

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**INVESTIGATING POOR SUMMARY WRITING SKILLS AMONG SECOND
YEAR STUDENTS OF SEFWI BEKWAI SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

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Studies, in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

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

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. FOFO LOMOTÉY

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my loving and beautiful wife Martha Donkor, my children Kwabena Yentumi Ababio and Yaw Nyamenhyɛbor Ababio

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ABSTRACT

Fundamentally, summary writing entails the shortening of a text based on the main and secondary ideas in the text and subsequent restatement by the reader. It has been regarded as an all-involving task that involves the interplay of two abilities, namely, the ability to comprehend the main ideas and schematic organization of a text and the ability to compose a concise and coherent re-wording of the author's ideas. The overwhelming importance of summary writing has made it a key component in the Core English paper in the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations. Despite the importance of this skill, textbooks generally provide a cursory treatment of this concept. Summarization undeniably is a difficult skill for many Senior High School students. Summary writing has over the years proven to be a major cause of failure in core English Language paper at the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE). Therefore, there was the need to identify the forms of challenges that students in the study area encounter when undertaking a summary task. It is for this important reason that this study sought to unravel the challenges confronting final year students of Sefwi Bekwai Senior High School in the Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai Municipality of Ghana in executing summary tasks. The qualitative research design was used for the study. Random sampling technique was used to select 50 final year students in Sefwi Bekwai SHS and total sampling method to recruit all five teachers in the department of English. Two sets of questionnaires were used to elicit responses from the teachers and the students. All recruited students were given a passage in English and were thereafter tasked to summarize the passage based on some pre-determined questions. The scripts were marked by experts. The marked scripts of the students were analyzed to identify and extract the challenges the students faced. Data collected were analyzed using SPSS version 24. The challenges faced by students in summary writing are due to lack of effective instruction on the processes of producing a summary, lack of comprehension skills and vocabulary among students and poor reading habits among students.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

To provide a basis for admissions into tertiary institutions, final year Senior High School (SHS) students are examined in at least seven academic disciplines involving program specific subjects also referred to as elective subjects and core subjects by the West African Examination Council (WAEC). The SHS curriculum entails program specific subjects and core subjects. The core subjects are offered by all students. English Language is one of such core subjects. A pass in the subject is mandatory for qualification into tertiary and other post-secondary institutions. Annually, reports from the WAEC show that many students perform poorly in English Language. Details from the Chief examiners report suggest that most of the failures in English Language is attributable to poor performance in summary writing.

The curriculum of education in Ghana recognizes the overwhelming importance and relevance of English to the national discourse and is therefore taught and studied at all levels of education in Ghana. The importance of English at the S.H.S level is further reinforced by the fact that a failure in the subject impedes a student's progress to any tertiary institution. Summary writing is explained as the process of putting out a more succinct text by selecting essential information and eliminating other supporting and explanatory details from the original text (Chew *et al.*, 2019). Summary writing is an important way of evaluating the comprehension of students in a given text (Idris, Baba & Abdullah, 2011). It requires students to adopt several strategies to produce a summary, which is usually a very short form of the original piece. These strategies are critical in summary writing because they form the basic rules and principles,

which determine what to include and eliminate how to organize information in a text and to maintain the meaning of the original text.

Fundamentally, it entails the shortening of a text based on the main and secondary ideas in a text and subsequent restatement by the reader (Özdemir, 2018). It has been regarded as an all-involving task that involves the interplay of two abilities, namely, the ability to comprehend the main ideas and schematic organization of a text and the ability to compose a concise and coherent re-wording of the author's ideas. It includes some main process skills such as reading and comprehending what is contained in a text, looking out for the most vital information in a text and writing out a shorter version. Producing a summary depends on the text at hand. It does not need fundamental planning of the content and structure of a text since the mechanisms are based on the original text. Summary writing depends to a large extent on the author's decision on what to retain, delete, how to put together the information and how to ensure that the summary produced maintains the meaning of the original text. This involves repetitive reading on the original text (Idris, Baba & Abdullah, 2011).

Research findings suggest that summary tasks can facilitate the holistic development of learners' English reading and writing abilities as well as their content area study skills (Radmacher & Latosi-Sawin, 1995; Friend, 2001). Nonetheless, some studies (Cohen, 1994; Moore, 1997; Kim, 2001; Yang & Shih, 2003) have also shown that this integrative task is very challenging for some learners, as their deficiencies in reading and writing might lead to breakdowns at certain points in the process of summary production, ranging from identifying key words to integrating ideas into a coherent restatement (Chin, 2017). Because summary writing simply involves reducing a text to its basic essentials, the ability to effectively do this, can be a measure

of one's mastery and competence in a particular language. It has thus been used as one of the educational tools to measure intelligence and scholarship (Agordjor,2004). The overwhelming importance of summary writing has made it a key component in the Core English paper in the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Summarizing skills are essential to academic success; students are often required to produce study summaries and to complete tasks that call for the incorporation of source materials in academic papers and presentation among other important roles (Chin, 2017). It is an essential skill needed by students to support other skills of learning and also go through learning at the tertiary level efficiently (Idris *et al.*, 2011).

Despite the importance of this skill, textbooks generally provide a cursory treatment of this concept. Summary writing has therefore presented huge pedagogical potentials and challenges to learners. Summarization undeniably is a difficult skill for many students, particularly, Senior High School Students. Summary writing has over the years proven to be a major cause of failure in core English Language paper at the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE). The impact of the challenges in summary writing on the performance of students in the WASSCE does not escape the lenses of Chief Examiners in their yearly report. The poor students' performance in summary at the WASSCE seem to be recurring in the annual reports of the Chief Examiners.

For instance, Chief Examiners' Reports (July/August 2002) stated among other things that, *“Many candidates found the passage for the summary test rather difficult and therefore, performed poorly. There were lots of ‘lifting’ from the passage. Some candidates did not attempt the question”*. Interestingly, the comments in subsequent

years were no different. For example, in the WASSCE 2016, The Chief Examiner for English reports that “*the summary passage was easy to understand. The question was also very clear, yet many candidates performed poorly. Most of them resorted to ‘lifting’ as if they were answering questions in comprehension. Some of the answers had no bearing on the passage.*” The performance of students in summary seems to have seen little improvement over the years. This has led to this long-held misconception and fallacy that summary writing is a very difficult task and hence difficult to pass summary writing examinations.

Studies focused on providing some glimpses of how students deal with summary tasks and the challenges they encounter are limited. Most studies on summary writing in the country have focused primarily on students from the major cities and from well-endowed schools. There is therefore limited data on challenges students in rural and peri-urban areas face in summary writing. The persistent annual abysmal performance of SHS candidates in summary writing provides incontrovertible evidence that students indeed have difficulties executing summary writing instructions and until these difficulties are scientifically identified and addressed, the poor performance of students in summary writing and to a large extent in English language will perpetually linger on.

Therefore, the issue that needs to be addressed is the identification of the forms of challenges that students in the study area encounter when undertaking a summary task. It is for this important reason that this study sought to unravel the challenges confronting final year students of Sefwi Bekwai Senior High School in the Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai Municipality of Ghana in executing summary tasks.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

The main purpose of the study was to find out how students, deal with summary tasks and the challenges they encounter in carrying out summary writing related tasks.

1.3 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following research objectives;

1. To examine the attitudes and perceptions of students towards summary writing in English Language
2. To identify problems frequently faced by students in dealing with tasks in summary writing in English Language.
3. To ascertain the causes/sources of problems associated with the tasks in summary writing in English.
4. To establish ways of overcoming the challenges confronting students in summary writing in English Language.

1.4 Research Questions

The research sought to seek to answers to the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes and perceptions of students towards summary writing in English Language?
2. What are the problems students encounter in dealing with tasks in summary writing in English Language?
3. What are the causes of the challenges and problems students encounter in dealing with tasks in summary writing in English Language?
4. How can the challenges confronting students in summary writing in English Language be surmounted?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The outcome of the study will help policy makers in education in developing appropriate and effective methods of addressing problems in summary writing skills among students. Furthermore, the outcome of this study will be useful in informing teachers on areas of practical concern for the teaching and learning of English language. The study is intended to identify and recommend effective ways of overcoming the inadequacies in summary writing in English Language and will therefore be an important source of reference information for teachers and educational policy makers. Besides, the findings of the study will also add to existing literature on the challenges students face in summary writing.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

The study will be delimited to final year students and teachers of English Language in Sefwi Bekwai Senior High School during the second semester of the 2020/2021 academic year.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The data collection instruments that will be used may impose some limitations on the study. Furthermore, during the interview there is a propensity that the respondents may lie, grossly exaggerate or may be unwilling to disclose sensitive or very personal information.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one dwells on the introduction to the study. It discusses the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose and the objectives of the study, research questions and hypothesis. Besides, the significance of the study, delimitation and limitations of the study are stated in

chapter one. Review of relevant literature, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin the study are presented in chapter two. Chapter three covers the methodology used for the study. This includes research approach, research design, population, sample size and sampling techniques, instrumentation, procedure for data collection, validity and reliability of the instrument for data collection, the pilot study, ethical considerations, and the data analysis. Chapter four focuses the results and discussion of findings of the study. The summary of the study, conclusions, recommendation, contributions to knowledge and suggestions for further research are presented in chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter details the review of relevant literature associated with the study. The review of literature was carried out under themes relevant to the research objectives and broadly put under three areas, theoretical framework, conceptual framework and review of relevant previous studies.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a blueprint or a guide that governs a research (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). A theoretical framework is premised on an existing theory and is related to a hypothesis and serves as the basis upon which the researcher designs his research. The theoretical framework guides the researcher in order for him not to deviate (Adom, Hussei & Adu-Agyem, 2018). Two theories; the Schema theory and the metacognitive theory were used to explain the theoretical basis of the study.

The schema theory is based on the belief that “every act of comprehension involves one’s knowledge of the world” (Anderson et al, 1977 as cited by Al-Issa, 2015 p 41). Schemas, or schemata, are known as cognitive constructs by which information is organized in one’s long-term memory (Widdowson, 1983). They represent the experiences, conceptual understanding, attitudes, values, skills, and strategies one brings to a text situation (Vocca & Vocca, 1999). Similarly, Khaghaninejad in (2016) explained that a schema is a cognitive framework or concept that helps organize and interpret information. It can be useful because they allow a person to take shortcuts in interpreting the large information that is present in our environment.

Smith (1994, p8) explained that; *Everything we know and believe is organized in a theory of what the world is like, a theory that is the basis of all our perceptions and understanding of the world, the root of all learning, the source of hopes and fears, motive and expectancies, reasoning and creativity. And this theory is all we have. If we make sense of the world at all, it is by interpreting our interactions with the world in the light of our theory. The theory is our shield against bewilderment* (as cited by Al-Issa, 2015). In simple terms, the schema theory states that all knowledge is organized into units. A schema can therefore be thought of as a generalized description or a conceptual system for understanding how knowledge is represented and used (Khaghaninejad, 2016). The metacognitive theory was introduced by Flavell in (1976). According to him, metacognition is one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them" (p.232).

Metacognition is used as an umbrella term embracing the structures that are related to the thinking process and information of individuals (Akturk & Sahin, 2011). Brown in (1978) conducted many studies focused on understanding information or the problems related to either effective use of information or understanding information for which a clear definition has been provided. Brown (1978) defined metacognition as students' awareness and organization of thinking processes that they use in planned learning and problem-solving situations. Metacognition is what helps a student who has been taught a particular problem context to retrieve and deploy that strategy in a similar but new context (Kuhn & Dean, 2004).

2.1.1 Applications of the Theories to the Study

Reading comprehension is crucial to a good summary writing. The schema theory has a phenomenal impact on reading comprehension. Understanding the role of schema in

the process of reading and comprehension provides insight into why students may fail to understand a given text material and subsequently summarize the text or portions of the text. When students are familiar with the topic of the text, they are reading that is if they possess content schema, are aware of the structural make-up of the text genre that is they possess formal schema and skillful in the decoding characteristics required to recognize words and recognize how they fit together in a sentence that is they possess language schema, they are better placed to understand the text. Lack of or deficiency in any of the schemas will end up in a deficit in reading comprehension and subsequently negatively impact on summary writing (Al-Issa, 2015). According to Carrell (1988), “students’ apparent reading problems may be as a result of insufficient background knowledge [content, formal, and linguistic]” (as cited by Al-Issa, 2015 p. 245). Nonetheless, students might have sufficient schemata, yet unable to understand a given text if such schemata are not appropriately activated. In relation to reading comprehension, the schema theory posits that a text does not by itself carry meaning. However, the reader brings schemata defined by information, knowledge, emotion, and culture to the printed word (Brown, 2006). Reading is only incidentally visual. Much information is brought by the reader than by the text. This therefore shows that understanding a text depends on the quantum of related schema a reader possesses while reading. The inability to understand a text or make sense out of text is as a result of appropriate schemata that can easily fit with the content of the text (Al-Issa, 2015).

