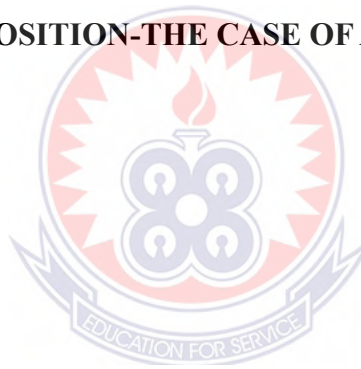


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**DETERMINANTS OF BASIC SCHOOL PUPILS' LOW PERFORMANCE IN
ENGLISH COMPOSITION-THE CASE OF AGONA EAST DISTRICT**



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2017

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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ENGLISH COMPOSITION-THE CASE OF AGONA EAST DISTRICT**



**A THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION, FACULTY OF
EDUCATIONAL STUDIES, SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE
STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (BASIC EDUCATION) DEGREE.**

AUGUST, 2017

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Education, Winneba

SUPERVISOR'S NAME: PROF. ASONABA KOFI ADDISON

SIGNATURE:

DATE:



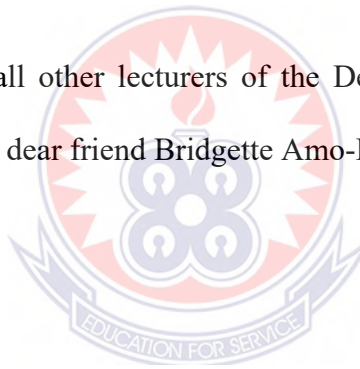
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I thank the Lord Almighty for seeing and blessing me through this course. The completion of this research is a result of so many Persons' efforts that deserve appreciation.

First and foremost I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my supervisor Professor Asonaba Kofi Addison. I really cannot put into words how incredibly grateful I am for everything he has taught me, his professional advice and constructive criticisms in my attempt to make this work a success, I sincerely thank him.

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I am equally grateful to all other lecturers of the Department of Basic Education and lastly, I am thankful to my dear friend Bridgette Amo-Darko for her support.



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my son Berry Jayden Rockson whom I conceived and brought forth during this course.

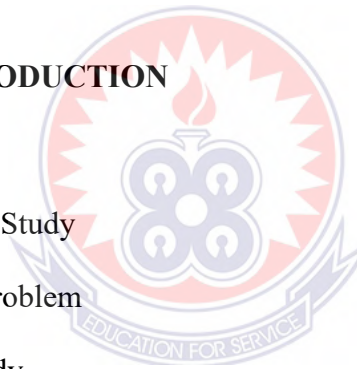


ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the determinants of basic school pupils' low performance in English composition in Junior High Schools within the Agona East District. The objectives were to identify the factors contributing to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition, to examine how these factors contribute to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition, to examine teachers' instructional strategies and their effect on the pupils' poor performance in English Composition and to evaluate pupils' attitude towards English composition and their effect on their low academic performance in the subject. The study made use of the mixed method research approach comprising both quantitative and qualitative approaches to find answers to the research questions. The target population was made up of all head teachers, English language teachers and pupils of basic schools in the Agona East District of Central Region of Ghana. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 120 respondents for the study. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used. Semi structured sets of questionnaires and interview guide where appropriate, were used to elicit responses from the respondents. The research found that pupils' performance is affected by different factors such as family background, learning environment and pupils' role in the learning process. Pupils' perceptions and teachers' teaching strategies were also identified to be a major contributing factor to pupils' downslope academic performance in English composition. It was recommended that more textbooks should be procured especially in English composition to enable pupils get access to reading material and possibly enable them borrow them to study at home. Teachers should also be encouraged to vary their teaching strategies with greater motivation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter discusses the background to the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and definition of terms.

1.1 Background to the study

Education is generally defined as an aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops his/her abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of value to the society in which he/she lives. It is the conscious training of the young to a life useful to him/her and to the society to which he belongs (Gordon, 2008). Our world today is a multicultural and globalized place. The inventions and improvements of new technologies, combined with their applications and the internet make it possible to communicate and interact with people all over the world.

According to McLaren (2007), taken together, these advances open up new possibilities on the job market and for the economy. Due to globalization, flexibility is oftentimes highly desired, and speaking another language is not just an additional qualification anymore, but rapidly has become a prerequisite for a successful career.

Education provides the child the opportunities to discover him/herself and become useful and self-reliant (McLaren, 2007). According to Gordon (2008), the various levels of education, which are applicable to the Ghanaian situation, include the pre-primary, primary, secondary, as well as tertiary. To catch up with the rest of the world, Ghana has

joined other developing countries in the quest for economic and technological improvement through education. Whereas this is the case, a trip down the lane of education indicates that education in Ghana has been declining in purpose. The public seems to believe that the standard of education in Ghana has fallen greatly (Meyer, 2008). Education over the years has been one of the important institutions in all human societies. Since the beginning of human history, it has played an invaluable role in moving societies forward and making life more meaningful to all its beneficiaries. The development of a nation is based on its level of education. Education has therefore been identified as an agent of national development (Afful-Broni & Ziggah, 2007). The school therefore is regarded as the formal agent of education. It is believed that every child who passes through any formal education should be able to read and write. Hence English composition forms a greater part of this writing (Meyer, 2008). The child's ability to read and understand any text is evidence that, the child can excel in any subject area. There is therefore the need for teachers to teach pupils the skills and strategies in English Composition (Montanari, 2014).

According to Rassaei (2013), to compose means to make something by merging parts. Composition of something therefore refers to the way in which its various parts are put together and arranged. In view of this, English Composition refers to the way of putting the various parts of English together to make meaning. According to Banks (2003), another important factor is the multicultural society we are living in. In Ghana enrolment in basic education has made significant progress but learning achievements appear to have stagnated. In the past, Ghanaian education sector strategies have tried to provide basic education for all free of private cost, concentrated assistance on increasing access in

deprived districts, shifted emphasis from hardware (school construction) to software (improvements to teacher training, learning materials, and classroom management) and emphasized aid to specific populations known to be underserved and rural. Between 2003 and 2006 the Gross Enrollment Rate in Ghana increased from 87 to 94% and the junior secondary school enrollment rate from 73 – 77%. The completion rate of primary school is currently 85% and the completion rate in junior secondary school is 65%. These are significant accomplishments in relation to the 2003 – 2015 Education Sector Plan. One key question for this new plan is whether recent increases in enrollment have been matched by an increase in achievement (GES, 2010). Collaboration between the Government of Ghana and USAID has generated several new sets of data able to respond to this question. The National Education Assessment (NEA) tested children in classes three and six in a national sample of schools in 2005 and 2007. English and mathematics achievement results from the 2005 and 2007 NEA indicate that Ghanaian primary school pupils continue to perform at levels far below proficiency. For example, in 2007, 70.62 % of class six (6) pupils performed at the minimum competency level (35% correct on the assessment) in English, the language of instruction in the upper primary grades, and only 27.69% attained the level of proficiency or above (55% correct on the assessment). Performance in mathematics was even worse, with only 48.05% of class three (3) pupils reaching the minimum competency level and 14.39% attaining proficiency (Ministry of Education, 2009). What accounts for the low level of achievement across schools in Ghana is not known.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Osindeinde (1999) states that education is an organized and sustained communication designed to bring about learning which involves the acquisition of basic and necessary skills, knowledge and competence by the learner to change his/her attitude positively towards contributing to the national economic development. It is the society that educates the child, and such education starts from early years of life. This is popularly referred to as life-long education. Education provides the child the opportunities to discover self and become useful and self-reliant. Despite the widespread interest and concern on teacher knowledge and pedagogical skills, the standard of education specifically in English continues to fall, and what counts as “subject-content knowledge for teaching” and how it relates to student performance has remained inadequately researched. It appears that most pupils cannot put meaningful sentences together in the form of writing essay. According to the Chief Examiners’ Report on the 2008 Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), poor spelling was singled out as a major cause of the poor performance by candidates in the examination. Also the report described the level of spelling during the 2008 BECE English Language paper as “terrible” and that a lot of candidates could not show thorough understanding of the questions and thereby wrote ‘shallow’ compositions. Also in 2012, the Chief Examiner indicated that limited vocabulary was a major cause of pupils’ failure in English language leading to the use of coined and inappropriate words, furthermore he indicated that some pupils could not express themselves in simple and correct English and therefore had to copy verbatim from the passage. Candidates were weak in the mechanics of the language. Prominent among them were spelling, punctuation, tenses, correct use of preposition, subject-verb agreement (concord),

syllabification, amalgamation, poor hand writing and the use of capital letters and small letters. This problem of poor spelling was also seen in Religious and Moral Education as the chief examiner indicated the following wrongly spelt words: ignorance was spelt “ignolance”, ‘pubic’ was spelt ‘public’, ‘blade-breade’, ‘hogbetsotso’ was spelt ‘obgetwotwo’, ‘Moshims’ for “Muslims; ‘fastivels’ for festivals; etc. The case of Information Communication Technology (ICT) was no exception. Here, some candidates did not understand the questions due to their poor standard in English. They therefore could not construct correct sentences and even copied wrongly spelt words that were in the question paper. This is evident that reading composition is a major problem in Basic schools. The case of low academic performance in English language in the Agona East District is devastating and it needs in-depth research to establish the cause to find a lasting solution to them. This is because in 2013, out of 1,403 pupils who wrote the BECE, 105 of them obtained grades 1-3 in English language and 852 obtained grades 5-9. In the following year, 2014, 176 pupils out of 1,535 who wrote the examination obtained grades 1-3 while 723 obtained grades 6-9. A total of 1,603 pupils wrote the same examination in 2015, and 180 obtained grades 1-3 with 1,003 obtaining between grade 6 and 9. Lastly in 2016, 163 out of 1,789 pupils obtained grades 1-3 and a total of 857 obtained grades 6-9 (Ghana Education Service, Agona East District).

The Agona West Municipal Chief Executive, (MCE) told reporters during a tour of some basic schools in line with the "My First Day at School" Programme on Thursday 23rd September 2010, that “No candidate of 10 selected Junior High Schools (JHS) in the Agona West Municipality and the Agona East District in the Central Region qualified at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) to gain admission to senior high

school”. This means that none of these candidates scored between aggregate six and aggregate twenty-four in the exams. The MCE also set up a team made up of service persons to investigate pupils’ performance in some selected subjects. The report he had was that all the pupils failed in English language composition and Mathematics. He therefore expressed regret about the poor performance of candidates and charged the Directorates of the Ghana Education Service (GES) to explore avenues to reverse the situation. (Agona West Municipal Assembly, 2010). He exhorted teachers in the Municipality to adopt positive attitudinal changes in their profession, adding that, teachers must show commitment, love and passion to enable them to serve as role models to the children. In addition, a Deputy Director of Education in charge of the Agona West Municipality, said “the 2010 BECE results was a big disgrace to the two districts”. She also made a comment as a result of pupils’ poor performance in English language in a series of District mocks organized for pupils to prepare them to write BECE. It is evident that pupils have problems in learning and communicating English in basic schools. English Composition which has been established as the surest foundation on which written communication is usually built, is almost totally non-functional in the Agona East District Basic schools. Several factors may have contributed to this non-functional state of English Composition among pupils at the basic schools. These factors are not known. This study therefore aims at investigating the factors that determine pupils’ low performance in English language Composition among selected junior high schools within the Agona East District.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish the factors responsible for the Agona East District Junior High School pupils' low performance in English composition

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The research was guided by the following objectives:

1. To identify the factors contributing to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District.
2. To examine how these factors contribute to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District.
3. To examine teachers' instructional strategies and their effect on the pupils' low performance in English Composition.
4. To evaluate pupils' attitudes towards English composition and their effect on their low academic performance in the subject.

1.5 Research Questions

The research was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that contribute to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District?
2. How do these factors contribute to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District?
3. How do the teachers' instructional strategies affect the pupils' low performance in English Composition?

4. What are pupils' attitude towards English composition and its effect on their low academic performance in the subject?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of the study is likely to inform the Agona East Directorate of Education and stakeholders in education in the District on the factors responsible for basic school pupils' low performance in English Composition.

The findings of this study will also provide information about English language teachers' approach in teaching English Composition. This will in turn help with the planning of in-service, education and training (INSET), workshops and other programmes for teachers.

The outcome of the study will serve as wake-up call and influence policies among Ghana Education Service, Municipal and District Assemblies' Stakeholders both in the areas of education and early childhood development.

Assessing the downward trend in English composition will serve as a basis to enable government to formulate policies to address challenges confronting basic schools in the country thereby finding lasting solutions to them.

Finally, the study will serve as reference point for other researchers who wish to research issues related to the teaching of English Composition in other institutions.

1.7 Delimitation and Scope of the study

Though the study examined the falling standards in pupils' education in general, it focused on the low academic performance in English composition among pupils of selected public basic schools within the Agona East District. Here an attempt was

however made to discuss some challenges pupils and teachers face and feasible recommendations suggested.

The study focused only on the ten selected schools within the District amidst several schools in the District. In view of this, it may not be possible to generalize the result of this study beyond the Agona East District. However, the results of this study could be replicated in any other Districts, or Municipalities in the country.

1.8 Definition of Terms

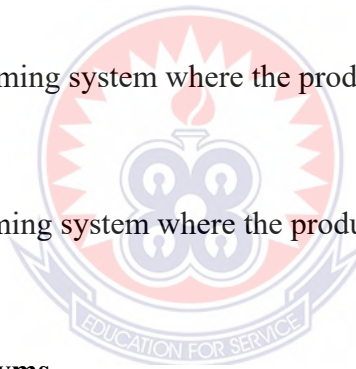
The following terms were defined:

Term : abunu

Meaning : A type of farming system where the produce is divided into two

Term : Abusa

Meaning : A type of farming system where the produce is divided into three



1.9 Abbreviations/Acronyms

AEDA	:	Agona East District Assembly
BECE	:	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CRDD	:	Curriculum Research and Development Division
CSPS	:	Computerized School Placement System
DCE	:	District Chief Executive
EFL	:	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	:	English as a Local Language
GES	:	Ghana Education Service

GSEC	:	Ghana School Examination Council
JHS	:	Junior High School
ICT	:	Information Communication Technology
LI	:	Legislative Instrument
MOE	:	Ministry of Education
NAGRAT	:	National Association of Graduate Teachers
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organization
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	:	United States of America
USAID	:	United State Agency for International Development
NEA	:	National Education Assessment
MCE	:	Municipal Chief Executive
PTA	:	Parent Teacher Association
PRP	:	Pupil Role Performance
SES	:	Socio Economic Status
SPSS	:	Statistical Product for Service Solution

1.10 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 2 focused on the review of related literature to the study. Chapter 3 discussed the methodology pivoted around design of the study, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, reliability and validity of the instrument, data collection procedure and analysis and ethical issues. Chapter 4 presented the results and findings of the research. Chapter 5

detailed the discussions of the various findings in relation to the research objectives and questions, summary of findings, conclusions, limitations and recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

This chapter reviewed the related literature on issues pertaining to this study. The literature was specifically reviewed under the following sub headings.

- Concept of Education And Academic Performance
- The Teaching and learning process
- Concept of Teaching
- Maxims of Teaching
- Concept of Learning
- Forms of Learning
- Learning Styles
- Educational Implications of Learning Styles
- Perception of Effective Teaching
- Factors That Contribute To Student's Success In External Examination
- Factors That Contribute To Student's Failure In External Examination
- Causes of Pupils' failure in English Composition
- English As An International Language
- Significant Approaches to Writing and Communication
- Approaches to Teaching of Writing
- Challenges In English Writing and Skill Development
- The Role of Perception, Attitude and Motivation in Foreign Language Learning
- Summary



2.1 Empirical Studies

2.1.1 Mismanagement of Instructional Time

Karweit (1984) reports that only about half the time in the school day these days is typically used for instruction. She continues that time allocations differed markedly among classrooms leading to uneven distribution of instructional time over various components of subjects. Karweit (1984) further argues that educational opportunities of students in the classroom where substantial proportions of available time are spent on few instructional activities instead of all, mysteriously jeopardize students' performance. Closely related to the issue of lack of equal subjects are such factors as class size and students grouping, homework, attendance and discipline. (Cotton 1990). Koomson, Akyampong and Fobih (1999) state that one major prerequisite for language instructional success is how the instructional time is managed and distributed across all segments of the language. This suggests that in teaching English language, if time is not equally allocated across the segments like grammar, composition and comprehension, one of these aspects would be lacking behind. Koomson, Akyampong and Fobih (1999) conclude that about 50% of instructional time on the average in the schools is unevenly distributed as also claimed by Karweit (1984) due to a host of factors including: late starting of schools; lateness to class; and teaching only few subjects on the time table.

2.1.2 Causes of Pupils Failure in English Composition

The dominance of mother tongue is regarded as one of the cause of poor performance in English language. Fema, (2003) was of the view that the major cause of the errors in English used by can be attributed to the interference of mother tongue with the English

language. He added that pupils often use their native language or mother tongue in all their interactions and English is only used within the environs of the classrooms and ends there.

