UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

INVESTIGATING THE CAUSES OF POOR ENGLISH COMPOSITION WRITING AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DUNKWA-ON-OFFIN MUNICIPAL AREA, CENTRAL REGION

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A thesis in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

Master of Education
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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, LINDA ARTHUR, declare that this dissertation with the exception of quotations
and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly
acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted either
in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

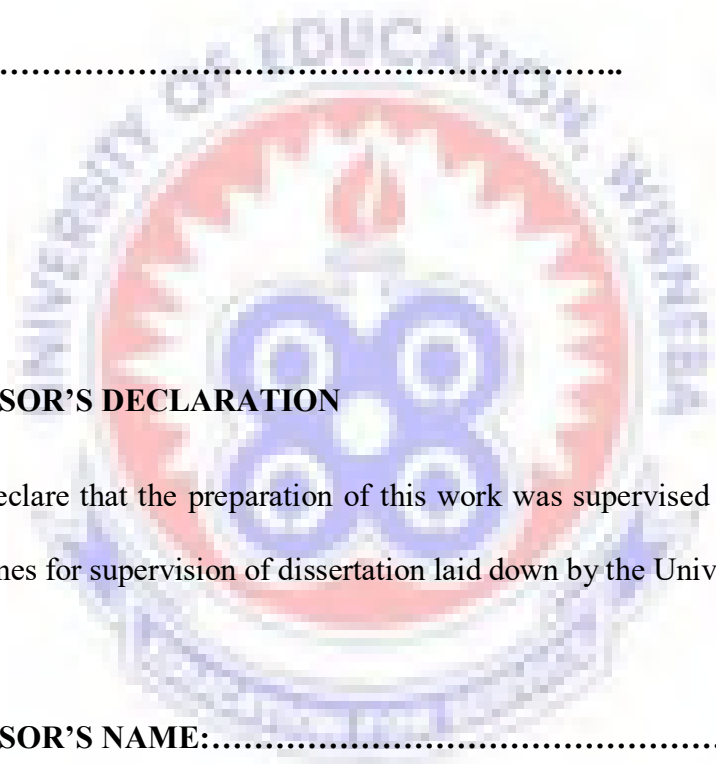**SIGNATURE: …………………………………………..**

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation of this work was supervised in accordance with
the guidelines for supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Education,
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SUPERVISOR'S NAME:………………………………………..………………

Signature: …………………………………………..

Date: …………………………………………..

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my husband Mr. Martin Donkuri, my parents and all my children Sumuella M. Donkuri and Martin E. N Donkuri.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my parents, my loving and tolerant supervisor, Dr. Mrs Rebecca Akpanglo-Naartey who helped in the framing of my topic and offered constructive criticisms to make this work a success, God bless you and keep you safe to continue your good work with the University of Education, Winneba.

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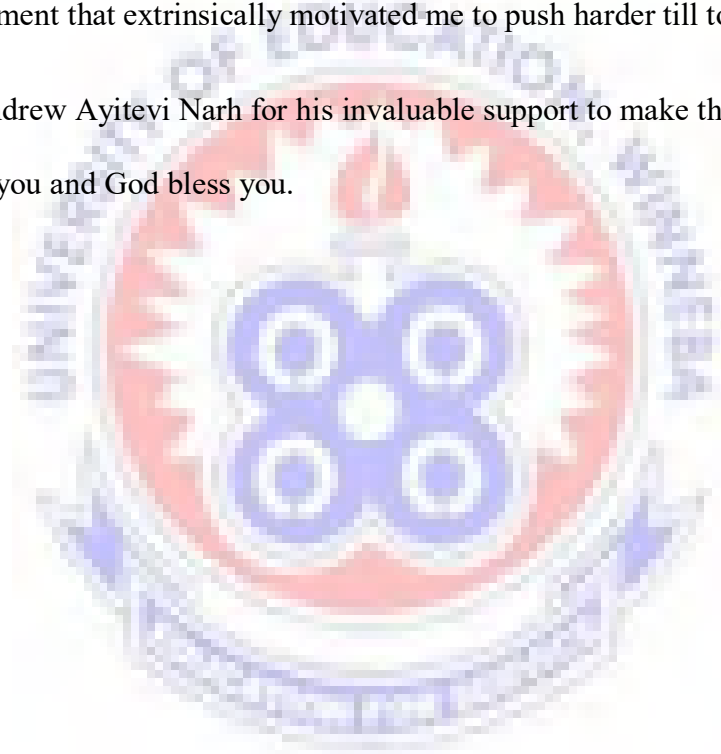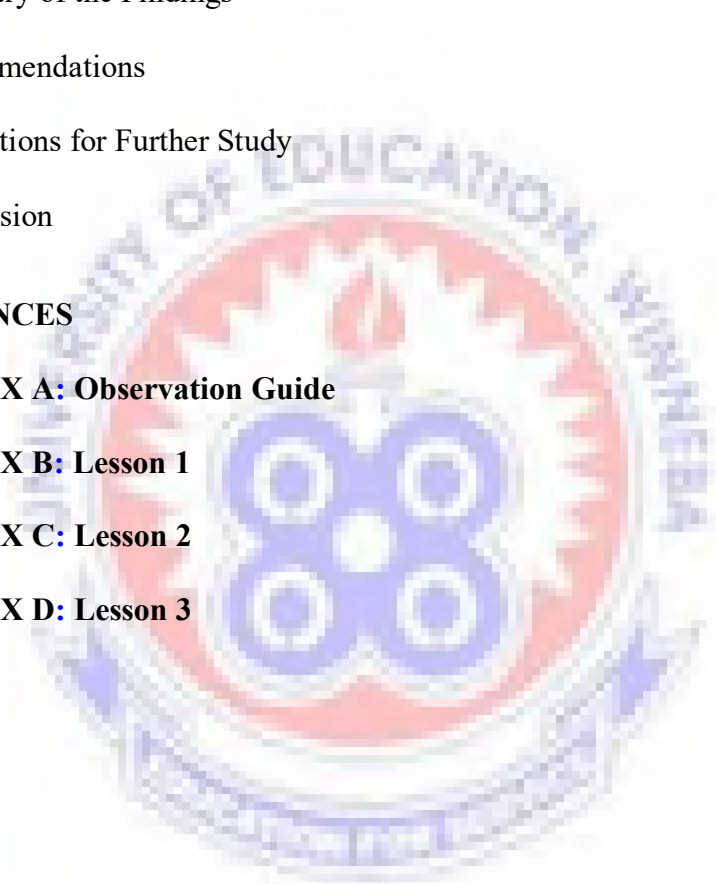
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ABSTRACT

The receptive skills involve listening and speaking while the productive skills deals with giving out information. The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges confronting Senior High School students in composition writing and the causes of these challenges in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality. The study employed descriptive survey design. The design was deemed suitable for the study because of its strengths as it enabled the researcher to gather information n from the sampled respondents by use of questionnaire, interview schedule and observational guide. The population of the study was all students and English Tutors of Senior High Schools in the Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality. Multistage sampling technique was employed to select the sample size of 120 students and four English tutors. The data collection tools used was direct observation and test. The findings revealed that some schools still use product-oriented method of teaching compositing writing instead of process-oriented approach. However, three out of the four schools sampled used the process-oriented method. The study also concluded that insufficient time for composition writing, inability of students to do more draft work, and students inability to be creative were the causes of poor performance of composition writing among schools in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality. It was also revealed that engaging students in the cycle of the process of writing enhance students' composition writing capabilities. It is therefore recommended that teachers and parents alike help students of SHS to develop the searching skills through giving of more search work.
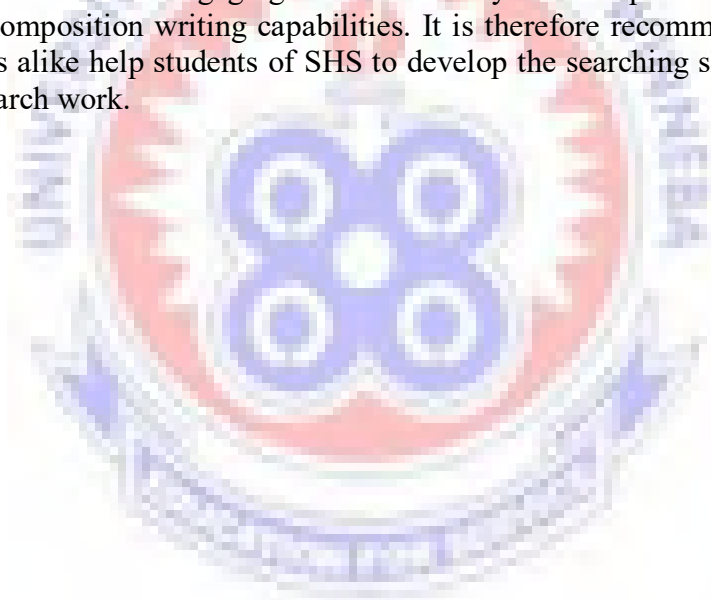
CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Language which is universally accepted as a major means or tool of reaching out to people or communication can be accessed through the four basic language acquisition skills namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are categorized into two major divisions such as receptive skills and productive skills. The receptive skills involve listening and speaking while the productive skills which deals with the giving out of information involves reading and writing. Even though all these skills are very essential for a person to attain literacy, much of the searchlight in this work will be on writing because the subject matter of this research which is composition is enacted and achieved through writing. In this light, a discussion on writing on what it is, and what it is about will be essential as it comes in very handy for this assignment.

Writing which is one of the four language skills acquired during the learning of any given language plays a major role in the learner's ability to write a composition. According to Daniels (1990) 'Writing is the representation of language in textual medium through the use of a set signs or symbols (known as the writing symbols)'. The key words in this definition are language, textual, medium, signs and symbols which are all very important factors needed to help one understand what writing is about.

According to Fischer (2004), 'there can be no single definition of writing which fully satisfies all the requirement of writing', hence writing can best be described rather than defined. In this vein, he posited three-prong criteria which must be actualized or evident when one discusses writing. These are: It must have as its purpose the means of

communication, it must involve artificial graphic marks on durable or electronic surface, and it must use marks that relate conventionally to speech.

Also, writing, according to Madukwe (2007), 'is described as the most challenging of all the language skills, though it is the last skill to be acquired by the learner'. This is because writing encourages the other language skills of listening, speaking and reading. Thus, every piece of writing serves a primary goal to communicate something about a topic or idea to a particular audience of readers. Berlin. (1994) expresses this idea in the following words: 'As I have said, I will be concerned in each case with the way that a writer's reality, audience and language have been defined so as to form a distinct world construct with distinct rules for discovery and communicatory knowledge'.

1.1 Background to the Study

Writing, as one of the forms of language skills that must be acquired by the learner differs from the oral communication because a writer has no means of finding how they are being understood. Writing is enacted with no paralinguistic feature such as intonation, stress, tone, as well as extra linguistic elements such as gesture, and facial expressions to bring out the import of what is being communicated apart from what is being written. Thus, every person writing a piece needs to make meaning only out of what is written (Goodman & Goodman, 1983; Hedge., 2005). This idea needs to be presented in clear, logical and unambiguous form. 'Learning to write and to write well encompasses a complex activity by which a writer must exhibit a good control of a number of variables at the same time', (Hedge, 2005). The writer must have ample

knowledge and trap of the demands of writing at the sentence level which include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, etc. Aside these important elements, one must be able to structure and integrate whatever information in a cohesive and coherent paragraph (Smith, 1983).

A good writing skills also calls for a passion to read extensively. According to Madukwe (2007), extensive reading involves 'reading quite a number of texts in a relatively short time usually for pleasure and for obtaining knowledge and information or having a general impression not for a purpose of a detailed linguistic study'. It has a known phenomenon that majority of students in many of our educational institutions for many years do not read or even strive to read materials outside their examination scope. They only focus on materials pertaining to their examination without the least desire to read other materials to broaden their horizon and thus perfect their writing skills.

The outcome as this desire to focus only on examination related materials and not well prepared materials is the bad writing skills that are heavily manifested during their examination and even after school writings. The Chief Examiner's Report of WAEC from year to year pinpointed inadequate preparation of students, poor use of English Language, failure to read instructions resulting in abysmal performance in the composition writing.