In the context of reading, meta-cognition entails thinking about what one is doing while reading. According to Pardede (2019) strategic readers do not only sample the text, make hypotheses, confirm or reject them, and make new hypotheses while reading; they engage in many activities along the process of reading. These activities

can be categorized into three stages that is before reading, while reading, and after reading. The activities the reader engages in before reading are to identify the purpose of the reading and identify the form or type of the text. During the second stage (while reading), they think about the general character and features of the form or type of the text such as trying to locate a topic sentence, following supporting details toward a conclusion, projecting the author's purpose for writing the text, choosing, scanning, or reading in detail, making continuous predictions about what will occur next based on information obtained earlier, prior knowledge, and conclusions obtained within the previous stages. In the last stage, the reader attempts to form a summary, conclude, or make inference of what was read.

2.2 The History of English Language in Senior High School Curriculum

The earliest form of formal education in Ghana started in the 15th century in the castle schools. These were schools that were established by the early Europeans in the forts and castles. The rationale for the establishment of the schools was to provide formal education to children and relatives of wealthy African merchants, some prominent traditional rulers. However, these schools were not meant to formally educate indigenous Ghanaian children. The precursor of modern English curriculum in our schools can be traced to the arrival and activities of the early Europeans. When the first Europeans arrived on the shores of Ghana, then Cold Coast, they trained some of the local people as interpreters for business (Adika, 2012). With the arrival of the British, other European competitors were knocked out of business by the British. Their forts and castles were consequently taken over by the British. These forts and castles subsequently housed schools for teaching English to the local citizens on a largely structured basis (Adika, 2012). The language policy of the colonial and missionary administrations helped to consolidate the study of English in Ghana. One

of the monumental actions which led to the consolidation of English was the role played in 1824 by a school master of the Cape Coast Castle School, Rev. Denny in advocating the exclusive use of English in the school. Violations to this directive came with sanctions.

Besides, the early Missionaries recognized the importance of English in their work of proselyting the gospel. English was therefore used in many Wesleyan mission schools. The Educational ordinances passed in 1822 and 1887 introduced grants as financial support for schools established by the missions and private individuals. It is worth mentioning that schools which used indigenous languages as media of instruction could not benefit from the financial support. This was a great incentive for the study of English and a great disincentive for the study of indigenous languages. The British Colonial Administration was of the opinion that instruction in indigenous language could be left to self-interest and that subsidies from the government were not required to encourage them.

The period from 1957 to 1966 which marked an era of Ghana's independence and pan-Africanism was a period where English was solely the medium of instruction in our schools. The existing language policy of Ghana stipulates that English Language be used as the medium of instruction from primary to the university. The introduction of this policy was driven by the desire to help students obtain high proficiency in English because all terminal examinations are conducted in that language. Besides, the policy was introduced to help students participate in and benefit from the global economy using a global language (Adika, 2012). Ghana belongs to the Anglophone countries because it is a British colony. Although the country has many indigenous languages, English is the official and the most prestigious language. Competence and

fluency in English is highly regarded, admired and respected. English is the key to social mobility in Ghana, and throughout the education system, a pass in English is mandatory in propelling one to the next level of the educational ladder (Dako and Quarcoo, 2017).

2.2.1 English Language Curriculum in Senior High Schools in Ghana

The current SHS curriculum takes three years to complete after basic school. At the end of the program, an external examination, the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) conducted by the West African Examination Council. The examination permits entry into universities and other post-secondary institutions. The examination results are graded on a scale of A1- F9. A1 is excellent and represents the highest/ best grade and F9 denotes failure and represents the lowest grade. C4 - C6 denotes credit passes. D7 and E8 are considered pass grades. However, for the purposes of admissions into the various universities in the country, the accepted grades are A1-C6. To be admitted into any university, a student should obtain credit passes or better in six subjects which should include English language (Dako and Quarcoo, 2017).

2.2.2 Content of the SHS English Syllabus

The preamble of the SHS English Language syllabus asserts the relevance of English Language in the existence and socialization of humanity. As individuals or members of a social group, our ability to function effectively and efficiently in almost all spheres of life depends fundamentally on our language skills. In Ghana, English is used as the official language and medium of instruction in our schools from upper primary school level to all higher levels. The need to study English is, therefore, crucial for students as well as all sectors of the population since it is the principal

medium for teaching and learning, for official work and for international communication. The Senior High School is the second level of education in Ghana. At this stage, students would have been introduced to the basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills must be improved considerably to give students the confidence as they communicate in the language. The syllabus details the pedagogical instructions needed in areas such as grammar, comprehension, orals among others.

2.2.3 English Paper at the Wassece: The Scope of the Syllabus

The examination conducted by WAEC sets out to test the different basic skills of communication in English using the medium of speech and writing. The examination tests the receptive and productive abilities of candidates. These abilities are demonstrated in the following forms: Reading Comprehension, Summary, Vocabulary, Lexis and Structure, Listening Comprehension, and recognition of different aspects of spoken English.

The objective of the syllabus is to measure the extent to which the aims of the teaching syllabuses of WAEC member countries have been realized in candidates senior high school career. The examination sets out to test candidates' ability to:

- (i) use correct English;
- (ii) write about incidents in English that are appropriate to specified audiences and situations;
- (iii) organize materials in paragraphs that are chronologically, spatially and logically coherent;
- (iv) control sentence structures accurately;
- (v) exhibit variety in the choice of sentence pattern;

- (vi) comply with the rules of grammar;
- (vii) comprehend written and spoken English;
- (viii) recognize implied meaning, tones and attitudes;
- (ix) use acceptable pronunciation that can be comprehended by others;
- (x) pick out and summarize relevant information from a set passage.

2.2.3.1 Scheme of Examination

There are three papers in the examination, Papers 1, 2 and 3; all of which are mandatory must be taken. Papers 1 and 2 are composite and are be taken at the same sitting. Paper 1 is made up of multiple-choice objective questions covering lexis, structure and literature. Paper 2 comprises essay writing, comprehension and summary. Paper 3 is an oral test.

Section C: Summary

This section usually consists of one prose passage of about five hundred (500) words. The passage is selected from a wide variety of suitable sources, including excerpts from narratives, dialogues and expositions on social, cultural, economic and political issues in any part of the world and is used to test the candidate's ability to

- (i) extract relevant information, avoiding repetition and redundancy;
- (ii) summarize the points demanded in clear, concise English;
- (iii) present a summary of specific aspects or portions of the passage.

2.2.3.2 Students' weakness in summary writing in WASSCE- excerpts from the chief examiner's report

The difficulty students face in summary writing has been recurring annually. An analysis of the Chief Examiners report for the past ten years revealed the following:

The performance of the candidates was below average. This is difficult to understand because the language in which the Summary passage and questions was couched in was simple and straightforward. Candidates should be reminded that summary answers, by their nature, are expected to be in short sentences incorporating just the main ideas. In fact, each answer should not be more than a line and a half. A summary question is not like a comprehension one where the candidate is virtually at liberty to quote whole sentences as answers – Chief Examiners Report 2013 .

The summary passage was also another interesting passage. It was about the difference between a desktop telephone and a handset telephone. These are gadgets students are used to and therefore answering questions on them should not pose a problem. Candidates were to summarize the problems associated with owning the desktop telephone as well as the advantages which the handset telephone had over the desktop telephone. The passage was easy to understand yet many candidates could not do well. They could not identify the main ideas of the passage and differentiate them from the illustrations. Most of them resorted to ‘lifting’ as if they were answering questions in comprehension. Teachers should point out these fundamental techniques in summary writing. Teachers should also point out to their students that they should avoid padding nouns and verbs with adjectives and adverbs in summary making. They should put main ideas as answers without any embellishment – Chief Examiners Report 2014

The summary passage was easy to understand. The question was also very clear. Yet many candidates performed poorly. Most of them resorted to “lifting” as if they were answering questions in comprehension. Some of the answers had no bearing on the passage. Teachers should work hard to help candidates acquire

*the skills in answering summary questions by giving them more summary exercises – **Chief Examiners Report 2016***

*The summary passage was about a topic that is very popular with the students. A good number of the candidates did not do well at all in this part of the paper. They were unable to identify the main ideas of the passage and differentiate them from their supporting ones and illustrations. Many of them resorted to mindless lifting as if they were answering questions on comprehension. Teachers should, therefore integrate the skills to be learned in their lessons and give students more exercises in summary as much as possible- **Chief Examiners Report 2017***

*The summary passage was a contemporary one talking about the importance of the types of food we eat. Nevertheless, most candidates resorted to copying whole parts of the passage as answers. The candidates clearly could not differentiate between topic sentences and illustrations. Most candidates found it difficult to answer the questions appropriately - **Chief Examiners Report 2018***

*The passage was straightforward with simple diction and sentence structures. However, performance of candidates was below average. They could not identify the main points and so resorted to lifting directly from the passage - **Chief Examiners Report 2019.***

2.3 Concept of Summary and Summary Writing

Several definitions have been put forward to explain the meaning of summary. According to Buckley (2004), summary is the reduction of a text to one-third or one-quarter its original size, clearly stating the author's meaning, and maintaining main ideas. Hacker (2008) explains summary as a task that involves stating a work's thesis and main ideas "simply, briefly, and accurately". It may also be explained as

condensed version of an existing text (Idris, 2014). Similarly, Langan, (1993) as the reduction of a large amount of information to its most important points. Friend (2003) describes summary as the process of determining what content in a passage is most important and transforming it into a succinct statement in one's own words. According to Hidi and Anderson, (1986), a summary is a brief statement that represents the condensation of information accessible to a subject and reflects the gist of the discourse.

Different explanations have been put forward to explain the concept of summary. Summarization has been also been simply described the ability to convey the main points concisely (Winograd, 1984). Some scholars consider this skill to include the reduction of a large amount of information to its most important points (Langan, 1993). The definitions show that it is a process that calls for higher cognitive skills and this is what makes it a demanding task (Lin & Maarof, 2019). "The summary writer must decide what to include, what to eliminate, how to reword or reorganise information, and how to ensure that the summary is true to the original's meaning" (Anderson, & Hidi, 1989, p. 26). Restructuring the source text demands students to engage with the text and to formulate ideas in their own words. This requires that students "make a shift from being consumers of knowledge to creators of knowledge" (Hood, 2008, p.351). This task calls for active metacognitive skills which are comprehension, evaluation, condensation and frequent transformation of ideas (Hidi & Anderson in Hill, 1991; Yu, 2008). Being able to decipher what is important from what is not demands careful judgement on the part of the reader so that he is able to create something new that can 'stand for the original' (Chihobo, 2016). Similarly, Karbalaei & Rajyashree (2010) mention that; often confused with determining importance, summarizing is a broader, more synthetic activity for which determining

importance is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition. The ability to summarize information requires readers to sift through large units of text, differentiate important from unimportant ideas, and then synthesize those ideas and create a new coherent text that stands for, by substantive criteria, the original. (p. 41). Considering how summary writing is regarded in the academic settings not only in language teaching but in other fields like business writing shows how important it is for students to acquire these skills in order to succeed in their academic activities. However, these skills do not come naturally for example, besides reading comprehension skills, “reducing a text to its main points is an ability which involves recognizing and deleting irrelevant and unnecessary information from a written text” (Ashrafzadeh & Nimehchisalem, 2015, p. 287).