Adedokun, (2011) also outlined inadequate qualified English language teachers also as a cause of poor performance in English language in our basic schools. Teachers who are not trained specifically for the language are made to teach it and hence poor performances from their products. Mohammed, (2002) observed that the teaching of English language is faced with many problems such as inadequate period of teaching, method of teaching and lack of adequate and useful resources. Another important cause of poor performance in English language is the negative attitude of pupils towards the learning of English language. Pupils, particularly in basic schools mostly show negative attitude toward learning of English language because they consider it foreign or not theirs. Mohammed, (2002) was of the view that most pupils put a kind of negative attitude in learning and use of English language as well as making teachers task a difficult one.

2.2 Concept of Education and Academic Performance

According to Ryan & Vowelson (1991), in educational institutions, success is measured by academic performance, or how well a student meets standards set out by authorities and the institution itself. Academic performance, according to the Cambridge Dictionary of English (1995), refers to how well a school, college, university, an individual or a group is able to perform when given a learning task, activity or one's achievement in standardized tests in academic pursuit. To Lamberg (1975), academic performance refers

to how pupils deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teacher. Academic performance is related to content and intellect, meaning that academic performance depends on the learner's competence. (Ross & Doty 1975).

Research supports the fact that student performance depends on different socio-economic, psychological and environmental factors. The findings of research studies show that student performance is affected by different factors such as Family Background, Learning Environment and Pupils Role Performance.

a. Family Background

Majoribanks (1996) holds the view that family is the key to a student's life outside of school; it is the most important influence on pupils' learning and includes factors such as socioeconomic status and family structure. The environment at home is a primary socialization agent and influences a child's interest in school and aspirations for the future.

b. Socio-economic Status (SES)

Majoribanks (1996) defines Socio-economic Status (SES) as a person's overall social position to which attainments in both the social and economic domain contribute. When used in studies of children's school achievement, SES refers to the parents or family's educational level, occupational level and income level (Jeynes, 2002). Several comprehensive reviews of the relationship between SES and educational outcomes exist. (Eamon, 2005; Majoribanks, 1996; Jeynes 2002). These studies make it clear that those children from low SES families are more likely to exhibit the following patterns in terms of educational outcomes as compared to children from high SES families:

- have lower levels of literacy, numeracy, comprehension and lower retention rates,
- earn lower test scores and are likely to drop out of school.
- exhibit higher levels of problematic school behaviour, for instance; truancy
- are more likely to have difficulties with their studies and display negative attitudes towards school.

Similarly, studies of children's educational achievements over time have also demonstrated that social economic background remains one of the major sources of educational inequality (Graetz, 1995). In other words, educational success depends very strongly on the socio-economic status of one's parents (Graetz, 1995).

The effect of parental SES on children's educational outcomes according to Barry (2005), may be neutralized, strengthened or mediated by a range of other contextual, family and individual characteristics. Parents may have a low income and a low-status occupation, for example, but nevertheless transmit high educational aspirations to their children. What family members have (material resources, for instance) can often be mediated by what family members do (for example parental support, family cohesion). The social and the economic components of socio-economic status, in other words, may have distinct and separate influences on educational outcomes. While both components are important, social factors (for instance, parents' educational attainments) have been found to be more significant than economic factors, such as a family's capacity to purchase goods and services, in explaining different educational outcomes. It is argued that families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically, foster a higher level of achievement in their children. They also may provide higher levels of psychological

support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school (Barry, 2005).

c. Family Structure

Socio-economic status may be linked to family structure. There is evidence to show that children from single-parent household do not perform well in school as children from two-parent households (Majoribanks, 1996).

Rich (2000) supports this view by explaining that children from single-parent families are likely to have lower educational performance because sole parent families on average have lower levels of income, are headed by parents with lower educational attainment and are less likely to be in the labour force. According to Rich (2000), other factors that are likely to adversely affect educational outcomes of such children compared to those from two-parent families are said to include:

- the custodial parent having less time to spend with children in terms of supervision of school-work and maintaining appropriate levels of discipline,
- increased responsibilities on children such as childcare roles, domestic duties which impede the time available for school work; and
- the nature of parent-child relationships in sole parent families may cause emotional and behavioural problems for the child.

Divorce has been found to negatively affect academic performance (Jeynes, 2002) as pupils whose parents are divorced are among those who scored lowest on a standardized test. Possible explanations for this relationship, according to Majoribanks (1996) and Jeynes (2002), is that divorce can cause a family's socio-economic status to decrease and parental connection harmed. This reveals that the quality of parents and home

background of a student goes a long way to predict the quality and regularity of the satisfaction and provision of a child's functional survival and academic needs. Poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child, usually yield poor academic performance of the child.

On the other hand, where a child suffers parental and material deprivation and care due to divorce or death, or absconding of one of the parents, the child's schooling may be affected as the mother alone may not be financially buoyant to pay the school fees, purchase books and uniforms, such a child may play truant, thus his/her performances in school may be adversely affected (Shittu cited in Basil, 2007).

Similarly, good parenting supported by strong economic home background could enhance strong academic performance of the child. This further predicts academic performance where the child is properly counseled in the choice of his/her courses and vocation that matches his mental ability, interest and capability.

d. Learning Environment

Barry (2005) holds the view that a student's educational outcome and academic success are greatly influenced by the type of school they attend. The school one attends is the institutional environment that sets the parameter of a student's learning experience. Depending on the environment a student can either close or open the doors that lead to academic achievement.

A learning environment that is not free of barriers, obstacles or distractions such as noise, gas or smoke pollution can constitute health hazards, which in turn affect or reduce the student's concentration or conceptual focus to learning (Sprinthall cited in Basil, 2007). According to Basil (2007), markets and garages located near schools have always posed a

threat to pupils. Noise and pollution from these sources have always endangered pupils' life and concentration. Therefore for an effective learning and high academic performance, schools in both rural and sub-urban and urban areas should be located off zones characterized with smoke or gas pollution, market centers or garages, as conducive learning environments stimulate learning, understanding and high perception.

Crosnoe, Johnson & Elder (2004) have suggested that school sector (public or private) and class size are two important structural components of schools. Private schools tend to have better funding and smaller class size than Public schools. The additional funding of Private schools lead to better academic performance and more access to resources such as computers, which have been shown to enhance academic achievement (Eamon, 2005). Smaller class size creates more intimate setting and therefore can increase teacher-pupil bonding which has also been shown to have a positive effect on pupils' success.

According to Danesty (2004), other factors that compliment environmental and socio-economic factors to produce high academic achievements and performance include good teaching, counselling, good administration, good seating arrangement and good buildings. Dilapidated buildings, lacking mentally stimulating facilities that are characterized with low or no seating arrangements will also be destructive.

Danesty (2004) indicates that the innovative environment do stimulate head start learning and mental perception. It has also been proved that pupils who come from simulative environments with laboratory equipment or those that are taught with rich instructional aids and pictures perform better than those trained without them. Thus, teaching and learning should be done under organized, planned and fortified environment with

instructional aids to stimulate pupils' sense of conception, perception and concentration to facilitate systematic understanding and acquisition of knowledge in them.

In sum, a combination of a healthy family background, good environment plus the child being educated in a conducive environment with a fortified learning or instructional aids and motivational incentives prompt academic performance while a lack of this will retard academic performance.

e. Pupils Role Performance.

Pupils Role Performance (SRP), according to Barry (2005), is how an individual fulfils the role of a student in an educational institution. SRP involves factors such as Gender and Extracurricular Activities. The effect sex has on a student's academic achievement has been debated and heavily researched over the past several decades (Chambers & Schreiber 2004). Past research has indicated an academic gap between the sexes, with boys ahead of girls. However more recent research shows that the achievement gap has been narrowing and that in some instance girls have higher academic achievement than boys (Eamon, 2005; Majoribanks, 1996 and Jeynes, 2002).

According to Jeynes (2002), there are several explanations for this increasing gender. These include biological differences, gender biases (such as reading being seen as not masculine), teaching, curricula and assessment (for instance less structured approaches to teaching grammar may have weakened boys), literacy performance and socioeconomic factors. The last explanation is of particular interest, especially the finding that the gender gap continues within each socio-economic level (Majoribanks, 1996). That is, girls have been found to out-perform boys within high or low socio-economic groups. Furthermore, the performance of boys deteriorates more rapidly than the performance of girls as they

move down the socio-economic scale. As noted above, the relationship between the performance of boys and socio-economic status is often mediated or partially explained by family structure.

A consensus on whether or not a pupil's participation in extracurricular activities such as sports will have a positive effect on academic performance has not been reached. From a theoretical point of view, extracurricular activities are viewed as boosting academic performance (Hunt, 2005). Coleman's multiple role theory posits that extracurricular activities provide additional complimentary role for the pupils and that it benefits the pupils academically because the added role of athlete, for example, increases self-esteem and overall participation/interest in school, which can boost grades (Hunt, 2005).

2.3 The Teaching and Learning Process

Teaching-learning process is the heart of education. This depends on the fulfillment of the aims and objectives of education. It is the most powerful instrument of education to bring about desired changes in the pupils. Teaching and learning are related terms. In teaching - learning process, the teacher, the learner, the curriculum and other variables are organized in a systematic way to attain some pre-determined goal (Bruner cited in Siaw, 2009).

It is informative to examine the ideal teaching-learning process, as proposed by Laurillard (1994) who argues that there are four aspects of the teaching-learning process. These are: discussion, interaction, adaptation and reflection.

Discussion to Laurillard (1994), is between the teacher and the learner. Interaction is between the learner and some aspect of the world defined by the teacher. Adaptation is of

the world by the teacher and action by the learner. Reflection is on the learner's performance by both teacher and learner. Laurillard (1994) considers how different educational media and styles can be described in these terms. For example, a textbook represents a one-way flow of knowledge from the teacher's conceptual knowledge to the student's conceptual knowledge.

2.4 Concept of Teaching

To Smith (1997), teaching is a system of action involving an agent, an end in view and a situation including two sets of factors-those over which the agent has no control (such as class size, size of classroom, physical characteristics of pupils) and those that the teacher can modify (such as ways of asking questions or ideas gleaned). Smith therefore defines teaching as undertaking certain ethical tasks or activities, the intention of which is to induce learning.

Tamakloe, Amedahe and Atta (2005) have defined teaching as directing knowledge towards the learner. To Kochhar (2004), teaching is not a mechanical process but a rather intricate, exacting and challenging job. Though teaching is poorly paid, Kochhar explains that its riches are of a different order, less tangible but more lasting - that is satisfaction of personal fulfilment. Farrant (1996) explains teaching as a "process that facilitates learning". Teaching and learning are therefore described as the two sides of a coin because teaching does not happen without a learner (Amissah, Sam-Tagoe, Amoah & Mereku, 2002). Some other definitions given to teaching by Amissah et al (2002) are as follows:

- Teaching is the means whereby an experienced member of a group guides and directs pupils in their total growth and development.
- It is also the activity that the teachers demonstrate to reflect their philosophy of education.
- Teaching is an interpersonal influence aimed at changing the way or behaviour in which other persons can or will behave.
- It is a system of actions intended to induce learning.
- It is an activity aimed at the achievement of learning and practiced in such a way as to respect the learners' intellectual integrity and capacity.

The above definitions show how teaching has been subjected to a variety of descriptions and definitions. While some authors describe teaching as an art because it gives the teacher an opportunity to do something creative like molding personalities and the mind, others describe teaching as a science because it hinges on a specified body of knowledge - psychology. In this sense, Kochhar (2004) asserts that “teaching is a complex art of guiding pupils through a variety of selected experiences towards the attainment of a widening field of learning”. Hence teaching directs growth and development. As the art involves the mind, the heart and the hand, so is teaching (Amisshah et al, 2002). The authors assert that teaching is the art of inducing pupils to behave in such ways that are assumed to lead to learning. This connotes that teaching is all about creativity because the personality is at play. It is out of passion that a person can teach effectively and it takes a creative teacher to impact on the learner. Therefore teaching can be defined as the art and a conscious act of transmitting knowledge, skills, attitude and values in a systematic and an orderly procedure to induce learning for positive growth and development.

2.5 Maxims of Teaching

Teaching activities and instructional procedure are performed by using maxims of teaching. The term 'Maxim of teaching', according to Smith (1997), may be defined as rules for presenting terms and concepts to make them easy to comprehend in classroom teaching. They are the guidelines for teaching. The maxims of teaching are very helpful in obtaining the active involvement and participation of the learners in the teaching - learning process. They quicken the interest of the learners and motivate them to learn. They make the pupils attentive to the teaching- learning process. According to Kochhar (2004), a good teacher must be familiar with the general maxims for effective teaching, some of which are the following: Proceed from the known to the unknown, Proceed from Simple to Complex, Proceed from the Concrete to Abstract, Proceed from Particular to General, Proceed from Psychological to Logical, Proceed from Whole to Part, and from Analysis to Synthesis.

It must be accepted that in the ultimate analysis maxims are meant to be our servants and not masters. Moreover, by and large, they are interrelated. Different maxims suit different situations. It is therefore essential that a judicious use be made of each maxim. They are means and not end in themselves.

2.5.1 Characteristics of Good Teaching

A good teacher is one who knows the capabilities of his learners and has understanding of what his or her pupils need to learn. This implies that the skill of teaching lies in knowing who, what and how to teach and above all to be able to judge. (Farrant, 1996). Good teaching demands great skill irrespective of the level of teaching. It does not

depend on the learner any more as Amissah et al (2002) indicate. Thus teaching has become complicated due to the increasingly intricate phase of human personality and society. The idea is that a teacher must bear in mind certain principles of good teaching while dealing with the pupils.

According to Kochhar (2004), good teachers exhibit the following characteristics:

- Recognize individual differences among learners,
- Create the learning situation,
- Challenge the child to learn,
- Encourage general development,
- Cause, facilitate and promote learning.

It is clear from the above discussion that efficient or good teachers must have a sound knowledge of what their learners must know and have the ability to relate the content, method, sequence and pace of work to individual needs; to use the environment and appropriate media to support learning, use a range of teaching strategies skilfully and have enthusiasm for the subject (Farrant, 1996). It is the teacher's duty and vital responsibility to motivate pupils in ascertaining their inner strengths and abilities and to discover what truly inspires them. The good teacher is therefore the one who has the willingness and passion to teach, respects and understands the individual learner, and creates learning situations that build up values in the individual learner for personal and societal satisfaction. It is vital therefore for the teachers to teach what they can teach better in order to facilitate effective learning for the pupils (Siaw, 2009).

2.6 Concept of Learning

Learning is defined as a relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of prior experience. (Brown, Amuah, Anyage, Frimpong & Koomson, 2000). To Brown et al, learning is understood as the modification of behaviour through practice, training, or experience. This is supplemented with the following important components of learning:

- Learning involves change, but not all changes reflect learning.
- Learning is reflected in behaviour, the change in behaviour should occur as a result of experience, practice or training and the practice or experience must be reinforced in order for learning to occur. Learning, according to Farrant (1996), is the process by which we acquire and retain attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities that cannot be attributed to inherited behaviour patterns or physical growth. To Farrant, capacity for learning is innate and is based on psychological factors while rate of learning is based on both inherited and environmental factors. In contrast to this assertion, Skinner (as cited in Farrant, 1996) opines that learning is seen as a series of experiences, each of which influences behaviour. Learning results should therefore be considered in terms of understanding the core processes within the content standards.

Farrant further explains that as much as the teacher's job is concerned, it is his duty to help the learner go through each of the learning stages in an efficient manner. Efficient learning therefore requires readiness, motivation and involvement on the part of the learner.

2.7 Forms of Learning

Five forms of learning identified by Smith and Blake (2005) are formal, informal, incidental, problem based and situated learning. Formal learning follows a curriculum and a sequence of planned teaching and learning activities. Informal learning is not structured like the classroom situation but the learner sets out to learn something for himself. It is achieved through observation, discussion with others, asking questions, and even making mistakes and learning from them. Incidental learning happens as the result of other activities. In Situated learning, the knowledge acquired is used in the same situation in which it is gained. With Problem-based learning, activities are associated with solving a problem. The set problem can be in a formal setting in order to result in particular learning outcomes, or the learning may be achieved informally through working on a real life problem.

Billet (as quoted in Agbenatoe, 2011) categorizes the forms of knowledge that are required for people to work effectively in to: ‘prostitutional’ (referring to knowing about things for example, facts, theories), ‘procedural’ that is learning how to do things, ‘dispositional’ which refers to the attitudes and how to interact and behave and ‘strategic knowledge’ (Gott as cited in Agbenatoe, 2011), which involves the ability to make judgments (knowing when to apply which knowledge to which problem).

Dreyfus (as cited in Agbenatoe, 2011) proposes an influential five-stage model of expertise development. This model tells the stages through which a learner moves from being “empty vessels” to being filled with knowledge to become constructors of knowledge. These are ‘novice’, ‘advanced beginner’, ‘competent’, ‘proficient’ and ‘expert’. People who are highly expert in a task move to what is known as ‘automaticity’.

This is where the task can be carried out automatically. This suggests that learning is supposed to progress learners (p. 15).