To achieve good writing skills, there is the need to develop great interest in reading widely and do extensive reading. In doing this, the student increases or widens his/her area of coverage in the language as well as enriching his/her repertoire of vocabulary. The Chief Examiner's report, 2018 of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) read as follows: 'The poor performance in English Language is

particularly worrying because it would be impossible for any student to do well in examination if English Language as a medium of expressions, is not mastered'. The committee, therefore, called for a return to the policy of placing emphasis on lexis and structure as well as promoting reading as a habit among students.

The best option or practice that must be embarked upon by the relevant educational stakeholders is to equip the JHS level with the necessary human and material resources so that quality teaching and learning of the language can be done. However, such situation is lacking, leaving in its trail the present poor writing skills of our students in the upper basic level of our educational ladder thus posing a serious challenge in the writing of composition.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The ability to write appropriately and effectively is considered a major part of written communicative competence among students at all levels of the education system. However, learning to master composition writing skills is a problem that students face in secondary schools. It is no gainsaying fact that stakeholders in education, especially parents and the general Ghanaian are visibly worried about the poor and gradual downturn in the standard of English Language in our educational institutions.

This worrisome situation came to the fore in the Chief Examiner's Report on the performance of students in English Language for consecutive years from 2007 up to date. It was glaringly manifested in the English Language Paper two where the

candidates were expected to compose an essay (write a composition) that students have problems in mechanics, expression, content and organization.

Going through the report, it was gathered that students exhibited deficiencies in tense sequence, subject-verb agreement, punctuation and even paragraphing. Some candidates also had problems in the right way of writing certain group of expressions or words as they wrote: "infact" instead of "In fact" "Inspite of" instead of "In spite of" (CER WASSCE, 2018). The art of paragraphing was another problem seen in the works of many candidates as topic sentences were poorly placed in many of the essays thus making organization of ideas poorly structured. Subordination and coordination were wrongly done making meaning of concepts and ideas difficult to follow. Another deficiency that also runs across the works of most candidates that were highlighted was wrong spelling (CER WASSCE, 2018).

It is against the backdrop that it has become expedient for such a research to be undertaken to find out the causes of this unfortunate academic situation in the writing of composition. It also seeks after finding the causes to prescribe probable remedies or solutions to the challenge.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges confronting Senior High School students in composition writing and the causes of these challenges in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Investigate the blunders SHS students in the Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality make in composition writing

2. Identify the methods teachers use to teach composition writing in SHS in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality

3. Ascertain the causes of poor composition writing in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions which serve as a point of reference in the investigation are:

1. What are the blunders SHS students make in class in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality in Composition Writing?

2. Which method do teachers use to teach composition writing?

3. What are the causes of poor composition writing?

1.6 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the findings of this study would serve as a basis for assisting English language teachers adopt teaching strategies that will enhance learning of composition writing skills among students. The study would again enable curriculum developers and textbook writers to come up with materials that will address the challenges students face in L2 composition writing. The researcher also hoped that the findings of the study would be relevant in teacher education as a whole, especially regarding language education which may enable teacher trainers to come up with better methods of training language teachers with specific reference to composition writing skills. Finally, the study would contribute to knowledge of classroom research in second language

writing and form a basis for further research which could prompt other researchers to do similar studies in other regions or levels of learning.

1.7 Limitations of the study

This study focused on Senior HighSchool students in Dunkwa-On-Offin, Central Region, pursuing various subjects or programmes. This comprised only the third year students who are about writing their final examination (WASSCE). This study also lookedat only the poor performance students in only composition writing. Despite other important areas such as listening and speaking, Grammar, Comprehension, Summary and literature, challenges students are faced with in composition writing was looked at. The study was also limited to only four schools with two being academically good schools and the other two being average performing schools. Due to time factor and amount of money involved in collecting data, the sample size was limited to 4 teachers and 120 students. This may have influenced the outcome of the study. The study did not also look at the skills taught in composition writing lessons.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

This study focused on Senior Secondary School students in Dunkwa-On-Offin, Central Region, pursuing various subjects or programmes. This comprised only the third year students who are about writing their final examination (WASSCE). The study is also concerned with only the challenges confronting students in the area of composition writing. Despite other important areas such as listening and speaking, Grammar, Comprehension, Summary and literature, challenges students are faced with in composition writing was looked at.

1.9 General layout of the study

The research work has been structured in five chapters. From chapter one, Chapter two (2) reviews the relevant literature to the study. This highlights what other experts or scholars have done in respect of the topic as well as the theories underpinning essay writing. Chapter three (3) deals with the methods and strategies in collecting data for the work. Chapter four (4) analyses and discuss the data collected. Finally, chapter five (5) gives a conclusion of the study through the discussion of the findings, outcomes and recommendations of the study.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Challenges: Difficulties students face in the process of learning essay writing skills.

Senior High School: second cycle institutions/schools

Student: a child who is in school to learn

Poor: performing below average in composition writing

Method: a plan of action to teach English composition writing

Causes: conditions that lead to poor composition writing

Teacher: a person who teaches for example English composition writing

English as a second language: The English language learned by students to whom the language is a second language in their country.

Essay: A text or a piece of writing that students creatively compose, either independently, in a group or with the help of a teacher, in response to a writing exercise or task.

Communicative competence: the ability that students need to develop in order to express themselves effectively especially in composition writing

Composition: a kind of a lesson where students learn skills of writing essay

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW
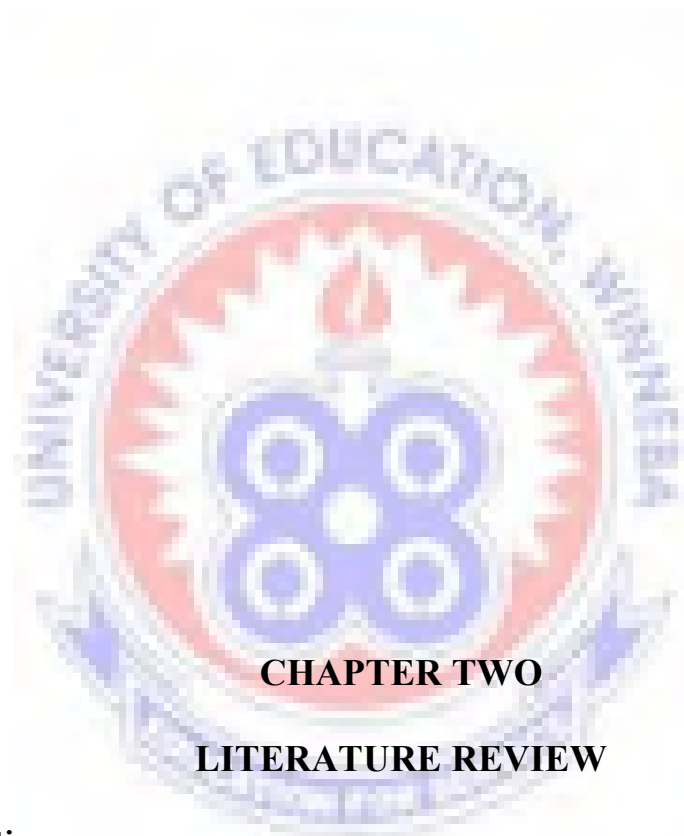
2.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges confronting students in the area of composition writing and the causes of these challenges in some selected Senior High Schools in Dunkwa-On-Offin. The main purpose of this chapter is to search and review available literature on the problems that students encounter in the writing of composition. In this chapter, the researcher will review the available literature on the subject matter.

2.1 Theories of Composition Writing

Many theories have been assumed on composition writing. Composition is basically writing. A number of theories of composition writing exist and this was acknowledged by Berlin (1994). The theorists universally agreed and posit that the writing procedure is composed of four identifiable items/elements namely: the language, the writer, the reality and the teacher. The language is about the expressions used by the writer, the writer is represented by the student who has the task to write an essay, reality stands for the content of the essay and the teacher represents the reader. Most theories of composition place emphasis or premiums on these four elements.

2.1.1 Process Genre Approach Theory

The Process Genre Approach for teaching writing skills recognizes that effective teaching methodology for writing needs to integrate the insights from product, process and genre approaches (Badger & White, 2000). Tangpermpoon (2008) stated that by integrating approaches, the strengths of each approach can successfully complement each other and help teachers to develop students' written competence by providing suitable input of knowledge and skills in the writing process. Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) further highlighted that the integrated approach to language teaching aims at maximizing meaningful communication and classroom interactions in meaningful situations. It fosters holistic learning such as sharing of information, experiences and development of values. It gives language skills their most meaningful, practical and relevant application, while at the same time giving the student the necessary tools for full learning.

According to Badger and White (2000), the development of writing in a process genre (integrated) approach, classroom learning takes place when teachers draw out the

potential of students as well as provide appropriate input to them. It also noted that the development varies between different groups of students because they are at different stages of their writing development. For example, students who have knowledge on the production of the particular genre, and are skilled in it, may require little or no input. Some may be aware of how the potential audience recognize what is written, while another group may lack knowledge of what language is appropriate to a particular audience. Thus, these two groups will require different input. The teacher is, therefore, required to assess the needs of the particular group to determine the kind of input needed.

Badger and White (2000) further identify three possible sources of input in a process genre approach to teaching writing skills: teachers, learners and samples of the target genre. In terms of instruction, Teachers provide input on language use and content, for instance, by asking learners to think about why they are writing a particular essay or story. A demonstration by the teacher is an alternative to this. On the other hand, students can do the same in group discussion or observing other students' written texts. Samples from the targeted genres can also be an important source of input about contextual and linguistic knowledge. Dudley-Evans (1997) also suggests that teaching and learning resources such as flow charts can also be used to illustrate the organization of particular genres. Tangermpoon (2008) points out that, by learning through the integrated approach, students will have less difficulties in L2 writing since they have enough input to create their writing tasks. This, therefore, implies that there is need for teachers to adopt the integrated approach to teaching writing skills in order to enable students achieve communicative competence in L2 writing.

Drawn from this theoretical model are various variables of the integrated approach that influence the learning of L2 writing skills. Integrated approach allows for collaborative learning among students as well as effective interaction between teachers and students in L2 writing classrooms. For instance, by working in groups, learners interact freely and also develop their critical thinking. It also enables teachers to monitor students' progress at every writing stage to determine the kind of input needed, as well as using teaching and learning resources to illustrate the organization of a particular genre. Thus, adopting the integrated approach to the teaching of essay writing skills will enhance effective learning leading to students' mastery of writing skills and achievement in essay writing.

2.1.2 The New Aristotelian/Classic Theory

This theory by its name should give a hit as to the root of the theory. The theory can be traced back to the revered ancient Greek Philosopher, Aristotle. The modern supporters or adherents of this theory are Robert Hughes (1967) and Edward P.J. Corbett (1971). Members of this school of thought believe that the observer and the material world exist as separate entities but that the material world can be known through sense impressions. According to Aristotle, through reality (truth) can be known i.e. it can never be stated with absolute certainty. The theory's relevance to this research work is the recognition of the inadequacy of the writer (the student). Thus, although reality can be known, it can be stated with total certainty or assurance. This implies that when students are made to write essay, they will try as much as possible to make an attempt to state what can never be perfectly stated. Thus, we should expect some inadequacies or shortcomings in their write-ups as their writings cannot be without mistakes or flaws.

2.1.3 The New Rhetoricians Theory

The New Rhetoricians Theory has adherents/supporters such as Atton Berker, Harcomt Brace Iovanovich, John Dewey, etc. This school of thought adherents believe that truth is perfectly situated or located in the rational spectrum of the mind. To them, truth is not merely a state entity which is solely there and available to be retrieved. Truth is dynamic, evolving and emanates from a process of the interaction of a contrasting or divergent elements. Thus, the school of thought provides the platform for critical thinking and creativity-the two ingredients that are essential in composition writing. In brief, the New Rhetoricians support the notion that the child need to be stimulated positively, encouraged as well as being propelled to put his/her mind to critically analyze issues to generate new knowledge.