One of the essential skills taught in schools to help improve students’ comprehension ability is summarization. The skill involves a few main processes such as reading and understanding the content of a text, identifying the most salient information in the text, and re-producing a relatively shorter form of it called summary. Summary writing is a component of the English syllabus because it allows the assessment and understanding abilities of students in summarizing texts. Beyond the SHS level, the skill of summarizing is important to help students effectively learn at the tertiary level (Idris, Baba & Abdullah, 2014). Besides, this skill helps support other skills such as copious note taking, writing and reading. Unlike other writing tasks such as story writing, report writing, summary writing is contingent on an initial or existing text (Hidi & Anderson, 1986).

Owing to the fact that the operations in summary writing are based on information and ideas obtained from the original text, it does not need basic planning of the

content and structure of a text or the generation of new ideas. It is however largely dependent on the decision of the author to identify and include information to retain, how to re-organize or re-word the retained information, what information to eliminate or delete all within the context of retaining or maintain the meaning of the original text. Nonetheless, the production of a good summary depends on a comprehensive understanding of the original text. This involves repetitive reading and writing activities between the original text and the summary one is producing (Kaur, 1997).

It is important to mention that summary writing involves many crucial strategies and that if these strategies are not identified and properly applied, students cannot produce a good and flawless summary. It is therefore imperative that students have a good mastery of these strategies in order to produce good summaries

When one is writing a summary he is creating something new from the original text by focusing on its important points (Chihobo, 2016).

The main objective of summary writing is therefore to present briefly the main ideas of a work. summary carries correct information in an efficient manner so that the essential details of a work is much shorter than the original (Frey, Fisher & Hernandez, 2003). As opposed to other forms of academic writing, summary writing does not demand basic planning of text content and structure by generating new ideas because the principles are based on ideas extracted from the original text. It however depends on some critical objective assessments and judgments of the reader such as the decision on what to include, what to include, what to expunge, how to organize the salient information and how to ensure that meaning of the original text is not compromised (Kirkland and Saunders, 1991). The production of a good summary

requires a comprehensive and good understanding of the original text and recurrent reading-writing activities (Chew *et al.*, 2019).

2.4 Types of Summary Writing

In relation to summary writing, the text structure can be categorized into microstructure and macrostructure. The microstructure represents the relations between sequences of sentences in actual text while the macrostructure represents relations between blocks of sentences and the global organization of texts (Hutchins, 1987). Summaries can therefore be viewed as expressions of the macrostructure of a text as interpreted by an individual in the light of background knowledge (Hutchins, 1987). Mastering text structure helps identify significant information and remove unnecessary detail and also relate to the skill of making generalizations or superordinations (Chong, 2012).

Summary writing can be put into two types or groups; précis and evaluation summary. Précis is a brief summary of another text that contains the main points but little embellishment and is usually four to eight sentences in length (Frey *et al.*, 2003). Evaluation summary is a brief summary of another text focusing on the main points and concluding with the insights and opinions of the writer (Frey *et al.*, 2003). Evaluation summary is mostly employed in the review of literature where a summary of the literature is provided and criticisms and recommendations are made by the writer. All the two major forms of summary have three overlapping properties; they are shorter than the original piece, they paraphrase the author's words and they focus on the main ideas only (Frey *et al.*, 2003). However, depending on the volume of extracted content from a work, there may be other types of summary such as the

descriptive, the paraphrase, and the analytical summary among others (Nanglakong *et al.*, 2019).

2.5 Challenges with Summary Writing

Summary writing over the years has proven to be a very challenging and difficult task among students. Many students tend to substitute quoting or lifting for summarizing. Writing skill is undoubtedly the most difficult for many students learning English as a foreign language.

Quoting refers to the borrowing and re-writing the words of the writer. When the exact words, sentence construction and structure are reproduced by the student it is termed as 'lifting'. Successful generalizations are key to producing a good summary. While good summarizers focus on the gist of a text,

poor summarizers reproduce a given text with all its details. Students have difficulty substituting a writer's ideas and intentions with their own words (Havola, 1986). Students who excel in summary writing tasks view these tasks in very broad terms, generalizing and drawing conclusions or inferences, altering the ideas of the author and creating something new within the context of maintaining the original idea of the text. People who perform poorly in summary writing tasks see these tasks in very narrow terms, rewriting the author's idea (Havola, 1986).

Choy and Lee, (2012) documented that limited vocabulary is a major challenge for students in summary writing. Students have a great difficulty when tasked to change the wording of a text in order to present the meaning in another way (Hood, 2008). The process of identifying key concepts of text materials and applying skills of paraphrasing sentence structures to make the end product a precisely condensed

summary reflecting the same meaning is therefore challenging for them (Choy and Lee, 2012). Besides, other studies have revealed that L1 (first language) and L2 (second language) affect summary writing in general because of the several different linguistic, rhetorical, and cultural backgrounds (Cho, 2012).

According to Hill (1991), text difficulty and organization, degree of comprehension, availability of text, audience, intended purpose, type of summary required, genre, and text length are many several factors that affect summary writing. Summarization is closely related to the characteristic nature of the text such as length of text, genre and complexity involving vocabulary, sentence structure, abstractness, familiarity of idea, improper or unclear organization (Hidi and Anderson, 1986). Genre of the original text can profoundly influence summarization. Students summarize narratives with much ease as compared to expositions (Cho, 2012). Complexity of the original text involves “low-frequency vocabulary, elaborate sentence structure, abstractness, unfamiliarity of concepts and ideas, and inappropriate or vague organization” (Hidi and Anderson, 1986). The absence of a topic sentence in a text makes identification of the most important ideas difficult for students (Cho, 2012). More complex texts demand more conscious and deliberate judgments (Brown and Day, 1983). Ideas can easily be closely related in a shorter text and can be expressed in a topic sentence. This makes summarizing a shorter text easier than a longer text. Longer texts require more load processing, evaluations and decisions in establishing the relevant portions and accurately and concisely condensing the text (Hidi & Anderson, 1986).

2.6 Strategies to Writing a Good Summary

Good comprehension skills are key to writing a good summary (Chew *et al.*, 2019) (Nandhini & Balasundaram, 2013) defined reading comprehension as the process of

simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning of what is read. Summarizing is one of the reading strategies that helps students to more deeply understand the text and it is an indicator of understanding at the same time (Pečjaka & Pirc, 2018).

Mastery of some strategies such as topic sentence selection, deletion, sentence combination, paraphrasing, generalization, and invention helps in writing very good summaries (Chew *et al.*, 2019). The use of topic sentence as a strategic tool for summary writing involves the determination of the main idea within a paragraph. A topic sentence is a single sentence that summarizes a paragraph. Deletion involves the disregard of insignificant and unimportant lexical and phrases from a text. Sentence combination joins two or more sentences to arrive at a brief and shorter version. Paraphrasing involves rewriting a sentence using the writer's own words by using the summarizing strategy, students are able to find important information and meaningfully join them with the words from the text or with their own words. The underpinning principle, in summary strategy is that, students first analyze each sentence/paragraph by searching for important words and essential details, then leave out unimportant information, and merge the important information into a meaningful whole (Westby, Culatta, Lawrence, &

Hall-Kenyon, 2010). Summaries are shorter than the original text, but reflect the macrostructure of the text (Brown & Day, 1983) while retaining the original meaning of the text (Chew *et al.*, 2019).

2.6.1 How to write a good summary

Summary writing needs three important processes; comprehension, text production and condensation and generalization (Hutchins, 1987). To ease the task of summary writing and also produce a very good summary, it is important for the writer to follow

some steps. Several procedural steps have been put forward by different researchers to show how a summary product can be obtained. The author differentiates three levels of statements in a text with regard to their importance: the first level represents the most important statements (macrostructures), the second level represents the statements with more details and the third one represents statements with the most details (microstructures) (Pečjaka & Pirc, 2018). Kintsch and van Dijk (1978) suggested three processes that are a part of summarizing—deletion, generalization and integration. They formed rules on the basis of which students connect individual statements at a lower level (the level of sentences, phrases and words) into macrostructures, and named them “macrorules”. The first two rules include the process of deletion of unnecessary material: the exclusion of unnecessary (trivial) information and the additional removal of redundant information. The next two rules refer to the process of generalization—replacement of specific individual terms with general concepts. Brown and Day (1983) named these two rules selection and invention. The

last two rules by Kintsch and Van Dijk (1978) describe the process of integration, in which students connect microstatements in a joint general statement. Students perform this task by either choosing a statement with the main idea from the text or by forming a keynote statement with their own words, a process identified as superordination by Brown and Day (1983).

Brown & Day (1983) identified several summarization rules or strategies to produce a summary. These rules included deletion, generalization, selection of topic sentence and invention.

Rule Process

Deletion Deletes unimportant information from the original text

In this rule, the term '*unimportant information*' is very subjective and quite vague thus converting such ill-defined rule into an algorithm is a difficult task. To develop a system that can automatically identify students' strategies used in summary writing, each summarizing strategy must be defined by measurable and precise rules. To produce these measurable and precise rules, human skills in summary writing need to be analyzed.

Experts produce better summaries than students and they employ a number of summarizing strategies to produce good summaries. Hence, to identify each strategy, we collected samples of experts' summary sentences and analyzed these sentences to determine the characteristics of each strategy. The results of the analysis are then used to formulate a more detailed and precise rules

In a study conducted in Malaysia to develop effective rules and strategies for writing effective summaries, summaries produced by experts were subjected to critical and painstaking analysis to extract the relevant themes. In analyzing the expert summaries, the summary sentence decomposition method was adopted to examine whether or not the summary sentences produced were from the original text and determine how these sentences were constructed. This was based on the principle that a summary produced is contingent on an original or existing text.

The following steps were employed to determine the strategies.

The experts' summary texts were first decomposed into summary sentences. These sentences were then segregated into words. Words were then searched for in the

original text and their locations in the original text noted. The locations of the words in the original text helped to reveal the original sentence corresponding to the summary sentence. In the final step, the relationship between each summary sentence and its corresponding original sentence was analyzed to identify the summarizing strategies used by the experts to produce the summary. In all the following guidelines in summary writing were outlined

deletion – if the summary sentence is shorter than the corresponding original sentence.

sentence combination – if the summary sentence is produced from more than one corresponding original sentences.

generalization – if a word or a phrase in the summary sentence refers to or replaces a list of items in the corresponding original sentence

paraphrase – if a word in the summary sentence is a synonym of a word in the corresponding original sentence

topic sentence selection – if the summary sentence or its meaning can be found at the beginning or the end of a paragraph in the original text

invention – if more than 75% of the summary sentence contain words not found in the original text and the meaning of the original text is retained.

Idris, Baba & Abdullah (2011) identified seven (7) types of strategies that have been used by experts to produce summary sentences. These strategies are:

Deletion

In the deletion process, trivial or redundant information are eliminated from the sentence in the original text. From the analysis, this process involves units such as stop phrases, explanations, examples, scenarios and elaborations .Deletion is the removal of redundant and unimportant or trivial information from a text. The

unimportant or trivial information contains minor details about topics. Redundant information contains repetitive words. It includes rewording or restating some of the important sentences. (Cho, 2012).

Sentence combination

In the sentence combination process, phrases from more than one sentence are merged into one sentence. This process is typically applied together with other strategies such as deletion, generalization and paraphrasing so that the summary sentences produced are short but informative. These sentences are usually combined using conjunction words such as *and*, *but*, *although*, *though*, *by*, *where*, *which*, and *because* or even by coma (,) and are most likely to come from the same paragraph.

Superordination

The superordination rule refers to the substitution of a superordinate term for a list of items or actions. For example, body parts can be used to replace a list such as eyes, ears, neck, arms and legs. Similarly, pineapple, mango, melon, avocado, grapes, apples can be replaced with fruits.

Topic sentence selection

In summary writing, selection means selecting main idea sentences in a given material. This generally involves the use of a topic sentence. In the topic sentence selection, usually only one main sentence is chosen to represent the main idea of the whole paragraph. This strategy involves identifying relevant information from the original text to be included in the summary. From our analysis, the human experts made use of cue phrases (e.g., *“It is concluded that”*, *“She discovered that”*, *“She claims that”*) and their location (which is either the first sentence or the last sentence of the paragraph) in order to identify the theme of the text.

Syntactic transformation

In syntactic transformation, the order of the words in a sentence or the syntactic structure of a sentence is changed. These changes may affect the location of the words in the summary text as compared to the original text.

Paraphrasing

In the paraphrasing process, a phrase or word in the original sentence is replaced with a similar phrase/word in the summary sentence. This refers to the use of similarity concept involving synonym, where different words that have same meaning.