2.8 Learning Styles

Learning styles are the general approaches –for example, global or analytic, auditory or visual –that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject.

These styles are “the overall patterns that give general direction to learning behavior” (Cornett, 1983, p. 9)

Learning style was defined by Dunn & Griggs, (1988) as “the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others” (Dunn & Griggs, 1988,)

Giles, Pitre and Womack (2003) refer to learning styles as the uniqueness of how each learner receives and processes new information through their senses. The National Association of Secondary Principals of United States of America (as cited in Giles et al, 2003) defines learning styles as “the composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment”. Some of the other phrases used interchangeably with learning styles include perceptual styles, learning modalities, and learning preferences (Giles et al, 2003).

Giles et al (2003) point out that each individual is born with certain preferences towards particular styles but culture, experience and development influence these preferences. The four most common learning styles are visual, aural, reading-writing, and tactile. Most people learn through all modalities but have certain strengths and weakness in a specific

modality. Some people have an equal propensity for more than one style, which is titled as the multimodal style. This preference can be determined through various testing instruments. Once a person's learning style is ascertained, accommodations can be made to increase academic achievements and creativity, as well as improve attitudes toward learning. The different learning styles are explained as follows.

a. The Visual (Spatial) Learning Style

The Visual learner processes information most effectively when information is seen. Depictions could include charts, graphs, flow charts, and all the symbolic arrows, circles, hierarchies and other devices that instructors use to represent what could have been presented in words. These learners think in pictures and have vivid imaginations. Most people are classified as visual learners. A visual learner's suggestions focus on the use of visual aids to increase information processing (Giles et al, 2003).

Learning strategies for Visual Learning style

Giles et al (2003) indicate that to help visual learners, teachers need to:

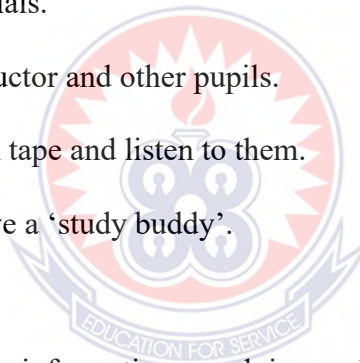
- Replace words with symbols or initials
- Translate concepts into pictures and diagrams.
- Underline or highlight notes or textbooks with different colours.
- Practice turning visuals back into words.
- Make flashcards of key information with words, symbols and diagrams.

b. The Aural Learning Style

In the view of Giles et al (2003), aural learners process information most effectively when the information is spoken or heard. These learners respond well to lectures and discussions and are excellent listeners. They also like to talk and enjoy music and drama. When trying to recall information, aural learners can often ‘hear’ the way someone told them the information. An aural learner needs to discuss the new information that point to the benefits of obtaining information in an oral language format.

Learning Strategies for Aural Learning Style

- Attend lectures and tutorials.
- Discuss topics with instructor and other pupils.
- Put summarized notes on tape and listen to them.
- Join a study group or have a ‘study buddy’.
- Tape or record lectures.
- Talk aloud when recalling information or solving problems



c. The Reading-Writing Learning Style

Reading-Writing learners process information very efficiently when presented in a written language format. This type of learner benefits greatly from instructors who use the blackboard to highlight salient points or provide outlines of the lecture material. When trying to recall information, reading/writing learner finds training manuals very comprehensive if they are put into written language format (Giles et al, 2003).

Learning Strategies for Reading-Writing Learning Style

- Write out important information again.
- Read notes silently.
- Organise diagrams into statements.
- Rewrite the ideas and principles in other words.
- Make flashcards of words and concepts that need to be memorised.

d. The Kinesthetic-Tactile Learning Style

Giles et al (2003) explain that kinesthetic-tactile learner processes information actively through physical means. Kinesthetic learning refers to whole body movement while tactile leaning refers only to the sense of touch. These learners gesticulate when speaking, are poor listeners, and lose interest in long speeches. Most pupils who do not perform well in school may be Kinesthetic-tactile learners, if teaching methods are devoid of practical activities. The crux of this learning style is that the learner is connected to real situations through experience, example, practice or simulation. A Kinesthetic-tactile learner does well in ‘hands on’ demonstrations and field experiences.

Learning Strategies for Kinesthetic-tactile Learning Style

- Sit near the instructor in classroom situations.
- Read aloud from textbooks and notes.
- Copy key points onto large writing surface such as chalkboard or easel board.
- Copy key points using word processing software.
- Listen to audiotapes of notes while exercising.

- Take in information through field trips, laboratories, trial and error, exhibits, collections, and hands-on examples.
- Put real life examples into notes summary.
- Recall experiments and role-play.

2.9 Educational Implications of Learning Styles

According to Giles et al (2003), a teacher who uses the ideas of learning styles exposes their pupils to many approaches to intellectual exercise. The activities planned by these teachers are more pupils-centred than traditional activities. Three steps have been pointed out in implementing learning styles in education. The first step is to diagnose the preferred learning style of the pupils. Secondly, the teacher has to outline the group preferences and weaknesses and lastly when teaching an individual, teachers should present the most difficult concepts in a style preferred by the learner. Easier concepts should be introduced in a different style. When teaching an entire class, teachers should use all learning styles in their presentation if they are to reach every student.

2.10 Perception of Effective Teaching

It is not unusual that individuals have diverse perspectives and opinions. They might agree on certain topics, but display contrasting views on others. This appears to be true for teachers and pupils as well. Furthermore, research has shown that teacher and student perceptions were not always in compliance with each other (Barkhuizen, 1998; Block, 1994; Nunan, 1986; Peacock, 1998). Nunan (1986) presented results from two research studies along with his own findings on the investigation of teacher and student

expectations and perceptions regarding the usefulness of various language teaching activities. Contrary to teachers' beliefs who rated communicative practices as highly helpful in Eltis' and Low's study (1985), Alcorso and Kalantzis (1985) found out that pupils rather favored traditional, non-communicative learning activities such as grammar exercises, memorizing, and repetition work (Nunan, 1986).

Moreover, Nunan's own research confirmed this apparent mismatch of teacher and student perceptions. Nunan (1986) selected ten of the most and least popular student learning activities and had surveyed sixty teachers from the same program as Willing (1985). A comparison of these findings revealed that pupils and teachers clearly differed in their views on the degree of importance and usefulness of particular activities. Similar findings were obtained by Block (1993), who had collected data through observations and oral diary accounts from a semi-intensive English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class and its teacher. Additionally, Barkhuizen's (1998) and Peacock's (1998) studies, which had investigated South African and Hong Kong Chinese English as a Local Language (ELLs), revealed analogous results. On account of Peacock's (1998) claim of a presumed link between the use of certain instructional methods and student achievement, Green's (1993) statement that "a mismatch between student needs and expectations and the style of the teacher, may result in learning problems for the pupils" (p. 2) and Horwitz' (1988) opinion that certain beliefs might "result in negative learning outcomes" (p. 292) reveal significant implications for foreign language educators. They were of the opinion that the gap between teacher and student perceptions could cause the learner to lose confidence and lead to dissatisfaction with the class, and ultimately result in a reluctance to participate in certain learning activities (Green, 1993; Horwitz, 1988).

Over the decades, numerous studies on teaching effectiveness and the behaviours of effective teachers especially as perceived by pupils in different contexts worldwide have been published both outside (Lee, 2010; Chen 2012; Wichadee & Orawiwatnakul, 2012) the domain of foreign language education. Although information from studies and the relevant literature on general teaching effectiveness can provide useful insights into the present study as certain characteristics that describe effective teaching are common among teachers, there are others which differ among them depending on the subject they teach.

According to Borg (2006) a language teacher's command of the target language was also highlighted by other relevant studies. Brosh (1996) found that a group of Israeli high school pupils perceived good language proficiency as being an essential element which enables the teacher to conduct his lesson without inhibitions, fear and insecurity as well as to motivate and challenge the pupils. Park & Lee's study (2006) investigated the characteristics of effective English teachers as perceived by high school pupils in Korea. Although variables such as gender and performance seemed to have contributed significantly in the way pupils ranked certain characteristics, they all ranked pedagogical knowledge the highest and agreed on the importance of reading and speaking proficiency, the teacher's ability to arouse pupils' interest in learning English and build their self-confidence. The results of the aforementioned studies are further supported by Wichadee and Orawiwatnakul's study (2012) which indicated that both low and high proficiency pupils placed great emphasis on organizational and communication skills and on the teacher's good proficiency of English. A teacher's pleasant and supportive personality as well as the use of more interesting activities, were also reported to be crucial in creating a

good learning atmosphere. Findings from a study conducted by Chen (2012) were grouped into two broad categories relating to personal trait-related and classroom teaching-related characteristics. The former mainly included emotion, kindness, fairness, lenience and responsibility, while the latter category was concerned with skills and techniques of lesson delivery and error correction, language used in teaching, classroom activity organization and classroom atmosphere creation.

Lesson delivery was also considered of utmost importance with particular emphasis on the use of various teaching methods and teaching materials and the employment of group work. Similarly, Bell (2005) and Lee (2010) assert that the language teacher should maximize student involvement by making use of group work and exposing pupils to more communicative activities. However, the need to engage pupils in such activities in a language they are not fully competent suggests a more tolerant stance on the part of the teacher towards learners' linguistic errors (Brosh, 1996)

A review of studies which have been carried out on the characteristics and qualities of effective EFL teachers on a number of variables, have shown that despite the differences in the level of importance given to various features, there seems to be a strong consensus on the types of knowledge and behaviours that language teachers need to possess and display. Among these are competence in the target language along with good communication skills, ability to deliver the lesson in meaningful and engaging ways, the use of group work to encourage greater degree of learner involvement, ability to maintain a motivating and supportive learning environment and tolerance to learners' linguistic errors (Lee, 2010).

2.11 Factors that Contribute to Student's Success in External Examination

Hipp (2005) holds the view that exams are set to assess not just the knowledge of a course but also pupils' ability to analyse the material, to problem solving and use the concepts in a practical way. Therefore rote learning (memorisation) of material for exams is rarely the best strategy. Dixon (1988) adds that preparing for exams is a task most pupils dread as it involves time and hard work and is the cause of a lot of stress and anxiety. Hipp (2005) outlines some of the effective ways to success towards external examination as: Planning and Time Management, Coverage of Syllabus and Regulations, and Managing Revision.

Planning and Time Management

A well-known saying is "if you fail to plan, you plan to fail". Planning and time management is a key to success. According to Hipp (2005), one needs to use a blank weekly planner to organize study period available to the person. The person should try not to review for more than a couple of hours before the exam- all night cramming sessions are seldom beneficial.

Coverage of Syllabus and Regulations

In the view of Dixon (1988), it is important to get the syllabus of the subjects chosen and study the topics by getting the required textbooks and study consistently over a long period. Dixon (1998) advises pupils to avoid reliance on 'short notes' at the beginning of learning a topic. According to him, the fact about the topics must sink into the pupils. He also advises pupils to study the regulations governing examinations, particularly about desired behaviour in examination, so that pupils do not ignorantly involve themselves in malpractice with serious consequences.

Hipp (2005) suggests that it is relevant to learn to answer questions after each topic. This, according to him, will enable the pupils to determine how far they have assimilated the topic. Pupils may use past questions, or form their own related questions on the specific topics studied. It is of importance to answer such questions in writing, not glibly orally. Dixon (1988) advocates that it is good to share knowledge and exchange ideas with mates since one may not have access to all textbooks or knowledge on a topic. He also advises that pupils should not join in cramming model answers prepared by somebody else.

Managing Revision

Revision is an indispensable part of preparation for exam. Revision helps learning to mature. According to Dixon (1988), one completes his course and learns well but it is not the end of it. It should be revised again and again. It is a fact, if pupils study a chapter well and don't revise it, what they have studied will vanish with the passage of time. Revision does not take much time because you have already learnt it but you revise to refresh your learning. Another advantage is that each time you revise you learn more and you get new ideas.

It is important to keep in mind at all times that exams are a test of recall, not recognition. All revision and exam preparation should be directed towards practising and testing recall. Many pupils make the mistake of simply reading through their notes again and again until they feel they 'know' it all. However, what they are really learning is to recognise the material. Learning to recall the information requires a much more active approach.

2.12 Factors That Contribute To Student's Failure in External Examination

Poor academic performance, according to Aremu and Sokan (2003) is a performance that is adjudged by the examinee. Aremu and Oluwole (2000) stress that academic failure is not only frustrating to the pupils and the parents, its effects are equally grave on the society in terms of dearth of manpower in all spheres of the economy and politics.

Morakinyo (2003) believes that the falling level of academic achievement is attributable to teachers' non-use of verbal reinforcement strategy. Adesemowo (2005) found out that the attitude of some teachers to their job is reflected in their poor attendance to lessons, lateness to school, unsavory comments about pupils' performance that could damage their ego, poor method of teaching and the likes which affect pupils' academic performance.

The question therefore is what is the cause of this fallen standard and poor academic performance of pupils? Is the fault entirely that of teachers or pupils or both of them? Is it that pupils of today are non-achievers because they have low intelligent quotient and a good neutral mechanism to be able to act purposefully, think rationally and deal effectively with academic tasks? Or is it because teachers are no longer putting in much commitment as before? Or is it in teachers' method of teaching and interaction with pupils? Or is the poor performance of pupils caused by parents' neglect, separation and poverty?

2.13 English as an International Language

The importance of learning another language is an acknowledged fact. The idea of teaching languages already exists for many centuries now and is not just a recent trend or

passing impulse in education. In the Western World, Latin was the first dominant language used for educational, religious, commercial and governmental purposes. Due to political changes in Europe during the sixteenth century, its influential status gradually decreased and was replaced by languages such as French, Italian and English (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). However, not only historical factors were the reason for the increasing importance of the English language, but, according to Crystal (1997), geographical and socio-cultural aspects also played a significant role in this development. Initially, the spread of English was promoted by Britain's industrial and trading leadership in the world by the beginning of the nineteenth century, thus, leading to the necessity of a sufficient knowledge of the English language if one wanted to understand and learn more about new innovations and advances made by Britain. In addition, British and American colonialism as well as the migration of English-speaking individuals to other parts of the world further contributed to this (McKay, 2002). The growing importance and expansion of the English language has also been due to fortunate circumstances, because in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries English was the language of the leading colonial nation - Britain. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was the language of the leader of the industrial revolution - also Britain. In the late-nineteenth century and the early twentieth it was the language of the leading economic power - the USA. As a result, when new technologies brought new linguistic opportunities, English emerged as a first-rank language in industries which affected all aspects of society - the press, advertising, broadcasting, motion pictures, sound recording, transport and communications. (Crystal, 1997, p. 110-11)

For these reasons, English has become the most widely studied foreign language in the world (Kitao & Kitao, 1999; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Nevertheless, to be fully acknowledged as an international language by definition, the respective language should be spoken by a large amount of native speakers of another language to be considered as a means of wider communication and since English is often used for communicative purposes by individuals from different countries as well as between ones of one country, it fulfills this criterion (McKay, 2002).

The status of English differs in various countries around the world. In countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Ireland it is either used exclusively or maintains the role as dominant language. However, there are also some countries, where it serves as a communicative instrument for people who do not share one common national language (Kitao & Kitao, 1999). This is the case with India, where English is the medium of communication and the language of the government. Furthermore, it is in fact some kind of status symbol and apparently has an effect on how one is seen by others in society. Another significant reason is to secure one's financial and professional success, because proficiency in English is nowadays often needed to achieve a higher education and has become a prerequisite for a successful career (Kitao & Kitao, 1999; McKay, 2002). In this sense, it concurs with Crystal's view on the achievement of global status of a language. He believes that a language attains this stage as soon as it acquires a 'special role that is recognized in every country' (Crystal, 1997, p. 2). According to McKay (2002), this significant status is then realized through endorsing the study of English as a foreign language, or by making it an official language of a particular country. Nevertheless, the majority of countries in the world learn English

as a foreign language. Thus, it does not serve primarily for everyday life communicative purposes, but its study has rather varying motivations for different individuals.

Some of the main reasons for learning English may include studying it as a hobby or for traveling purposes. It is said that international travel promoted the need for a common language; thus, much information about a country is disseminated in English, and it is commonly spoken by people working in the tourist industry, for instance, at airports, on tourist's tours and attractions, in hotels and shops, which are frequently visited by tourists (Kitao & Kitao, 1999; McKay, 2002). Moreover, the dominance of the English language in popular culture such as in the music and film industry contributed to the spread of this respective language and further augmented its popularity. Songs and movies, which are known all around the world, are generally written in English, and are oftentimes of American or British origin (Kitao & Kitao, 1999). However, not only did popular music and films instigate many to learn the language in order to understand them, but also the widely used practice of publishing electronic and printed media, such as news and other information as well as fictional publications in the particular language, was an additional factor for people's motivation to acquire at least a certain level of proficiency (Kitao & Kitao, 1999; McKay, 2002). Undoubtedly, some of the most important uses of English are for educational, business, diplomatic and professional purposes. In order to communicate with each other, English is used as a common denominator for communication at international conferences, trade and business meetings, and within many international organizations (Kitao & Kitao, 1999).