2.2 Defining Composition Writing

According to Busemi et al., (1998), it is a process of discovery which helps the writer to communicate with others and to discover important things about the writer's subject and the writer himself or herself. For Mc Witock, (1983), a composition involves building relations among words and sentences, the sentences in paragraph and the paragraphs in text. It is clear from the above positions by the language experts that certain key expressions "process" thinking, "discovery" "relative" are evolving. These expressions or key words can help us to arrive at a working definition for composition. Thus, a composition can therefore be seen as a writing process which involves thinking and is used to communicate an idea to the reader. The purpose which a composition is to be enacted or written will determine a pattern or arrangement of ideas and expressions. The targeted

audience also determines the voice and tone of the composition. Thus, the choice of words or diction is very crucial for the addressed participants or audience.

2.3 Types of Composition Writing

There are different types of composition writing that are available for many purposes. The purposes for writing composition are varied but basically, there are four main types or aims for which composition can be used to address. These are: to describe a situation, to explain a process, to argue out a point and to narrate an incident. The above four main purposes are very important as they are evident and demonstrated in narrative, expository, descriptive and argumentative respectively. This is further consolidated by the teaching syllabus for teaching English Language at the junior high school and even senior high school levels which critically and specifically require that pupils and students should be taught on how to write these aspects or types very well. For the purposes of these essays or works, it would be prudent to have insight into the various types.

2.3.1 Narrative Composition

Narrative essay or composition basically answers the question-what transpired? what happened? Narratives tells or details a story, give an account of an event. It also highlights an experience of what happens by giving an insight. Stories and events are brought to life through good narration. In executing this vital technique, narration involves certain important features like setting, characterization and the point of view of the narrator (Roberts, 1978). Setting, which is basically the background, gives an insight to the location and time of the incident. The historical, the climate and the geographical background are highlighted through the setting. Characterization on the other hand deals with the participants in the narration. These could be actual human beings or imaginary fictional

created beings if the story is a fictional one. The point of view basically refers to narrator through whose voice the story is enacted. It must be noted that, the point of view can be broken into two broad areas. These are first person and the third person points of view. In detail, the first person's point of view is enacted through the use of pronouns "I", "We", "Us" and "Me". Hence the narration is done by a participant who is involved in the incident or story. This can be highlighted through a position of the narrator writing an autobiography or centrally involved in the conflict as a witness (Winkler & Mccuen, 2006). A creation to illustrate this can be seen in the following lines to serve as a typical first person narrative.

Last Wednesday's dawn during the rainstorm, I heard some murmurings and groaning behind my kitchen window. I was frightened but to satisfy my curiosity, I stealthily crept on the floor to the window to find out. In the hazy dawn, I saw two masked men with a young damsel huddled together in a sack on the floor behind the window. I quickly made a distress call to neighbours who rushed to my place to help me effect their arrest.

The second point of view which is the third person's narrative is enacted using the pronouns "he, she, it, they, etc. Hence, the narrator is stationed outside the story or narration. However, he/she is able to tell a lot about the characters in the story. Due to this, the writer is entitled or has the freedom to do a lot of mind thinking or imagination thus making the story quite exciting. Roberts (1978, p.68) in discussing the nuances of the third person narrator writes that, "like God, the writer attempts to show the inner workings of characters' minds, workings that may be obscure even to characters themselves.

2.3.2 Descriptive Composition

Descriptive composition generally shows readers what or how something looks like, how it tastes, smells, or feels like (Stephen 1995, p.53). In descriptive writing, the

reader must be in the position to see, feel, taste and be in sync with writers on how something looks like. According to Royster (1996), by using sensory points or highlighters, writers are able to share images and experiences with readers in a very lively way "it is like painting a picture with words". Descriptive must also highlight spatial and chronological order of things. By spatial ordering, description must start from one point and move on systematically to another point in a well-defined sequential order. For example, in describing an aeroplane, the description must start with the exterior design, the wings, the fuselage, the gangway and move to the interior décor, the cabins and the cockpit etc. In terms of the chronological order; it involves discussing from the earliest events, followed by the events that occur later. For example, in describing a football match, one can start from the pre-match conference of the two teams, the crowd at the stadium, the kick-off, (half time) recess, full-time, post-match conference, interviews, etc.

2.3.3 Argumentative or Persuasive Composition

Literally by its name, argumentative or persuasive composition simply involves taking stand and trying to convince the minds of readers to accept or agree to a writer's point of argument. In an argumentative essay, the writer has stand which he couches or points in a position statement or a proposition (Warriner, 1998). The position statement helps the audience or readers to know exactly where the writer stands on an issue in discourse. In the discourse, the writer brings readers evidences and statements which must be convincing enough to the audience or readers. According to Sehor and Summerfield (1986), an argumentative essay centres must rectify a point. "It means giving reasons for an idea bringing a weight of evidence to convince your reader".

2.3.4 Expository Composition

The expository composition is basically about giving information or explanation and it can be strengthened with facts, examples and statistics. One important thing in expository composition is that it is devoid of personal feelings and emotions. In fact, the personal idiosyncrasies, beliefs, philosophies are not to invade the writings, as the sole purpose of the composition is not to convince any reader but to give information about an issue or case or item (Royster 1996). An example to illustrate this:

(a) Ghana is in West Africa.

(b) Ghana is the friendliest country in Africa.

The first statement is a fact while the second statement is an opinion. This can be further strengthened by Warriner (1998) "**Fact**- the capital of Alaska is Juneau."

"**Opinion**- Alaska is the most beautiful state in the United States.

2.4 Structuring the Composition

In weaving the composition, a number of elements are taken into consideration. In advancing this research, an attempt will be made to highlight some few ones such as paragraphing, punctuation and spelling.

2.4.1 Paragraph

The paragraph is one of the most important aspect of any written text of which composition is no exception. The paragraph is one or group of sentences that present a single idea or topic. Thus, a paragraph usually has a topic sentence which is supported by other sentences called the supporting sentences. Kirsner and Mandall, (2003) says a paragraph is unified by a single main idea. Gere (1988, p.251) explains that paragraphs are miniature versions of larger collections of writings. In summary, a paragraph is the central

focus of a written composition that expresses a particular idea. Thus, the number of paragraphs expresses an equal number of main ideas in any given text. The paragraph can be sub-classified as follows:

The introductory paragraph, the transitional paragraph, the body or developmental paragraph and the concluding paragraph. All the above paragraphs have important roles to play in translating the ideas in the minds of the students with meaningful sentences. According to Sekyi Baidoo (2003), paragraph can be classified into four main types. There exist the expository, the argumentative, the narrative and the descriptive. Each of the paragraphs has a unique role it plays in the enacting of an essay or composition.

2.4.2 Uses of a Paragraph

To Mccuen and Winkler (2006, p.70), a paragraph has a key function to signal the introduction of a new proposition. Through paragraphing, ideas are arranged according to their hierarchy of importance. Paragraphs can further be classified into many types namely introductory, transitional, developmental and concluding paragraph.

2.4.3 Essential Writing Skills Marks

Embedded in the composition is the need to recognize the importance of the writing skills. These are called punctuation marks. Examples of these are:

(i) The full stop/period

(ii) The comma

(iii) The semi-colon

In evaluating the compositions of the students, it was found that there was almost total neglect of these important marks. Some students who managed to use them also used them wrongly, creating problem of flow of thought. A speech or any written text that is devoid

of punctuations will reduce the text to a meaningless piece or a mere assembly of ideas. Punctuation marks according to MetCalfe (1994) "is the use of spacing, conventional signs and certain typographical devices to promote understanding and to guide correct reading either silent or aloud". Sekyi Baidoo (2003) posits "punctuation marks are to assign correct meaning to words, phrases and sentences." In all their expositions on punctuation, these authorities were unanimous in saying that punctuations are employed in any written text (composition included) to bring out clarity and meaningfulness of the text.

2.4.4 Spelling

Another key item focused on in the research is spelling: According to Smith (1993), the "rules" of spelling can be numbered in the hundreds and still carry only fifty percent probability of being correct for any particular word. There are so many alternative and exceptions that we must confirm and to memorize the correct spelling of every word we hope to write with confidence in the future if it does happen to be regular.

2.5 The Role of Writing in Academics

Writing, according to (Mukulu *et al*. 2006) is considered the most important language skill that students require for their personal development and academic success. Similarly, writing strengthens students' learning, thinking and reflecting on the English language in their academics, Rao (2007). Ahmed (2010) also notes that competence in writing enables students perform well in their academic programmes. Moreover, being proficient in writing in English will enable students to be professionals and action researchers in the future. However, it has been noted that learning to master writing skills is a problem students face at all levels of the education system. Ong'ondo (2001) states that

writing skills are of major importanceto students at all levels of the education system. This is because most examinations and assignments learners do at schools are mainly assessed through writing. It is probably because of this crucial role in assessment that writing has been considered the most crucial skill that students require for their academic advancement. This implies that learners should be assisted to acquire skills that will enable them to express their ideas clearly and effectively in writing. Kroll (2003) notes that improving the writing abilities of students has both academic and social implications. He observes that helping students to write clearly, logically and coherently about ideas, knowledge and views will expand their access to higher education and give them an opportunity for advancement in the work force. He further observes that the current trends of globalization and internet revolution have come to require proficiency in English language that goes beyond the spoken language embracing a variety of uses of the written language. Among such uses include; writing of business letters, memos and telephone messages. This further underscores the importance of learning writing skills. However, there has been a considerable concern that majority of the students do not develop the competence in writing they need to be successful in school, workplace, or their personal lives, Graham and Perin, (2007).

2.6 Writing Integrated with other Language Skills

There are four basic language skills namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The development of the four language skills is very important in every language classroom and that any inquiry into writing endeavours among students presupposes effective understanding of the other three skills, Ouma (2005). Similarly, Cope and Kalantzis (2000) point out that for learners to become proficient writers they need explicit

mastery of the other language skills of listening, speaking and reading. Ikeguchi (1997) presented a lesson plan combining the teaching of writing with reading, speaking and listening. The lesson was presented in three phases. In the first phase, students were allowed to choose topics that they were most interested in, and something that they wanted to know more about. Then, they were asked to look for a short passage from a magazine or a newspaper article, and read thoroughly until they understood the content, and make a copy to bring to class. The second phase was the interactive phase in where students who had chosen the same topic were called to sit together and form a group. They were then asked to take turns in reading each of their articles to the group members, while everybody else listened and then asked questions to clarify points that were unclear. The third phase was the writing stage. Students were asked to get back to their seats and write about the topic they had chosen to read. The findings revealed that students were able to write freely and expressed themselves meaningfully in writing. The four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are integrated in such a way that they complement each other. For instance, the English language syllabus recommends the use of class readers and literature set books as sources of writing tasks. The learner is exposed to new vocabulary, new sentence structures, different registers and good models of language use through reading. Thus, what learners read could form the basis of their oral presentations or essay writing.

2.7 Methods of Teaching Writing Skills

The methods used by teachers in writing instruction have measurable effects on the quality of the students' written products (Sengupta, 2000). Archibald (2001) has also observed that teaching has an effect on the students' ability to reflect on their writing and

to produce more effective and appropriate texts in the second language. Tangpermpoon (2008) in addition states that teaching writing skills to second language students is a challenging task for teachers because developing this skill takes a long time to achieve improvement.

2.7.1 Product Approach

The product approach to teaching writing skills according to Silva (1990), highlights form and syntax and emphasizes rhetorical drills. The product approach mainly focuses on the written product rather than the process the learner should undergo to produce a good written text. In this approach, writing concerns the knowledge about the structure of a language, and writing development is a result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher (Badger & White, 2000). It is similarly confirmed by Myles (2002) that if students are not exposed to written model texts, their errors in writing are more likely to persist. Again, Jordan (1997) indicates that the students are required to focus on a model, form, and duplication. In other words, the students study model texts and attempt various exercises that enable them to draw attention to relevant features of a text, and then rewrite them in their own writing.

However, the product-based writing.is not without weaknesses associated with it. Badger and White (2000) have pointed out that this approach gives little attention to audience and the writing purpose since learners and instructors tend to overemphasize on the importance of grammar, syntax, and mechanics. Process skills such as pre-writing, drafting, evaluating and revising are given relatively minimal role, and the knowledge and skills that learners bring to the classroom are undervalued. Thus, students may lack

motivation in learning and have high pressure in creating their writing tasks, as their instructors mostly focus on the accuracy of the language structures.