Generalization

In the generalization process, a list of words or items is replaced by a more general word in the same class. This refers to the use of relatedness concept such as hypernymy (*is-a relationship*), meronymy (*part-ofrelationship*) or any kind of frequent association.

Invention

In the invention process, the meaning of the sentences is constructed by using the expert's own words. In this case, our assumption is: if more than 75% of words in a summary sentence are composed by using their own words, then it is considered that the sentence is produced by using the invention strategy. This assumption is due to cases where some words are unique words and cannot be replaced by other related words. For example, person's name, diseases, place, etc.

In cases where a paragraph does not have a topic sentence, one can be invented, stating clearly but concisely the implicit or main idea of the text. The invention rule

requires that students “add information rather than just delete, select or manipulate sentences already provided for them” (Brown and Day, 1983).

2.6.2 Step by step processes to writing a good summary

Hare and Borchardt, (1984) documented the following steps meant to help produce a good summary.

1. Understand the passage: Find out what the text was about. Look back and re-read the text to make sure the theme of the passage is identified.
2. Collapse lists: use words or phrase to replace a whole list of items. For example, body parts can be used to replace a list such as eyes, ears, neck, arms and legs.
3. Use topic sentence. In cases where the writer does not provide a topic sentence, one must be made up.
4. Get rid of unnecessary details. Summaries are meant to be short, therefore any trivial information and repetitions should be avoided.
5. Collapse paragraphs. Paragraphs generally relate to one another. Some paragraphs expand or explain in detail other paragraphs. Such paragraphs should be collapsed.
6. Check and polish the product: adjustments should be made to the final summary to make it a good piece.

Apart from this, Cho (2012) outlined the following as useful steps in producing a good summary with ease.

A. Identification and Organization of the main ideas and important Information

1. Write down the main idea.
2. Write down the important things the writer indicated the main idea.

3. Check to make sure you understand what the main idea is and the important things the writer stated.
4. Indicate the main idea you are going to write about.
5. Organize in a chronological order your main ideas.
6. Cross check to see any relevant information left out or any trivial detail included.
7. Write the summary.
8. *Clarify and Revise the Summary*
9. Reread your summary and revise it appropriately. Clarify any information if necessary and delete any irrelevant detail.

It hence follows that summaries involves synthesizing information from different many parts of an original text, there is a great possibility of a skipping very important information. Interestingly a painstaking examination of all the summary procedures for any given text documented by different researchers reveal three common principles, clearer understanding of the text, identification of all relevant or important information and condensation of the relevant facts.

Idris, Baba & Abdullah (2011) outlined the following heuristic rules;

Deletion

A summary sentence is produced by deletion if two words or more:

- are found from the same sentence in the original text
- are sequence of words in adjacent positions in the original text
- retain their relative precedent relation as in the original text
- are less than the number of words of the original sentence

Sentence Combination

A summary sentence is produced by sentence combination if the words are found:

- in different sentences from original text which come from nearby sentences or from the same paragraph
- applied together with other strategies
- involve the use of conjunction words to combine phrases from different sentences

Topic sentence selection

A summary sentence is produced by topic sentence selection if:

- cue phrase or
- location cue (the first or last sentence of the paragraph in original text) is found in the sentence.

Syntactic transformation

A summary sentence is produced by syntactic transformation if:

- the words are found from the same sentence in the original text
- the order of the words are different from the original text

Paraphrase

A summary sentence is produced by paraphrase if:

- the words in the sentence are similar/synonym to the words found in any sentence in original text

Generalization

A summary sentence is produced by generalization if:

- a set of words in the sentence is related to the same class or word found in any sentence in original text

Invention

A summary sentence is produced by invention if:

- most of the words in summary sentence is not found in any sentence in original text but are semantically related by lexical relationships.

2.7 Connection between Reading and Writing and Summarization

In order to complete summarization tasks L2 learners need to demonstrate both their reading and writing skills (Li, 2014). Studies suggest that summarizing is intimately linked to reading comprehension in that the writer must, first of all, make sense of the target text (Kintsch & van Dijk 1978). Findings from many studies show that summary writing is a demanding and difficult skill to master not only because it is a cognitive activity as discussed above, but also because it is a combination of reading and writing skills (Lin & Maarof, 2013; Nambiar, 2007). A summarizing task demands that one reads and understands the original text, identifies its important information, and composes a short text to synthesize the important information (Yuan Ke & Hoey, 2014). Hee Ko (2009) adds that a combination of the two can be effective because the skills can reinforce each other. They facilitate deeper reading comprehension since they are interactive and interrelated. Reading and writing are at the heart of producing a good summary. There seems to be connectivity between summary writing and reading and writing (Chihobo, 2016). Summary is a primary contact between reading and writing in academic settings (Cho, 2012). One of several academic tasks that require that students write in a second language is summary writing, which is a synergy of writing and reading skills. According to Hood (2008)“the practice of summary writing from source texts has long been a core activity in academic writing programs” (p. 351). It is frequently used in academic settings to test for comprehension, metacognitive skills, such as recall (Hee Ko, 2009;

Sajedi, 2014; Yang & Shi, 2003). Summary writing is associated with academic success (Hee Ko, 2009; Kim, 2001). To produce a good summary, the students should clarify unfamiliar words and read the text several times. During the first reading, the reader should try to identify the author's idea and the purpose of the text. This will enable the reader to better understand the details in the text through subsequent readings (Cho, 2012). Because there are different types of text, different reading techniques are required for reading and producing a good summary (Havola, 1986). Good summarizers master reading techniques, prioritizing the meaning in the text and finding out how the different parts of a text are connected. Good summarizers read a text based on their own experiences and imagination, start summarizing while reading, and spend a lot of time reading and planning than writing (Havola, 1986). Compared with good summarizers, Havola, (1986) argues that poor summarizers spend a lot of time writing and a little time reading and thinking. This problem is as a result of lack of both reading comprehension skill and lack of background knowledge. Knowledge of strategies and procedures which facilitate the process of learning from a text should be given to the poor writers. (Chong, 2012).

2.8 Benefits of Summaries

Cho (2012) argues that summary writing improves comprehension. Similarly, Westby *et al.*, (2010) reported that summarization yields the greatest gains in comprehension and facilitates long term-retention of text information. Because students must dedicate enough time reflecting and processing information read, summaries help in learning because it focuses on only important information in a given text (Westby *et al.*, 2010). Similarly, Hidi and Anderson, (1986) observed that summarization facilitates learning because it helps readers clarify the meaning and significance of discourse. Summarizing presents huge benefits to both the teacher and student. It helps the

teacher to determine the ability of a student to select the gist of a text, provides evidence for the comprehension ability of the student and finally the determines the ability of the student to prioritize and sequence (Westby *et al.*, 2010). For the student, it presents an opportunity to communicate the important aspects of a text, helps determine understanding and a platform to practice decision making and sequencing (Westby *et al.*, 2010). This was corroborated by Rinehart and Thomas (1993) when they pointed out that effective summary requires reflection and decision making. Besides, summarizing helps in planning, and also using important information in a text (Cho, 2012). Summarization aids students to better organize. This is because it makes students aware of the structure of ideas within the text and how individual ideas relate to each (Rinehart *et al.*, 1986). Summarization enhances the critical thinking ability of students (Casazza, 1993). It improves the ability of the student to make inferences and read critically (Jitendra *et al.*, 2000).

According to Majorie (2001), independent critical thought of the student is demonstrated as students make decisions about what to include or omit, as they create, arrange, and reconstruct information; and as they fill in gaps where the author was not explicit, in order to construct a piece of writing that has meaning and coherence. In furtherance to this observation, Marjorie (2001) stated that sensitivity to text structure and the use of different approaches according to the type of text being summarized is required in the task of summary writing. It requires that students reprocess text in order to use their own words, shift ideas to different positions. This is an important transformational activity that helps students to internalize usage by changing the forms of sentences and inventing new structures and relationships between words and concepts. This necessity to invent, choose, and make decisions require critical thinking on the part of students.

In a study by Jitendra et al.in (2000) on the effects of summarization instruction on students with learning disabilities and behavioral disorders, it was reported that successful students, were able to identify main ideas and demonstrated improved comprehension of text and further showed a decline in behavioral difficulties.

2.9 Pedagogy of Summary Writing in Schools

The exercise to read a text and condense the words in very brief and concise form is very difficult. As a result, students mostly have a difficulty in summary writing. Summarization is undeniably a difficult skill for many people especially for novices or students. The conventional or traditional method of teaching and learning English summary writing has been found not to be very effective in addressing the challenges and difficulties students have in summary writing and also to improve their summary writing skills. This is because the conventional teaching and learning emphasizes the quality of the final summary produced but little attention is given to the processes and strategies adopted and applied at arriving at the final quality summary product.

Available evidence suggests that one of the challenges militating against the production of good summaries by students is the lack of strategic summary writing skills (Zipitria, Arruarte, Elorriaga, & De Ilarraza, 2004).

For instance, a study conducted was conducted to investigate the challenges students encounter in producing summaries. When the summaries produced by 56 high school students were analyzed, it was found that students who employed appropriate summary writing strategies obtained higher scores as compared to students who did not use these strategies.

The pedagogy of the process of summary writing requires that teachers carefully identify the strategies adopted by their students in writing summaries. Consequently, less attention is given to the teaching of the process of producing summary. This is because the process is laborious and time consuming.

The macro skills of English language such as reading, writing, speaking and listening tend to influence the study of the language especially as a foreign language. A mastery of the difficulties of these skills is key to successes in the study of the language. Studying English as a foreign language cannot be separated from its macroskills. Those are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All of those macroskills have their own difficulties to be mastered by the students. Many tutors think summary writing should not be thought in school because they erroneously assume that students can summarize (Marjorie, 2001). The skill of summary writing does not develop on its own but through direct instruction (Guido and Colwell, 1987).

Careful instruction in teaching the processes in summary writing positively impacts on student's use of summarization strategies and the quality of their summaries (Kaur, 1997). It is therefore imperative that strategies in summarizing is taught in school by using step-by-step instructional rules. It has been reported that summary proficiency at high school or college is very poor. This observation emphasizes the need to teach summarization even at higher educational levels (Marjorie, 2001). Some summary teaching strategies are more effective than others. Friend (2001) argued that one strategy that can be employed by teachers to teach students how to identify important points is to ask students to look for repeated references. This is because an idea often referred to by other ideas is an important. Besides, Friend (2001) suggested that teachers should teach students how to generalize by writing on their own sentences

that reflect the details in a paragraph or group of paragraphs. This notwithstanding, students should be discouraged from copying or selecting ideas from a passage. Students should be taught to synthesize ideas and concepts that can be put together and express them in their own words as far as possible not borrowing the author's words. This form of explicit or direct instruction in summary writing has been supported by many researchers (Marjorie, 2001). Students should be taught that it is their responsibility to bring meaning to a text and that they should learn to independently function in this exercise (Casazza, 1993). Teaching instructions in summary should focus on two key related areas. Content and language of the text. In order to focus on the context, four variables namely main idea, secondary ideas, integration of ideas and staying true (fidelity) to the text should be utilized. Organization, style, language use, objectivity should determine focus on the language (Chin, 2015). Summary undoubtedly requires composing ability, indeed, there may be a correlation between general composing ability and the ability to write a summary (Cho, 2012). Hence, teachers should make compositions an integral part of teaching summary. Nonetheless, direct or explicit instruction is defined by academic focus, precise sequencing of content, high pupil engagements, careful teacher monitoring and specific corrective feedback to students (Duffy and Roehler, 1982).

2.10 Academic Writing and Summary Writing

Teachers have always had problems with the lack of knowledge and use of skills such as outlining, paraphrasing and summary writing that are required for academic writing of speakers of English who are not natives. Effective writing includes the ability to integrate the words and ideas of other authors into their own write up. An aspect of writing that is given attention in schools is the skill of summary writing. In many academic schedules, it is a requirement to write summaries of academic documents.

Summary writing helps a learner to retain the most important aspects of a text. It helps to identify and organize the essential material. Many English examinations require that students to summarize part or an entire passage. The exact nature of the question is dependent on the examining body.

It is generally agreed that summary writing is a skill that does not develop on its own, but requires instruction (Alshabanah, 2005). Writing summaries is a necessary academic skill.