All of the above mentioned factors facilitated the spread of the English language to various areas and countries all over the world. Adequate knowledge of this respective

language is not only useful for entertainment purposes (e.g. travels, popular films and music), but it moreover, plays an essential role in academia and can be seen as a prerequisite in order to become a member of a global community, and to successfully take part in a diverse society.

In accordance to the perception of reasons for learning a foreign language and of the kind of competence level learners should obtain, the methods for language teaching have changed several times throughout history. Richards and Rodgers (1986) state that those changes in language teaching methods not only reflect and acknowledge the shift of attitudes towards proficiency that is thought to be desirable for learners of the language, but that it also mirrors the alterations in the way the nature of language in general and the nature of language learning is understood during that particular time.

Before the sixteenth century, Latin held a central status as the language of education, government, commerce and religion in Europe (Richards & Rodgers, 1986), thus making it a necessity to learn. Although French replaced Latin as lingua franca during the sixteenth and seventeenth century; turning it from being a living to a dead language, the study of Latin grammar and rhetoric, nevertheless, formed the basis for foreign language teaching between the seventeenth and nineteenth century. The communicative aspect of language learning was mainly ignored within this approach, whereas a significant focus was laid on the learning and memorizing of grammar rules and translating exemplary sentences, which were supposed to demonstrate the grammatical system of the language (Kitao & Kitao, 1999; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Howatt, 2004). This line of teaching a foreign language later became known as the Grammar-Translation method.

2.14 Significant Approaches to Writing and Communication

Learning to write effectively is a fundamental component of education and the ability to do so could be a great asset for pupils throughout their lives (Berdan, 2006). It is pertinent to know that ‘writing is not an innate natural ability but is a cognitive ability’ (Harris, 1993, p. 78) and has to be acquired through years of training or schooling. It is a visual medium and both the printed and hand written pages are visual objects (Kress, 1997). Writing, ranges from hastily written notes to formal carefully argued essays on complex issues and functions as a communicative act that transmits information and links people together (Browne, 1993). Simply, the purpose of writing is to write and convey the message. All writers need to understand the purpose of their writing. The purpose of writing could be to entertain, persuade or explain something to a reader (Bunting, 1998). The audience should be identified at the outset because it helps the writer with decisions about the tone, the choice of the language and the structure of writing. This is applied as much to creative writing as to any other form of writing. In Ghana, pupils are not taught appropriately that the purpose of writing is determined by the writer’s attitude and his selection of structure and language. Although, in Ghana, English is taught as a second language and writing is a compulsory skill, during the whole period of education but pupils in schools face great difficulty to express themselves in simple English. Thus, the problem which the researcher identifies is that in Ghana, the teaching of writing tends to maintain more focus on memorisation of readymade answers from help books rather than on the development of communicative and creative abilities (Khan, 2011, p. 111).

2.15 Approaches to the teaching of writing

There are a variety of approaches such as the genre approach, the product approach, the process approach, and the process genre approach which can make a positive difference in a typical Ghanaian classroom. These approaches will be discussed separately to describe their advantages and shortcomings.

Genre Approach

A genre approach is a different way of looking at writing. Kachru (1992) asserts that an imaginative or an innovative function of English language refers to the use of English language in various literary genres. *Genre* means different types of writing; it refers to the overall structure and purpose of a text and the register which is more concerned with details (Collerson, 1988). To Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992, p. 98), *genre* is a concept which is traced back through French to Latin 'generare' (to beget). Littlefair (1992, p. 10) defines genre 'as a purposeful and communicative activity'. Cowley (2004, p. 79) believes 'by approaching creative writing via genre', pupils' interest and motivation can be enhanced. So, it is appropriate to employ genre approach in a Ghanaian classroom, because a genre approach views how language is used for the particular purpose in the particular context (Martin, 1992). The pupils should have knowledge of genre to understand the purposes, conventions and strategies to write successfully in different ways because by approaching creative writing via genre their interest and motivation can be enhanced. (Cowley, 2004, p. 79). In addition, genres are socially recognized text types and in teaching writing, generic forms should be explicitly taught (Graves, 1983). However, the knowledge of genre does not ensure the teachers' ability to enhance pupils' capability in the writing process. It also fails to provide learners knowledge about the

operation of the language that may hinder effective communication in writing and critical analysis of the text (Hasan, 1996). Therefore, the genre approach has limitations. It is desirable to discuss some other approaches which should be used in Ghana to perform the innovative and creative functions.

The Product Approach

In the product approach, it is seen that the instruction proceeds from the perspective that one type of writing, for instance, a literary journalistic essay is suitable for all the pupils. In this approach, ‘the focus of instruction is on pupils’ finished products. The various features of an essay are described in general terms, for example, introduction, body and conclusion. It is not mentioned that different kinds of writing are required for different situations or different disciplines. (Williams, 1998, p. 46). The product approach presents the teacher at the centre of class activities. The shortcoming of the product approach, in the light of research and experience, is an assumption that pupils can write correctly from the editing marks teachers put on papers (Mansfield, 1993). It is also important to note that in a Ghanaian classroom, emphasis is laid on the product approach. It is rightly pinpointed that “the product-oriented classroom, fails to introduce pupils to collaborative writing and concentrates on literature and reading, not on writing” (Williams, 1998, p. 47). Therefore, Andres (1993) suggests that in a product-oriented classroom, teachers should develop a curriculum to make the pupils to convey their thoughts and emotions.

The Process Approach

The process approach helps the pupils through various stages of composing. As Graves (1994, p. 80) says, in a process approach ‘writers follow a simple pattern: select, compose, read; select, compose, read’. In a process approach, teachers recognize that writing is not just a product but a process that involves thinking and shaping meaning. It also views pupils as authors and treats their written work as meaningful (Bunting, 1998). The emphasis is on the process rather than on the product. The process approach stresses ‘‘writing activities which move learners from the generation of ideas and the collection of data through to the ‘publication’ of a finished text’’. (Tribble, 1996, p. 37). Moreover, the process approach views writing as a ‘complex, recursive and creative process and learning to write requires the development of an efficient composing process’ (Silva & Matsuda, 2002, p. 261). The pupils work in groups and these groups become collaborative teams. The peer or shared writing encourages pupils to reflect on all aspects of writing (Graves, 1983). The teacher is a facilitator (Elbow & Belanoff, 2000). He/she extends the writing abilities of the pupils by suggesting how to improve the content, organization and vocabulary in writing (Browne, 1993, p. 36). Teachers should themselves often write to understand the process of writing the pupils undergo (Graves, 1983). In addition, the process approach to writing is built around audience, purpose and form. The audience for the student could be the teacher and peers; he needs to have an understanding of his audience’s expectations and prior knowledge, because these will affect the content of his writing. If the audience know less than the writer, the writer takes up the role of an instructor, if the audience know more than the writer, the writer’s

purpose is to display familiarity, expertise and intelligence. The writer also needs to ensure that the communication is written in an appropriate style (Bratcher, 1997).

2.16 Challenges in English writing and Skill Development (English Composition)

To Henderson, Fisher & Fraser (1995), learning to write is uniquely challenging. Writing requires the mastery and concurrent use of a complex array of language skills, from vocabulary and spelling to the ability to organize and convey ideas. Indeed, the intricacies of writing make it one of the highest forms of human expression. Morris (1995). In basic schools, children are encountering the elements of writing for the first time, from the formation of letters, to organizing their ideas, to using correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Basic school pupils are expected to advance from learning the rules of writing to automatically applying those rules beginning in class four. By the end of basic school, a child should be writing independently and producing multiple-paragraph essays that contain formal introductions, supporting evidence and conclusions. According to Meece (2008) writing ability improves in stages, as children build upon the skills learned in prior grades. However, Walberg (1999) recommends keeping an eye out for repetitious errors and habits, such as in incorrect grammar and spelling, poorly structured essays, and unsupported ideas. Frustration is also a red flag. Writing is hard work and can be a chore, but excessive complaining and procrastination may indicate a bigger problem with writing. If not addressed, eventually writing problems can lead to problems in other subjects and affect overall academic success (Walberg 1999).

A growing challenge of English teachers in Ghana and the world over is how to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for pupils to effectively write essays in English. The importance of essay writing for pupils is underpinned by Shaffle et al (2010) who mentioned that pupils will need English writing skills that range from simple paragraph and summary skills to the ability to write essay and professional articles. The Ghana School Examinations Council (GSEC) Report 2011 observed that pupils manifest a range of problems. In most cases, pupils present essays with loose content. They lack originality basing on the given topic. Their essays also lack proper sequence and organised flow of ideas. Furthermore, paragraphs are badly formulated, with ideas haphazardly arranged. It is common to find different ideas placed in one paragraph, devoid of developers at all. Essays lack properly defined structure, devoid of introductions body and conclusions.

Hesse (2010) also stated that pupils lack variety in expressing of ideas in essay writing because their sentences are long and meaningless and also includes wrongly used conjunctions. The complex sentences which are correct lack variety. Pupils show lack of understanding of the difference between fragments and short sentences. They confuse the two thereby messing essay with meaningful fragments. Dawson (2008) observed that most ordinary level pupils do not know the various types of essays. These are, descriptive, argumentative, narrative and expository. Writing and writing instruction is a shared responsibility across disciplines. English, Science, Social Studies and other content subjects' examinations are written in English therefore good writing skills are a necessity. The GSEC Report of 2014 highlights composition writing as the most difficult component of English Language curriculum for pupils followed by written grammar

which is also an important proponent of not only English Language but other content subjects.

Adas & Bakir (2013) state that writing is an intricate and complex task, it is most difficult of all languages to acquire. They also highlight that many pupils understand the English Language but most of the pupils face the problem of communicating their ideas effectively. The problem is lack of adequate stock of vocabulary, creativity in writing and several other factors (Adas & Bakir 2013).

Failing English language also hinders pupils to going to upper academic or professional levels. That is to say that pupils are not able to go to the next class because of poor performance in English language. Without mastery of good writing skills, other content subjects will also be affected. Ordinary Level pupils face a myriad of grammatical problems such as the correct use of verb, surface problem, content problems, sentence structure, process difficulties and many others (GSEC Report 2011). Despite the efforts by the government of Ghana and non-governmental stakeholders in providing qualified instructors, learning resources, financial aid, pupils' academic performance in writing essay remains low (GES, 2014). A good composition comprises of an introduction, body and conclusion. (Bereiter & Scardamalia 2013). Dawson (2009) wrote extensively on essay introductions. He posits that introductions should be good. According to him, opening sentences should capture the readers' interest and ignite in him/her a desire to read on. Sentences need to be fresh and original. Furthermore, Dawson and Yong (2008) note that some writers, in their work on narratives use the flashback technique. The writer should be clear and gripping. In his research, it is apparent that most pupils at Ordinary Level write essays which are devoid of the above. Dawson and Yong (2008) suggest that

both pupils and teachers should be knowledgeable of such aspects to improve in writing essays.

Characterization is an important component of essay writing. Dawson (2009) states that, narratives should have characters that are realistic and convincing. Clear characters do not confuse the examiners and even the pupils themselves when they use some of the character roles as the story progresses. Pupils do not use clear characters in their essay. Emphasis on the need for pupils to have clear character greatly helps pupils when writing essay, he further purports.

Orthography is another important area of concern in essay writing. Good English essays have correct spelling, punctuation and properly arranged sentences with recommended word division (Dawson, 2006). Teachers are encouraged to instil in pupils' minds, the importance of these aspects. Pupils should be taught to punctuate properly, spell words correctly and improve word division as well as practice using variety in sentence construction. Dawson and Yong (2008) stated that pupils have many basic mistakes in written works on spelling, grammar, punctuation and organisation. Kihara et al (2009) also suggest that some words become spelling problems because of the gap between spelling and pronunciation. In order to improve essay writing techniques, teacher should put great emphasis in the use of figurative language and various errors that crop up in pupils work (Al Fadda, 2012). He enlists challenges of English as a Second Language pupils encounter as: difficulty in differentiating between written phrases and spoken words, reviewing grammar including subject verb agreement and joining sentences to make a coherent paragraph. Gordon (2008) suggests that, ' readings such as books, journals and even some websites are invaluable source of which learners could rely on to

enrich their lexicon with academic vocabulary and expressions'. By doing so pupils will then effectively express their ideas in their own voice. Essays that lack proper and appropriate use of correct tenses derived from the topic are a common feature in pupils' essays (GSEC Report November 2011). Whenever pupils write an essay, decision should be made on what tense to use. A topic demanding an example in the past calls for the use of past tense. Contrarily, writing about a newspaper article with a future event, one needs to use the future tense. However, this is not the situation in specified essays. Discourse markers are important in an essay. Essays without them do not flow and tend to 'hang' together (GES Report November 2011). Calkins (2010) stresses that an essay which is devoid of cohesive devices is disjointed, jerky and jarring. This contrast with Lester et al (2011) who state that composition writing is a process which has a sequential flow of events. The adjudicators in the Randal National Essay Competition Report pointed out that, pupils essay usually have weakness in introduction development, sequencing and linking of ideas. Furthermore, they noted that most pupils do not exhibit skills of writing logically and lack the presence of variety in sentence structure. They recommended teachers to help pupils write good introductions. This is also supported by Graham (2008) who stated that writing and writing instruction is a shared responsibility across disciplines: English, Science, Social Studies and other subjects. He further purports that teachers must devote significant attention to the teaching of writing if they expect pupils to learn how to write effectively within their discipline. Grammatical errors are also common in pupils' works. Al Fadda (2012) defines grammar as the system by which words combine into larger units to convey ideas. Pupils write, "He play soccer." instead of "He plays soccer." or "Washington go to school" instead of, "Washington goes to

school.” (GES Report November 2011). The above examples show the influence of Agona/fante language on learning English. Pupils usually try to translate word by word from Agona/fante language. The report also points out that, the result of using grammar translation method of English results in pupils not thinking directly in English language. They think in their mother language (Agona/fante) then transfer and translate their thoughts to English.

Experiencing writing difficulty can also give writing teachers opportunities for increased inquiry into the whole concept of how teaching and learning might happen each day in a writing class. That is, as difficulty breaks down the writing process from a ‘flow’ to a series of trials, queries, reader responses and revisions, participating in the process can prepare pupils to see teacher intervention as a planned yet flexible set of assistive activities rather than as an intuitive. Pedagogy instructors who hope that their pupils will develop exploratory habits and take time for learner-reflection may have to substantially amend a formal seminar-paper assignment.

As several pedagogy scholars have pointed out in recent years, the culture of teaching related narratives remain conclusive rather than exploratory. Stenberg (1996) writes: ‘Teacher narratives often promote . . . a neat and linear story told by a unified when we bring pedagogy pupils into full engagement with the field as writing- learners, as writing-explorers, and as critical reflectors on their writing and learning, we help them discover for themselves what the discipline of writing education really involves, and help them practice being in a state of ongoing learning, study, and development.’ Paradoxically, by focusing on their roles as learners and explorers, we move closer to treating them as professionals: as Steven L. VanderStaay (1999) notes, we treat them as people who are

(or will soon be) “not so much told how to do their job as appointed to decide for themselves how to do it”. By highlighting the need for inquiry and flexibility, and positioning everyone as a learner including ourselves as we remake our own pedagogies, we position everyone as a teacher. Finally, if we are brave enough to argue that there are better and worse ways to teach writing, generally, then we need to be equally courageous in exploring and recommending better pedagogies for educating writing teachers. Composition pedagogy may indeed need to be “remade” for every class, but it should not be remade from scratch, without reference to common goals and practices.

2.17 The Role of Perception, Attitude and Motivation in Foreign Language

Learning

Attitude and motivation are said to have a significant influence on pupils’ language learning. Several researchers have found that there is a correlation between learners’ attitude (whether it is positive or negative), their motivation to learn another language and achievement in foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 1994). According to Brown (1987), attitudes, like all aspects of the development of cognition and affect in human beings, develop early in childhood and are the result of parents’ and peers’ attitudes, contact with people who are “different” in any number of ways, and interacting affective factors in the human experience. These attitudes form a part of one’s perceptions of self, of others and of the culture in which one is living. (p. 126)

Thus, learners are not “blank pages” who are unbiased, but they come into the classroom with a preset of perceptions and opinions formed by factors such as previous experiences (Barkhuizen, 1998; Block, 1994; Christison & Krahnke, 1986; Green, 1993; Nunan,

1986; Peacock, 1998) that can have a strong impact on their learning and, subsequently, on their academic success (Tse, 2000). Krashen (1981) has identified several factors, which encourage and motivate an individual's second language learning by supporting communication with speakers of the target language, and which furthermore, has an influence on the attainment of the necessary information to learn another language.