2.7.2 Process Approach

The process approach according to Hyland (2002), focuses on how a text is written instead of the final outcome. Additionally, the process approach has a major influence on understanding the nature of writing and the way writing is taught. Therefore, the process approach emphasizes on the importance of certain procedures such as pre-writing, drafting, evaluating and revising. The process approach also involves introducing techniques that help the students identify and engage in a topic. Students are required to produce multiple drafts of a work. After discussion and feedback from evaluators, the students would revise the drafts. Rewriting, revision and editing are essential parts to writing in this approach. Similarly, Jordan (1997) stipulates that process writing enables the students to make clear decisions about the direction of their writing by certain procedures such as discussion, drafting, feedback and revision choices.

Tribble (1996) explains that when using the process-based approach to teaching academic writing, students should first brainstorm in small groups the topic to be discussed in writing; this helps them to generate ideas before starting to write. This is followed by making an outline of the essay. At this stage student also revise their first drafts and give them to other students for pre-reviewing and commenting on. The final stage is editing the essay by the writer himself or herself to eliminate any language errors. Thus, this approach focuses on process rather than product. The process approach according to Boughey (1997) is one of the best methods for teachers to use in teaching second language writing skills. He adds that students improve their writing abilities step by step since teachers will guide

them through the whole process of their writing tasks by giving them feedback and enough time and opportunity through peer and teacher review. Myles (2002) similarly posits that process approach enables the students to understand the steps involved in writing and recognizes learners' efforts toward the development of their writing abilities and input brought to the writing classroom contributes to the development of their writing abilities. Students' critical thinking ability is also developed and learn not to depend only on teacher's feedback.

Although, there are many benefits of using this method in teaching writing skills, the process-based approach has been criticized on various grounds. Badger and White (2000) argue that learners have to spend quite a long time to complete one particular piece of writing. Again, this may decrease students' learning motivation and impede them from learning other types of writing. In critiquing the process approach to teaching writing, Freeman and Freeman (2004) argue that it is time consuming when dealing with large classes. This is so because teachers may not have enough time to schedule individual writing conferences in large classes.

Badger and White (2000) in order to alleviate the weaknesses associated with this approach, suggest that teachers should provide learners with some examples of the text type that they have to write so as to allow them have a clear understanding about the aim and framework of a particular writing type. In addition, teachers should not spend too much time on one piece of writing in the class and should train students to develop a concept of audience by taking turns giving comments on their classmates' writing. It is therefore important that language teachers should adopt this method to improve students' writing abilities.

A research by Owuondo (2011) about the instructional methods used by teachers in secondary schools in Kenya to teach composition writing in French revealed that teachers lacked appropriate instructional methods for composition writing. The study also revealed that there was a vicious cycle of students' dismal performance and lack of interest in composition writing in relation to teachers' lack of interest and confidence in the same.

2.7.3 The Genre Approach

The genre or eclectic approach is considered as the most effective and successful in the teaching of writing skills Badger and White (2000). The genre approach combines process theories with genre knowledge and also emphasizes on the social context in which writing is produced. Otherwise, this approach provides the learner with opportunities for developing their individual creativity as well as helping them fully understand the features of the target genres. Giving the knowledge of form and language at the same time, helps the student to understand how a particular form functions in a specific context; in this way, learners' writing proficiency can be enhanced (Kim & Kim, 2005). In addition, Tangpermpoon, (2008) explains that the focus of writing in this approach aims to integrate the knowledge of a particular genre and its communicative purpose. Thus, helping learners to produce their written products to communicate to others in the same discourse community successfully.

The genre approach to writing emphasizes the need for studying different types of texts (Nunan, 1999). This is so because different genres of writing are typified by a particular structure and by grammatical forms that reflect the communicative purpose of the genre. Similarly, by studying different genres, students can perceive the differences in structure and form and apply what they learn to their own writing (Cope & Kalantzis,

2000). In the academic writing context, they further suggest that writing tasks can be introduced that are based on different genres such as genres of essays, editorials and business letters for students to achieve similar communicative purposes.

Matsuda (2003) views the learning of specific genre construction as a way of helping learners to come up with appropriate actual writing in their real life outside the class-room. It also increases students' awareness of such writing conventions as organization, arrangement, form, and genre. Thus, the aim of the genre approach in writing is to help students master the convention of a particular form of genre that is relevant to their specific situation (Flowerdew, 2000). However, the genre approach has also been criticized for some reasons. Badger and White (2000) point out that, the genre approach undervalues the writing skills which learners need, to produce a written product and ignores the writing abilities learners have in other areas. Another reason is that learners may not have enough knowledge of appropriate language or vocabulary to express what they intend to communicate to a specific audience.

2.8 Blunders in English Composition Writing

The process of writing essay is not all that easy. This is because many rules are to be followed by the students and more so formal writing is introduced to student much later than expected. Less practice is given to writing composition by teachers and students. Without given much time to grammatical practice and rhetorical convections that composition writing is needed, the likelihood that one will make blunders when one has to use the written form of communication is high. Systematic deviation by learners who have not yet mastered the tenets of the target language is what Tomlinson and Ellis (1980) called blunder or error. When a mistake recurs continuously it becomes a blunder. Moreover,

uncorrected blunders become habitual and systematic as they become reinforced by people who speak it.

It is however important to distinguish between mistakes and blunders. Wrong word in a text is what is referred to as a mistake. When a student makes a mistake, she/he breaks the tenets of the language as a result of non-linguistic issues (Tomlinson and Ellis, 1980). The occasional lapses in performance is called mistakes. Mistakes may occur maybe because the student is unable to perform what she/he knows, perchance due to one of the following: boredom, tiredness, thinking a head or quick writing, fear, sickness or carelessness (Tomlinson and Ellis, 1980). Mistake is a random performance and can be self-corrected. It could therefore be said that a mistake is failure to perform while a blunder is as a results of failure in proficiency or understanding. Blunders in may occur because students do not know what is correct (Ellis, 1997) and therefore the topic of this study.

Young people before acquiring literacy, may make some blunders in speech, however adults usually do not take these blunders seriously. Most of these young people do not need formal instruction to correct their language. What they need is more time to interact with good models around them to gain experience. According to Nessel, Jones and Dixion (1987) role models like teachers, peers, parents and any other good source of language is what they need. If students still do not write well enough when they are in Senior High or later, reasons must be found by parents and teachers since at that age, they are expected to have learnt enough to be able to write according to convention. Some of the possible blunders listed by Rambo (2011) were: mixed construction, pronoun blunders, lack of subject/verb agreement, inaccurate word choice, comma splices, run-on sentences,

misplaced/dangling modifiers, sentence fragments, possession blunders, spelling blunders and semicolons blunders.

According to Hacker (2003), if a semicolon is used to replace a comma, then it is used wrongly. The semicolon (;) is used to separate two close sentences. To some extent, full stops and semicolons are interchangeable. However, semicolons and commas are not.

2.9 Empirical Review on Causes of Poor Composition writing

Some renowned scholars, Oyiloyo and Gbenedio (2010) stated that there was a problem of mass failure in English language among students. As usual, students are anticipated to have learnt the basic literacy skills needed to help them further their formal education and communication in a location in which English language is used as the official language. It was revealed by Oyiloyo and Gbenedio (2010) that there have been complaints about the poor English composition writing in schools.

Ohia and Adeosin (2002) identified inappropriate pedagogy employed in schools which does not related to the students' interest and needs, the teaching which was not directed towards the attainment of the goals and purposes of the language skills, as some of the causes of poor composition writing among students. Obemeata (1995) found that teachers' inability to improvise the necessary enrichment material that could stimulate the desired intellectual development in composition writing as one of the causes of the poor composition writing. Ajayi (2002) observed that students' performance in composition writing was dwindling and he attributed it to the methods used by the teachers to teach composition writing in the schools. He strongly belief the method used by teachers were inadequate.

A study by Nyoni (2012) which took place in Zimbabwe, found that composition writing seemed to be treated with very littleenthusiasm by students. He observed that students were performing below average in the English language at 'O' level. The record of marks was worrying in that students were performing poorly without any sign of progression. The student has the role of handling the linguistic input in the process of obtaining linguistic, pragmatic, discourse and strategic competence (Hedge, 2004).

2.10 Improving Students' Writing Skills

Two major components according to Kroll (2003) that are most essential for improving students' writing skills in any writing task include: provision of feedback on students' written assignments and assessment. Teaching and learning resources enhance teaching and learning process in English language (Omulando, 2009).

2.10.1 Provision of Feedback on Students' Written Essays

Kroll (2003) Feedback on students' written assignments is a very important aspect of improving learner's ability in any second language writing course. The goal of feedback is to teach skills that will help students to improve their writing proficiency to the point where they recognize what is expected of them as writers. Learners should be encouraged to analyze and evaluate feedback themselves in order for it to be more effective. Similarly, Myles (2002) notes that feedback is of utmost importance to the writing process without which individual attention and sufficient feedback on errors, improvement will not take place. In addition, it is the teacher's responsibility to help students to develop strategies for self-correction and regulation.

Two common categories of feedback that teachers give on students' written essays as identified by Williams (2005) are: feedback on form and content. He observes that the

most common methods of feedback on form include outright teacher correction of surface errors, teacher markings that indicates the place and type of error but without correction, and underlining to indicate the presence of errors. On the other hand, feedback on content consists mainly of comments written by teachers on drafts that usually point out problems and offer suggestions for correction. Therefore, students are expected to incorporate information from the comments when doing their corrections.

Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) point out that it is important for teachers to provide regular and quick feedback to the learners. The feedback which may be either formative or summative is very important for further learning as well as contributing to written fluency. They further suggest that in order to pre-occupy the learner in doing self-correction, teachers can use a certain correction code with symbols for the different types of mistakes such as poor sentence and paragraph organization, omitting needed information, misuse of sentence linkers and idea connectors, tense and ambiguity. However, teachers need to train the students on how to effectively use the feedback in order to make gains in their proficiency and competence as second language writers.

In a research by Nthiga (2010) on second language writing pedagogy: teachers' feedback practices, it was indicated that error feedback plus teacher written comments were the most commonly used feedback provision methods. In addition, the teachers' feedback was largely in form of directives generally highlighting weaknesses in the students' written compositions which is likely to affect students' confidence in second language writing.

2.10.2 Assessing Students' Writing Skills

Assessment is a crucial part of the instructional process in determining student's progress. It provides guidance for revision, feedback to both the students and

teachers that they can use to improve teaching and learning of writing skills (Kroll, 2003). Isaacson (1996), asserts that assessment of students' writing abilities is an integral part of effective teaching and learning. He argues that a teacher cannot ensure students' success and make necessary adjustments in instruction without engaging in frequent assessment. He adds that self-assessment helps students to take ownership for their own writing and enables them to internalize the skills they are learning. Effective assessment of a student's writing requires the teacher to have a conceptual model of written expression taking into account purpose, process and product.

Taking into account the purpose of assessing students' writing abilities, Airasian (1996) identifies three types of assessments. The first is the sizing up assessment, commonly known as diagnostic test which is done to provide the teacher with quick information about the students' entry behaviours before planning for their instruction. The second is the formative, used for the daily tasks of planning instruction, giving feedback and monitoring students' progress. The third is the summative, which is the periodic formal functions of assessment for grouping, grading and reporting.

Isaacson (1996) identifies five aspects of students' writing that a balanced assessment should consider. First is fluency which involves the ability to translate ones' thoughts into written expression by using a variety of sentence structures and appropriate vocabulary. Second concerns content which relates to the ability to organize ideas and write coherently. It is also the ability to write creatively through logical argument. Third involve conventions which concern the ability to use the standard conventions of written English language such as correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar and readable handwriting. Fourth entails vocabulary which involves the ability to express precise

meaning in a variety of writing context. This is achieved by use of wide range of use of appropriate vocabulary relevant to the idea expressed in writing. Fifth contains syntax which concerns the ability to use a variety of sentence patterns and constructions. A study conducted by Okwara (2012) on factors related to achievement in written English composition among secondary school students showed that lack of adequate assessment can easily affect students' writing competence.