There are different kinds of academic summaries: the assignment summary, writing a response to a reading passage, the abstract, "the one or two sentences summary or mini-summaries, and the traditional précis type. The existence of so many different types of summary make summarization strategies an area that requires attention and mastery (Alshabanah, 2005).

Pedagogical textbooks have stressed on skills needed to execute summary, but very little attention has been given to the strategies students should adopt in order to produce adequate summaries. Besides, there has not been enough attention given to summarization strategies from the empirical perspective.

2.11 Student Feed Back in Summary Tasks

There are no standard ways or tools for easily and rapidly identifying strategies used by students in summary writing. Due to this, the task of evaluating summaries produced by individual students and providing feedback on the summary for the individual student is considered to a burden for teachers. This therefore militates against the development of summary writing skills of students.

However, some systems have been developed to automatically evaluate summaries produced by students. For example, there is a computer-based assessment called summary sheet that has been developed to give students a rapid and easy feedback on the content of their written summaries (Franzke, Kintsch, Caccamise, Johnson & Dooley, 2005; Lemaire, Mandin, Dessus & Denhière, 2005). The summary sheet has the essential features of providing a feedback on the length of the summary product, the relevance or otherwise of the summary sentences to the topic and plagiarism.

Similarly, another software *LEA* (Zipitria, Arruarte, Elorriaga, & de Ilarraza, 2004a) gives feedback on the coherence, content coverage and cohesion, the use of language and adequacy of the summary product. Besides, another computer-based software, *Summary Assessment System* (Zipitria, Arruarte, Elorriaga, & de Ilarraza, 2004b) offers feedback on the content and other essential components of the summary. Many studies have contributed towards the development of the summarization assessment systems, and focused on some content-related strategies such as the concision of the summary, inclusion of main ideas and deletion of irrelevant portions.

Teaching or instructions in summary writing need appropriate feedback from students. This has great benefits to both the teacher and learner. Written and oral feedback is generally used in summary writing instructions (Cho, 2012).

2.12 Summary Writing and Cognitive Development

Cognitive skills are core to the concept of summarization. It involves complex, high order skills and has been linked to cognitive processes. Summarization involves conscious processing strategies. Some summary writing strategies and skills such as decoding, knowledge of text features, previewing of material by skimming text, examining title or subheadings, setting a purpose, self-questioning involves planning,

an advanced cognitive operation, and other metacognitive processes. Selection and reduction of text, monitoring of understanding and drawing on prior knowledge are activities that meta-cognitive in nature (Marjorie, 2001). Many researchers claim that the complexities inherent in summary task is linked to cognitive development and can impose an overwhelming cognitive load on students (Kirkland and Saunders, 1991). Summary writing task is a problem-solving activity that requires the use of one or more cognitive operations. The ability to clearly identify the main idea, trivial or secondary ideas, generate alternative ways of communicating the author's idea involves tremendous cognitive processes (Kirkland and Saunders, 1991). Several researchers have identified many cognitive operations involved in executing summary writing tasks. Brown and Day (1981) reported that summarizing a text involves three steps namely deletion of trivial and redundant information, substitution of list, selecting or inventing a topic sentence for each paragraph. These findings were corroborated by Cho (2012) who documented that summarization involves three main principles; deletion, generalization, and construction. These different observations show that summarization basically involves a selection process in which information is consciously evaluated, some segments deleted, and others chosen. This demands very high cognitive processes and operations. Apart from this, the execution of summary tasks involves planning which is a metacognitive skill (Cho, 2012).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study explains the study site, approach and design of the study, population, sample size, sampling technique and instruments of data collection. Besides, reliability and validity of the research instrument as well as ethical considerations relating to the study are spelt out in this chapter.

3.2 Study site

The study was conducted in Sefwi Bekwai Senior High School located within the Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai Municipality of the Western North Region. The school is the only senior high school within the Sefwi Bekwai Traditional area and its immediate surroundings. The school offers six academic programs and has a total population of about one thousand four hundred (1,450) students with a teaching staff strength of about sixty-five (65).

3.3 Research Design

Research design is a type of inquiry within research approach that gives specific direction for procedures in a study (Creswell, 2014). Also referred to as the strategies of inquiry, a research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems (Kumar, 2011). The qualitative research design was used for the study.

Qualitative studies explore and help gain insight into the feelings and thoughts of people. The role of qualitative research accesses the thoughts and feelings of people about a particular subject matter (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The qualitative research

design was used because the researcher sought to determine the thoughts and challenges of participants with respect to challenges in summary writing by collecting qualitative data and subsequently analyzing the data by determining themes in the data.

3.4 Study Population

In research delineation is made between general population, target population and accessible population. The general population of a study in statistics is an entire group about which some information is needed to be ascertained (Banerjee and Chaudhury, 2010). Participants in the general population must share at least a single attribute of interest (Asiamah, Mensah & Oteng- Abayie, 2017). It is an embodiment of the target and accessible populations.

The general population is inherently unrefined in that, it mostly includes elements whose inclusion in the study would undermine the research objectives and/or assumptions. The general population is thus refined to eliminate such elements. The population obtained after eliminating elements that cannot be included in the study is called the target population. The target population is therefore the group of persons or participants with the specific attributes of interest and relevance (Bartlett et al., 2001; Creswell, 2003).

The accessible population is the population obtained after taking out all individuals of the target population who will or may not participate or who cannot be accessed at during the period of the study (Bartlett et al., 2001). It is therefore, the final group of participants in a study from whom data is obtained by surveying either all its members or a sample drawn from it (Asiamah *et al.*, 2017)

For the purposes of the study, the general population was all senior high school students in the country and the target population was all final year SHS 3 students in the Sefwi Bekwai SHS. Furthermore, on the part of teachers the general population was all teachers of English Language at the senior high schools whilst the target population was all English Language teachers teaching final year students at the Sefwi Bekwai SHS.

3.5 Sampling Technique

Sampling is the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group (Kumar, 2011).

Random sampling technique was adopted to select all the student participants for the study. In simple random sampling every member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected in the sample (McMillan, 1996). The sampling frame consisted of all the ten (10) classes in form three. The final year classes were purposively chosen by the researcher on the basis that these students have received enough instructions and tutoring on summary writing in English Language. Five (5) students each were selected from each class using simple random sampling technique.

All the five teachers of English in the school were selected into the study. The teachers were selected using the total population sampling technique. Total population sampling is a method of sampling where the entire population that meets a certain criterion is included in the study. It is more frequently used where the number of cases being investigated is comparatively small (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection is the method of choosing participants and gathering information from them. Semi-structured questionnaires and tests were primarily used to gather data on the study participants. Semi-structured questionnaires contain both closed and open-ended questions. A questionnaire is a written list of questions to which respondents provide answers. In a questionnaire, respondent read the questions, interpret what is expected and then write down the answers (Kumar, 2011). There are several ways of administering a questionnaire. In certain situations, the questions can be read to the respondents and the answers they provide recorded on their behalf by the researcher. Two different types of questionnaire were prepared and administered to the teachers and students who participated in the study. Each questionnaire had two sections; section A which elicited information on the demographic background of the respondents, section B sought to elicit detailed information about the challenges associated with summary writing.

Furthermore, tests were also used as a tool for data collection in the study. A test is a procedure intended to establish the quality, performance or reliability of something, especially before it is taken into widespread use (Anandan, n.d.). Similarly, (Mahmoodi-shahrehabaki, 2018) explained tests to be the systematic processes of measuring knowledge, behavior, skill, attitudes, and beliefs according to explicit rules and benchmarks. Two passages (see appendices) were given to the students to summarize. The responses of the students were thoroughly studied and the difficulties they encountered which were evident in their responses were analyzed.

3.7 Pre-Test Survey

A pre-test was carried out under actual field conditions on a group of students and teachers similar to the study population. The pre-testing was therefore carried out on fifty (50) students and five (5) teachers of the Bibiani Senior High Technical School located within the Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai Municipality.

The objective of the pre-test survey is to identify problems that prospective respondents might encounter in responding to questions on the questionnaire, such as understanding the wording of the questions and appropriateness of the meaning of the questions (Kumar, 2011). Problems encountered from the pre-testing were fixed by re-wording the questions to remove any

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Validity is defined as the degree to which the researcher measures what he sets out to measure (Smith, 1991:106) as cited by Kumar (2011).

The validity of the research instruments was determined by the Supervisor who meticulously proof read the questions and the test to determine their suitability. Reliability is related to the consistency and stability in a research instrument. Reliability of a research instrument refers to the extent that repeated measurements made by the instrument under constant conditions will yield same results (Kumar, 2011; Moser and Kalton 1989).

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using the test-retest method. The measured Cronbach reliability coefficient was 0.90 indicating an appropriate and sound questionnaire.

3.9 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues relating to research means adhering to the code of conduct for researchers that has evolved over the years for an acceptable professional practice (Kumar, 2011).

Ethical clearance was therefore sought from the Ethical Review Board of the University of Education, Winneba. Besides, informed consent of all respondents in the study was obtained. Respondents were assured of strict anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.

3.10 Data Analysis

The responses to the questions on the questionnaire were coded and subsequently entered into Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software version 24 and analyzed. Percentages and frequencies were indicated for categorical variables. Descriptive Statistics were used to describe the basic features of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The results and discussions of the findings of the study are detailed in this chapter. The data were analyzed according to the objectives of the study and the research questions posed. This study sought to:

1. To examine the attitudes and perceptions of students towards summary writing in English Language.
2. To identify problems frequently faced by students in dealing with tasks in summary writing in English Language.
3. To ascertain the causes/sources of problems associated with the tasks in summary writing in English.
4. To establish ways of overcoming the challenges confronting students in summary writing in English Language.

Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 24 was used to summarize and analyse the data. Descriptive statistics for all variables were computed and presented in tables. Where appropriate, bar charts were used to present the data. For qualitative data, an inductive analysis procedure was used to identify themes from responses given by students and Teachers.

4.1 Description of the Participants

The description of the respondents is summarized in Table 1. A total of 50 students consisting of 18 General Science students, 11 Business students and 21 General Arts students responded to the survey. Male to female ratio was 1:1. Most of the respondents were aged between 17-18 years old. Most of the respondents mostly used

the English Language for communication (32/50), 15 used the Ghanaian Language and 3/50 use the Non-standard English, which is also called the “pidgin” for communication.

Table 0:1: Descriptive characteristics of the students

Demographic measure	Category	Frequency
Sex	Male	25
	Female	25
Age (Years)	17-18	25
	19-20	18
	21-23	5
Programme	General science	18
	Business	11
	General Arts	21
Religion	Christian	50
The language mostly used for communication	English Language	32
	Ghanaian Language	15
	Non-standard English	3

(Source: *Field Data, 2019*)

Table 0:2 Descriptive characteristics of the Teachers

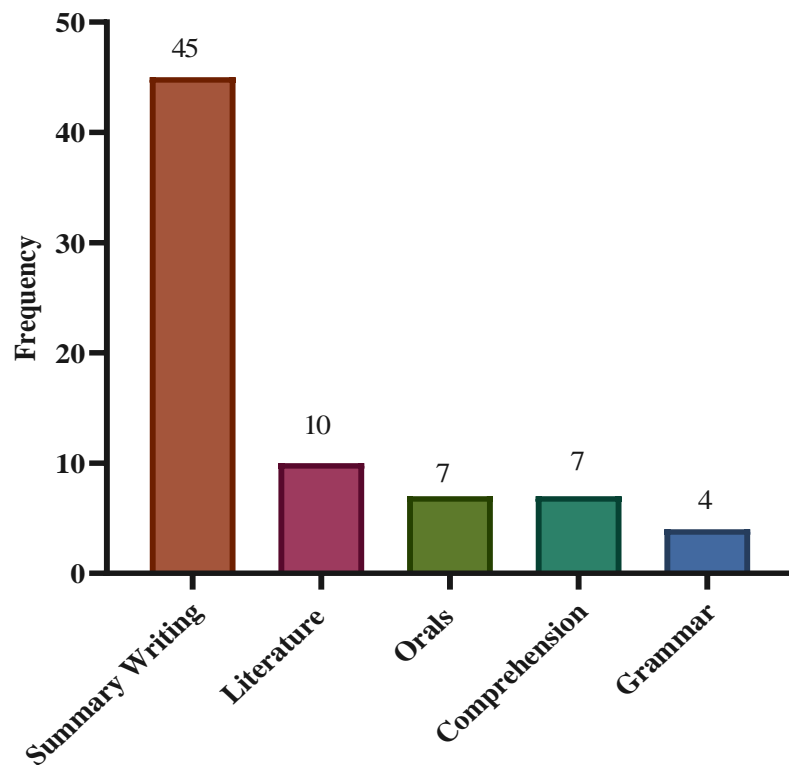
Variable	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Rank	PSI	PS	ADI	ADI	ADII
Age	32 years	30 years	54 years	48 years	35 years
Marital status	Single	Single	Married	Married	Single
Educational Level	BSc/BA	BED	BED	MA/MSc	BSc/BA
Number of years of teaching English	9 years	2 years	10 years	15 years	10 years
Which for or class do you teach	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3

(Source: *Field Data, 2019*)

Objective 1: To examine the attitudes and perceptions of students towards summary writing in English Language

Difficulty in some critical aspects of English Language to Students

The majority of the students admitted that Summary Writing was the most challenging aspect of the English Language. The responses revealed that 45 respondents representing 90% identified summary writing as the most challenging. Ten (10) respondents representing 20% said Literature was the most challenging. 7 respondents representing 14% each said comprehension, or Orals were the most challenging, while as few as 4 respondents representing 8% said Grammar was the most challenging.