Moreover, a great emphasis has been put on motivation in relation to foreign language learning since it is said to have a significant impact on the perceived importance of language learning and its achievement (Dörnyei, 1994; Kouritzin et al., 2009; Krashen, 1981; Price & Gascoigne, 2006; Roberts, 1992). Additionally, Gardner and Lambert (as cited in Carrasquillo, 1994) define motivation in terms of a learner's objective or orientation, distinguish between integrative and instrumental motivation (Carrasquillo, 1994; Kouritzin et al., 2009; Krashen, 1981). Integrative motivation is defined as the desire to be part of the target language's community. It is a result of the learner's positive attitude and his/her interest in this community and its culture. According to Carrasquillo (1994) and Krashen (1981), several research studies suggest that this type of motivation has been related to proficiency in language learning. A positive attitude towards language learning has been said to lead to greater success in the attainment because of the learner's interest, which motivates them to participate more actively in the classroom and also invest more in their language learning in general (Brown, 1987; Carrasquillo, 1994; Krashen, 1981; Price & Gascoigne, 2006).

The primary reason for instrumentally motivated learners to learn another language is to enhance their qualification and thus, to obtain a particular educational, financial or professional advantage (Carrasquillo, 1994; Kouritzin et al., 2009). To Krashen (1981),

the purpose of foreign language learning is based on practical usage, and language acquisition and it might cease after the desired goal is achieved. Consequently, this might limit the spectrum of language aspects that these pupils are learning, because they might focus only on elements which they consider as necessary and valuable for their intention (Krashen, 1981). Additionally, this self-restriction might also have an impact on the language learning and, subsequently, on the acquired proficiency level.

Although there are several other studies which are not as confirmative in regard to a direct connection between pupils' positive attitude and a successful language learning achievement and which report weaker linkage of the effect of positive attitudes have on language learning success (Krashen, 1981), it appears to be unquestionable that certain attitudes towards languages (including a positive attitude toward its native speakers and their culture) and language learning in general, have an impact on one's learning and eventually on one's level of competency.

In their longitudinal study, Heining-Boyton and Haitema (2007) examined the attitudes of basic school children towards foreign language learning over a four-year period (and as a follow-up study, they subsequently interviewed 13 high school pupils, who had previously participated in the basic school study, to find out whether or not their perceptions had changed as adolescents. Initially there was a general positive attitude toward foreign language learning at the basic school level, which however, significantly declined over time. Furthermore, pupils displayed a rather negative perception towards the use of a foreign language outside the classroom, which Heining-Boyton and Haitema (2007) assumed to be interrelated with the general loss of desirability and prestige of school itself and its activities within children's attitudes. Nevertheless, the researchers

felt that pupils' perceptions remained mostly positive on the items measured. The majority of adolescent participants in the follow-up study expressed a positive attitude toward their previous foreign language learning in basic schools. Moreover, while some showed an enthusiastic or affirmative attitude towards foreign cultures and perceived the study of language as valuable in itself, others had a more pragmatic viewpoint in that they recognized the need to understand other cultures and their languages and, even though they expressed a rather negative attitude, acknowledged the fact that learning another language and attaining a certain proficiency level have their benefits (Heining-Boyton & Haitema, 2007).

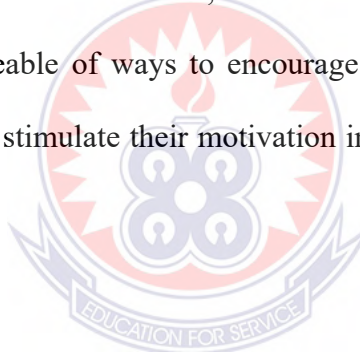
Another interesting finding of this longitudinal study was the fact that the hierarchical order of school subjects could also play a role in a learner's perception towards language learning. If learning a foreign language was not seen as an essential component of the school's curriculum, then pupils might develop a similar attitude and perceive it as less important, as opposed to the core subjects (science, mathematics, and language arts). Heining-Boyton and Haitema (2007) concluded that the formation of attitude inhabits a fundamental part in early schooling and that "children and adolescents are knowledgeable consumers" (p. 164). Therefore, it is the educator's task to utilize the children's and adolescents' positive desire to learn another language and to furthermore, assist them in this process (Heining-Boyton & Haitema, 2007 p 22)

In addition, several research studies were conducted to discover pupils' beliefs concerning the importance of foreign language learning, and also their motivation and arguments for studying it. Comparing Ely's (1986), Price and Gascoigne's (2006) and Roberts' (1992) compiled student arguments, the most common ones were:

- (1) Cultural understanding,
- (2) job/career opportunities,
- (3) Interpersonal communication,
- (4) Educational,
- (5) Travelling purposes.

The overall findings of these three studies showed a supportive attitude towards foreign language learning, whereby understanding and learning about other cultures and studying it for communicative purposes appeared to be the most frequently stated factors of motivation (Ely, 1986; Price & Gascoigne, 2006; Roberts, 1992).

Taking these elements into consideration, educators should display a positive attitude themselves, be knowledgeable of ways to encourage and make use of pupils' positive attitudes, and additionally stimulate their motivation in order to support pupils' language learning.



2.18 Summary

This chapter started off by explaining the status of English as an international language and its primary fields of application. Then it continued to briefly outline major methodologies of English language teaching and their main characteristics, which were implemented in education over the centuries, causes of pupils' failure in English composition and finally, the role of motivation and attitudinal factors, which are said to have an influence on the achievement of proficiency in foreign language learning.

The status of English within the global community and the variety of its usage were examined in order to try to explain the general popularity of learning English as a foreign

language all around the world. Furthermore, to gain a better understanding about the teaching methods and learning activities that the pupils perceive as effective and enjoyable, knowing about their history of language learning is important, and thus, the most predominant teaching methodologies were introduced. In addition, the role of one's attitude and motivation in foreign language learning is looked upon, because of its crucial role in finding out for what purposes English is learned and what kind of teaching approaches could then be used to support this learning process and ensure the learner's success. Lastly, a brief account on teacher and student perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities was discussed.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter describes the method employed in carrying out the study. It also discusses the methodology, research design and defines the population of the study. It describes the sample and instruments for the study and goes further to spell out the procedure for data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Methodology

The study made use of the mixed method research approach because of the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to find answers to the research questions. Though there are several definitions of mixed methods research, the researcher agrees with Onwuegbuzie's which says mixed methods is "the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study or set of related studies" (Onwuegbuzie 2007). This study is a mixed concurrent type of research because it aims at correlating the findings by using findings from responses from interviews questionnaires to prove how the quantitative and the qualitative responses corroborate. The nature of this study which involves a large number of population calls for the essence of using a quantitative tool in reaching out to a larger sample that will fairly represent the population in making generalizations.

Ritchie (2003) believes that there has been discussion and development in the latter part of the twentieth century of 'multi-method, trans disciplinary' research which employs a

range of different methods and draws on expertise from a range of alternate disciplines, as appropriate to the research questions. That is to say that the need arises in an instance where the researcher ought to adopt mixed method to achieve an extended understanding which neither method can exclusively offer. A mixed method design is useful to capture the best of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In these situations, the advantages of collecting both closed ended quantitative data and open-ended qualitative data prove advantageous to best understand a research problem (Cresweell, 2003).

3.2 Research Design

The study used a descriptive survey research design. Cohen and Manion (1991), explain that descriptive survey gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions or identifying standard against which existing conditions can be compared or to determine the relations that exist between specific events. They identified the data collecting procedure to include structured and semi-structured interviews, self-completed or postal questionnaire and the use of telephone. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), descriptive survey “involves asking the same set of questions (often prepared in the form of a written questionnaire or an ability test) to a large number of individuals either by mail, by telephone or in person” (p. 11). Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) observe that when answers to a set of questions are elicited in person, the process is called interview. The descriptive survey was chosen because it has the advantage of providing the researcher with a lot of information from quite a large number of individuals (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). It also provides the researcher a meaningful

picture of events and seeks to explain people's opinion and behaviour on the basis of data gathered. The descriptive survey could also be used with a greater confidence with regard to particular questions of special interest or value to the researcher.

On the contrary, the use of the descriptive survey has a number of disadvantages. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) identify what they called "the threefold difficulty" in the use of the descriptive survey. First of all, the researcher has to ensure that the questions to be answered are clear and not misleading. Secondly, he/she is faced with the challenge of getting the respondents to answer the questions thoughtfully and honestly; and then finally, he/she is also faced with the challenge of getting a sufficient number of the questionnaire completed and returned so that meaningful analyses can be made.

In addressing these problems, items on the questionnaire that were found to be ambiguous due to poor wording or language structure were redesigned. Secondly, the researcher adequately explained to the respondents the purpose of the study, (solely for academic purpose), hence the responses provided would not be used to victimize them. Again, to assure them of confidentiality, respondents were not required to write their names or school's name on the questionnaire. Finally, the researcher administered the questionnaire in person to all the selected schools, and then collected all the responses from the respondents as soon as they finished responding to the items. With these measures, it is expected that the disadvantages were minimized.

3.3 Study Area

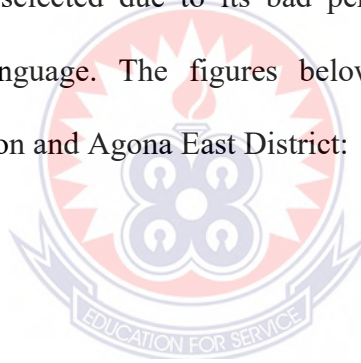
The Agona East District Assembly (AEDA) was carved out of the Agona District now the Agona West Municipality in 2008. It is one of the 20 Districts in the Central Region.

It is situated in the eastern corner of the Central Region. The District has one constituency and five Town/Area Councils. These are: Nsaba, Duakwa, Asafo, Kwanyako and Mankrong Area Councils. The people in the District are predominantly farmers. The Agona East District Assembly (AEDA) was established through Legislative Instrument (LI) 1921. It has a total land area of 539.7km². The indigenous people of the District are the 'Agonas'. Over the years, they have co-existed with other prominent minority migrants such as Gomoas, Ewes, Effutus, Ashantis, Fantis, Kwahus, Kotokolis and several other ethnic groupings from northern Ghana. Ethnic groups like Kwahus and Gomoas are mainly traders and cocoa farmers. Despite the diversity of ethnic groups, the District has a strong social integration. The groups inter-marry and participate in shared cropping arrangements under the existing land tenure systems, especially the 'Abunu' and 'Abusa' which are commonly practised. This has promoted solid social bonds and economic ties between migrants, tenants and their indigenous landlords. It also makes it easier for tenants to acquire land for farming.

Agona East District is situated within latitudes 5030° and 5050°N and longitudes 0035° and 0055°W. It is bounded to the south by the Agona West Municipality and the Gomoa East District Assembly, to the north by the Birim South District and to the northeast by the West Akim District, both in the eastern region. The eastern part of the district is bounded by the Awutu Senya District and to the West by Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa and Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam Districts.

Generally, the District lies in the wet semi-equatorial climatic zone. It has two main crop growing seasons; a bio-modal pattern of rainfall with the maximum occurring in May/June and the minimum occurring in September/ October. The District capital is

Agona Nsaba, which is approximately 35 kilometres North of Winneba and 20 kilometres from Agona Swedru. Of the population aged 11 years and above, 75.4 % are literate and 24.6 % are non-literate. Those literate in English and a Ghanaian Language form 60.6 %, while 28.3 % are literate in English only. There are 10.0 % of the population who are literate in Ghanaian Language only. The proportion of the population who are literate in English and French is very low (0.4%) while those literate in English, French and Ghanaian Languages are 0.7 %. Of the population aged 3 years and above in the district, 21.2 % have never attended school, 41.7 % currently attend school and 7.1 % have attended in the past. More females (27.6%) than males (14.2%) have never attended school. The district was selected due to its bad performance in BECE examinations especially in English language. The figures below indicate the position and the topography of central region and Agona East District:



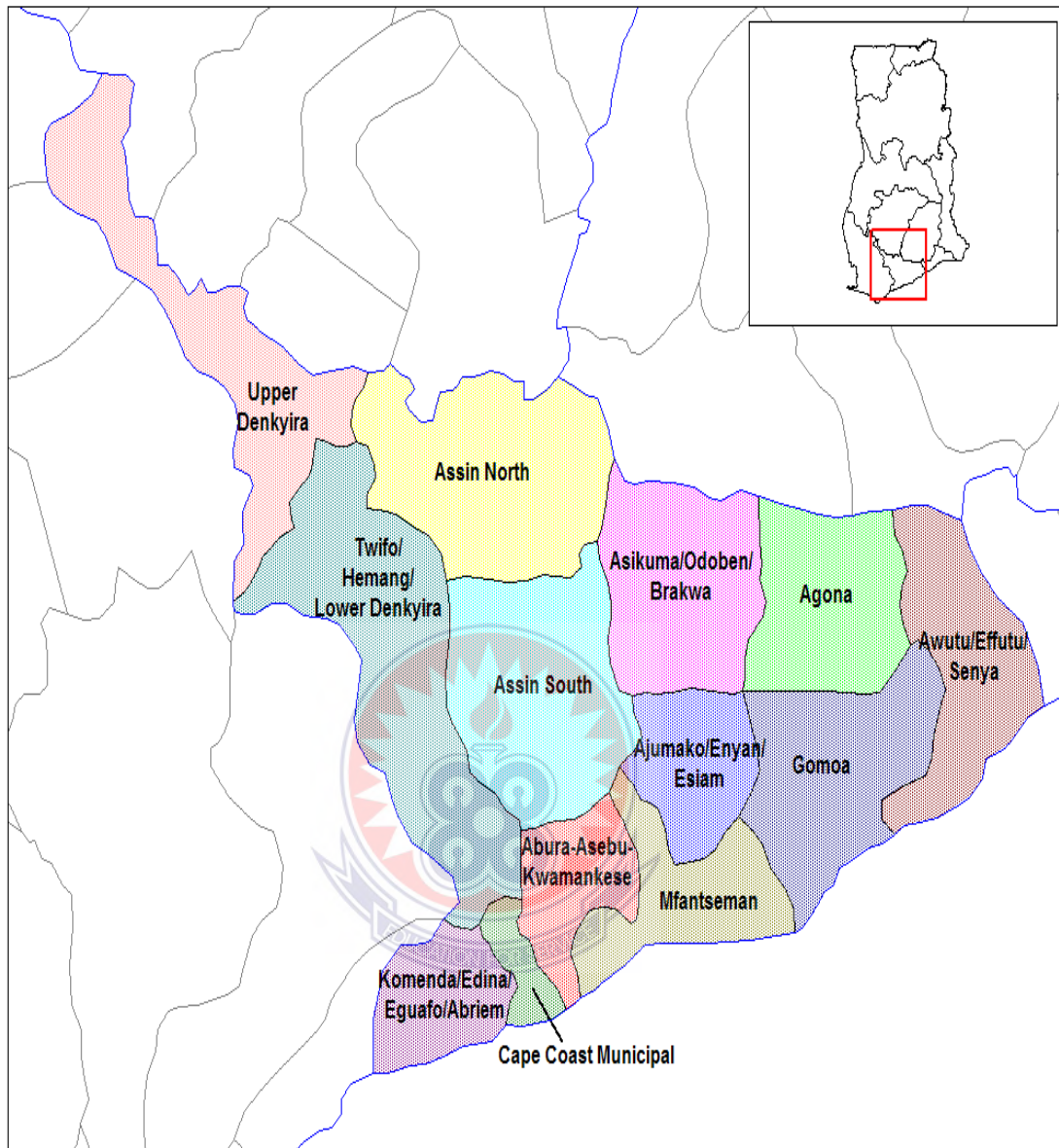


Figure 1: Districts in the Central Region Ghana

(Courtesy: Agona East District Assembly, 2015)

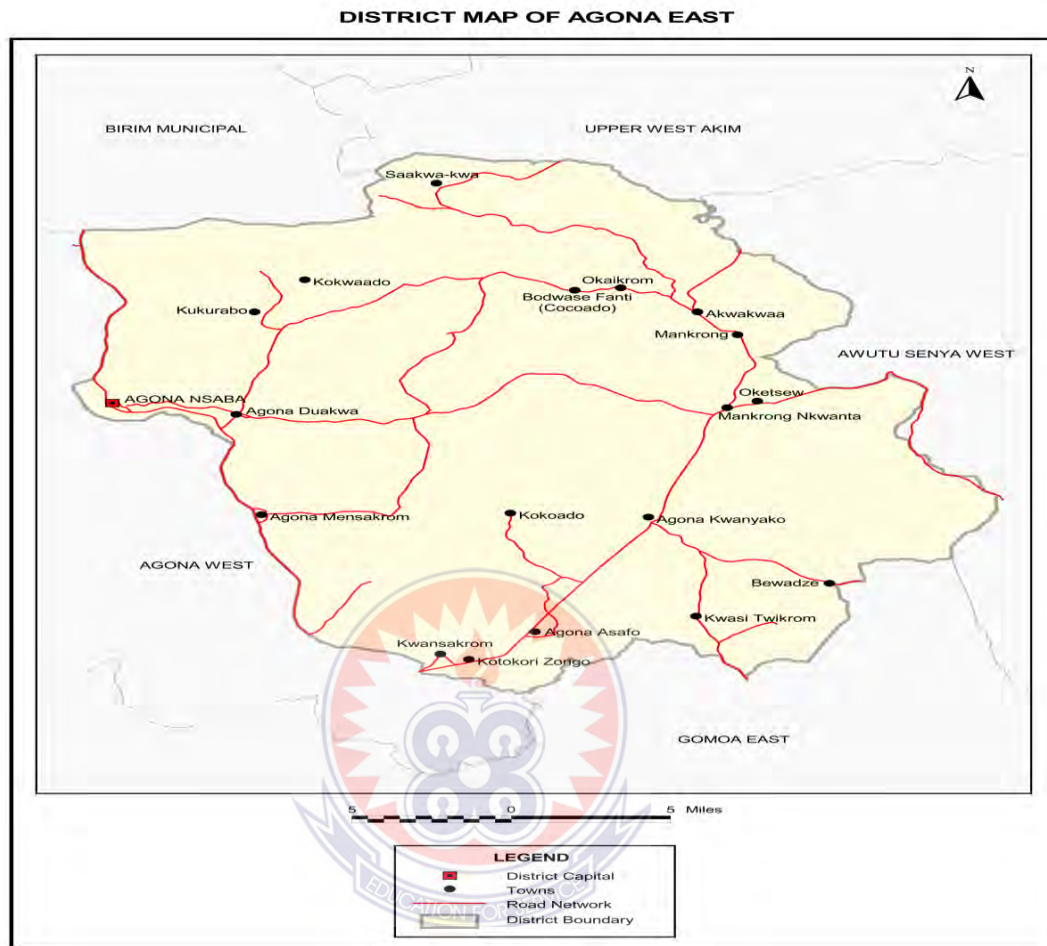


Figure 2: Map of Agona East District

(Agona East District Assembly, 2015)

3.4 Population of the study

Population is the target group for a study. It involves all the individuals (or objects) with certain specified characteristics (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). They further note that it is for the population that the researcher will generalise his/her results. In the view of Rubin and Babbie (1989), the population for a study is the theoretically specified aggregation of

study elements. They identified the “study elements” as the unit of individuals or objects about which information is collected and that provides the basis of analysis.