2.10.3 Use of Teaching and Learning Resources

Resources are valuable tools of promoting teaching and learning in language learning situation (Omulando, 2009). Lack of sufficient instructional resources limit teachers from adequately facilitating instructional process with particular reference to their use of appropriate language teaching methods and enhancing learners' use of language learning strategies. Similarly, Minae (2004) notes that teaching and learning resources facilitate and motivate students to learning. Teachers should therefore make teaching and learning resources an integral part of their instructional practices. In the English language syllabus, teaching and learning resources for writing skills which include: audio-visual resources such as video tapes, printed materials which include class readers and literature set books and other resources such as pictures can be used to generate ideas for writing.

Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) state that audio-visual materials such as tapes, pictures and diagrams should be used to make students aware of the content of writing. Good writing materials should be learner-centered rather than teacher-centered. They should also focus on helping students to develop their own strategies for learning. Resources should allow students to be creative and provide stimulating activities that focus students' attention on the writing skill to be learnt. They should be task-based, that is, they

should use purposeful tasks to motivate students' learning and make them see the usefulness of writing.

A study by Ouma (2005) on achievement motivation in English composition writing among secondary school students, revealed that students from schools with adequate teaching and learning resources were motivated to achieve in composition writing, unlike those from schools which were not adequately equipped with teaching and learning resources. This, shows that teaching and learning resources have a bearing on students' motivation and achievement in L2 composition writing.

2.11 Second Language Learning Strategies

Language Learning Strategies are specific actions, behaviours or steps that students use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. They are procedures that facilitate the learning task and they vary considerably within each individual learner (Chamot, 2005). Rubin (1997) explains Language Learning Strategies as processes which contribute to development of the language system which the learner constructs and affects learning directly. Richards and Lockhart (2006) affirm that LLS determine, to large extent, the success level of learners in L2, arguing that absence of appropriate strategies results in low achievement in language. Interactive learning strategies which include: working in groups, peer teaching and role play provide constructive knowledge that promotes use of target language efficiently and clearly. Brown (2007) observes that learning strategies are classified into three categories: metacognitive, cognitive and social affective. Metacognitive strategies are those that involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension,

and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. They involve strategies such as: translation, grouping, note-taking, auditory representation, deduction, imagery elaboration, transfer and inference, that is, using available information to guess meaning of new items, predict outcomes or fill in missing information. Social affective strategies have to do with working with one or more peers to obtain feedback and asking questions for clarification.

Language learning strategies (LLS) are taught and the learners can benefit from being coached in their use (Griffiths, 2004). This practice is what is commonly referred to as "strategy training". This approach according to Cohen (2003), is based on the belief that learning will be facilitated through making learners aware of the range of strategies from which they can choose during language learning and use. Thus, second language learners are encouraged to learn and use a wide range of LLS through the learning process. Lessard-clouston (1997) suggests that focusing on the language learning process itself is important because it enables learners understand the process, the nature of the language communication, and the language learning resources that are available to them. In addition, they will know the specific LLS they might use in order to improve their own vocabulary use, grammar knowledge, and L2 skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking. Chamot (2005) also attest to the concept of strategy training for enhancement of language learning and achievement of communicative competence particularly for second language learners. In a study by Omulando (2009) investigating the teaching and learning strategies used by teachers and learners respectively; and how they influence the manner in which language teachers conduct instruction in English language in secondary schools in Kenya. It was

indicated that learners did not appropriately use the LLS. English language teachers were aware of LLS and their usefulness but they did not appropriately apply this knowledge in training learners on the use of appropriate LLS during instruction. Ahmed (2010) on students' problems with cohesion and coherence in essay writing revealed that problems students face with regard to cohesion and coherence were due to: lack of motivation among students, teachers' use of traditional teaching techniques such as lecturing, reading aloud and teacher demonstrations which were frequently indifferent to students' needs.

Eyinda and Shariff (2010) in a study to investigate the teaching of writing secondary school students revealed that most teachers dominated in the classroom interaction. It was also reported that teaching methods used were mainly teacher centred such as lecturing and question and answer. The study further found that although teachers use a variety of teaching and learning activities in their writing lessons, most of the activities used give teachers overwhelming control of the class proceedings. Teachers also face challenges such as lack of knowledge, skills and interest to teach writing, inadequate teaching and learning resources, large classes and lack of learners' interest in writing.

Provision of feedback on students' written essays has also been a subject of considerable amount in second language writing research. Findings from a study by Ferris (1997) on the effects of feedback on students' writing indicated that changes made by students in responses to the teacher comments did not have a positive effect on the overall quality of students' written essays. Nthiga (2010) carried out a research on second language pedagogy: teachers' feedback practices in secondary schools, Kenya. Error feedback plus teacher written comments were the most commonly used feedback provision methods as findings. In addition, the teacher feedback was largely in the form of directives generally

highlighting weaknesses in the learners' compositions and that it laid more emphasis on aspects of grammar and spelling compared to other features such as content and coherence. The findings also revealed that workload, teachers' attitudes, examination culture and lack of training knowledge in responding to learner writing as factors that influenced teachers' feedback practices.

Investigating the types of errors made by form three students in their L2 written work, Darus and Subramanian (2009) revealed in a study that the errors committed were basically grammatical. The students also had relatively weak vocabulary and they committed errors in applying sentence structure rules in English language. They concluded that the students had problems in acquiring grammatical rules in English language. Farooq (2012) in a similar study on opinions of second language learners about writing difficulties in English language revealed that students faced a lot of difficulties in L2 writing due to lack of vocabulary, poor spelling, L1 interference and poor understanding of grammatical structures. Again, Okwara (2010), investigated factors related to achievement in written English composition among secondary school students. The study revealed that certain factors affected achievement in written English composition. Some of these factors were the linguistic environment of students, lack of adequate preparation of students for examinations, lack of adequate reading materials, the poor quality of students, lack of a proper foundation in primary schools, lack of concerted efforts by teachers, limited time for learning English, poor interpretation of questions and shortage of trained English teachers. It was also found out that certain selected factors had strong relationship with achievement in written English composition while others did not because performance was relatively high or low depending on these factors. Some of the factors which indicated

strong relationship with achievement were the professional training of English teachers, availability of learning resources such as class textbooks, class readers and school libraries, and school type. The academic qualification of English teachers, teaching experience, teaching load, availability of English textbooks and student sex did not appear to have any particular relationship with achievement of students in written composition. The findings made important implications for the teaching of written composition which should be taken seriously by English teachers, curriculum developers and policy makers if achievement has to be improved.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges confronting Senior High School students in the area of composition writing and the causes of these challenges in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality. This study further seeks to find practical remedies to rectify it. The chapter explains research design, population, sample as well as sampling procedure for the study. In addition, the research instrument that was used, data collection procedure and the procedures for the data analysis are also described.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed descriptive survey design. According to Gay and Airasian (2006), the descriptive survey is concerned with the conditions or relationships that exist, such as determining the nature of prevailing conditions, practices and attitudes; opinions that are held; processes that are going on; or trends that are developed. The design was deemed suitable for the study because of its strengths as it enables the researcher to gather information from the sampled respondents by use of questionnaire, interview schedule and observational guide. This design was also chosen because it allowed the researcher obtain

both quantitative and qualitative data with regard to challenges students face in learning essay writing skills in English language.

In this design, the researcher draws a sample from the population of interest and generalizations are made taking into consideration responses from the subjects of the study. Osuala (2001) pointed out that descriptive surveys are practical and enable the researcher to identify present conditions as well as present needs. Osuala believes that the descriptive survey is regarded by social scientists as the best especially where a large population is involved, and it is widely used in scientific research since data gathered through descriptive surveys represent field conditions. On the other hand, Amedahe (2002) argued that in descriptive research, there is accurate description of activities and this goes beyond the mere fact-finding.

3.2 Population

The population of the study is all Senior High students and the English Tutors of Senior HighSchools in theDunkwa-On-Offin Municipality. If students still do not write well enough when they are in Senior High or later, reasons must be found by parents and teachers since at that age, they are expected to have learnt enough to be able to write according to convention (Rambo, 2011). Based on Rambo (2011) assertion, this study's population was made up students of SHS students and their teachers. These students are teenagers mostly between the age brackets of 13 to 20. There are eight Senior High Schools in the Municipality. The total population of the SHSstudents in the Municipality is 7104 students (from the schools in the Municipality). The English Tutors are professionals with qualifications ranging from first and Master's Degrees in the field. The total population of

English Tutors in the Municipality is 96. On the whole the total population for this study is 7200.

Target Population

Due to the large number of students in all the schools in the Municipality. This study targeted only the SHS three students and teachers in four SHS in the Municipality. The population of SHS three students together with SHS English teachers in the four schools is 1184.

3.3 Sample Size

A sample size of 124 made up of 120 (30 from each school) studentsand 4 teachers were sampled from a target population of 1184. According to Amedahe (2002), calculating 10% of any given population is enough to make representation. In order to sample a proportional number of students and English tutors from all four schools, 10.4% of the target respondentswere sampled.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

Multistage sampling technique was employed to select the sample size of 120 students and four English tutors from all four schools. Multistage sampling according to Ogah (2013) is the combination of two or more sampling techniques such as simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and purposive in a single study.For the purpose of this study, multistage sampling was employed because the study combined purposive sampling stratification and simple random sampling.

The researcher, based on her judgment of the problem statement and the purpose of the study purposively selected four teachers (one from each school) and four SHS 3 classes,

one from each school and their tutors for lesson observation based on the composition writing period on the four schools' timetable.

The four schools were stratified into two strata. The first stratum included schools in the Municipality with reputation for good academic performance. The second stratum was made up of two schools with average academic performance.

Simple random sampling was employed to select 30 SHS 3 respondents out of the available SHS3 students' population of each school. 'Yes' and 'No' were written on pieces of paper and put in a bowl. The respondents (students) were then asked to pick a paper each from the bowl. All those who picked 'yes' were included in the study whiles those who picked 'no' were eliminated from taking part in the study. The simple random sampling methods allow each individuals in population chance to be selected.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

This study employed two data collection instruments. They were direct observation and test. The researcher observed four live lessons to understand the method and skills used in teaching English composition writing in the four selected SHS. The observation was done with the researcher's own pre-designed lesson observation guide (see Appendix 1).

The second instrument which was a test was administered in all the four SHS selected. The selected respondents from the schools were given the same composition questions to write on. The composition question was about letter writing.

3.5.1 Observation

The researcher used the observation approach to gather information about how composition lessons were handled in the schools. The researcher went to the schools to observe the teaching of composition during English lessons. This she did, with the permission of the

subject teachers. The needed pieces of information from the observation strategy were to see how composition lessons were introduced, what activities were done and how the lessons were concluded. Through the observation technique, the researcher was able to understand the teaching atmosphere of the various classes. Though this tool was time consuming, it gave the researcher a lot of insight into the study. Upon the researcher interaction with the teachers, the researcher had an idea that, the teachers always taught the concepts 'compositions' with only the product approach. Hence, students inability to write well.

3.5.2 Test

The term test refers to the use of test scores as data (Macmillan &Schumacher, 1989).This technique involves subjective responses to either writtenor oral questions to measure knowledge, ability, aptitude or some other trait. Intervention lessons involving pre-test and post- test were used. The test instrument consisted of test items based on the Senior High School syllabus. The aspect on which the researcher tested the student was an informal letter.

3.5.3 Interviews.

The researcher used a semi-structured interview guides to find out why the student scored below average.This was done through questions and answers and recorded the responses. Similarly, the subject teachers were too interviewed to find out what teaching techniques they have been adopting in their lesson delivery. The subject teachers were asked about their teaching experiences, highest professional qualification, the number of years they have been teaching the English Language and their teaching methods. Their responses

informed the researcher of the possible causes of student inability to write good composition

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher observed four English composition writing lessons. The direct observation method was applied. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), direct observation method provides information about the actual behaviour.

