media, easier to learn and appealing after the implementation of "Vocabulary.com" media to teach English writing. In other words, "Vocabulary.com" became likeable and had satisfactory responses by students in their perceptions. Moreover, it might be a good media for students' learning in English, by this questionnaire who gave the answer about the questions in students' perceptions.

## Conclusion

According to the data collected, all the respondents knew that "Vocabulary.com" had a significant impact on their learning development. The majority of them had a favorable impression of "Vocabulary.com," which assists students in improving their vocabulary mastery. Their writing abilities improved as a result of the mastery they gained, making their work better. Even yet, a few of them struggled with perception and had difficulty using "Vocabulary.com" in the learning process.

However, because all respondents want to write English effectively and fluently, it can be fairly stated that writing was highly essential for them to master, including improving their vocabulary building. In this regard, more than half of them were willing to engage in required activities such as learning new terms, improving their writing abilities with projects, taking daily quizzes, and collecting more vocabulary every day in order to master it.

Most respondents believed that the chance to improve their writing in English lessons was suitable. Most of them also remarked utilizing "Vocabulary.com" in English classrooms are fascinating and entertaining. Even though more than half of respondents indicated that they have adequate opportunities to write English properly. As a result, English teachers needed to make their classes more interactive or student-centered, which they might achieve by employing enjoyable learning resources such as "Vocabulary.com." As a result, students will have a larger opportunity to write more properly and effectively as they grow in their studies. As a result, they not only learn about English, but also how to utilize it in a natural way.

According to these findings, children should be provided a new learning method, encouragement, space and time for learning, some process and progress in training, reassurance, and therapy for their writing abilities. The instructor was also responsible for assisting students in their learning process, ensuring that they understood and performed better consequently. The teacher could also develop more polite ways to peer student mistakes. In summary, creating an amiable and favorable climate in the classroom should be prioritized.

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