In this study, the target population is made up of all head teachers, English language teachers and pupils of public basic schools in the Agona East District of Central Region of Ghana. There are 72 head teachers, 78 English language teachers and 3977 pupils, while the accessible population is head teachers, English teachers and pupils in three of the seven circuits of the District. There are 33 head teachers, 36 English language teachers and 698 pupils.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Sampling, according to Kumar (1999) is the process whereby a small proportion or subgroup of the population is selected for scientific observation and analysis. Sample is a small proportion of a population selected for a study (Seidu, 2006). The sample for the study is made up of pupils, teachers and head teachers in public basic schools selected within the Agona East District of the Central Region of Ghana. Multi-stage sampling was used in selecting the participants for the study. The researcher randomly selected three (3) circuits out of seven (7) in the district and further used simple random sampling procedure to select ten schools within those circuits. With this, the names of all the schools from each circuit were written on pieces of papers, folded and put in a bowl. The bowl was shaken for the papers to shuffle several times. Four shuffled papers were randomly picked from the bowl of Asafo circuit, three from Duakwa circuit and three from Kwanyako circuit. This gave a total of ten participant schools for the study. This approach is a probability sampling procedure that gives every member of the group an equal opportunity to be selected for the study. The head teachers and the English

language teachers for the selected schools were purposively selected for the study. In selecting the pupils, purposive sampling was used to select JHS 3 class. Then the researcher used simple random sampling to select ten (10) pupils from each school for the study. Out of the ten, three pupils were randomly selected to be interviewed and the remaining were made to answer questionnaire. The researcher adopted this interview procedure because it was realized that there might be other reasons which the questionnaire might have not captured. So to determine these covariates interview was adopted. A total of twelve (12) respondents were selected from each school: one (1) Head teacher, one (1) English teacher, and ten (10) pupils.

3.6 The Research Instrument

Semi structured questionnaires and an interview guide were the instruments used for data collection, since most of the respondents could read and write. It consisted of two sections. Section A outlined the demographic information of respondents and sections B, C and D had prepared questions based on the research questions to be answered by respondents.

3.7 Validity

Face validity

Items on the questionnaires were prepared by the researcher and given to colleagues to go through to check grammar and also get rid of any ambiguity.

Content Validity

The questionnaires were also given to the supervisor and other lecturers to check whether it measured what it had to.

3.8 Reliability

A pilot test was conducted in two schools in the Agona West Municipality to determine the reliability of the instruments. A cronbach alpha co-efficient of 0.73 was realized.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher where necessary guided the respondents in answering the items on the instrument. Then head teachers and teachers were also engaged in one-on-one interview with the researcher. The interview and the questionnaire gave the researcher detailed information as respondents were engaged in conversation. Both instruments where appropriate were used to gather detailed information relevant for the study. Items of the structured interview and the questionnaire were based on the specific objectives and variables of the study. The questionnaire and interview guide used consisted of open and close ended questions pre-coded and pre- tested and administered personally.

3.10 Data Handling and Analysis

The researcher analyzed the quantitative data that was obtained from the field using tables and charts with the help of the SPSS software. The data was first edited and categorized in relation to the research questions. In the case of the interview, it was

analyzed based on themes. This was focused on identified key ideas and patterns of responses received from the field in relation to the research questions.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Consent for the conduct of the research was sought from the Heads of the selected basic schools within the district. A letter of introduction was obtained from the Head of the Department of Basic Education University of Education, Winneba, which enabled the researcher to seek consent for conduct of the study and enabled the researcher formally introduced herself to the study participants during data collection. Participants were also assured of the necessary confidentiality.

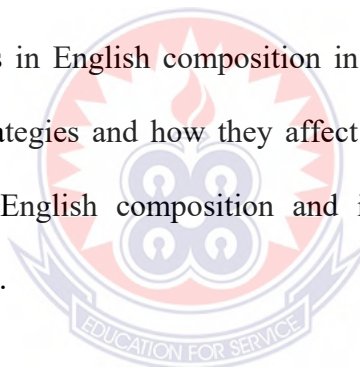


CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

This chapter deals with results and findings obtained from the analysis of the data gathered for the research. The outcomes of the research are explained in detail. The results are presented in prose in relation to the research objectives and questions. The results and findings of the study are presented under the demographic information of respondents, factors contributing to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District, how these factors contribute to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District, find out teachers' instructional strategies and how they affect pupils' performance and evaluate pupils' attitude towards English composition and its effect on their low academic performance in the subject.



4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

4.1.1 Category of Respondents

Table 1: Category of respondents

Category of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
English Teachers	10	8.3
Head teachers	10	8.3
Pupils	100	83.3
Total	120	100

Table 1 represents category of respondents selected for the study, 8.3% were English teachers; 8.3% were head teachers and 83.3% were school pupils.

4.1.2 Schools of Respondents

Table 2: Schools of Respondents

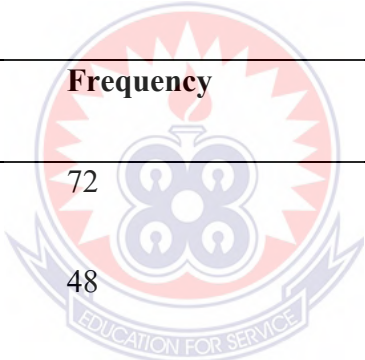
School of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Kwansakrom AEDA 'A' JHS	12	10
Nantifa AEDA JHS	12	10
Asafo Presby JHS	12	10
Asafo AEDA 'A' JHS	12	10
Duakwa Catholic JHS	12	10
Mensakrom AEDA JHS	12	10
Duakwa Presby JHS	12	10
Kwanyako Presby JHS	12	10
Fawomanye AEDA JHS	12	10
Kwanyako Methodist JHS	12	10
Total	120	100

Table 2 represents schools of respondents, 10% were selected from Kwansakrom AEDA 'A' JHS; 10% were selected from Nantifa AEDA JHS ; 10% were selected from Asafo

Presby JHS; 10% were selected from Asafo AEDA ‘A’ JHS; 10% were selected from Duakwa Catholic JHS; 10% were selected from Mensakrom AEDA JHS; 10% were selected from Duakwa Presby JHS ; 10% were selected from Kwanyako Presby JHS; 10% were selected from Fawomanye AEDA JHS while 10% were selected from Kwanyako Methodist JHS. The process was to give an equal number of representation to all the selected school.

4.1.3 Gender of Respondents

Table 3: Gender of respondents.



Gender of respondents	Frequency	Percentages %
Male	72	60
Female	48	40
Total	120	100

Table 3 shows that, there were 60% male respondents and 40% female respondents. It was found that the number of male respondents was higher as compared with that of their female counterparts.

4.1.4 Age of Respondents

Table 4: Age Range of Respondents

Age Range of respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
10-14	31	25.8
15-19	64	53.3
20-24	3	2.5
25-29	2	1.7
30-34	3	2.5
35-39	9	7.5
40-44	8	6.7
Total	120	100

Table 4 shows that in terms of age, 25.8 % were within the age range of 10-14 years; 53.3 % were within the age range of 15 and 19 years, 2.5 % were within the age range of 20-24 years, 1.7 % were within the age range of 25-29 years; 2.5 % were within the age range of 30-34 years; 7.5 % were within the age range of 35-39 years; 6.7 % were within the age range of 40-44 years. The age range distribution indicates that about 53.3% of the respondents were teenagers between 15-19 years and were pupils.

4.2 Research question 1: What are the factors that contribute to low academic performance of pupils in English Composition in Agona East District?

Table 5: Pupils' views on factors contributing to low academic performance

Key: 1) Strongly agree A, 2) agree B, 3) disagree C, 4) strongly disagree D

STATEMENT	A		B		C		D		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Lack of teaching and learning materials in the school	35	(35)	48	(48)	10	(10)	7	(7)	100
Afraid of reading	25	(25)	51	(51)	14	(14)	10	(10)	100
English composition is a difficult subject	47	(47)	31	(31)	9	(9)	13	(13)	100
Not well informed on how to answer examination questions	35	(35)	18	(18)	25	(25)	22	(22)	100
Time allotted on the time table for composition is too small	13	(13)	25	(25)	45	(45)	17	(17)	100
We are not taken through English composition in class regularly	33	(33)	28	(28)	21	(21)	18	(18)	100
Teachers don't teach to our understanding	27	(27)	48	(48)	15	(15)	10	(10)	100
We don't study at home	32	(32)	41	(41)	9	(9)	18	(18)	100
Teachers cane too much	21	(21)	18	(18)	31	(31)	30	(30)	100
Scared of the teachers	29	(29)	24	(24)	31	(31)	16	(16)	100
Teachers don't take their time to explain the subject to us	31	(31)	14	(14)	33	(33)	22	(22)	100

The subject is taught at the time when we are tired usually in the afternoon	38	(38)	12	(12)	32	(32)	18	(18)	100
Teachers hardly come to our class during the lesson period	12	(12)	20	(20)	41	(41)	27	(27)	100
Pupils don't have enough vocabulary to write essays	32	(32)	42	(42)	15	(15)	11	(11)	100
We do not have reading materials at home	54	(54)	37	(37)	4	(4)	5	(5)	100
Lack of parental support to teacher efforts	39	(39)	40	(40)	10	(10)	11	(11)	100

Table 5 indicates pupils' view on how they agree, strongly agree, disagree or strongly disagree to statements on factors contributing to their low academic performance in school. The participants were assisted in answering the questions on the instrument. The questions were read to the pupils to give responses. On the issue of lack of teaching and learning materials in the school contributing to low academic performance, 35% strongly agreed; 48% agreed; 10% disagreed; 7% strongly disagreed. On the issue of pupils being afraid of reading in the school which contributes to low academic performance, 25% strongly agreed; 51% agreed; 14% disagreed; 10% strongly disagreed. On the issue that English composition is a difficult subject which contributes to low academic performance, 47% strongly agreed; 31% agreed; 9% disagreed; 13% strongly disagreed. On the issue that pupils are not well informed on how to answer examination questions which contributes to low academic performance, 35% strongly agreed; 18% agreed; 25% disagreed; 22% strongly disagreed. With time allotted on the time table for composition being too small which contributes to low academic performance, 13% strongly agreed;

25% agreed; 45% disagreed; 17% strongly disagreed. On the issue that pupils are not taken through English composition in class regularly which contributes to low academic performance, 33% strongly agreed; 28% agreed; 21% disagreed; 18% strongly disagreed. On the question that teachers don't teach to pupils understanding contributing to low academic performance, 27% strongly agreed; 48% agreed; 15% disagreed; 10% strongly disagreed. On the question of pupils not studying at home contributing to low academic performance, 32% strongly agreed; 41% agreed; 9% disagreed; 18% strongly disagreed. On the issue that teachers cane too much in the school which contributes to low academic performance, 21% strongly agreed; 18% agreed; 31% disagreed; 30% strongly disagreed. On the issue of pupils being scared of the teachers in the school contributing to low academic performance, 29% strongly agreed; 24% agreed; 31% disagreed; 16% strongly disagreed. On the issue that teachers don't take their time to explain the subject to pupils 31% strongly agreed; 14% agreed; 33% disagreed; 22% strongly disagreed. On the question that the subject is taught at the time when pupils are tired usually in the afternoon contributing to low academic performance, 38% strongly agreed; 12% agreed; 32% disagreed; 18% strongly disagreed. On the question of hardly do teachers come to our class during the lesson period contributing to low academic performance, 12% strongly agreed; 20% agreed; 41% disagreed; 27% strongly disagreed. On the issue of pupils not having enough vocabulary to write essays, 32% strongly agreed; 42% agreed; 15% disagreed; 11% strongly disagreed. On the issue that pupils do not have reading materials at home which contributes to low academic performance, 54% strongly agreed; 37% agreed; 4% disagreed; 5% strongly disagreed. On the issue of lack of parental support to teacher efforts contributing to low academic performance, 39% strongly

agreed; 40% agreed; 10% disagreed; 11% strongly disagreed. It was clear from the discussion with pupils that teachers of English composition also contribute to the academic prowess of pupils in terms of how students perceive them to be and how the subject is handled in class. When pupils were asked whether they practice essay writing at home, about 72% of them responded negative. During the interview discussion, pupils were asked if they are taken through English composition regularly and are made to practice how to answer examination question in class, about 50% of the responses were negative. However Hipp (2005) suggests that it is relevant to learn to answer questions after each topic. This, according to him, will enable the students to determine how far they have assimilated the topic. Students may use past questions, or form their own related questions on the specific topic studied. It is of importance to answer such questions in writing, not glibly orally. Dixon (1988) advocates that it is good to share knowledge and exchange ideas with mates since one may not have access to all textbooks or knowledge on a topic. He also advises that students should not join in cramming model answers prepared by somebody else. According to Danesty (2004) other factors that compliment environmental and socio-economic factors to produce high academic achievements and performance include good teaching, counselling, good administration, good seating arrangement and good building. Dilapidated buildings, lacking mentally stimulating facilities that are characterized with low or no seating arrangements will also be destructive. The research found that pupils' low academic performances in English composition is caused by several factors. The findings of research studies shows that pupils' performance is affected by different factors such as lack of reading materials and teachers' instructional strategies.

As indicated in Table 5, the research found that lack of reading materials on English composition at home and in the school which will enable pupils to study both in school and at home contribute about 80% of their failure in the subject. This is supported by the opinion that pupils' performance depends on different socio-economic, psychological and environmental factors. (Majoribanks, 1996)

Table 6: Head teachers' and teachers' views on factors contributing to pupils' low academic performance in English Composition

Key: T= true, VT= very true, NT= not true

Statement	T		VT		NT		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Pupils do not concentrate in class	8	(40)	10	(50)	2	(10)	20	100
Lack of reading materials in the school	8	(40)	12	(60)	-	(-)	20	100
Lack of parental support and guidance when pupils are at home	4	(20)	14	(70)	2	(10)	20	100
Pupils also don't practice at home	10	(50)	10	(50)	-	(-)	20	100
Pupils rarely find interest in the subject	6	(30)	8	(40)	6	(30)	20	100
Absenteeism	8	(40)	10	(50)	2	(10)	20	100
Truancy	4	(20)	4	(20)	12	(60)	20	100
Social media outlets have made pupils lazy in reading	4	(20)	14	(70)	2	(10)	20	100

Table 6 indicates teachers' and head teachers' views on how the statements were true, very true or not true on factors contributing to pupils' low academic performance in composition. With this the researcher engaged in a one- on- one interview with respondents with an outlined set of questions as a guide. The session was conducted separately for all the participants. Categorization of responses was done based on the similarities of responses given. On the issue that pupils do not concentrate in class which contributes to low academic performance in composition, 40% indicated true; 50% indicated very true; 10% said not true. On the issue that lack of reading materials in the school contribute to low academic performance in composition, 40% indicated true; 60% indicated very true. On the issue that pupils lacking parental support and guidance at home contributing to low academic performance in composition, 20% indicated true; 70% indicated very true; 10% said not true. On the question of pupils not practicing at home, 50% indicated true; 50% indicated very true. On the issue that pupils rarely find interest in the subject contributes to low academic performance, 30% indicated true; 40% indicated very true; 30% said not true. On the issue that Absenteeism contributes to low academic performance in composition, 40% indicated true; 50% indicated very true; 10% said not true. On the issue that Truancy contributes to low academic performance in composition, 20% indicated true; 20% indicated very true; 60% said not true. On the issue on how Social media outlets have made pupils lazy in reading contributing to low academic performance in composition, 20% indicated true; 70% indicated very true; 10% said not true. The research found that the influx of social media tend to distract pupils from learning instead of using it to learn. As indicated in table 6, about 90% of teachers and head teachers agreed that social media is a contributing factor to pupils' low

academic performance. Teachers' and head teachers' responses agreed with the pupils' view that lack of reading materials and parental support are the major contributing factors of pupils' low academic performance in composition in school. The poor performance has raised concern and efforts have been made to find out the reasons behind it. For poor performance of pupils in schools, many factors such as lack of facilities in school, lack of teachers, indiscipline, unfavorable home environment, low intelligence, anxiety and pupils' socio-economic need to achieve have been found as being the causes (Cantu, 1975; Maundu, 1980; Ndirangu, 2007).