Non-participant observation approach was used to gather data on method of teaching composition writing. This gave the researcher the chance to observe without playing active role in the lesson delivery. This afforded the researcher the chance to take note and also to record the data of interest. This gave the researcher the chance to have first-hand information since the researcher recorded exactly what transpired at that particular time.

Timetable for each teacher selected for this study was collected before data collection commenced. The scheme of work, the record of work and the lesson plan of teachers were collected before each observation lesson was started. These timetables of the schools were followed without disrupting their normal schedules. All the selected teachers gave their maximum best during the lesson presentation. The researcher was welcomed by the students every class her entered. Notes were taken when lessons were going on with the observational guide prepared.

The test was administered in all the four schools purposively selected. The respondents selected from the schools wrote the same composition question. The question was researcher's own prepared letter writing question. The question was constructed bearing in mind WAEC standard. Here, the researcher sought to answer the research question

What are the blunders SHS students make in class in Composition Writing?

The 30 respondents from each school were given 40 minutes to write the test. Respondents were asked not to include their name and the name of their school. The selected teachers invigilated the test. Two WAEC examiners from the Municipality marked the test. This was to ensure that the standard practices for marking English composition writing by WAEC was followed.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

Osuala (2001) describes data analysis as the ordering and breaking down of data into constituent parts and performing of statistical calculations with the raw data to provide answers to the research questions which initiated the research. The data which was qualitative was from the live lessons conducted in the 4 schools. The analysis took the form of identifying the methods used by teachers to teach English composition. The findings from the test were then quantified and analyzed using SPSS version 22 for windows. This was to show frequencies and percentages of blunders students made.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Permission was sought from the school heads concern before the data collection began. The research topic was read to the participant and their consent was sought. This was to ensure voluntary participation. The confidentiality of both students and teachers were assured. The name of students and the name of their schools remained anonymous.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the results based on the research questions. The results were from the test conducted among the selected students and the live lessons observed by the researcher. Four live lessons were observed. The lesson numbers were used to identify the teachers.

4.1 Blunders Committed by Students

The first research question sought to identify blunders committed by students in composition writing. From the four selected schools, it was revealed that all the 11 main kinds of blunders reviewed in the literature in addition to others that were not mentioned were made by the students in their written compositions. In all, 15 blunders were made by the students. The blunders were run-on sentences, pronoun blunders, not grammatically clear, comma splices, missing words, inaccurate word choices, wrong prepositions, possessive blunders, wrong punctuations, word orders, and wrong expressions. The study sampled all the blunders students made in their written compositions from all the four schools selected and this is presented it on the Table 4.1.1 below, which shows the

frequency and percentages of the blunders students made in their written composition on the question "Write a letter to your friend explaining and describing how you celebrated the Easter Holidays". It was observed that all the 120 students from both reputable (in terms of academic performance) and non-reputable schools made 826 blunders in all.

Table 4.1.1: Types of Blunders distribution

Type	Frequency	%
Run-on sentences	62	7.5
Pronoun blunders	56	6.8
Not grammatically clear	43	5.2
Comma splices	42	5.1
Missing word	30	3.6
Inaccurate word choice	52	6.3
Wrong preposition	70	8.5
Possessive blunders	93	11.3
Wrong punctuation	21	2.5
Word order	37	4.5
Wrong expression	40	4.8
Subject/verb agreement	77	9.3
Sentence fragments	29	3.5
Mixed construction	32	3.9
Spelling Blunders	142	17.2
Total	**826**	**100**

Source: field survey, 2019

The data, as presented in Table 4.1.1 shows that 7.5% run-on-sentences blunders were made by the students from all the four schools used. Percentage for wrong punctuation blunder was 2.5%, which was the least type of blunder they made. Majority (17.2%) made spelling blunders.

Considering all the blunders made one by one, it was observed that run-on-sentences were repeated 62 occasions by the students in their written compositions. It was observed from the beginning of the letter to the end. Students mixed two or more separate clauses with no punctuation mark or conjunction. Examples of such blunders were:

I believe by the grace of Allah everyone is fine has your father been discharged from the hospital how is your Easter preparation.

To be honest with you this Easter was extremely marvellous it will forever be remembered.

I saw many people queuing to board the plane I also joined the queue with my uncle.

These were but a few run-on-sentences made by majority of the students. These were corrected as follows:

The next blunder considered was pronoun blunders. This blunder was made 56 (6.8%) times by the students. Examples were:

Their was no car at the station

She went home when mother was asleep.

This father's car entered the house when all were drunk.

It was also observed that "not grammatically clear" blunder was made 43 occasions in the students' written compositions. About 43 of them wrote sentences that were

meaningless. Some of the sentences were not readable. Some of the blunders observed were:

I was when they decise to swim in the river.

We got to abroad on 6.30 pm in the evening.

This it even the small hotel there

I no that you will give my the feel back of what you learn for the celebration of easter and I will tell you a funny thing when I meet you thank you

On the Sunday, I went to church both the morning and the evening the morning is for the normal church services but for the evening is the I like most because the Sunday the youth will take control on every activities which will make you help and I am one of the people who will do that activities for this year.

Lastly*, on Saturday my mother took all of my cousins to go for shopping.*

The next blunder which was "comma splices" occurred 42 times representing 5.1% of all the blunders. Most of them separated sentences using commas instead of full stop and the use of conjunctions. Examples of such blunders were:

We hired a car, throughout our rounds.

I was there with him, my mother came home later.

She talks too much, leave her.

Your friend at Tafo came later, he was sucked by the organizers.

The study observed 77 blunders on subject/verb agreement. This represented 9.3% of all the blunder made by the students. Some of them could not find the right subject to change it to agree with its verb. Examples of such blunders were:

They laughs at him.

Neither Kwame nor Ama were happy about dad and I going to Sunyani.

I loves my father's car.

The analysis in Table 4.1.1 shows that inaccurate word choice occurred 52 times representing 6.3% of the entire blunders recorded. These were some of the examples:

Great her for me.

I no that you will come home.

After congregation me, my mum and my siblings decided to snap a picture with the pastor and his wife.

I as about my sister and I was told she has gone to school.

Yours friend

From the Table, 93 representing 11.3% of the entire blunders were possessive blunders. It was observed that students were not able to determine when to show possession. Some examples of possessive blunders were:

I was just behind my fathers car.

All the employees helmets were in their car.

When we got home my mums phone has just been stolen by a thief who came to our house.

The most occurring blunder was spelling blunders. It occurs 142 times. This represents 17.2% of the entire blunders. Here are some of them from their written composition samples:

I read the bile at church that day

I took pics with him because I am a fan of him.

The bus stoped in front of the Ghana commercial bank and the driver said "last stop".

Another blunder students of the selected schools from Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality made in their written composition was wrong punctuations. 21, representing 2.5% of the entire blunders was wrong punctuations. Some students either wrongly punctuated their sentences or never punctuated at all.

Hi Manu.

So curious as a cat I begun to unite them and see what it was.

20th May 2019

The four schools were cross tabulated with the results above to established schools' distribution of the common blunders students make in composition writing. The aim here is to identify common blunders made by the two groups in terms of their English proficiency. For ethical consideration, the schools with good academic reputations were named A and B, and those with average academic performance were named C and D. The Table 4.1.2 below presents common blunder distribution by schools.

It could be observed that all the schools sampled, whether academically high performing schools or averagely performing schools committed some of the common blunders. From the table below, it could be observed that 11.4% of the school 'D' students

committed most of the run-on-sentence blunders, followed by school 'C' and school 'A' committed the least. On pronoun blunders, 8.7% of school 'B' students committed it, followed by school 'D' 8.5%, then school 'C' 7.3% and lastly school 'A' 4.1%. About not grammatically clear, 10.6% of students of school 'C' committed that blunder.

Table 4.1.2: Type of Blunders Distribution by Schools

| Type | Schools | | | | | | | | | |
| | A | | B | | C | | D | | Total | |
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Run-on sentences	12	6.2	10	5.8	17	7.8	23	11.4	62	7.5
Pronoun blunders	8	4.1	15	8.7	16	7.3	17	8.5	56	6.8
Not grammatically clear	5	2.6	4	2.3	23	10.6	11	5.5	43	5.2
Comma splices	15	7.8	5	2.9	10	4.6	12	6.0	42	5.1
Missing word	10	5.2	6	3.5	7	3.2	7	3.5	30	3.6
Inaccurate word choice	18	9.3	16	9.3	10	4.6	8	4.0	52	6.3
Wrong preposition	16	8.3	14	8.1	20	9.2	20	10.0	70	8.5
Possessive blunders	23	11.9	20	11.6	30	13.8	20	10.0	93	11.3
Wrong punctuation	6	3.1	7	4.1	5	2.3	3	1.5	21	2.5
Word order	9	4.7	10	5.8	11	5.0	7	3.5	37	4.5
Wrong expression	10	5.2	7	4.1	12	5.5	11	5.5	40	4.8
Subject/verb agreement	12	6.2	13	7.6	30	13.8	22	10.9	77	9.3
Sentence fragments	0	0	11	6.4	12	5.5	6	3.0	29	3.5

Mixed construction	9	4.7	10	5.8	11	5.0	2	1.0	32	3.9
Spelling Blunders	40	20.7	24	14.0	46	21.1	32	15.9	142	17.2
Total	*193*	**23.4**	*172*	**20.8**	*260*	**31.5**	*201*	**24.3**	*826*	**100**

Source: field survey, 2019

This was followed by 5.5% of students of school 'D'. On comma splices, majority (7.8%) of students of school 'A' made it, with the least coming from school 'B'. for missing word, the school 'A' was the most cooperate, followed by schools 'B' and 'C'. School 'A' and 'B' were the most cooperate in terms of inaccurate choice of words. Concerning wrong preposition, 10.0% of students of school 'D' made it. This was followed by school 'C' with 9.2% and then school 'A' 8.3%. 11.9% of school 'B' students committed the possessive blunder and 11.6% of school 'B' students committed it. About wrong punctuations, 4.1% representing the majority, were from school 'B' and 3.1% of that blunder was committed by school 'B'. The school 'D' committed the least of that blunder.

The Table 4.1.2 also proves that 20.8% of all the forms of the blunder were committed by school 'B', with school 'C' committing most of the blunders and schools 'A' and 'D' having 23.4% and 24.3% of the share of the blunders. It could therefore be said that the blunders committed were common to all the schools. 44.2% of the blunders were committed by students from reputable schools and majority of the blunder, representing 55.8% were committed by averagely performing schools.

This implies that averagely highly performing schools committed most of the blunders and for that matter much attention should be emphasized on in other to help reduce rate of such commitment.

To establish the association between the blunders committed by the selected schools, correlation analysis was run. The Table 4.1.3 below presents the analysis.

Table 4.1.3: Correlations Analysis of schools' distribution on common composition blunders

		A	B	C	D
A	Pearson Correlation	1	.760**	.737**	.719**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.002	.003
	N		15	15	15
B	Pearson Correlation		1	.712**	.653**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.003	.008
	N			15	15
C	Pearson Correlation			1	.858**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.000
	N				15
D	Pearson Correlation				1
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	15	15	15	15

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: field survey, 2019

From the analysis, it was observed that school 'A' blunders and that of 'B' correlate at significance level of 1%. This shows that the common blunders committed by both schools were related. The correlation coefficient between schools 'A' and 'C' was 0.737 with p-value of 0.002. This means that blunders committed by school 'A' and that of 'C' were related. The correlation coefficient between schools 'A' and 'B' was 0.719. This figure was significant at 1% significance level. This means that there is no significant

difference between blunders committed by schools 'A' and 'B'. In other words, they are related. The Pearson correlation coefficients between school 'B' and that of schools 'C' and 'D' respectively, were 0.712 and 0.653. These figures were significant at 1% significance level. This means that blunders committed by students from schools 'B', 'C' and 'D' were related. The correlation coefficient between school 'C' and school 'D' was 0.858. The analysis shows that when it comes to common blunders students make in English Composition writing, no school among the four selected were not at fault. This means that English Composition writing is a common problem among students of the Municipality.