(Source: Field Data, 2019)

Figure 0.1: Aspect of English Language Difficult to Students

This finding corroborates earlier findings made on this subject. For instance, Hirvela & Du, (2013); Shi, (2012) mentioned that summary writing is an integrated skill of reading and writing and is one of the most difficult skills for learners. Kato in (2018) also explained summarizing a text is highly complex, recursive reading-writing activity that involves constraints that can impose an extremely, cognitive load on students resulting in negative performance of the students. Similarly Lin & Maarof (2019) reported that summary writing is a skill which is difficult to teach, learn and evaluate. Nambair provided some explanation as to why summary writing is a challenge to students. According to him summarizing is a difficult and cognitively demanding endeavour (Nambiar, 2007). He further explains that “summary writing is not an easy skill to acquire because it involves the ability to re-conceptualize material in which the student has to be able to move from the specific and local to the general or macro. In addition, they have to present the information they have gathered in a clear and concise manner”

4.2 Descriptive presentation of Summary Writing among the Respondents

The respondents were asked whether Summary writing was important. Majority 46/50 (92%) indicated that summary writing is important, whereas 4/50 (8%) indicated that it was not important. Also, with regards to the question of whether students regard summary writing a difficult exercise, 41/50 (82%) of the respondents indicated that it was difficult. Only a few as 9/45 (18%) of the respondents, however, believed that summary writing was not difficult. On average, most students indicated that their summary teacher sometimes gives adequate practice questions in summary writing at most once a week.

This observation corroborated with the assertions of Lin & Maarof in(2019)that summary writing is recognized as a very important and crucial skill not only in language learning but in many areas of the academic career of a student. Adding that it is a extremely useful and sophisticated skill associated withboth reading and learning, contributes to academic success and promotes dialectic thinking by forcing students to articulate views which are not their own. Similarly, Sackeyfio (1999) states that summary writing is an important skill to “maintain essential sanity in the world of today where information is replete and for the student it is also a very necessary skill to “cope with further education. According to Behrens & Rosen summary writing is an important way to understand what one reads (Behrens &Rosen, 1997). Behrens and Rosen further state: “Writing summary is an excellent way to understand what you read. This in itself is an important goal of academic study” (Behrens & Rosen, 1997.p3).

Table 0:3: Descriptive presentation of summary writing among respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency
Is summary writing important	No	4
	Yes	46
Do you have problems in Summary writing?	No	9
	Yes	41
Does your teacher give adequate practise questions/exercises in summary writing	No	10
	Yes	40
How often does your teacher gives you exercise in summary writing	Rarely	1
	Sometimes	25
	Very Often	13
On average how many exercises, in summary, are you given in a week	1	27
	2	8
	3	3

(Source: *Field Data, 2019*)

4.3 Qualitative Findings

An inductive analysis procedure was used to identify themes from responses given by students and Teachers. The analysis was built on four main themes; the significance of summary writing, difficulties in summary writing, causes of difficulties in summary writing and ways to improve performance in summary writing. Subthemes were identified in each main theme, which is supported by existing literature (Figure 2).

4.4 Theme One: Why is summary writing important?

4.4.1: Readable Unified Whole

In line with the common definition of summary writing, most respondents considered that summary writing is extracting the most important points from a text and rewriting

them in your own words, in a shortened form. Importantly, such skills demonstrate how students fully understand the text he/she is reading. Generally, students wrote statements like “summary writing is important because it makes sentences and passages short” and “summary writing is important because it helps me to cut a long statement short”. This shows how students understand summary writing, as simply reporting back what the writer has said, without making value judgments.

Source Text

“Summary writing helps me (the student) to get only the necessary information about someone. Also, it helps to explain things briefly”

Participant 0040702195

“Summary writing is important because it helps to shorten long passages to become small for understanding”

Participant 0040702218

“Summary writing helps us (students) to make our information simple, short and fast”

Participant 0040702359

The above text explains how the respondents consider summary writing as a way of informing readers who have not read the main text of what the text is about. It describes its purpose or main idea and summarizes the supporting arguments that develop that idea.

4.3.2: Improves Vocabulary

Some students also considered summary writing as a way of improving the learning of and knowing the meaning of new words. Importantly, summary writing involves

selecting word choices to replace an original text. As such some responses obtained included;

“Summary writing is important because it helps students to know how to write a brief passage, it also helps students to get known to new words”

Participants 0040702057

“It makes you understand what you were not able to no especially words and their meaning”

Participants 00407002188

“Summary helps me to research more because you cannot use words in the passage for your answers; you have to replace it. It also teaches how to minimize or shorten our words when writing”

Participant Unknown

4.3.3 Improves Critical Thinking Skills

Critical thinking is the process of identifying and solving problems by gathering information, analysing and evaluating evidence, discovering patterns, and reasoning logically. It is eminent that students with high reading levels most likely have strong critical thinking skills. For some respondents (students), summary writing enhances their critical thinking ability. This was reflected in some statement made by the students

“Summary helps me to research more because you cannot use words in the passage for your answers; you have to replace it. It also teaches how to minimize or shorten our words when writing”

Participant 0040702289

“It helps the student to think ahead in class and help the student to know how to conduct English in their understanding”

Participant 0040702018

This finding can be explained on the basis that, summary tasks involve metacognition. Metacognition represents control structures of a higher order, which enable an individual to comprehend and to regulate one’s own mental activity – also by reading. Metacognitive knowledge refers to the knowledge of oneself as a reader and the knowledge about reading tasks and strategies, which are suitable for resolving different kinds of problems. These strategies comprise students’ knowledge about the main goal of reading, their knowledge about reading the text several times to form a summary and their knowledge about trying to decipher the meaning of unknown words from the context, etc. (Pečjak, 2010).

4.3.4 Improves Writing and Editing Skills

Writing a summary means being comprehensive, coherent, concise and independent. These are the basics of writing and editing. Writing summary means, you are establishing your understanding of what you are reading and demonstrating your understanding of the text and communicating it to your reader. Thus, for some students, summary writing improves their writing and editing skills.

Source Text

“Summary writing helps to summarize facts, editing passages and writing a good text”

Participant 0040702409

Objective 2: To identify problems frequently faced by students in dealing with tasks in summary writing in English Language

4.4.1 Lack of engagement with Text

One set of responses related to issues of poor engagement with the text. A teacher's comment typifies responses in this category:

"The student's inability to focus on only the essential elements of a particular text is a major problem"-Teacher 02

Similar, a student commented on the most problem he faces in summary writing

"We need to understand it well and go by all the rules before you get the correct answer, but some summary passage may be lengthy and we find it difficult to see the point" – Student 0040702163

Some of the students made comments that reflected their inability to engage (not even with the techniques learnt in the classroom) with the summary passage

"I always deviate when answering summary questions. I don't have the tricks in answering summary questions. I lack strategies in reading sentences and writing summaries- Student 0040702195

"I find it difficult in finding answers to the questions. Also, I find it difficult to break down the question"-Student 0040702248

Most importantly, general comments made by some teachers indicated that students cannot identify major points or topic sentences [*The identification of major points or topic sentences, in a passage, is a challenge to students*]. This observation can be attributed to the fact that most students are deficient in reading vocabulary. Reading vocabulary refers to understanding of words, which students recognize and

understand by reading. Many studies show that vocabulary is a factor that influences reading comprehension directly and indirectly. Indirectly by facilitating the process of decoding and releasing some of the capacities of the working memory for word processing or understanding (Nouwens, Groen, & Verhoeven, 2015; Pečjak, 2011; Rydland, Grøver, Aukrust, & Fulland, 2012). Readers with broader vocabulary determine the meaning of individual paragraphs faster compared to those who guess the meaning of the unknown words with the help of the remaining text (Ong, 2011). Nevertheless, Wanzek, Wexler, Vaughn and Cuillo (2010) warn in their meta-analysis of reading interventions for struggling readers that merely vocabulary training has a relatively weak effect on these students' reading comprehension. The relation between vocabulary and reading comprehension also depends on the type of texts used to establish this connection (Diakidoy, Stylianou, Karefillidou, & Papageorgiou, 2005; Kelley & Clause-Grase, 2010). It is usually larger for expository texts than for narrative texts, the former containing more difficult words/concepts or academic vocabulary (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Spiro & Taylor, 1980).

4.4.2 Lack of summarizing Skills and Strategies

This theme reflected the lack skills and strategies needed to produce a good summary. Though they sometimes know what is required of them in summary writing tasks, the lack of strategies makes it difficult to execute the task correctly. This further revealed the student's inability to simply report back the passage, without making vague judgments. That is to say that, most students made comments that highlighted their deficiency strategies and skills needed in writing a summary.

“Trying to make long sentences precise is my major problem, I just don't know how to do it”- Student 0040702221

“when they put the summary question there, you can find the answer in the question but how to put it in a different answer is difficult”- Student 0040702330

“how you will change some of the sentences to fit the answer is my problem”- Student 40702223

Two teachers highlighted some points that show the desire of the student to copy direct text and pasting it as answers to summary questions.

“The students can write sentences but not fragments. Also, they are not capable to summarize without copying and pasting” Teacher 05

“Some students have the desire to copy and paste”- Teacher 03.

There were additional comments from some students and teachers that indicated challenges in putting words together to form a meaning statement. [*Some students are unable to write answers in sentences-Teacher 03; They are unable to write answers in full sentences- Teacher 01*]. In agreement with my findings, Norisma et al (1997) found that students generally used the copy-delete strategy in summarizing whereby they copied sentences from the source text. Besides, students resort to strategy of sentence-combination and used wrong conjunction words to join the sentences and concluded that students were weak at summary writing. Similarly, in a study involving 60 ESL secondary school teachers, Othman found that students were unable to distinguish between main ideas and supporting ideas in a summary text (Othman, 2009). He further reported that students had difficulty in using their own words in writing summary tasks. The lack of understanding of summary texts can be attributed to the fact that much focus has not been put on reading comprehension. The outputs of comprehension and summary tasks involve the combination of the dialectical, organizational and linguistic skills in producing a piece of written work (Lin &

Maarof, 2019). Similarly, in a study by Kintsch (1974) it was found that young students were most effective in applying the rule of deletion and selection, but when completing a summary writing task, they were able to take into account only one rule at a time when writing a summary. However, when they decided to include an individual phrase or a sentence in the summary, they copied directly from the original text. When confronted with a summary writing task, students usually read sentence by sentence, each time deciding whether to include it in the summary or not. If they choose to include it, they literally copy it. According to the Reading Quest Organization (2017) the most difficult challenge confronting students in summary writing is copying everything or a lot from the text, literally copying the whole statements. (Lin & Maarof, 2019) also reported that some of the factors militating against good summary writing included L2 proficiency, content and formal schemata, cognitive and meta-cognitive skills. Furthermore, Chen & Su in (2011) found that L2 learners tend to copy from source texts when tasked to summarize an academic text.

Objective 3: To ascertain the causes/sources of problems associated with the tasks in summary writing in English.