Discussion with teachers pointed out that these factors however make the subject unattractive. It was revealed that the challenge makes pupils absent themselves from class and makes them feel teachers are wicked or cane too much. Teachers lamented.... *"we have become very fearful teachers in the school just because of the language we teach"*. It was identified that truancy and absenteeism also contribute to pupils' low performance in the subject. It was found that pupils lack continuity due to absenteeism and truancy.

4.3 Research question 2: How do these factors contribute to low academic performance of the pupils in English Composition in the Agona East District?

4.3.1 Effect of the Factors' on Pupils Academic Performance

Table 7: Head teachers' and teachers' views on how the factors affected pupils' performance in the subject?

Key: T= true, VT= very true, NT= not true

STATEMENT	T		VT		NT		Total	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	F	%
Bad expression	9	(45)	9	(45)	2	(10)	20	100
Poor writing skills	10	(50)	6	(30)	4	(20)	20	100
Difficulty to perform in other subjects because of bad language	11	(55)	8	(40)	1	(5)	20	100
Bad performance in final examination	7	(35)	7	(35)	6	(30)	20	100
Pupils are now scared of English language	6	(30)	6	(30)	8	(40)	20	100
Pupils look tired and sleep in class	4	(20)	8	(40)	8	(40)	20	100
Pupils hardly participate during teaching	3	(15)	6	(30)	11	(55)	20	100
Pupils write very bad English	9	(45)	8	(40)	3	(15)	20	100
Pupils cannot express themselves adequately	10	(50)	6	(30)	4	(20)	20	100

Pupils usually abstain from class during composition lessons	11	(55)	8	(40)	1	(5)	20	100
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Table 7 shows head teachers' and teachers' views on how the factors mentioned earlier affect pupils' performance in the subject. Respondents were to indicate how the statement is true, very true or not true on how these factors have affected pupils' academic performance in the school. With this, respondents were engaged in one on one interview with outlined questions as a guide after identifying factors contributing to pupils' low performance composition. On the issue of bad expression, 45% indicated that it's true; 45% indicated that it's very true; 10% said it's not true. On the issue of Poor writing skills, 50% indicated that it's true; 30% indicated that it's very true; 20% said it's not true. On the issue that pupils find it difficult to perform in other subject because of bad language, 55% indicated that it's true; 40% indicated that it's very true; 5% said it's not true. On the issue that pupils' performance bad in final examination, 35% indicated that it's true; 35% indicated that it's very true; 30% said it's not true. On the issue that pupils are now scared of English language, 30% that indicated that it's true; 30% indicated it's very true; 40% said it's not true. On the issue that pupils look tired and as such sleep in class, 20% indicated that it's true; 40% indicated that it's very true; 40% said it's not true. On the factor that pupils hardly participate during teaching, 15% indicated that it's true; 30% indicated that it's very true; 55% said it's not true. On the issue that pupils write very bad English, 45% indicated that it's true; 40% indicated that it's very true; 15% said it's not true. On the issue that pupils cannot express themselves adequately, 50% indicated it's true; 30% indicated it's very true; 20% said it's not true. On the reason of

pupils usually abstaining from class during composition lessons, 55% indicated that it's true; 40% indicated that it's very true; 5% said it's not true. The research found that not only do pupils fail in their final exams as a result of socio economic factors but also cannot even express themselves properly. As indicated in Table 7. Respondents become scared of English composition and even tend to avoid class completely. The interaction with teachers revealed that pupils usually sleep in class during lessons and when they are asked they complain of running excessive errands at home. An interview with teachers revealed that about 70% of pupils serve as helps to their parents most especially the illiterate parent who usually do not attach much importance to education.

These support the assertion by Sarigiani (1990) that parental educational level or attainment has been found to be significantly related to the educational attainment of their children in both rural and national samples. The study also had two levels of judging educational level. The two levels are some college or below to college graduates and above. As with the case previously, the children of more educated group tended to have higher aspirations and higher education plans. Habighust and Levine (1990) observed that parents of all classes realize the importance of education. Different families create environment that influence children's intellectual growth and educational motivation in different ways.

Table 8: Pupils' views on how these factors affected their performance in the English composition

STATEMENT	T		VT		NT		Total	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	F	%
Poor concentration in class due to tiredness	9	(45)	9	(45)	2	(10)	20	100
The fear associated with the subject makes it unattractive	4	(20)	10	(50)	6	(30)	20	100
We do not practice and revise what we learn due to lack of reading materials	8	(40)	7	(35)	5	(25)	20	100
Cannot read and write	8	(40)	10	(50)	2	(10)	20	100
Find it difficult to express myself in English language	10	(50)	6	(30)	4	(20)	20	100
Find other subjects too very difficult because of bad reading	6	(30)	12	(60)	2	(10)	20	100

Key: T= True, VT= Very True, NT= Not True

Table 8 depicts pupils' views on how the factors mentioned earlier have affected their performance in the composition. Pupils were to indicate how the statements were true, very true or not true. On the issue of poor concentration in class due to tiredness, 45% indicated that it's true; 45% indicated that it's very true; 10% said it's not true. On the issue of fear associated with making the subject not attractive, 20% indicated that it's

true; 50% indicated that it's very true; 30% said that it's not true. On the issue that pupils do not practise and revise what they learn due to lack of reading materials, 40% indicated that it's true; 35% indicated that it's very true; 25% said it's not true. On the issue that pupils cannot read and write, 40% indicated that it's true; 50% indicated it's very true; 10% said not it's true. On the issue of pupils finding it difficult to express themselves in English language, 50% indicated that it's true; 30% indicated it's very true; 20% said it's not true. On the issue that pupil perform badly in other subjects because of bad reading, 30% indicated it's true; 60% indicated it's very true; 10% said it's not true. The research revealed that not only do pupils perform badly in English composition but other subjects as well. As indicated in Table 8, about 80% of pupils expressed that because they cannot read and write good English, it becomes very difficult for them to perform well in other subjects since almost all the subjects involve reading. This confirms the assertion that Language is one of the most useful tools we have as humans. Without it we could not think and express our thoughts to others, nor could we engage in the activities that commonly take place in the society we build ourselves (Di Pietro, 1994). Language is very important in education. For instance, Roy-Campbell and Qorro (1997) asserted that education is carried out largely through the medium of language, thus, language is very significant in the educational process. Additionally, ADEA (2005) argues, "Language is not everything in education, but without language, everything is nothing in education" (p. 5). Language plays a crucial role in learning, and if the learner is handicapped in the language of instruction, then learning may not take place at all as the instructor or teacher and the learner will not be communicating (Malekela, 2003). Therefore poor performance

in English composition has a serious repercussion on other subjects and for that matter the total academic performance of students.

4.4 Research question 3: How do teachers' instructional strategies affect the pupils' poor performance in English Composition?

Table 9: Head teachers' and teachers' views on instructional strategies and its effect on the pupils' poor performance in English Composition.

STATEMENT	A		B		C		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
use of role play strategies	2	(10)	15	(75)	3	(15)	20	100
use lecturing strategies	1	(5)	9	(45)	10	(50)	20	100
do evaluation of each lesson	12	(60)	7	(35)	1	(5)	20	100
involve games and story	2	(10)	10	(50)	8	(40)	20	100
use question and answer approach	11	(55)	9	(45)	-	(0)	20	100
recognize individual differences among learners	3	(15)	14	(70)	3	(15)	20	100
create the learning situation to motivate pupils in ascertaining their inner strengths and abilities	4	(20)	15	(75)	1	(5)	20	100
challenge the pupils to learn	8	(40)	11	(55)	1	(5)	20	100

encourage general academic development of pupils	8	(40)	10	(50)	2	(10)	20	100
Facilitate and promote learning	2	(10)	18	(90)	-	(0)	20	100
teach composition together with other aspects of English	8	(40)	9	(45)	3	(15)	20	100
respect and understand the individual learner	7	(35)	8	(40)	5	(25)	20	100
Give a lot of composition exercise	2	(10)	14	(70)	4	(20)	20	100
don't mark composition exercises	9	(45)	10	(50)	1	(5)	20	100
don't discuss pupils mistakes in composition	4	(20)	11	(55)	5	(25)	20	100

Key. Always =A, sometimes= B never =C

Table 9 shows teachers' and Head teachers' views on instructional strategies and their effect on the pupils' low performance in English Composition. Respondents were engaged in one-on-one discussions to elicit responses to outlined questions. Respondents were to indicate always, sometimes or never to statements on instructional strategies that teachers use in teaching English composition. On the use of role play strategies, 10% indicated they always do; 75% indicated they use it sometimes; 15% indicated they never do. On the use of lecturing strategies, 5% indicated they always do; 45% indicated they use it sometimes; 50% indicated they never do. On the issue of teachers doing evaluation of each lesson, 60% indicated they always do; 35% indicated that they sometimes do; 5% indicated that they never do. On the use of games and stories, 10% indicated they always

do; 50% indicated they use it sometimes; 40% indicated that they never do. On the use of question and answer approach, 55% indicated they always do; 45% indicated they sometimes do. On the issue of teachers recognizing individual differences among learners, 15% indicated they always do; 70% indicated they sometimes do; 15% indicated they never do. On the issue of teachers creating the learning situation to motivate pupils in ascertaining their inner strengths and abilities, 25% indicated they always do; 75% indicated they sometimes do; 5% indicated they never do. On the issue of teachers challenging the pupils to learn, 40% indicated they always do; 55% indicated they sometimes do; 5% indicated they never do. On the issue that teachers encourage general academic development of pupils, 40% indicated they always do; 50% indicated they sometimes do; 10% indicated they never do. On the issue that teachers facilitate and promote learning, 10% indicated they always do; 90% indicated they sometimes do. On the issue that teachers teach composition together with other aspects of English, 40% indicated they always do; 45% indicated they sometimes do; 15% indicated they never do. On the issue of teachers respecting and understanding the individual learner, 35% indicated they always do; 40% indicated they sometimes do; 25% indicated they never do. On the issue of teachers giving a lot of composition exercise, 10% indicated they always do; 70% indicated they sometimes do; 20% indicated they never do. On the issue of teachers not marking composition exercises, 45% indicated they always do; 50% indicated they sometimes do; 5% indicated they never do. On the issue of teachers not discussing pupils' mistakes in composition, 20% indicated they always do; 55% indicated they sometimes do; 25% indicated they never do. The findings revealed that teaching strategies adopted by teachers also contribute to pupils' failure in English composition.

The discussion revealed that teachers employ few games and role plays as indicated in table 9. Only about 10% indicated that they always use role play strategies. According to Rinaldi (2001, p.8) ‘based on careful and sensitive listening, observation/documentation, and reflection with other adults, the teachers serve as resources and guides to the children. Additionally, ‘teachers especially trained in visual arts work with children to encourage expression through different media and symbol systems’. Teachers organize environments rich in possibilities and provocations that invite the children to undertake extended exploration and problem solving, often in small groups, where cooperation and disputation mingle pleasurably. Interaction with head teachers revealed that the school curriculum and the time table do not allow enough time and space for games and role playing oriented strategies in teaching. Surprisingly interactions with the pupils revealed about 70% of them asserted that they express themselves through games in the academic environment only during break time, and special game sessions of the surrounding schools. Students indicated ‘*we only engage in plays and games during cultural festivals and inter-school soccer games*’. Children learn through discovery touching, moving, exploring, questioning etc. Young children are active and eager to learn, using all their senses to absorb information and make sense of the world around them. Children are natural artists, drawn to music and stories, delighted by every opportunity to dance or talk to a puppet friend (Bamford, 2006). Grisham-Brown, (2009) stated that good teaching requires expert decision making, meaning that teachers need solid professional preparation, as well as ongoing professional development and regular opportunities to work collaboratively. When head teachers and teachers were asked to respond to teaching strategies they use in teaching composition, about 70% of them indicated that

they explore mixed methods of teaching which is composed of lecturing, giving exercises and questions and answers strategy without ascertaining first the needs and the weakness of the pupils. It was found that these strategies also sometimes alienate the pupils from the teaching process which makes them less involving in the teaching and learning process. Teachers' reasons given for the adoption of the strategy was limited time frame and the large class size. However according to Giles et al (2003), a teacher who uses the ideas of learning styles exposes their students to many approaches to intellectual exercise. The activities planned by these teachers are more students-centered than traditional activities. Three steps have been pointed out in implementing learning styles in education. The first step is to diagnose the preferred learning style of the students. Secondly, the teacher has to outline the group preferences and weaknesses. Giles et al (2003) conclude that when teaching an individual, teachers should present the most difficult concepts in a style preferred by the learner. Easier concepts should be introduced in a different style. When teaching an entire class, teachers should use all learning styles in their presentation if they are to reach every pupil. Interviews with teachers revealed that though they are doing their best there has not been any specific motivation for whipping up the interest of pupils in the subject and could not give an account of how effective the adopted strategy is. On the question of regular supervision by head teachers, some responded '*.... Oh I don't do my supervision on regular basis but I do mark lesson notes and sometimes go to their classes*'. It was also deduced that over the years, teachers and head teachers have not done any serious assessment on the pupils' failure in the subject to ascertain its real cause. There has not been any variation in strategy over the years to assess its adaptability by pupils and even how people assimilate what is taught.

On this, Farrant (1996) is of the view that a good teacher is one who knows the capabilities of his learners and has understanding of what his or her students need to learn. This implies that the skill of teaching lies in knowing who, what and how to teach and above all to be able to judge good teaching demands great skill irrespective of the level of teaching. It does not depend on the learner any more as Amissah et al (2002) indicate. Thus teaching has become complicated due to the increasingly intricate phase of human personality and society. The idea is that a teacher must bear in mind certain principles of good teaching whiles dealing with the students. According to Kochhar (2004) good teachers exhibit the following characteristics: Recognize individual differences among learners, Create the learning situation, Challenge the child to learn and encourage general development of learners. In Educational institutions, success is measured by academic performance, or how well a student meets standards set out by authorities and the institution itself. It is clear from the above discussion that efficient or good teachers must have a sound knowledge of what their people must know and have the ability to relate the content, method, sequence and pace of work to individual needs; to use the environment and appropriate media to support learning, use a range of teaching strategies skilfully and have enthusiasm for the subject (Farrant, 1996). It is the teacher's duty and vital responsibility to motivate students in ascertaining their inner strengths and abilities and to discover what truly inspires them. A good teacher is therefore the one who has the willingness and passion to teach; respects and understands the individual learner, and creates learning situations that build up values in the individual learner for personal and societal satisfaction. It is vital therefore for the teachers to teach what they can teach better in order to facilitate effective learning for the students (Siaw, 2009).

4.4 Research question 4: What are pupils' attitudes towards English Composition and its effect on their low academic performance in the subject?

Table 10: Pupils' views on their attitude towards English composition

Key: T= True, VT= Very True, NT= Not True

STATEMENT	T		VT		NT		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
English composition is a subject for only brilliant pupils	51	(51)	21	(21)	28	(28)	100	100
English composition is a difficult subject	50	(50)	35	(35)	15	(15)	100	100
English composition teachers are strict	62	(62)	30	(30)	8	(8)	100	100
English composition teachers are disciplinarians	58	(58)	41	(41)	1	(1)	100	100
English is someone's language so we can't be perfect	60	(60)	35	(35)	5	(5)	100	100
English composition is not to be studied like other reading subjects	45	(45)	24	(24)	31	(31)	100	100
Spoken language is different from written language	25	(25)	20	(20)	55	(55)	100	100
Composition does not contribute to one's ability to speak the language	21	(21)	15	(15)	64	(64)	100	100

There's no objectivity in the scoring of composition tests	28	(28)	22	(22)	50	(50)	100	100
No matter your effort, you cannot please composition teachers with your essay content	35	(35)	39	(39)	26	(26)	100	100

Table 10 represents pupils' perception of English composition. Respondents were engaged in a one on one discussion to give responses to outlined questions. Pupils were to indicate how the statement is true, very true or not true of their perception of English composition. On the issue of English composition being a subject for only brilliant pupils, 51% indicated that it's true; 21% indicated it's very true; 28% said it's not true. On the issue that English composition is a difficult subject, 50% that it's indicated true; 35% indicated it's very true; 15% said it's not true. On the issue that English composition teachers are strict, 62% indicated that it's true; 30% indicated it's very true; 8% said it's not true. On the issue that English composition teachers are disciplinarians, 58% it's indicated true; 41% indicated it's very true; 1% said it's not true. On the issue that English is someone's language so we can't be perfect, 60% it's indicated true; 35% indicated it's very true; 5% said it's not true. On the statement that English composition is not to be studied like other reading subjects, 45% indicated that it's true; 24% indicated it's very true; 31% said it's not true. On the issue of spoken language being different from written language, 25% indicated it's true; 20% indicated it's very true; 55% said it's not true. On the issue that Composition does not contribute to one's ability to speak the language, 21% indicated it's true; 15% indicated it's very true; 64% said it's not true. On

the issue that there no objectivity in the scoring of composition tests, 28% indicated it's true; 22% indicated that it's very true; 50% said it's not true. On the issue that no matter your effort, you cannot please composition teachers with your essay content, 35% indicated it's true; 39% indicated it's very true; 26% said it's not true.