4.2 Methods Used During Composition Writing

The second research question sought to identify the methods teachers use to teach composition writing. Composition writing basically has two main methods which includes the product- oriented approach and the process approach. The process approach basically place emphasis on the various stages a student must go through before coming out with a comprehensive writing. Under this approach, the teacher must not only focus on the outcome but the understanding of the various stages a student must go through. From the observation made by the researcher at the end of the study, the study identified that the most used method was product-oriented approach. From the 4 lessons observed by the researcher, only one teacher was able to use all the three stages of process-oriented method. This method is students-centred approach. However 3 of the schools used the product-oriented approach in teaching composition writing. Instead of teacher serving as facilitator, theywere more of judges. Almost all the teachers were not looking at the creativity of the students but their writing of the composition. The future benefits of developing students

writing skills which is the most needed in composition writing was missing. It was observed that the fourth schoolteacher teaches students know how to write composition. The product oriented approach is the traditional way of teaching composition writing. The teachers of three schools was quick in giving students exercise without making sure students have full control over the stages of composition writing. Teachers who normally use the product-oriented method to a very large extent dwell on grammar, forms, syntax, mechanics and organization, and not on content of the students' composition writing (Gathumbi & Masembe, 2005).

Table 4.2.4: Approaches Schools used in Teaching Composition Writing

Lesson	Product approach	Process approach
School 1	Yes	No
School 2	Yes	No
School 3	Yes	No
School 4	No	Yes

Source: field survey, 2019

It could be observed that for the schools 1, 2, and 3, they all adopted the product oriented approach. For the fourth school, they adopted the process oriented approach. They are the school that takes students through the three stages of composition writing. This implies that, there is low level of commitment in the best method of composition writing as this affects the writing skills of the students in the municipality.

4.3 Discussion of the Results

The discussion was done based on the objectives of the study. All the classes sampled for the study were SHS 3 classes. It was observed that most of the teachers were well prepared

for the lessons. Majority of them used the process-oriented method fully. The objectives were:

1. Investigate the blunders SHS students in the Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality make in composition writing

2. Identify the methods teachers use to teach composition writing in SHS in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality

3. Ascertain the causes of poor composition writing in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality

4.3.1 Investigate the Blunders SHS Students in the Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality make in Composition Writing

The study was set up to assess the common blunders that students of Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality make in composition writing. This study was able to identify 15 common blunders that students in that Municipality have being making in composition writing. The following were identified: Run-on sentences; Pronoun blunders; Not grammatically clear; Comma splices; Missing word; Inaccurate word choice; Wrong preposition; Possessive blunders; Wrong punctuation; Word order; Wrong expression; Subject/verb agreement; Sentence fragments; Mixed construction; and Spelling Blunders. The most committed blunder identified by this study was spelling. This blunder was high among the schools selected for this study. Majority of these blunders made reading of the scripts difficult.

Considering some of the blunders the two groups of schools sampled made, it was observed that run-on-sentences were committed 22 times by the academically reputable schools and 40 times by averagely performing schools. The finding shows that students

wrote sentences without knowing where the sentences will end. This result from students' inability to use punctuations and conjunctions. This finding is in line with Hairston et al. (1998) who asserted that knowing when the sentence will end is crucial. Clearly, if one does not end a sentence well, it will cause it intended meaning to change or misunderstood by the reader. This affects students' composition writing greatly. For pronoun blunders, 23 of that blunder was committed by academically reputable schools with 33 from averagely performing schools. Pronoun blunder occurs when the pronoun used is not in accordance in number or person with its antecedent. 9 of the not grammatically clear blunders were committed by academically performing schools and 34 from averagely performing schools. This type normally occurs when students lack vocabularies. Through vocabulary, students learn to think, focus and organize ideas (Archer, Cregan, Mcgough & Shiel, 2012). For students to be able to communicate well, either in spoken or written, there must be logic in their utterances. Lack of logic in communication leads to poor communications.

Also, concerning subject verb agreement blunders, 25 of it was committed by academically reputable schools while 52, was committed by averagely performing schools. When subject and verb are not accordance with each other in terms of person and number, this type of blunder occurs. Lack of proficiency of English language happens when students are not able to use pronouns well, when their grammar is not good and lastly, when the subject and the verb they use do not agree. It was observed that most students were not able to use the English language suitably. To be able to communicate well in writing, students must have adequate knowledge and skills with the form and function of English Language (Hacker, 2003). According to Hacker (2003), if pronoun blunder, grammar blunder and

subject/verb agreement occurs frequently in writing, it means the writer lacks proficiency in the English language.

When students improve in proficiency in the language, it leads to high English language performance (Hacker, 2003). However, when the proficiency in the language is low, it leads to low performance. One of the causes of poor compositing writing is lack of English proficiency.

The study found that spelling blunders was the most committed blunder made by all the school sampled. 64 of it was committed by academically performing school whilst 78 was committed by averagely performing schools. It was observed that most of the students wrongly spelt and in some situations, they used short forms. This affected their composition writing greatly. Students inability to proofread led to spelling blunders. Some also have not knowledge about correct spelling of some words. This led to increase in spelling mistakes among the schools selected. This might also due to students' inability to read wide. Reading wide helps students to master or memories words. Spelling blunders put readers off.

The study also shows that most missing words blunders were committed by students from academically performing schools (16) with 14 of such blunder coming from averagely performing schools. This may be due to students rushing to complete their composition writing. Teachers must therefore encourage students to proofread before submitting their composition for marking.

The study found that wrong preposition blunder occurs 30 times and 40 times respectively, in academically performing schools and averagely performing schools. It was observed that most students who committed this blunder either incorrectly used the

preposition or omitted it in their sentences. This omission and incorrect use of preposition might lead to misinterpretation of sentences. With the mass usage of preposition in English language, students must learn how to use it well. Inability to use preposition well may lead to poor performance in English composition writing.

For wrong expression usage, 17 of it were committed by schools 'A' and 'B' and 23 of it were committed by schools 'C' and 'D'. There was incorrect use of phrases such as "answer my letter" and "reply to my letter", "talk about" and "discuss". Students were not able to identified that 'reply' is followed by 'to'. For effective communication in composition writing, student must master and use expression correctly.

The study also identified that most of the blunders were committed by the less performing schools with 55.8% coming from them and 44.2% from reputable schools in the Municipality. This finding is in line with same conclusion from Ng'na (2015). It was established that school 'C' committed most of the blunders. This was followed by school 'D' with 24.3%. The school 'B' committed least blunders.

The study found that all the schools' common blunders were related with the relation between school 'C' and school 'D' being the strongest. The correlation coefficient between school 'C' and School 'D' was 0.858. It is clear that schools in the Municipality need to encourage students to read more, write more and always do proofreading. Words are building blocks in vocabulary (Cain & Oakhill, 2007). Students learn English language to use it well in composition writing. The key component of reading and writing according to Cain & Oakhill (2007), is vocabulary. Students with good vocabulary, express themselves well in English language.

4.3.2 Identify the Methods Teachers use to Teach Composition Writing in SHS in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality

Instead of teachers serving as facilitator, they were more of a judge. Almost all the teachers were not looking at the creativity of the students but their writing of the composition. The future benefits of developing students writing skills which is the most needed in composition writing was missing. The writing process should be an interactive nature of learning composition. Teachers must guide students throughout the writing process till the end.

In one out of the four lesson observed by the researcher, the teachers went through all the process of teaching composition. The students were engaged in all the processes. The students communicated well in groups in term of thinking, selecting organizing ideas at the pre-writing stage. At the composing stage, the students were allowed to discuss and write the composition. However, students were not taught to write a number of drafts as possible before coming out with the final work. As students are making more drafts, they may be thinking of writing good compositions (Meriwether, 1997). This help in reducing blunders.

The process-oriented method has positive effect on teaching students how to write composition. Students used pre-writing stage to think and organize their ideas in compositing writing. Students going through the stages help improve their composition writing in terms of ideas and mechanics of ideas.

English composition writing should be taught by teachers as a process and not as a product. Even though, the process-oriented method is the most effective way of teaching composition writing, it is most time consuming approach. This is due to the number of stages one has to go through. Here, students have to brainstorm, write a number of drafts and then do revision. Students ability in writing composition will be enhanced if they go through the process of planning, drafting, group discussion, and revising. The process-oriented method motivates and boost students' confidence in writing. It could be said that inappropriate method used by teachers to teach composition contributes to poor composition writing at SHS.

4.3.3 Ascertain the Causes of Poor Composition Writing in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality

The study identified the following as the cause of poor composition writing in SHS in the Municipality: use of inappropriate method in teaching composition, insufficient time, inability of students to do more draft work, and students inability to be creative.

The researcher observed that teachers and students alike were finding it difficult to go through all the stages under the process-oriented method. The period on the timetable for English Language for all the schools was 4. A period was 1 hour or 60 minutes. It was observed that composition writing was taught every fortnight. For that matter teachers wanted to finish every composition lesson within 2 periods that is 120 minutes. Time is needed to ensure student understand composition lesson fully. Time is also needed by students to think about a given topic, think about ideas in groups, organize ideas in groups, write and re-write until the final draft is presented for marking. According to Chan (1986), students must be given time to organize their ideas in groups and discuss them. It was

observed that the English teacher for school 'D' failed to use his time to go through all the stages. It could therefore be said that time allotted for English composition writing is a cause of poor performance in composition writing.

It was also observed that students were not writing and re-writing until the final draft. After going through group discussion to identify the ideas, teacher goes through their ideas with them just to organize it and allows them to write the first draft. They discuss the draft in groups with the teacher and then they are told to write into their exercise book. In the nut shell not having enough drafting time might cause poor performance in composition writing.

The composition question that the teachers gave to their students from the researcher shows that most students have serious problem when it comes to composition writing. This was observed in the way students organized their ideas and thought in writing that exercise. Students had difficulties in sending strong ideas to figure out clearly what he/she was thinking or feeling about the topic. They couldn't look for information, think over it, support it and rewrite until the intended message was clearly stated. Students were not able to think beyond the given ideas. Their written group work was not cognitive but rather physical. Cognitive development is crucial for data gathering and processing prior to production (Sovik, 2003). Creativity is crucial for effective composition writing. It is needed to develop skills in structuring sentences, paragraph development, classifying related information, identifying main information and logical sequencing of information. Any students who is creative willfully controls the language and it fosters improvement in composition writing (Myers, 2006). Creativity makes a student a great thinker and writer.

One of the causes of poor composition performance is lack of creativity among students.

Teachers should help develop the creative skills of students for better composition writing.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is the final chapter of the study. It presents the conclusion and most of all the recommendations of the study. The suggestions for future studies shall also be covered under this all important chapter.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The summary of this study was organized under the objectives of the study. The main purpose for this study was to investigate the challenges confronting Senior High School students in composition writing and the causes of these challenges in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality. In finding out the challenges and the causes, the study looked at some of the blunders that students made in composition writing. The study also identified the method that most teachers in our SHS use in teaching English composition writing.

The study found several forms of blunders students commit in composition writing. In all, 15 blunders were identified. It was established that most of the blunders came from averagely performing schools from the Municipality. However, the study revealed that there was a strong correlation among the blunders committed by the schools. It was therefore clear that composition writing blunders of all the schools were the same. All the school sampled for this study committed all the types of blunders identified in this study. Some of the blunders is study identified were: run-on sentences; pronoun blunders; not grammatically clear; comma splices; missing word; inaccurate word choice; wrong

preposition; possessive blunders; wrong punctuation; word order; wrong expression; subject/verb agreement; sentence fragments; mixed construction; and spelling Blunders. The most committed blunder identified by this study was spelling.

This study also found that apart from the school 'D' all other schools used the process-oriented method. Three schools were found to have gone through all the stages of the process-oriented method. The process as used by the teachers were the pre-writing stage, the composing stage and the revision stage. The teachers used the discussion method. Teachers grouped the students by themselves and also help each group to come out with the ideas, develop it and draft the first report. It was identified that the school 'D' used the traditional method of teaching composition writing, that is the product-oriented method.