4.4.3 Lack of effective teaching or instruction on the processes of producing a summary

This theme unearthed the lack of emphasis given to the concept of teaching summary writing processes and strategies in schools. To highlight this theme, some students pointed out;

We are not taught what we have to go through to write the summary – Student 0040702097

Our teachers don't teach us how to write our own, when you are wrong, they will only write the correct one for you – Student 00407020196.

I don't know the things I have to pass through or what I have to do to write the correct summary, so always am wrong and that is why summary is difficult- Student 0040702017

The apparent lack of emphasis in teaching summary writing processes or strategies in SHS was explained by (Idris, Baba & Abdullah, 2011). They asserted that little attention is given to the process of summary writing because it requires teachers to identify the strategies used by students in their summaries. However, the process of identifying the strategies is time consuming and requires lots of effort. This problem is compounded by the fact that there are no standard methods or tools for easy and fast identification of these strategies for teachers.

4.4.4 Lack of Comprehension Skills and Vocabulary

This has to do with reading and understanding the passage. This is essential in summary writing because it helps the student to extract meaning from the text and better realize what the passage is trying to convey. However, the majority of the comments made by teachers and students pointed out challenges with understanding passages. For example, one teacher wrote...

Some students cannot read (meaning they can't engage with the text), some others find it difficult to understand what they have read!!"

Similar comments were made by two of the teachers, "They are unable to read well and understand the given passage; They have the difficulty in understanding the content".

Being the subject of interest, the majority of the students expresses their challenges with summary writing [*My problem is how to understand the passage, summarize and get the main point from the passage*”- Student 0040702070].

Comprehension and summarizing are intertwined. Comprehension is one of the key strategies for good summary writing. Summarizing is a learning strategy, by which students find essential information in a text and combine them into a short, coherent text called summary (Pečjaka & Pirc, 2018). To carry out this, students need to analyze each of the sentences/paragraphs, search for important words in each paragraph, leave out the non-essential or specific information and then gather the important information in to a whole that makes sense (Westby, Culatta, Lawrence, & Hall-Kenyon, 2010).

Reading comprehension is a process that involves interaction between the characteristics of a given text, the reader and the reading context (Pečjaka & Pirc, 2018). In a reader, several cognitive processes interact to contribute to comprehension (McCloskey & Perkins, 2013;

Oakhill & Yuill, 1996; Van den Broek & Espin, 2012). For understanding a sentence only, the reader must visually process each word, identify it, reach phonological, orthographical and semantic representation, and finally connect all these perceptions in order to understand the basic meaning of the sentence. It is akin to understanding the text as a whole: the reader has to identify individual ideas and form a coherent mental representation of the text.

Another major subtheme identified, was the challenge with word replacement. Ideally, replacing one word for another or replacing a whole sentence with few words

was hectic to students. For example, one student expressed his challenge, *“The way that I will use the different words to mean the same thing in the passage is my problem”*. Similar comments were made by students and a few have been presented below.

Source Text

“I sometimes lack vocabularies. Also, it requires us to use our ideas”- Student 0040702055

“Sometimes replacing some words with the same meaning is difficult for me”- Student 0040702177

“In summary, replacing or hiding sentence or words for your answers is difficult for me”- Student 0040702018

The way that I will use different words to mean the same thing in the passage is my problem”-Student 0040702222

For the 9 students that indicated that they do not have problems with summary writing, they associated the causes to the teaching style. Reference from two student comment below

We students don't like reading books. Also, our teachers are not teaching us well.

We have poor understanding, poor reading, lack of teaching

Besides, most of the respondents identified poor reading habits, unavailability of reading materials, inadequate practice exercises as the cause of their difficulties in summary writing.

4.4.5 Poor reading habit

Most students admitted that they have poor reading habits, which explains why summary writing is difficult for them. Reading is an essential skill of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. Students benefit from reading in several ways that are essential for summary writing. First, it enhances their concentration, improves their vocabulary and language skills. Second, it helps the students to develop cognitive skills that enhance their performance school. However, most students admitted and Teachers highlighted that, they cannot read. Unfortunately, also, there was a subtheme of unavailability of reading material, which together compromises the reading abilities of students. Comments identified directly or indirectly attest to this fact.

Source Text

“Students have a poor reading habit, and there is the unavailability of reading materials (which further complicated the situation)”- Teacher 04.

“Students attitudes towards summary writing are not encouraging and there is the unavailability of textbooks”- Teacher 03. This is to say that students show nauseating behaviour towards summary writing because they lack the essential material. The whole situation was summarized by one teacher, *“Lack of good materials”*. A teacher further expanded the situation;

The major challenge in teaching summary writing is that my students and students nowadays feel lazy in reading. This makes it very difficult and challenging since one [students] cannot summarize unless they [students] understand the passage at hand”- Teacher 05.

A student shared his comment

“I do not like practicing in summary writing, I do not understand many vocabularies, I do not like speaking English”.

In consonance with the findings of this study, Galaa et al reported that the design of the English textbook, the approaches of teachers to the teaching of summary writing, and the general perception of students towards summary writing as the main causes of students’ problems in summary writing. They further reported that, English summary writing is not given equal attention in the syllabus as is given to the other aspects of the English language. Owing to the relative negligence of summary writing in the syllabus and textbooks, the current approach of teachers to the teaching of skills in summary writing has not been beneficial to students (Nanglakong *et al.*, 2019)

Objective 4: To establish ways of overcoming the challenges confronting students in summary writing in English Language.

The most cause of challenges in summary writing represented a task to adopt for a change. The themes specified that the best ways to overcome the challenges of summary writing are to subjugate the causes for solutions. Below are the major themes identified as solutions to improving summary writing.

4.5.1. Encouraging the habit of reading

This theme presented two major subthemes 1) provision of reading materials, 2) encouraging students to read books”. Under these headings some comments generated by students include;

“More modern books are to be brought to the library sothat we can read and have the understanding very well”- Student 0040702171

“I will read more books. I have to search for the meaning of words if I don’t understand it”- Student 0040702409

“By learning dictionary, learning story and vocabulary”- Student 0040702046

Similarly, the text summary of teachers’ comments indicated that students should be encouraged (including making available reading materials) to read widely.

“Problems faced by students in summary writing can be solved by encouraging students in reading and writing and teaching students about the Do’s and Don’ts in summary writing”-Teacher 05

Reading materials should be made available for students to read. Also, students should be encouraged to develop the love of reading”-Teacher 01

Students should be encouraged to read widely to get a good stock of vocabulary. Besides, students should be taught to know the differences between a sentence and then how to look for a preamble to an answer- Teacher 04.

4.5.2: Improving summary writing teaching algorithms

This theme encompasses subthemes that advocate for the express teaching of summary writing processes and strategies, expansion of teaching periods, providing adequate practice exercises and adopting basic but comprehensive teaching style.

A teacher's comment, reflected on this theme are indicated in the source text below;

“Professional teachers who can help allay the fears of students should be allowed to teach summary writing. Also, more time should be allowed on the time table for a summary”.

In line with this comment, most students were advocating for enough time for expanded periods for teaching summary, teachers should have time to explain new words and teach vocabulary, as well as summary questions, should be re-structured for clarity. Some comments made by students are highlighted below:

“Students should be provided with more summary book. Besides, teachers should be giving more training and skill in the summary, and solving more questions about summary in class”

“the teacher now has to get godly patience to teach the students how to answer summary questions and improve their performances in summary writing and also the student must be persistent reading to build their vocabularies”

“more assessment must be given to us in summary writing, the teacher must give us more techniques in summary writing”

“making it easier and simple, always giving a lot of lessons to it so that it can be learnt well since it needs constant practice and more work about summary”

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter details the major findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations for further research.

5.1 Findings

On the objective of identifying problems frequently faced by students in dealing with tasks in summary writing in English Language, the following problems were identified; lack of engagement with the text of summary tasks, being unable to identify main ideas in a text, lack of summary writing skills and strategies and lack of comprehension skills and vocabulary.

On the objective to ascertain the causes/sources of problems associated with the tasks in summary writing in English, it was found that poor reading habit was the major cause of the problems associated with summary writing.

Encouraging the habit of reading among students, improving the teaching of summary writing by teachers, allocating periods to the teaching and assessment of summary writing were found to be ways of overcoming the challenges associated with summary writing.

5.2 Conclusions

From the findings of the study, the conclusion is made that; summary writing remains a difficult task for many students and that encouraging the habit of reading and improving the pedagogy and assessment of summary writing can help address the challenges students face in summary writing.

5.3 Recommendations

It is recommended that studies into the effectiveness of the pedagogy used by teachers in summary writing are conducted. This will help to determine whether or not the methods employed by teachers in the classroom to teach summary accomplish the purpose of addressing challenges in summary writing or not.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Sample of filled questionnaire for students

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This questionnaire aims at soliciting information from you in order to enable the Researcher identify the cause(s) of the poor performance of students in summary writing.

Your opinion is therefore sought purely for academic purposes. Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

ID NO. UDFO702107 Date 25th June, 2020

A. Background Information

1. Gender Male Female

2. Age (in years) 18

3. Class/Form and Program..... 3 / General Science

4. Religion Christian Muslim Traditionalist Others

If others, please (specify).....

5. What language do you often use for communication in school?
English Language Ghanaian Language Non-Standard English (e.g. Pidgin)

6. Which aspect(s) of English Language is difficult for you?.....
Summary, literature and composition.

B. Information on Challenges on Summary Writing

7. Is Summary writing important? Yes No

(b) If yes, why?.....
It makes sentences and passages short.

8 (a). Do you have problems in summary writing? Yes No

1 | Page

(b) If yes, what are the problems/difficulties you in summary writing? Please state as many as you can.....

I sometimes lack vocabularies
And also we shouldn't rewrite the answer you but
we should use our idea.

9. Do you like your Teacher's way of teaching you summary? Please explain or give reasons.....

Sometimes I do understand ~~but~~ and sometime
am not. But I likes his way of teaching

10. Do you give your Teachers give you adequate practice questions/exercises? Yes No
(If yes please proceed to b and c)

11. How often do your teachers give you exercises in summary writing?

Very often Sometimes Rarely

12. Averagely how many exercises in summary writing are you given in a week?.....1

13(a). Do you know there are techniques/strategies in summary writing? Yes No

(b). If yes, state as many of the techniques you know.....

12. Have you heard of the following in relation to summary writing?

(a) Deletion Yes No if yes explain.....

(b) Superordination Yes No if yes explain.....

(c) Selection Yes No if yes explain.....

(d) Invention Yes No if yes explain.....

14. In your opinion what are the cause(s) of the difficulties you face in summary writing? Please state as many as you can.....

Find the real answer, The vocabular are not familiar to me.

.....
.....
.....
15. In your view what can be done to improve your performance in summary writing? Please state as many as you can.....

The passage shouldn't be too long.

The passage should be in a way when the student's read it he/she will get the understanding or concept the passage is about.

(b) If yes, what are the problems/difficulties you in summary writing? Please state as many as you can.....

The passage will sometimes be lengthy and also sometime don't get the meaning of the passage!

9. Do you like your Teacher's way of teaching you summary? Please explain or give reasons.....

Yes I like.
I likey his teaching of summary because he often gives us exercise and assignment.

10. Do you give your Teachers give you adequate practice questions/exercises? Yes No
(If yes please proceed to b and c)

11. How often do your teachers give you exercises in summary writing?

Very often Sometimes Rarely

12. Averagely how many exercises in summary writing are you given in a week?.....1

13(a). Do you know there are techniques/strategies in summary writing? Yes No

(b). If yes, state as many of the techniques you know.....
Read the passage carefully to get the understanding

12. Have you heard of the following in relation to summary writing?

(a) Deletion Yes No if yes explain.....

(b) Superordination Yes No if yes explain.....

(c) Selection Yes No if yes explain.....

(d) Invention Yes No if yes explain.....

14. In your opinion what are the cause(s) of the difficulties youface in summary writing? Please state as many as you can.....

lengthy passages
Not getting the concept of the passage.

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This questionnaire aims at soliciting information from you in order to enable the Researcher identify the cause(s) of the poor performance of students in summary writing.