The research revealed that failure in the English composition is directly linked with pupils' wrongful perception of the subject. Pupils however perceived that English language in general is a foreign language, so attaining perfection in it is a mirage. As indicated in table 10, the perception and the attitudes developed for the subject makes it difficult for pupils to effectively study the subject. About 72% perceived English language as very difficult and therefore it stands as a difficult subject. Accordingly, attitude and motivation are said to have a significant influence on pupils' language learning. Several researchers have found that there is a correlation between learners' attitude (whether it is positive or negative), their motivation to learn another language and achievement in foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 1994). According to Brown (1987), attitudes, like all aspects of the development of cognition and affect in human beings, develop early in childhood and are the result of parents' and peers' attitudes, contact with people who are 'different' in any number of ways, and interacting affective factors in the human experience. These attitudes form a part of one's perception of self, of others and of the culture in which one is living. (p. 126) Thus, learners are not 'blank pages' who are unbiased, but they come into the classroom with a preset of perceptions and opinions formed by factors such as previous experiences (Barkhuizen, 1998; Block, 1994; Christison & Krahnke, 1986; Green, 1993; Nunan, 1986; Peacock, 1998) that can have a strong impact on their learning and, subsequently, on their academic success (Tse, 2000).

Table 11: Head teachers' and teachers' views of pupils' attitude towards English Composition

Key: T= True, VT= Very True, NT= Not True

STATEMENT	T		VT		NT		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Pupils perceive that English teachers are unfriendly	8	(40)	7	(35)	5	(25)	20	100
Pupils perceive English language to be a very difficult subject	11	(55)	5	(25)	4	(20)	20	100
Pupils perceive that since their senior couldn't pass very well in final exams they can also pass	6	(30)	4	(10)	12	(60)	20	100
Pupils perceive that we don't learn English language	7	(35)	7	(35)	6	(30)	20	100
Pupils perceive learning is only done at school	14	(70)	5	(25)	1	(5)	20	100
Teachers perceive all subject could be studies equally by pupil given same time	6	(30)	5	(25)	9	(45)	20	100
Teachers mark grammar only but do not consider ideas expressed in compositions	5	(25)	5	(25)	10	(50)	20	100

Table 11 presents teachers and head teachers' views of pupils' perception of English composition. Teachers and head teachers' were to indicate how the statement is true, very true or not true of how pupils perceive English composition. On Teachers' view that Pupils perceive that English teachers are unfriendly, 40% that it's indicated true; 25% indicated it's very true; 35% said not true. On teachers' view that pupils perceive English language to be a very difficult subject, 55% indicated true; 25% indicated very true; 20% said not true. On teachers' view that pupils perceive that since their seniors couldn't pass very well in the final exams they can also not pass, 30% indicated true; 10% indicated very true; 60% said not true. On Teachers' view that Pupils perceive that we don't learn English language, 35% indicated it's true; 35% indicated it's very true; 30% said it's not true. On Teachers' view that Pupils perceive learning is only done at school, 70% indicated it's true; 25% indicated it's very true; 5% said it's not true. On Teachers' view that Pupils perceive that all subjects could be studied equally by pupil given same time, 30% indicated it's true; 25% indicated it's very true; 35% said not true. On Teachers' view that Pupils perceive Teachers mark grammar only but do not consider ideas expressed in compositions, 25% indicated it's true; 25% indicated it's very true; 50% said it's not true. Interaction with teachers revealed that the major challenge affecting the teaching and learning of English composition is how pupils perceive the subject. It was revealed that about 95% of the pupils perceive that, learning is only done at school which teachers claim makes it difficult to make any progress in the study of the language.

Green (1993) stated that "a mismatch between student needs and expectations and the style of the teacher, may result in learning problems for the students" (p. 2) and Horwitz's (1988) opinion that certain beliefs might "result in negative learning

outcomes” (p. 292) reveal significant implications for foreign language educators. They were of the opinion that the gap between teacher and student perceptions could cause the learner to lose confidence and lead to dissatisfaction with the class, and ultimately result in a reluctance to participate in certain learning activities (Green, 1993; Horwitz, 1988). However, Heining-Boyton and Haitema (2007) conclude that the formation of attitude inhabits a fundamental part in early schooling and that “children and adolescents are knowledgeable consumers” (p. 164). Therefore, it is the educator’s task to utilize the children’s and adolescents’ positive desire to learn another language and to furthermore, assist them in this process (Heining-Boyton & Haitema, 2007).



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter summarises the outcome of the research, draws conclusion and makes recommendations for implementation by all the stakeholders in the areas of education and educational management. The outcome of this research shall help build a strong evidence based on pupils' academic performance in the district and to place teaching and learning in its right perspective. This will help inform its inquiry and ultimately inform policies regarding education and various stake holders mandated to ensure good quality education by confronting the challenges drowning academic progress in the district and the possible way forward.

5.1 Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study is to establish the determinants of basic school pupils' low performance in English composition among Junior High Schools within the Agona East District. The objectives of the study were to identify the factors contributing to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District, to examine how these factors contribute to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District, to examine teachers' instructional strategies and their effect on the pupils' low performance in English Composition and to evaluate pupils' attitude towards English composition and their effect on their low academic performance in the subject. Though the study looked at the falling standards in

pupils' education in general, it focused on the low academic performance in English composition among pupils of some selected basic schools within the Agona East District. Here an attempt was however made to discuss some challenges teachers and pupils face and feasible recommendations suggested.

The study focused only on the ten selected schools amidst several schools within the District. In view of this, it may not be possible to generalize the result of this study beyond the Agona East District. However, the results of this study could be replicated in any other Districts or Municipalities in the country.

The study made use of the mixed method research approach because of the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to find answers to the research questions. The target population was made up of all head teachers, English language teachers and pupils of public basic schools in the Agona East District of Central Region of Ghana, while the accessible population was head teachers, English teachers and pupils in three of the seven circuits of the District. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 120 respondents for the study. In order to achieve the said objectives, both primary and secondary source of data were collected and used. Semi -structured sets of questionnaires and interview guide where appropriate, were used to elicit responses from the respondents.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The research revealed the following:

1. Pupils' performance is affected by different factors such as family background, learning environment and pupils' role in the learning process.
2. That lack of reading materials on English composition in the school and at home which will enable pupils to study both in school and at home, contribute about 80% of pupils' failure in the subject.
3. That pupils serve as helps to their parents who most especially are illiterates and do not attach much importance to education and therefore do not encourage them to learn.
4. The influx of social media tends to distract pupils from learning instead of using it to learn.
5. That failure in English composition is directly linked with pupils' negative attitude towards the subject. Pupils however perceived that English language in general is a foreign language, so attaining perfection in it is a mirage.
6. That not only do pupils fail in their final examination as a result of socio economic factors but also cannot even express themselves properly in the English language.
7. That not only do pupils perform bad in English composition but in other subjects as well since almost all the subjects involve reading and writing of the English language.

8. Teaching strategies adopted by teachers also contribute to pupils' failure in English composition. School curriculum and the time table do not allow enough time and space for games and role playing oriented strategies in teaching.
9. There has not been any serious assessment on the pupils' failure in the subject to ascertain its real cause. There has not been any variation in the strategies used over the years in teaching English Composition to assess its adaptability by pupils and even how they assimilate what is taught
10. That about 95% of the pupils perceive that learning is only done at school which teachers claim makes it difficult to make any progress in the study of the language.

5.3 Conclusion

The major conclusion drawn from this study is that, pupils' academic failure in English Composition is directly linked with lack of availability of learning materials, pupils not well informed on answering examination questions and their negative attitude towards English Composition. On the part of teachers, their teaching strategies and lack of supervision by head teachers also led to a massive failure in the subject. It therefore behooves the authorities and policy makers to think through these challenges to find a lasting remedy to this woeful situation in the country completely.

5.4 Limitations

It will be extremely unfair to generalize the findings of the study for the following reasons:

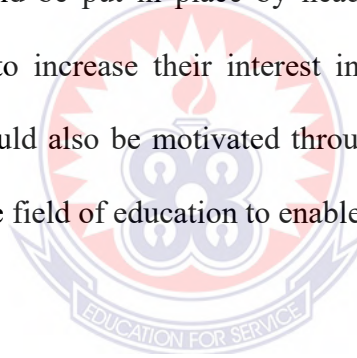
1. The study area is relatively small to warrant assumption of same characteristics for the rest of the towns in the region
2. The researcher did not control for location and since the Agona East district is largely rural its characteristics may necessarily differ from those of the more urban ones.

5.5 Recommendations

Considering the findings of the research the following recommendations are made:

1. More textbooks should be procured by basic schools especially in English composition to enable pupils get access to reading materials and possibly enable them borrow some to study at home. This will help them to improve their vocabulary.
2. Social and economic policies should be put in place by the government to enable children from parents of low economic status to have equal opportunity of advancing the cause of education of their children.
3. Parents should monitor their wards' activities on the social media. They should ensure that their children use the media to learn and not otherwise. Parents should endeavor to prevent their children from watching non-educative programs.

4. Teachers should be encouraged to vary their teaching strategies. Refresher courses and workshops on teaching strategies should be organized on regular basis to enable teachers acquaint themselves with modern trends of teaching.
5. Pupils should be assessed regularly by teachers most especially after each lesson to evaluate how they understand what has just been taught rather than waiting till final examination.
6. There should be constant supervision by head teachers, circuit supervisors and other supervisors on teachers' teaching strategy. More efforts should be channeled towards teachers' preparation for lessons and children's involvement.
7. Mechanisms should be put in place by head teachers, teachers and parents to motivate pupils' to increase their interest in the English composition subject. Also teachers should also be motivated through the activities of PTA and other stakeholders in the field of education to enable them teach the subject.



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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

To identify the factors contributing to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District.

- a) What are the factors contributing to low academic performance of pupils in English composition in your school?

To examine how these factors contribute to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District.

- b) How have these factors affected pupils' performance in the subject?

To examine teacher's instructional strategies and their effect on the pupils' poor performance in English Composition.

- c) What teaching strategies do teachers use in teaching composition?
- d) How effective are these strategies?
- e) Do you supervise teachers during composition lessons?
- f) Do you vet your teachers' lesson notes/plan?
- g) How experienced are your composition teachers in the subject?

To evaluate pupils' attitude towards English composition and its effect on their low academic performance in the subject.

What do you think are pupils' perception of composition?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

SECTION A

Please tick (✓) the appropriate column or fill in the blank spaces where necessary.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

1. Age:

- I. 20-24 years []
- II. 25-29 years []
- III. 30-34 years []
- IV. 35-39 years []
- V. 40-44 years []
- VI. 45-49 years []
- VII. 50 and above years []



2. Sex

Male [] Female []

Rank Director [] Assistant Director 1 [] Assistant Director 2 [] Principal

Superintendent [] Superintendent [] Assistant Superintendent []

Others (specify)

3. Highest Academic Qualification

Diploma..... BSc/BA/B.Ed..... MA/MSc/M.Ed./MPHIL.....

Others (Specify)

4. Number of years in teaching service
5. Number of years of teaching composition

SECTION 'B'

To identify the factors contributing to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District.

1. What are the factors contributing to low academic performance of pupils in English composition in your school?
 - i. Are your pupils able to read?
 - ii. Are there enough reading materials in your school?
 - iii. Do you teach pupils how to answer composition questions?
 - iv. Do you see English Composition as difficult to teach?
 - v. Is the time allotted for teaching the subject enough?

SECTION C

To examine how these factors contribute to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District.

2. How have these factors affected pupils' performance in the subject?

To examine teachers' instructional strategies and their effect on the pupils' poor performance in English Composition.

- vi. What teaching strategy do you use in teaching English Composition?
- vii. What are your reasons for using that strategy?
- viii. Do you give pupils enough exercises?
- ix. Do you mark the exercises and discuss their mistakes with them?
- x. Do you teach composition as a separate aspect of English language?
- xi. What form of assistance do you give pupils before BECE?
- xii. What other suggestions can you give for the effective teaching of composition?
- xiii. How do you motivate pupils to learn composition?

To evaluate pupils' perception of English composition and their effect on its low academic performance in the subject.

- xiv. How do you think pupils perceive English composition?
- xv. How do you think pupils think about your method of teaching composition?

APPENDIX C

Interview guide for pupils

To identify the factors contributing to low academic performance of pupils in English composition in the Agona East District.

1. What are the factors contributing to low academic performance of pupils in English composition in your school?
 - a) Do you practice essay writing at home?
 - b) How often do you study at home after school?
 - c) Do you have reading materials at home?
 - d) Are you taken through English Composition regularly?

To examine how these factors contribute to low academic performance of the pupils in English composition in the Agona East District.

2. How do these factors affect your performance?

To examine teachers' instructional strategies and its effects on the pupils' poor performance in English Composition.

- e) What are the instructional strategies adopted by your teacher in teaching English composition?
- f) What are your teacher's reasons for adopting those strategies?
- g) Do you often understand English Composition lessons?
- h) What do you think about the time allotted for English Composition lessons?
- i) What form of assistance do teachers give to pupils before BECE?

j) What other strategies will you suggest for your teacher to use in teaching English composition?

To evaluate pupils' perception of English composition and their effect on their low academic performance in the subject.

k) How do you see English Composition?

l) Do you think it should be studied in schools?

m) Do you think teachers are fair in scoring marks for composition?

n) What is the relationship between you in your English Composition teacher?



APPENDIX D
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

Dear Respondents,

I am a Master of philosophy Student in the Department of Basic Education of the University of Education, Winneba. I'm conducting a research on "Determinants of Basic School Pupils' Low Performance in English Composition. The Case of Agona East District. The information sought for through this medium is for research purpose. Kindly spend few minutes of your time to attempt to the questions as truthful as possible; information given will be treated with great confidentiality.

Thanks for your anticipated response.

SECTION A

Please tick (✓) the appropriate column or fill in the blank spaces where necessary.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

1. Age:

I. 12-15 years []

II. 16-19 years []

III. 20 and above []

2. Sex

I Male []

II. Female []

SECTION 'B'

To identify the factors contributing to low academic performance of pupils in English composition in the Agona East District.

3. Tick where appropriate

Factors on low academic performance in English composition	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
There is limited number of reading materials in the school				
Afraid of reading				
English composition is a difficult subject				
Pupils are well informed on how to answer examination questions				
Time allotted on the time table for composition is too small				
Pupils are not taken through English composition in class regularly				
Teachers don't teach to pupils understanding				
Social media language or diction has telling influence on pupils' composition learning				

Lack of parental support to teacher efforts				
Pupils don't study at home				
Teachers cane too much				
Pupils are scared of teachers				
Teachers don't take their time to explain the subject to us				
The subject is taught at the time when we are tired usually in the afternoon				
Teachers hardly come to class during the lesson period				
Pupils don't have enough vocabulary to write essays				
We don't have reading materials at home				
Lack of parental support to teacher efforts				

SECTION C

To examine teachers' instructional strategies and their effect on the pupils' poor performance in English Composition.

4. Tick where appropriate

Effects of teachers instructional strategies on academic performance	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Teachers:				

always use role play strategies				
use lecturing strategies				
do evaluation of each lesson				
involve games and play				
use question and answer approach				
recognize individual differences among learners				
create the learning situation to motivate pupils in ascertaining their inner strengths and abilities				
challenge the pupils to learn				
encourage general academic development of pupils				
cause, facilitate and promote learning.				
teach composition together with other aspects of English				
respect and understand the individual learner				
don't teach composition often				
don't give enough composition exercises				
don't mark composition exercises				
don't discuss pupils mistakes in composition				

SECTION D

To evaluate pupils' perception of English composition and how it affects their low academic performance in the subject.

Pupils' perception of English composition	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
English composition is a subject for only brilliant pupils				
English composition is a difficult subject				
English composition teachers are strict				
English composition teachers are disciplinarians				
English is someone's language				
English composition is not to be studied like other reading subjects				
Spoken language is different from written language				
Composition does not contribute to one's ability to speak the language				
There's no objectivity in the scoring of composition tests				
No matter your effort, you cannot please composition teachers with your essay content				