The study also identified the use of inappropriate method in teaching composition, insufficient time for composition writing, inability of students to do more draft work, and students inability to be creative as causes of poor performance in composition writing. It was observed that teachers and students alike were finding it difficult to go through all the stages under the process-oriented method. It was revealed that time was needed by students to think about ideas in groups, organize the ideas in groups, write and re-write until the final draft is presented for marking. It was found that time allotted for English composition writing was one of the causes of poor performance in composition writing. The study also found that the writing and the re-writing stages were not utilized by teachers and it was identified as another cause of poor performance of composition writing. The study also revealed that students had difficulties in sending strong ideas to figure out clearly what he/she was thinking or feeling about the topic. It was revealed that most students were not able to search for information, think over it, support it and re-write until it to its intended

purposes. It was also difficult for students to think beyond the given ideas from their teachers. It was established that student cognitive development was not looked at.

5.2 Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations based on the findings of the study: It was observed that the vocabulary level of the students was very low enhance the huge number of blunders. Students showed that sign because they hardly read books, magazines and newspapers. It also means that they do not listen to news. It is therefore recommended that teachers help to develop good reading habit to help improve their vocabulary levels.

The study also found that students were finding it difficult to search for information on a given topic. Some of the groups were not able to even mention one idea from the given topic. This could be attributed to their inability to develop their searching skills well. It is therefore recommended that teachers and parents alike help students of SHS to develop the searching skills through giving of more search work and also ensuring they use their smart phone to do more information mining. They should also be help generate ideas before writing any composition.

It was observed that most teachers were not able to plan their lessons within the time allotted on the timetable. The researcher considered it as poor plan on the side of the teachers. It there recommended that teachers plan their lessons within the 120 minutes to help the students finish all activities. This will help reduce the poor performance of composition writing among SHS 3 students.

It was observed that some teachers were using the product-oriented approach which does not help students to acquire all the skills involved in composition writing. Some just gone through the pre-writing stage and they give exercise to the students to do without

them going through other stages. It is therefore recommended that teachers schools enhance continuous professional development in composition writing. This will aid teachers share ideas on teaching methods and also help them reduce the problems of teaching composition writing.

It was observed that students were not creative on the topic given give to them. This the researcher attributed it to their inability to read wide. It is recommended students be made to start reading at early stages of SHS so that their vocabulary level will be enhanced,

5.3 Suggestions for Further Study

It is recommended that future study includes all levels of Senior High School students to help identify and reduce the problem of composition writing from early stages to improve the performance of composition writing. This study took place in only one Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana. It is recommended that the study be replicated in the entire region and if possible the entire nation to help identify the blunders students make in composition writing so as to help reduce the poor performance of students in composition writing in the entire region and for that matter the whole nation.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study identified a number of blunders students make in their composition writing. The study also concluded that some schools still used product-oriented method instead of process-oriented method. However, three out of the four schools sampled used the process-oriented method in teaching composition writing. The study also concluded that insufficient time for composition writing, inability of students to do more draft work, and students inability to be creative were the causes of poor performance of

composition writing among schools in Dunkwa-On-Offin Municipality. It was also revealed that engaging students in the cycle of the process of writing enhance students' composition writing capabilities.

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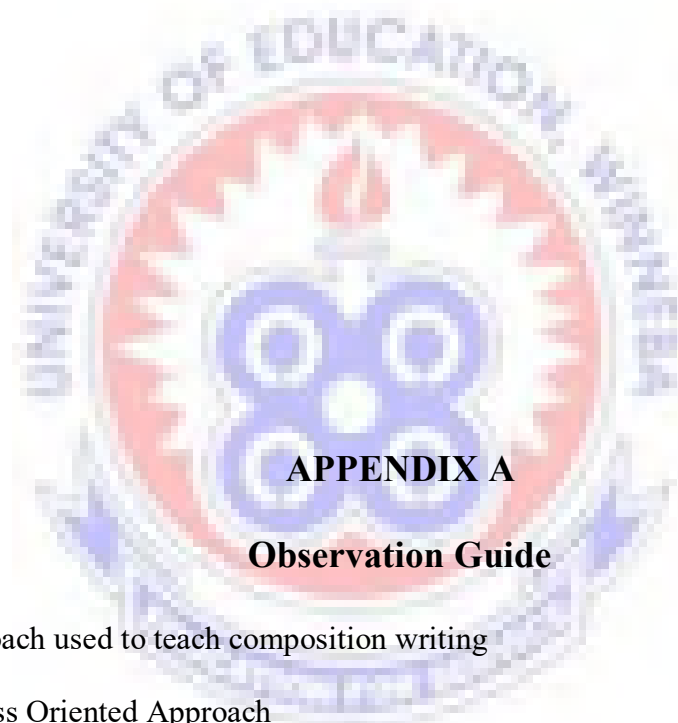
APPENDIX A

Observation Guide

Approach used to teach composition writing

Process Oriented Approach

Stages of composition writing

i)   Pre-writing stage

a) Teacher's Activities

b) Learner's Activities

ii)   Composing stage

a) Teacher's Activities

        b) Learner's Activities

iii)   Revision stage

        a) Teacher's Activities

        b) Learner's Activities

Other observations

        a) On the lesson plan
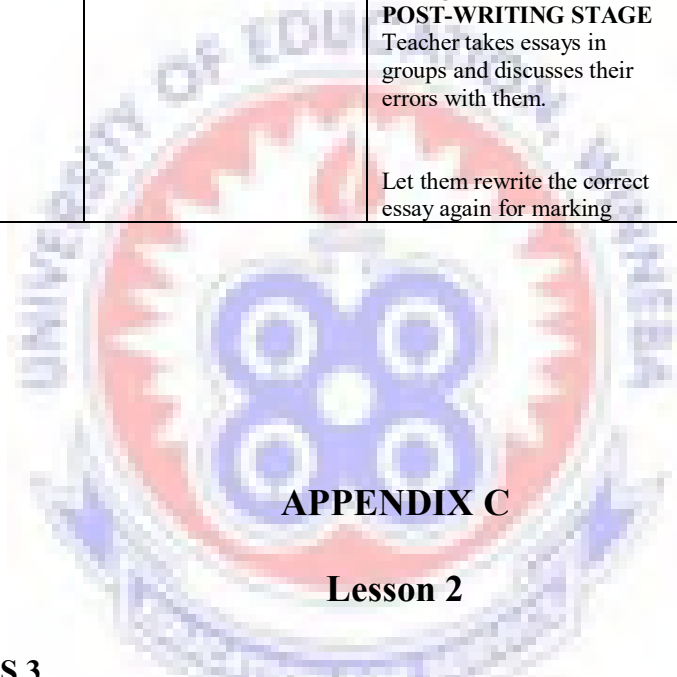
        b) Examining study composition exercises
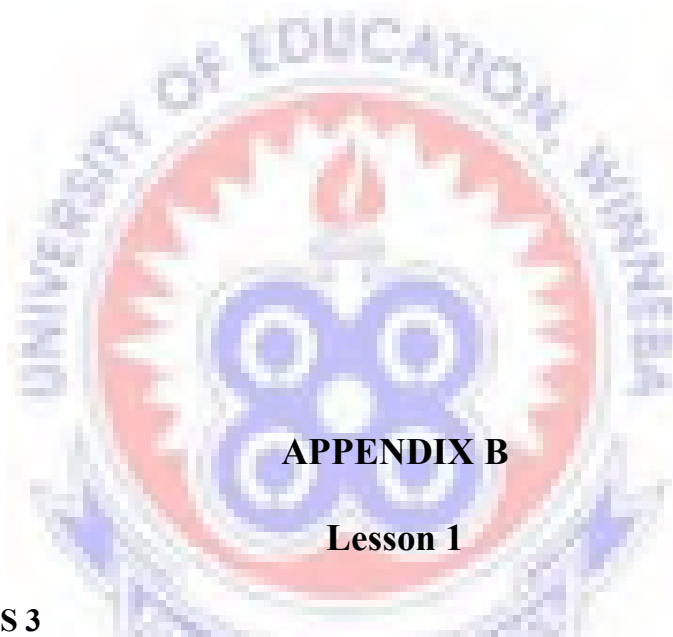
APPENDIX B

Lesson 1

CLASS: S.H.S 3

DAY, DATE DURATION	TOPIC/SUB-TOPIC ASPECT	OBJECTIVES R.P.K	TEACHER LEARNER ACTIVITY T.L.M	CORE POINTS	EVALUATION REMARKS
DAY	**TOPIC**	**OBJECTIVE(S)**	**T.L.M**		
Monday	Article writing (Road accident)	By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to: 1. Identify the features of writing "Article"	Samples of newspapers magazines **PRE-WRITING STAGE** Teacher asks students about what they read in magazines and newspapers. Teacher groups students according to their abilities and distributes samples of articles published in magazine for them to predict what they are going to study.	Development of fluency skills Development of prediction skills	

DATE 3rd June, 2019	SUB-TOPIC Causes and solutions of road accidents in Ghana	2. Write an article on a given topic	Teacher asks students to come out with the features of article writing	Development of fluency skills	
DURATION 2 hours	ASPECT Writing	R.P.K Students have been reading articles published in the dailies and magazines.	WRITING STAGES Let students brainstorm on the topic given (road accident in Ghana) and come out with the points (using the process approach). Teacher guides students to write on the topic using the features of article writing. POST-WRITING STAGE Teacher takes essays in groups and discusses their errors with them. Let them rewrite the correct essay again for marking	Development of fluency skills Development of writing skills Development of listening and fluency skills Development of writing skills	Write an article on the causes and solutions of road accident in Ghana. Remarks

APPENDIX C

Lesson 2

CLASS: S.H.S 3

DAY, DATE DURATION	TOPIC/SUB-TOPIC ASPECT	OBJECTIVES R.P.K	TEACHER LEARNER ACTIVITY T.L.M	CORE POINTS	EVALUATION REMARKS
DAY	TOPIC	OBJECTIVE(S)	T.L.M		
Wednesday	Descriptive essay	By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to: 1. Identify the features that characterize descriptive writing	Samples of essays PRE-WRITING STAGE Give them list of topics on descriptive essays Teacher gives to them to select from the list of options provided. Teacher provides the students with model essays on the descriptive essay. Guide students to brainstorm on the topic selected based on the model given.	Developing selection skills Fluency skills	

DATE 24th July, 2019	**SUB-TOPIC**	2. write a descriptive essay using the appropriate features, tone and language	Tell students to write every idea that pops into their head about the topic selected. Guide them to organize their brainstorm after they have finished it by circling best ideas, and crossing out ideas that won't work. Let students create an outline from their brainstorm.	Writing skill Organization skill	
DURATION 120 minutes	**ASPECT** Writing	**R.P.K** students have been writing about themselves	**WRITING STAGE** Let students use the information gathered from the brainstorm and the outline to write an essay. Guide them to do peer editing here after the first draft. Students read their writing and give feedback about their writing **POST WRITING STAGE.** Let students react to the comments on the peer editing. Teacher guides students to rewrite the essay one more time using the appropriate features.	Writing skill Fluency skill Fluency skill Writing skill	

APPENDIX D

Lesson 3

CLASS: S.H.S 3

DAY, DATE DURATION	TOPIC/SUB-TOPIC ASPECT	OBJECTIVES/ R.P.K	TEACHER LEARNER ACTIVITY T.L.M	CORE POINTS	EVALUATION REMARKS
DAY	**TOPIC**	**OBJECTIVE(S)**	**T.L.M**		
Thursday	Letter writing	By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to: 1. Identify the features that characterize informal essay writing	Sample of model informal essays **PRE-WRITING STAGE** Teacher asks students about how they communicate with their peers on social media. Give them model essays on the informal letter writing in groups. Let them brainstorm on every idea that pops into their head about the topic and notice the features. <u>Note:</u> some of the ideas will be good and some will be bad. Let them write all. Guide them to create and outline their points based on the model essay given.	Development of fluency skills Development of prediction skills Development of creativity skills	
DATE 1st August, 2019	**SUB-TOPIC** Informal letter	2. Write informal letters using the appropriate features, tone and language	**WRITING STAGES** Teacher guides students in groups to write their first draft based on their points raised.	Development of writing skills	
DURATION 120 minutes	**ASPECT** Writing	R.P.K Students have been chatting with friends on the social media.	**POST WRITING STAGE.** Teacher corrects students' mistakes with them. Let them rewrite the correct essay using the appropriate features.	Development of writing skills	