Your opinion is therefore sought purely for academic purposes. Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

ID NO. 0040702055 Date 25th June 2020

A. Background Information

1. Gender Male Female
2. Age (in years) 21⁺ June 2002
3. Class/Form and Program (Form 3) Business I
4. Religion Christian Muslim Traditionalist Others
If others, please (specify).....

5. What language do you often use for communication in school?
English Language Ghanaian Language Non-Standard English (e.g. Pidgin)
6. Which aspect(s) of English Language is difficult for you? Summary

B. Information on Challenges on Summary Writing

7. Is Summary writing important? Yes No
(b) why? It's helps to save time and also reduce a lengthy passage. If yes,
8 (a). Do you have problems in summary writing? Yes No

.....
.....
.....
15. In your view what can be done to improve your performance in summary writing? Please state as many as you can.....

The teacher's should show us the way to identifying it easily and teach us to know and how to use such vocabularies.....
.....

(b) If yes, what are the problems/difficulties you in summary writing? Please state as many as you can.....

I sometimes lack vocabularies
And also we shouldn't rewrite the answer you but
we should use our idea.

9. Do you like your Teacher's way of teaching you summary? Please explain or give reasons.....

Sometimes I do understand ~~but~~ and sometime
am not. But I likes his way of teaching

10. Do you give your Teachers give you adequate practice questions/exercises? Yes No
(If yes please proceed to b and c)

11. How often do your teachers give you exercises in summary writing?

Very often Sometimes Rarely

12. Averagely how many exercises in summary writing are you given in a week?.....1

13(a). Do you know there are techniques/strategies in summary writing? Yes No

(b). If yes, state as many of the techniques you know.....

12. Have you heard of the following in relation to summary writing?

(a) Deletion Yes No if yes explain.....

(b) Superordination Yes No if yes explain.....

(c) Selection Yes No if yes explain.....

(d) Invention Yes No if yes explain.....

14. In your opinion what are the cause(s) of the difficulties you face in summary writing? Please state as many as you can.....

Find the real answer, The vocabular are not familiar to me.

Appendix 2: Sample filled questionnaire for teachers

Students must cultivate the habit of reading by always reading passages of their own interest to see if they can properly condense it.

16. In your opinion what are the cause(s) of the difficulties encountered by students in summary writing? Please state as many as you can

The concept of skimming and scanning is not well taken by students.

Students do not have interest in reading hence their inability to answer summary passages properly.

17. How does poor summary writing adversely affect the academic performance of your students?

Students inability to answer summary passages leads to scoring low marks in the English language.

18. In your view how can the problems faced by students in summary writing be solved? Please state as many as you can.

Students should always try to solve a lot of past questions and other relevant summary passages. Students should contact their teachers to help them with areas they find difficult.

19.(a). Do you give your students practice questions/exercises? Yes No (If yes please proceed to b and c)

(b). If yes how often?

(c). Averagely how many exercises in summary writing do you give in a week? Please give reasons for your answer

About four to five. This is will actually help students to cultivate the habit of reading and help them to develop ~~the~~ interest in solving summary passages. This if properly done will help students to perform well in the English language in general.

20. In your opinion what are the cause(s) of the difficulties encountered by students in summary writing? Please state as many as you can

Students must desist from the idea that the English language is not a subject that should be studied. They should therefore study it ~~comprehen~~ comprehensively and solve a lot of questions in summary writing.

Students inability to condense a particular text properly.

10. Do you have any idea of the instructions or strategies to use to help students in summary writing?

- Students should be able to read a text carefully and identify the key major/Key points made by the original writer.

- Students should be taught to prepare an outline of the key points there by providing examples and other minor ideas.

11. How do you teach summary writing?

Students are to note that summary is the condensed form of a piece of writing hence the techniques of skimming and scanning would help students identify functional words and phrases which will help them express essential points.

12 (a). Do you have challenges teaching summary writing? Yes No

(b). If yes, please specify the challenge(s)

Students inability to read and understand a particular text.

Most students forget that ~~condense~~ condensing a piece of writing should be in ones own words thereby lifting a whole sentence in a text.

13. How do you assess students in summary writing?

Students are asked to identify and write single topic sentences and summaries of given passages and text.

14. How do you identify the specific challenges facing your students in summary writing?

By given different texts to students to see if they can aptly condense and come out with the most essential elements.

15. How do you address the challenges facing your students in summary writing?

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

This questionnaire aims at soliciting information from you in order to enable the Researcher identify the cause(s) of the poor performance of students in summary writing. Your opinion is therefore sought purely for academic purposes. Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

ID NO. 02 Date. 09-08-2020

A. Background Information on Respondents

1. Gender Male Female []
2. Rank PRINCIPAL SUPT.
3. Age (in years) 30
4. Marital Status Single Married [] Divorced [] Widowed []
5. Religion: Christian Muslim [] Traditionalist [] Others []
If others, please (specify).....
6. Educational Level
1st Degree (BSc/BA) [] MPhil [] MA/MSc [] Others []
If others, please (specify)..... B.E.D. ENGLISH LANGUAGE
7. Number of years of Teaching English..... TWO (2)
8. Which form/class do you teach? ONE, TWO & THREE

B. Information on Challenges on Summary Writing

9 (a). Is summary writing a challenge to your students? Yes No []

(b) If yes, what are the difficulties faced by the students in summary writing? Please state as many as you can

The students inability to focus on only the essential elements of a particular text is a major problem.

.....
.....
21. In your view how can the problems faced by students in summary writing be solved? Please state as many as you can

- Students must always take note of the features of summary writing to help them when summarizing.
- Students should not fear that the English language is a difficult subject. They should learn to solve a lot of questions in summary writing.
- They should always try to come closer to their teachers or colleagues who have clear understanding in summary to help them with in passages they find difficult.

Appendix 3: Sample summary task for students

- i, Science serve as source of entertainment tools.
(understanding)
- ii, It developed clinical aids and drugs to take care of dis sickness. reply
- iii, Through Science, the world is experiencing easy communication.

3/9

ID NO. 004070218

Date: 18th July, 2020

SUMMARY

Read the following passage **carefully** and answer the questions that follow.

Scientific inventions are known and used in all places across the globe: in ultra-modern buildings in cities, as well as in huts in the remotest areas. The impact of scientific discoveries on humans is felt most particularly in the home where people derive immense pleasure and happiness from various means of entertainment. Sound systems and gadgets produce melodious music loud and clear to entertain music lovers. Modern television sets and home theatres show films to lighten mood, dispel boredom and help overcome depression.

The capacity of science to do good to humans seems infinite. People were thrilled when science carried man to the moon and outer space. Over time, chemists, physicists, and physicians have developed clinical aids and drugs that have been used to cure hitherto incurable diseases. Thanks to science, there have been vast strides in medicine and medical practice.

What decades ago was in the realm of science fiction has now become reality. The vast distances which separated the continents have been bridged. Now it is possible to send and receive messages to and from all parts of the world via satellite within seconds. What is even more enchanting is that familiar voices can be heard and faces seen from thousands of miles away. Indeed, science had built the communication network, improving on it by leaps and bounds.

(a) In **three** sentences, **one** for **each**, state the benefits of science to man.

0/9

ID NO. D040702073

Date. 13th July, 2020

SUMMARY

Read the following passage **carefully** and answer the questions that follow.

Scientific inventions are known and used in all places across the globe: in ultra-modern buildings in cities, as well as in huts in the remotest areas. The impact of scientific discoveries on humans is felt most particularly in the home where people derive immense pleasure and happiness from various means of entertainment. Sound systems and gadgets produce melodious music loud and clear to entertain music lovers. Modern television sets and home theatres show films to lighten mood, dispel boredom and help overcome depression.

The capacity of science to do good to humans seems infinite. People were thrilled when science carried man to the moon and outer space. Over time, chemists, physicists, and physicians have developed clinical aids and drugs that have been used to cure hitherto incurable diseases. Thanks to science, there have been vast strides in medicine and medical practice.

What decades ago was in the realm of science fiction has now become reality. The vast distances which separated the continents have been bridged. Now it is possible to send and receive messages to and from all parts of the world via satellite within seconds. What is even more enchanting is that familiar voices can be heard and faces seen from thousands of miles away. Indeed, science had built the communication network, improving on it by leaps and bounds.

(a) In **three** sentences, **one** for **each**, state the benefits of science to man.

1. It helps to satisfy many basic human needs.
2. It allow us to develop new technologies.
3. It helps us to solve practical problem.

understand

(poor understanding)

1. Science help to discovery and overcome our depression.
(expression)
2. Science has help us to cure of hitherto diseases.
understand
3. Science has help us to Communicate and to transpo message
to each other in ^{the} world. (expression)

ID No : 0040702028

8/9

9/9

ID.NO. 00110762303
Date 13/10/2020

SUMMARY

Read the following passage **carefully** and answer the questions that follow.

Scientific inventions are known and used in all places across the globe: in ultra-modern buildings in cities, as well as in huts in the remotest areas. The impact of scientific discoveries on humans is felt most particularly in the home where people derive immense pleasure and happiness from various means of entertainment. Sound systems and gadgets produce melodious music loud and clear to entertain music lovers. Modern television sets and home theatres show films to lighten mood, dispel boredom and help overcome depression.

The capacity of science to do good to humans seems infinite. People were thrilled when science carried man to the moon and outer space. Over time, chemists, physicists, and physicians have developed clinical aids and drugs that have been used to cure hitherto incurable diseases. Thanks to science, there have been vast strides in medicine and medical practice.

What decades ago was in the realm of science fiction has now become reality. The vast distances which separated the continents have been bridged. Now it is possible to send and receive messages to and from all parts of the world via satellite within seconds. What is even more enchanting is that familiar voices can be heard and faces seen from thousands of miles away. Indeed, science had built the communication network, improving on it by leaps and bounds.

(a) In **three** sentences, **one** for **each**, state the benefits of science to man.

- ① Science is good to humans seems infinite.
- ② Science it is possible to send ^{diff} and receive messages
- ③ Science is the modern television sets and home ^{leaves} theatres show films.

Answers

1. Science helps to cure hitherto incurable diseases. (Lifeline)
2. Science has helped us to communicate easily ~~and~~ with people far away from us. (embellishments)
3. Science inventions has made the world ~~global~~.

3/9

ID NO. 0040702221

Date. 13th July 2020

SUMMARY

Read the following passage **carefully** and answer the questions that follow.

Scientific inventions are known and used in all places across the globe: in ultra-modern buildings in cities, as well as in huts in the remotest areas. The impact of scientific discoveries on humans is felt most particularly in the home where people derive immense pleasure and happiness from various means of entertainment. Sound systems and gadgets produce melodious music loud and clear to entertain music lovers. Modern television sets and home theatres show films to lighten mood, dispel boredom and help overcome depression.

The capacity of science to do good to humans seems infinite. People were thrilled when science carried man to the moon and outer space. Over time, chemists, physicists, and physicians have developed clinical aids and drugs that have been used to cure hitherto incurable diseases. Thanks to science, there have been vast strides in medicine and medical practice.

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(a) In **three** sentences, **one** for **each**, state the benefits of science to man.

0/9

ID NO. 0040702372

Date. 13th July, 2020

SUMMARY

Read the following passage **carefully** and answer the questions that follow.

Scientific inventions are known and used in all places across the globe: in ultra-modern buildings in cities, as well as in huts in the remotest areas. The impact of scientific discoveries on humans is felt most particularly in the home where people derive immense pleasure and happiness from various means of entertainment. Sound systems and gadgets produce melodious music loud and clear to entertain music lovers. Modern television sets and home theatres show films to lighten mood, dispel boredom and help overcome depression.

The capacity of science to do good to humans seems infinite. People were thrilled when science carried man to the moon and outer space. Over time, chemists, physicists, and physicians have developed clinical aids and drugs that have been used to cure hitherto incurable diseases. Thanks to science, there have been vast strides in medicine and medical practice.

What decades ago was in the realm of science fiction has now become reality. The vast distances which separated the continents have been bridged. Now it is possible to send and receive messages to and from all parts of the world via satellite within seconds. What is even more enchanting is that familiar voices can be heard and faces seen from thousands of miles away. Indeed, science had built the communication network, improving on it by leaps and bounds.

(a) In **three** sentences, **one** for **each**, state the benefits of science to man.

1. For Modern buildings • *understanding / expression*
2. For happiness from various means of entertainment •
3. Science carried *lifting* man to the moon and outer